VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

CLASSIFIED HANDBOOK

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County Superintendent

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"Commitment to Quality Education for All"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION 4

ORGANIZATION 5
WHO WE SERVE 5
WHAT WE ARE PROUD OF 6
WHY WE ARE IN BUSINESS 7
YOUR SUPERVISOR 9
EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS, VALUES AND BELIEFS 9
HANDBOOK PURPOSE 10

CLASSIFIED STAFF 11

PROBATION 12
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION 12
RECLASSIFICATION 12
TEMPORARY PROMOTION / WORKING OUT OF CLASSIFICATION 13
DEMOTIONS 13
TRANSFERS 13
LEAD SPECIALIST 14
SUPERVISING SPECIALIST 17
DISCIPLINARY ACTION 19
RESIGNATION PROCEDURES 19
REINSTATEMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT 20
LAYOFF and REEMPLOYMENT 20
CONTINUATION OF BENEFITS (COBRA) 20
VCOE ORGANIZATION for INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AMONG EMPLOYEES (VOICE) 21

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS 22

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION / EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY / AMERICANS WITH 22
DISABILITIES ACT 22
AB 1432 / MANDATED CHILD ABUSE REPORTING 22
ARMATUS SEXUAL MOLESTATION PREVENTION PROGRAM 23
EMPLOYEE MEDICAL EXAMINATION 24
FREEDOM FROM TUBERCULOSIS 24
EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION DOCUMENT 24
FINGERPRINTS 24
OATH OR AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE 25
MANDATORY DISASTER SERVICE WORKERS 25
VERIFICATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY CARD 25
PERSONNEL FILES 25
CHANGE OF NAME, ADDRESS or PHONE NUMBER 25
CONVICTION OF NARCOTICS OR SEX OFFENSE 26

SALARY AND BENEFITS 27

DISTRIBUTION OF PAY CHECKS 27
PAY DAY AND DEDUCTIONS 27
SALARY SCHEDULE PLACEMENT 28
STEP ADVANCEMENT 28
TIME CARDS 28
OVERTIME APPROVAL 29

OVERTIME HOURS WORKED 29
OVERTIME COMPENSATION 30
OVERTIME EXEMPTIONS 30
CANCELLATION OF SCHEDULED OVERTIME SHIFT 30
HOLIDAYS 31
HEALTH AND DENTAL BENEFITS 31
RETIREMENT COVERAGE 32
SECTION 125 FLEXIBLE BENEFIT PLAN 32
TAX SHELTERED ANNUITIES 32
WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE BENEFITS 33
TUITION REIMBURSEMENT 33
CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLAN 34
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE 36
VACATION 36
REQUESTS FOR LEAVES OF ABSENCE WITH OR WITHOUT PAY 37
DISCRETIONARY PERSONAL NECESSITY LEAVE 38
PERSONAL NECESSITY LEAVE 38
BEREAVEMENT LEAVE 39
CATASTROPHIC LEAVE 39
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA) 39
MATERNITY LEAVE and CALIFORNIA FAMILY RIGHTS ACT (CFRA) 40
JURY DUTY 40
INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT AND INDUSTRIAL ILLNESS LEAVE 40
SICK LEAVE 41
OTHER SICK LEAVE 42
RETIREMENT CREDIT FOR ACCRUED SICK LEAVE 42

HEALTH AND SAFETY 43

AIR POLLUTION EMERGENCY ALERT PLAN 43
DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE WORKPLACE 43
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS COMMUNICATION PROGRAM 44
INDUSTRIAL INJURIES 44
INFECTIOUS DISEASES / BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN 46
INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM 48
TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT 48
VIOLENCE-FREE WORKPLACE 48
EMERGENCIES 51

VCOE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 52

SEXUAL HARASSMENT 52
DISCRIMINATION 52
COMPLAINT POLICY 52
CODE OF ETHICS 52
RULES AND REGULATIONS 53
CELL PHONE USAGE 53
EMAIL POLICY 54
OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT 57
CREATION, PUBLICATION AND SALE OF MATERIALS 57
POLITICAL ACTIVITIES 57
VEHICLE USE 58
TRAVEL EXPENSES 58
TRANSPORTING STUDENTS 59
WORKING CONDITIONS 59

APPEARANCE AND DRESS 59
EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION BADGE 60
VISITORS 60
PERSONAL MAIL 60
VENTURA COUNTY FAST ACTION SCHOOL TRANSIT (VCFAST) 60
VCOE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS 61
USE OF EQUIPMENT OFF THE PREMISES 62
TRANSFER OF PROPERTY 62
PUBLIC RELATIONS 62
GIFTS TO EMPLOYEES 63
PEDDLERS OR SALESPERSONS 63
RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO A FAMILY MEMBER 63
CUSTOMER SERVICE VIA TELEPHONE 63
GRAPHICS REPRODUCTION SERVICES 64

DISCIPLINARY ACTION PROCEDURES – CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES 65

INTRODUCTION TO THE VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

It is a pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you as an employee of the Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE). We are pleased that you have chosen to join our team and to share our goal of providing a quality education for all. This handbook was prepared specifically for you, so that you might know how VCOE is organized, the benefits to which you are entitled and your responsibilities as an employee. It is our hope that this handbook is a helpful source of information that will serve to make your employment satisfying and rewarding. If there is something in this handbook that does not correspond with a Board of Education or superintendent's policy or a contract agreement, the official policy takes precedence. If you find such a discrepancy, or if you have any questions regarding a topic that is not included in the handbook or related to your employment, please contact your immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Department.

Welcome to the Ventura County Office of Education.

Vision

All people will benefit from life-long learning.

Mission

The Ventura County Office of Education provides quality services and support for life-long learning opportunities.

Motto

"Commitment to Quality Education for All"

Goals

We will collaborate to build relationships with local educational institutions and other government and private sector entities to provide leadership, service, and support for all learners, local educational institutions, and other government and private sector entities to:

1. Provide, promote and support environments that result in world-class quality learning opportunities.
2. Secure and develop resources (human, fiscal, and information) that support and promote our mission.
3. Develop and maintain an organization based on teamwork, trust, communication, commitment, and competence.
4. Optimize customer satisfaction.

ORGANIZATION

The Ventura County Office of Education is governed by an elected Superintendent of Schools and a five member Board of Education. The County Superintendent develops personnel and program policy and is the employer for all county schools employees. The Board makes policy decisions related to county operated programs in appropriate areas of budgeting, curriculum, and planning. Another function of the County Board is to hear appeals related to student inter-district attendance, student expulsions and charter schools. The County Superintendent and Board invite interested individuals to attend board meetings and to take an active role in educational planning at the county level.

County Superintendent of Schools
Stanley C. Mantooth

Board of Trustees
Area 1 – Rachel Ulrich
Area 2 - Marty Bates
Area 3 – Dr. Mark Lisagor
Area 4 – Dean Kunicki
Area 5 – Dr. Ramon Flores

WHO WE SERVE

The Ventura County Office of Education is pleased to serve 8 unified school districts, 10 elementary school districts, 1 high school district, 1 community college district, and 4 Joint Powers Authorities. We provide service to 258 public schools.

A variety of additional information, including staffing and student demographic, can be found at http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/.

WHAT WE ARE PROUD OF

The Ventura County Office of Education strongly supports local school districts in building a regional system of services and leadership to maintain, bolster, and improve educational opportunities for all children, staffs and community members in Ventura County. Some of the services and leadership strands include:

Educational Services Branch

- Categorical Programs
- Comprehensive Health and Prevention Programs
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Early Childhood Programs
- Hearing Conservation
- Leadership Support Services
- Local District Support Services
- Regional System of District and School Support Services
- Research and Evaluation

Fiscal and Administrative Services Branch

- Facilities and Maintenance
- Internal Business Services
- Personnel Services
- Human Resources
- Expanded Learning Services
- Teacher Support Services
- School Business and Advisory Services
- Technology Services
- Graphics Services

Student Services Branch

- Career Education
- Charter School Support and Oversight
- Court and Community Schools
- Special Education
- Special Education Educational Support
- Student Achievement and School Support
- Student Competitions and Fundraising

The Ventura County Office of Education plays an important and vital role in helping educate the diverse population of Ventura County's students. VCOE recognizes that optimizing educational opportunities takes a team effort and must involve the entire community. Our young people will not have the best opportunity for success without each of us doing our part to effectively and efficiently provide an educational system that prepares students to be contributing citizens.

WHY WE ARE IN BUSINESS

The Ventura County Office of Education is chartered to act as a regional support system for area schools, providing service and leadership to maintain and improve the schools in Ventura County. Our mission is to promote life-long access to world-class educational opportunities in Ventura County.

We are in business for four reasons:

- To provide direct services to students where appropriate
- To provide essential fiscal and administrative services to school districts
- To provide professional development opportunities for staff throughout the County
- To support compliance with State and Federal Mandates

DIRECT SERVICES TO STUDENTS

The Ventura County Office of Education operates specialized student programs and coordinates countywide student events. Each year we teach over 8,000 students in specialized programs such as severely handicapped special education, career education, and incarcerated, expelled and at-risk youth. The VCOE also provides student welfare and special services such as school safety programs; psychological services and nursing services to small districts; gang prevention; attendance improvement and dropout prevention; and healthy-start school based multi-agency services. In addition, the Ventura County Office of Education sponsors student activities and events that support academic excellence i.e. mock trial, academic decathlon, top scholars, spelling bee and science fair.

ESSENTIAL FISCAL & ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The Ventura County Office of Education monitors school districts fiscal health, accounting for $1.7 billion annually. We assist school districts' business offices by providing fiscal oversight of the ongoing fiscal integrity of districts and by ensuring that districts meet reporting requirements in an accurate and timely manner.

The Ventura County Office of Education is uniquely situated to bring together people, programs, and services within the county and offer the 21 school districts and the Community College District the benefits of cost containment and avoidance of duplication of services. Through our centralized business systems center, we distribute all public education vendor checks and paychecks for 25,000 employees in school districts. We coordinate a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) that purchases liability and property insurance, workers' compensation coverage, and medical, dental, and vision plans based on much reduced large group rates.

We assist personnel offices through teacher recruitment efforts, credential processing, employee screening, retirement counseling, and employer-employee relations services. Our technology services department provides electronic data storage, retrieval, and processing for fiscal, personnel, and student data systems. To maintain and build resources, we forge alliances with public and private agencies and businesses throughout the County.

The Ventura County Office of Education supports local districts in the development, selection, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum and materials through provision of a variety of curriculum, instruction, and assessment services. We enhance educational technology use through our California Technology Project for training teachers and administrators in technology use; our teachers' materials preparation center; and the use of technology to strengthen instructional programs.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Ventura County Office of Education provides a broad array of professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators, and other educational staff which might be cost prohibitive to an individual school or district, but can become cost-effective when shared across districts. Participants take advantage of state-of-the-art learning options ranging from administering educational programs to teaching reading to technology-based office practices. We conduct board and administrative retreats; planning sessions for local school districts; and job-alike meetings for superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, special projects directors, librarians, and nurses. The Ventura County Office of Education also coordinates the Teacher of the Year competition and the IMPACT II program designed to spread effective teaching practices throughout Ventura County.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATE & FEDERAL MANDATES

The Ventura County Office of Education also provides services as specified in State and Federal mandates: oversight of school elections for bonds and school boards; oversight of school district reorganization; appeal hearings of local school board decisions on expulsions, inter-district transfers and charter schools; verification of credentials and assignments of personnel; reporting to State Teachers' Retirement System (STRS) and Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) for county employees; review of district audits and vendor warrants; approval of school district budgets and monitoring of districts for solvency; distribution of funding apportionments; maintenance of books of record of transactions; dissemination of California Department of Education advisories, programs, and curriculum frameworks.

County Offices have also formalized their assistance to under performing schools. Ventura County Office of Education has been approved by the California State Department of Education to begin interventions in our highest priority schools and districts in the county. The goal of our Curriculum and Instruction department is to ensure that standards-based teaching is fostering progress in student achievement in each school in the county. To that end, school reviews, and classroom observations focused on curriculum, instructional materials, instructional strategies, and adequacy of classroom support are being implemented. The County Office intervention teams are building capacity in the schools for sustained change and growth.

Without county offices, the quality of local schools would suffer, tax dollars would be wasted, and district and school site personnel would be flooded with additional duties.

YOUR SUPERVISOR

Your supervisor is the most important person you will meet during the first few days on the job. This person is responsible for your orientation, training, and evaluation of your performance on the job. Your supervisor will work with you to ensure overall effectiveness on the job and will let you know exactly what is expected of you and keep you posted on policies and procedures. Your supervisor will assign your work, introduce you to other employees, help you get the feel of your job, explain the regulations concerning lunch breaks, rest periods, reporting absences, scheduling vacations, and other job-related information you will need to know. Do not be afraid to ask questions! If instructions are not clear, always ask for clarification.

There may be times when you want advice on a problem or an answer to a question. Usually, your immediate supervisor will be able to help you. If not, your supervisor will try to obtain the information you need. The Human Resources Department is also available to answer any questions you may have about your employment.

EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS, VALUES AND BELIEFS

The following values and beliefs are expected to be reflected in the behaviors of VCOE employees.

Personal Character

We hold a strong belief that one's personal character profoundly affects one's work behavior. VCOE employees should be reliable, responsible, collaborative, open, self-reflective, confident, inquisitive, interested in learning, honest, humorous, trustworthy, authentic, enthusiastic, motivated, passionate, fair, ethical, respectful, empathic, sensitive, and culturally proficient.

Communication

We strongly believe that open and honest communication provides the foundation for organizational and personal growth and improvement. VCOE employees provide regular opportunities for oral and written communication between all levels of the organization. Emphasis should be placed on communicating information that is necessary for maintaining organizational progress and goal attainment. Gossip is discouraged. Confidentiality and responsible disclosure of information is a responsibility of employees. Questions and concerns should be taken to the source.

Chain of Command / Employee Treatment

We believe that empowering employees with information and decision-making responsibility will assist in achieving the mission of the organization. VCOE employees should treat each other respectfully, as equals, and should expect this treatment in return. Employees should maintain high standards of conduct and personal character as listed above. Employees should be committed to the organization. Each employee should be viewed as a life-long learner who is competent, committed to organizational goals, motivated, honest, self-directing, and collaborative. Each employee's contribution to the organization should be valued. Feedback regarding effectiveness should flow up and down the organizational hierarchy. The chain of command in the organization should be respected and followed.

Challenges / Risk Taking

We believe that reasoned risk-taking is the only way to "break new ground" and invent new and more successful practices. VCOE leaders should encourage reasoned risk-taking and allow reasonable failure.

Leaders should expect professional judgment and continuous self and supervisor evaluation in all experimental practices. The welfare of the student and fellow employees should be paramount in any risk-taking decision.

Continuous Improvement
We believe that a commitment to continuous quality improvement in our service is the charge of all employees. VCOE provides employees with the resources necessary to engage in continuous improvement including systematic data collection and evaluation, necessary professional development, personal support for change, opportunities for individual contributions along with recognition and celebrations of successes.

Conflict Management
We believe that conflict is an opportunity to learn and is a natural occurrence in improving organizations. It is also believed that working toward constructive resolutions helps organizations improve faster. VCOE encourages employees to constructively disagree and provide differences in perspective in an atmosphere of goodwill. Leaders should intervene to resolve conflicts among staff and invest time in each employee's success.

Customer Service
We believe that possessing a customer orientation will improve the value of our service. VCOE employees should identify customers, help them make informed decisions, be responsive, teach and model the process of learning and improving, continuously seek customer feedback, and anticipate what customers will value.

HANDBOOK PURPOSE

This handbook is designed to familiarize classified employees with the classified personnel practices of VCOE, and consolidate the rules and regulations regarding the employee-employer relationship for classified personnel at VCOE.

This handbook explains some of our philosophies and beliefs and describes (in general terms) some of our employment guidelines. We hope that it will serve as a useful reference document for employees throughout their employment at VCOE. Employees should understand, however, that this handbook is not intended to be a contract (express or implied), nor is it intended to otherwise create any legally enforceable obligations on the part of VCOE or its employees not otherwise found in California law. This handbook supersedes and replaces all previous personnel policies, practices, and guidelines except as otherwise set out in the Superintendent's Policies.

Because VCOE is a growing and changing organization, it reserves full discretion to add to, modify, or delete provisions of this handbook, or the policies and procedures on which they may be based, at any time without advance notice. VCOE also reserves the right to interpret any of the provisions set forth in this handbook in any manner it deems appropriate. For this reason, employees should check with the Director of Human Resources to obtain current information regarding the status of any particular policy, procedure, guideline, or practice. Similarly, to obtain information regarding specific employment policies or procedures, whether or not they are contained in this handbook, employees should contact the Human Resources Director.

No individual other than the Superintendent has the authority to enter into any employment or other agreement that modifies VCOE employment policy. Any such modification must be in writing.

CLASSIFIED STAFF

The County Superintendent's staff is comprised of two categories of employees: Certificated and Classified.

Certificated employees are those who, in order to perform the function of their position, must be certified by the State of California and are designated as teachers or non-permanent employees.

Classified employees are members of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), with a survivor benefit added. There is no social security coverage. All new hires contribute to Medicare. Classified employees are participants in employer paid health and dental insurance plans, prorated for part-time employees. There are no transfer rights into, or out of, service with the County of Ventura or any other public agency.

The status of employment of classified personnel is defined in the following ways:

1. Regular Full-Time: A position that has been approved to be filled for a full year or longer, at eight (8) hours per day, five (5) days a week.

2. Regular Part-Time: A position that has been approved to be filled for a portion of a year or less than eight (8) hours per day, or less than five (5) days a week, on a regular basis.

3. Extra Help: No position has been approved, but a person is hired for a temporary period to complete a job during peak or rush periods and the job is subject to termination as the need terminates.

4. Substitute: Individuals are hired on a daily or hourly basis to substitute for staff during periods of absence.

5. Specially Funded: A position (usually related to a special project) which is dependent on specific funding and will terminate on a certain date as specified in the project or contract. "Specially Funded" project employees will be classified as "Regular" or "Extra Help" for purposes of determining eligibility for various benefits. Seniority gained while working in a specially funded project applies to like positions within VCOE.

Employees in "Regular" (including Specially Funded) positions will serve an initial probationary period as described later in this handbook.

Employees are recruited to fill vacancies as they occur.

When approved by the Human Resources Department, a position may be filled at less than the authorized level for a number of reasons. Among justifiable reasons are:

1. Inability to recruit acceptable and qualified applicants at the authorized level.

2. The position requires an extensive training period making it more appropriate to fill the position at a lower level for an initial training period.

Keeping in mind the foregoing explanations relative to the classified staff, the balance of this handbook will be devoted to explaining details that concern you as a member of VCOE’s Classified Staff.

PROBATION

Each employee shall serve in a probationary status upon initial employment and upon promotion to any position which is at a higher classification or in a different job family (i.e. Secretary to Account Technician) than previous positions for which probationary status was successfully completed.

The probationary period for Classified Management staff shall be one year. Classified Management staff employed after the beginning of the fiscal year shall be eligible for regular status after having served at least fifty percent of the days in a full contract year. The anniversary date shall be July 1.

The probationary period for all other classes shall be a minimum of six months of probation, which shall not exceed one year. Probationary employees who are initially placed on Step 1 are eligible to be moved to Step 2 upon successful completion of probation. Probationary employees who are initially placed on Step 2 or higher are eligible to be moved to the next step upon successful completion of probation and one full year of service as determined by start date.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Your performance will be evaluated by your supervisor. A formal report on your performance will be prepared three times during your initial probationary period and annually thereafter. These reports, and less formal evaluations, will be discussed with you by your supervisor.

In evaluating your performance, the knowledge, skill, and abilities you exhibit will be measured against the standards of the job and your ability to attain agreed upon objectives.

The basic purpose of the evaluation is to recognize past performance and to have you and your supervisor mutually establish goals and objectives for the future.

RECLASSIFICATION

The Department Head shall redefine the job responsibilities to show evidence of the change in duties that have existed for a period of at least six months and submit a request for reclassification form available from the Human Resources Department.

A committee composed of the Associate Superintendents and the Director of Human Resources will review all requests for reclassification and make a recommendation for a reclassification study if deemed appropriate. The study will be completed by the Human Resources Department and a decision made based on the study.

If a reclassification is implemented and there is an incumbent in the position, the incumbent will be reclassified to the position. If the position is not filled, the promotional or recruitment process shall be utilized to fill the vacancy.

When the incumbent is reclassified to the position, the anniversary date shall not be affected. If the reclassification is to a higher placement on the salary schedule, the incumbent in the position shall be placed at the first step providing at least a five percent (5%) increase. There is no probationary period. For more information, refer to Superintendent Policy No. 4213.23

TEMPORARY PROMOTION / WORKING OUT OF CLASSIFICATION

If a regular employee is requested to serve in a higher position in excess of five (5) working days within a fifteen (15) calendar day period, that employee will be paid at the salary range assigned to the higher position. The rate of pay shall be the first step of the higher position or to the step on the salary schedule that most nearly approximates a five percent increase above the normal salary of the regular position, whichever is greater, until the return to the regular position.

All normal anniversary date increases and cost of living increases shall be acknowledged during this period.

DEMOTIONS

A demotion is the change of an employee from one job classification to another with a lower salary range. Demotions may be voluntary or involuntary. (Examples: Voluntary - employee requests demotion in lieu of layoff or termination. Involuntary - position reclassified to a lower salary range.)

When a voluntary demotion is effected, the employee's salary will be adjusted to the range of the lower position. Step placement on the salary schedule will be adjusted to the highest step on the lower range that does not exceed the employee's salary prior to demotion.

When an involuntary demotion is effected, the salary will be to the step on the lower salary range that will equal the employee's salary prior to demotion, or the employee will be "Y" rated until the salary range of the lower position exceeds the employee's salary.

A demotion to a lower unrelated position will require completion of a new probationary period, but will not change the anniversary date for purposes of step increases.

A demotion to a lower related position, (i.e., Senior Secretary demoted to a Secretary) will not require a new probationary period and will not change the anniversary date for purposes of step increases.

TRANSFERS

Transfers are not a right in VCOE. Voluntary lateral transfers to vacant positions shall be allowed, in accordance with administrative regulations, upon approval of the Director of Human Resources and the department head or supervisor of the vacant position.

Involuntary transfers may be required, in accordance with administrative regulations, to assure staff assignments most efficiently meet the needs of the organization.

Emergency temporary transfers may be required, in accordance with administrative regulations, when the department director determines that the transfer is necessary to relieve the temporary emergency situation. The employee shall be returned to the regular assignment as soon as the emergency has been resolved.

The Administrative Regulations are reprinted below:

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS - Transfers - Classified Employees
A Transfer is a change of job placement to a different position with the same title and salary range (lateral transfer).

A voluntary transfer is a transfer requested by the employee. An involuntary transfer is an administrative assignment to a position not requested by the employee.

Transfers may be necessary or desirable in a variety of situations. The following is not intended to cover all situations, but will be applied to the specified situations and will be used as a guide in circumstances not specifically covered.

Transfer requests will be considered only upon completion of probation and indication that the employee has maintained a satisfactory level of performance in the current position.

VOLUNTARY TRANSFERS
PROCEDURE:

A. Employees submit a request, in writing, to the Director of Human Resources, indicating the position(s) and any other criteria for the desired transfer. The request will be kept on file for six (6) months ONLY. If the transfer is still desired, but not accomplished within six (6) months, a new request may be submitted. The transfer request will be considered only when the desired position(s) is vacant. Acceptance of the transfer request will be at the discretion of the department head where the vacancy occurs.

B. Requests for transfer from one position to another in the same department will be handled by the department head. Requests will not be filed with the Human Resources Department. All assignments within the department are the department head's responsibility.

INVOLUNTARY TRANSFERS
Employees may be transferred in the best interest of VCOE.

LEAD SPECIALIST

PURPOSE OF LEAD SPECIALIST:
To ensure safe and effective services, to promote consistent communication between administration and specialists, and to provide structured leadership opportunities for specialists.

DEFINITION OF LEAD SPECIALIST:
To provide educational and managerial leadership to the professional staff and students under the direction of the assigned administrator. To perform those duties as described in the Specialist job description(s).

CRITERIA FOR LEAD SPECIALIST:
The Lead Specialist's job responsibilities occur on a regular basis and are in support of all VCOE programs within their specialty.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEAD SPECIALIST:
The primary responsibility is to serve in the assigned specialty capacity. Other responsibilities may include, but are not limited to the following:

Professional Leadership
- May participate in interviews and selection process within their specialty.
- Share responsibility for the continuous improvement of the quality of services.
- Keep abreast of current trends in Education related to assigned specialty.
- Assist with in-service activities and workshops.
- Serve as a resource to staff members who request assistance.

Ongoing Management Functions
- Communicate with the assigned administrator to plan and coordinate services
- Assist in orienting new employees, contractors and substitute staff members to the program.
- Facilitate regular meetings for their specialists.
- Coordinate caseload assignments with administration as needed throughout the school year.
- Assist with coordination of the scheduling of regular and special activities within the program.
- Assist with coordination of Supervising Specialists.
- Coordinate professional development activities per approval and/or direction of administration.
- Facilitate problem solving to assist and support students and staff.
- Update and disseminate information such as current trends, policies and procedures.
- Assist the administration in implementing all policies and rules.
- Assist administrator with coordination and ordering of group supplies/materials/assessments.
- Provide direction and support to specialty group.

QUALIFICATIONS OF LEAD SPECIALIST:
Experience/Licensure Requirements:
- Two successful years of demonstrated professional competency with the organization.
- Possession of appropriate specialty licensure for current assignment.

Ability to:
- Communicate effectively and get along with others.
- Work independently and collaboratively.
- Gain the professional respect of their colleagues.
- Show initiative.
- Be reliable and responsible.
- Provide leadership.
- Demonstrate knowledge and skill within specialty area.
- Effectively utilize a broad repertoire of professional skills.
- Manage time effectively.
- Solve problems effectively.
- Take direction.

ACTION PLAN AND EVALUATION FOR LEAD SPECIALIST:
Assigned administrator will assess organizational needs and develop an Action Plan with the Lead Specialist that will delineate the specific responsibilities.

Lead Specialist will be evaluated at least annually by the assigned administrator relative to the performance of the responsibilities within the Action Plan. The evaluation process may include feedback from the specialists. Failure to perform satisfactorily may lead to removal from the Lead Specialist position. This evaluation will be separate from the regularly scheduled evaluation process.

COMPENSATION FOR LEAD SPECIALIST:
An annual stipend is listed on the Classified Salary Schedule. These stipends are prorated based upon days of service as lead specialist within a fiscal year.

SELECTION PROCESS FOR LEAD SPECIALIST:

- Selection is for one term, which is defined as the contract year.
- Lead Specialist may reapply for subsequent term(s).
- No restriction on the number of terms that a Lead Specialist may serve.
- Lead Specialist must be a full-time employee.
- Lead Specialist role/stipend may be shared subject to pre-approval by administration.
- Lead Specialist candidates will be interviewed by a panel and a recommendation made to the Superintendent or designee.
- Minimum panel recommended includes: two Specialists and one administrator.
- Interview panel has the authority not to fill the position and to reopen the application process if it deems necessary.
- In the event of a vacancy, the position will be opened immediately.

WAIVER OF QUALIFICATIONS OF LEAD SPECIALIST:
The VCOE may choose to waive the qualifications listed above.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR LEAD SPECIALIST:
The following application materials must be submitted to the Human Resources Department:

- Letter of interest describing qualifications for the position, including what the applicant believes he/she has to offer the school site and the Ventura County Office of Education.
- Resume.

TIMELINE FOR LEAD SPECIALIST:

- Applications due by May 30
- Decision made prior to first day of school at designated site.
- Start first day of school at designated site.
- In the event of a vacancy, the position will be opened when school is in regular session.
- The VCOE may modify the timeline.

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF LEAD SPECIALIST POSITION AND PROCESS:
Review and analysis of lead specialist positions and process will be completed annually by the assigned administrator.

SUPERVISING SPECIALIST

SUPERVISING SPECIALIST PURPOSE:

To ensure safe and effective services to students, to help identify and recruit potential specialists, and to provide structured leadership opportunities for specialists.

SUPERVISING SPECIALIST DEFINITION:

To provide supervision to pre-professional candidates for specialty licensure under the direction of the assigned administrators. Candidates for licenses in specialty areas must undergo internships or clinical practices that provide them with intensive and extensive professional experiences. Within these field-based experiences, candidates are immersed in the learning community and are provided opportunities to develop and demonstrate competence in the professional roles for which they are preparing. Field-based experiences are provided to the candidate under the licensure of a Supervising Specialist, an experienced individual who has the knowledge and skills the candidate is working to attain as evidenced by licenses within the specialty area and as determined by the agency and/or approved program responsible for granting licenses within the specialty area.

To provide supervision to registered and/or licensed support personnel under the direction of the assigned administrators. Such support personnel are, following academic coursework, fieldwork, on-the-job training, and state registration, allowed to perform tasks prescribed, directed, and supervised by licensed specialists.

To perform those duties as described in the specialist's job description(s).

SUPERVISING SPECIALIST CRITERIA:

A Supervising Specialist must meet the criteria determined by the agencies responsible for recommending and/or granting licenses within the specialty area. A Supervising Specialist job responsibilities occur on a regular basis.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERVISING SPECIALIST:

Primary responsibility is to serve in the assigned capacity. Other responsibilities may include, but are not limited to the following:

Professional Leadership

- Assume professional liability for the work of assigned pre-professional candidate(s) and/or support personnel.
- Share responsibility for the continuous improvement of assigned pre-professional candidate and/or support personnel.
- Keep abreast of current trends in assigned specialty area.

Ongoing Management Functions

- Assist in orienting pre-professional candidate(s) and/or support personnel to field-based work and/or clinical experiences.
- Assist with coordination of the scheduling of field-based work and/or clinical experiences.
- Coordinate off-campus educational activities with the agencies responsible for recommending and/or granting licenses within the specialty area.

- Provide educational opportunities for the pre-professional candidate(s) specific to the requirements of the agencies responsible for recommending and/or granting licenses within the specialty area. Those opportunities may include working with students doing assessments, treatment, observation, and data collection all under the supervision of the Supervising Specialist.
- Respond to inquiries or concerns of the agency and/or approved program responsible for granting licenses as needed.
- Facilitate problem solving to assist and support pre-professional candidate(s) and/or support personnel.
- Collect and disseminate information as directed by assigned administrator and/or the agency/agencies responsible for recommending and/or granting licenses within the specialty area.
- Provide written evaluation and feedback to pre-professional candidate(s) as required by the agencies responsible for recommending and/or granting licenses within the specialty area.
- Assist the assigned administrator in implementing all policies and rules.
- Meet regularly with the assigned administrator to plan and coordinate services.

Qualifications of Supervising Specialist:

- Experience/Licensure Requirements:
- Demonstrated competency within the organization.
- Possession of appropriate experience and/or licensure to meet the criteria determined by the agencies responsible for recommending and/or granting licenses within the specialty area.

Ability to:

- Communicate effectively and get along with others.
- Work independently and collaboratively.
- Gain the professional respect of their colleagues.
- Show initiative.
- Be reliable and responsible.
- Provide leadership.
- Demonstrate knowledge and skill with student population served.
- Effectively utilize a broad repertoire of professional skills.
- Manage time effectively.
- Solve problems effectively.
- Take direction.

ACTION PLAN AND EVALUATION OF SUPERVISING SPECIALIST:

Supervising Specialist will be evaluated at least annually by an assigned administrator relative to the performance of the responsibilities. The evaluation process may include feedback from the agencies responsible for recommending and/or granting licenses within the specialty area. Failure to perform satisfactorily may lead to removal from the Supervising Specialist position. This evaluation will be separate from the regular employee evaluation process.

COMPENSATION OF SUPERVISING SPECIALIST:

An annual stipend is listed on the Classified Salary Schedule. These stipends shall be prorated based upon days of service as Supervising Specialist within a fiscal year. In those instances where there are multiple

supervisors, the amount will be calculated by dividing the stipend by the number of supervisors, and not the percentage of the supervising time. This division was developed to ensure maximum disbursement across unit members.

SELECTION PROCESS OF SUPERVISING SPECIALIST:
Assignment as a Supervising Specialist will be determined by VCOE in consultation with the agencies responsible for recommending and/or granting licenses within the specialty area.

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF SUPERVISING SPECIALIST POSITION AND PROCESS:
Review and analysis of lead teacher positions and process will be completed annually by the assigned administrator.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The tenure of office of every employee is conditioned upon the individual meeting the work standards as established by the department head and in the Superintendent's Policies and Regulations.

Probationary employees may be terminated at the will of the department head.

Employees whose conduct is detrimental to VCOE or the Department may be 1) suspended, 2) demoted, or 3) dismissed. The disciplinary action varies with each case depending on the seriousness and frequency of the wrongful action.

The Disciplinary Action Policy, including some of the causes for such action, is listed under the VCOE Policies and Procedures section of this handbook. Your supervisor can provide additional details.

RESIGNATION PROCEDURES

Any classified employee who voluntarily resigns from a position shall provide a written resignation to the VCOE by letter or resignation form. Resignation dates are subject to approval by the VCOE. At least ten (10) working days' notice shall be given in order to be eligible for reinstatement or reemployment.

Formal notice of resignation may be accomplished by completing a resignation form, available from your supervisor or from the Human Resources Department. The form shall be processed through the department head and forwarded to the Human Resources Department. A letter of resignation is also an acceptable form of resignation reporting.

Upon separation from VCOE, the employee shall have an exit interview with the Human Resources Department. Rights of retirement benefits, continuation of insurance coverage, and unemployment insurance benefits may be discussed with the Payroll Department.

The employee shall be required to turn in all VCOE possessions such as: cell phones, pagers, mobile devices, and keys to any premise or vehicle, identification badges, computer equipment and other school or office property.

Classified employees shall be paid for all time worked, plus accrued vacation, compensatory time and overtime. Final pay shall be reduced by the amount of any unaccrued sick leave that may have been used.

REINSTATEMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT

A regular employee may return to the same or similar position within the VCOE at the same level on the salary schedule, upon the following conditions:

1. At least ten (10) working days notice was given at the time of resignation.
2. Reinstatement must take place within thirty-nine (39) months after the last day of paid service.
3. Employee's final performance report must have been satisfactory.
4. The reinstatement is conditioned upon the approval of the department head, to fill an existing vacancy.

Reinstatement in accordance with the above procedure also restores:

1. Sick leave accrued at the time of separation (unless transferred to another agency).
2. Vacation accrual rate.
3. Seniority for the period of time in a paid status.
4. Step placement on the salary schedule.

LAYOFF and REEMPLOYMENT

Occasionally, because of reorganization, lack of work, or lack of funds, it may be necessary to lay off employees. Every effort will be made to offer a position somewhere within the organization to those designated to be laid off. The official layoff procedure is included in the Superintendent's Policies and Administrative Regulations, Section 4217.3, which are on file at your school site or department. Effected employees will be given sixty (days) notice prior to determined date of close of position. They shall be notified of their bumping rights to compete for vacant positions for which they may qualify and their rights to unemployment insurance benefits (Education Code Section 45117).

EXIT INTERVIEW

Upon termination, the employee shall have an exit interview with the Director of Human Resources. Rights of retirement benefits, continuation of insurance coverage, and unemployment insurance benefits may be discussed with the Payroll Department.

CONTINUATION OF BENEFITS (COBRA)

Dependents who become ineligible due to age or marital status may purchase continuation of health and dental benefits for a limited period of time, if the Payroll Department is notified within 30 days of the date the dependent becomes ineligible. It is the employee's or dependent's responsibility to advise the Payroll Department upon expiration of eligible status.

An employee who becomes ineligible for paid health and dental insurance coverage, due to reduction in hours or termination of employment, may purchase continuation of health and dental benefits for the entire family for a limited period of time. The employee will be notified of continuation options at the time of termination or reduction in hours.

If you choose the option to continue your health and dental benefit coverage under COBRA you will be responsible for ensuring that payment is received on the due date (1st) of the month for which the premium

is due. If any monthly payment is not received within 30 days of the due date, your continued health coverage will be cancelled without notice, (the postmark is not considered the received date). Checks returned by the bank constitute non-payment of premium and will result in cancellation of coverage without further notice.

VCOE ORGANIZATION for INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AMONG EMPLOYEES (VOICE)

VOICE is the classified advisory committee that provides a communication link between non-management, unrepresented classified employees and VCOE management. Representatives are elected every two years or as vacancies occur. Meetings are held every other month in the Administrative Services Building. Minutes of the meetings are made available to all employees through the intranet, or through their representative, if requested.

The major goal of the monthly VOICE Representatives meeting is to provide an opportunity for the unrepresented employees and management to work together to foster a partnership that contributes toward positive relationships, organizational gains and job satisfaction. The objectives are to enhance communication opportunities, share concerns and successes, and to identify and resolve issues utilizing a collaborative problem solving process for the benefit of the employees, the organization and the customers served.

Specific, individual questions or problems should be brought to the attention of the VOICE representative in your department or the Human Resources Department.

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION / EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY / AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

VCOE is an equal employment opportunities employer. The employment and procurement in every department within VCOE will be on a totally fair and impartial basis, and no factors of race, religious creed, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, age, marital status, military and veteran status, medical condition, or physical handicap, where the latter does not impair one's job performance with reasonable accommodations, are to be considered.

Furthermore, VCOE recognizes the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and acknowledges that reasonable accommodations for the employment of qualified persons with a physical disability or medical condition are necessary and consistent with the philosophy and intent of ADA.

AB 1432 / MANDATED CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

VCOE is concerned about the national problem of child abuse. In an effort to support existing laws and support county personnel in reporting child abuse, VCOE has established the following procedures which offer direction and, hopefully, clarity to the reporting process. All VCOE employees are required to participate in and complete the AB 1432 training on an annual basis. Successful completion on the related examination is required.

To report abuse or neglect, call the Human Services Agency 24-hour hotline: (805) 654-3200.
For emergency help, dial 911.

IF YOU HAVE A REASONABLE SUSPICION THAT A STUDENT IS A VICTIM OF ABUSE, whether physical, sexual, or neglect:

1. You are legally obligated to report it. Call Child Protective Services (CPS). (Note: Reasonable suspicion means that it is objectively reasonable for a person with your training and experience to entertain such a suspicion based on the facts, i.e., knowledge or observation, available to you.) To assist in determining whether an incident is reportable, you can ask yourself the question, "Do I suspect, based on my training and experience, that the injury was not accidental or not self-inflicted?" If the answer is "yes", the incident is reportable. Try to be clear, include the name of the person making the report, the name of the student, the present location of the student, the nature and extent of the injury, and any other information, including information that led you to suspect child abuse.
2. Complete the Suspected Child Abuse Report Form on file at your site and forward it to the appropriate agency within 36 hours. If necessary, pictures of the abuse area shall be taken.
3. If a student tells you that he or she is being sexually abused, believe the student and report it directly to CPS. It is extremely rare for a child not being abused to make up a scenario involving sexual abuse.
4. Employees who directly work with students are considered mandated reporters and are immune from prosecution and cannot be sued for reporting a suspicion of child abuse, even in the event that it later appears not to have taken place. You can be found guilty of a misdemeanor and confined in

the County Jail for failure to report suspected abuse.

5. When discussing a child abuse matter, remember that they are the victims of a crime and are not to be blamed for it. Also, do not belittle the student's parents.
6. Supervisors should not prohibit their employees from completing a CPS report if the employees suspect abuse.
7. All employees should keep any reports made to CPS confidential, discussing the matter only with other employees who "need to know."

IF YOU ARE ACCUSED OF MOLESTING OR ABUSING A CHILD:

1. If a verbal allegation is made by a parent, tell them that in view of their serious concerns, you will contact your administrator who will arrange a joint meeting time. Do not debate the issue with the parent. If parents or guardians insist on calling the supervisor directly, that is their right. However, you may wish to call first to alert the administrator to the situation.
2. If a report has been filed with CPS or the police, there will be an investigation and you will be questioned. If a CPS worker questions you, it is recommended that you speak with an administrator present who can confirm what you say, and the context in which you made the statement. It is your right not to talk to a CPS worker without first consulting your personal attorney at your own expense.
3. If a police officer comes to interrogate you, you may wish, for your own protection, to consult your personal attorney at your own expense prior to saying anything to the police. Sometimes innocent people feel "I don't mind talking, I have nothing to hide," but innocent statements can sometimes be manipulated or interpreted in such a way as to aggravate the situation. If you do choose to discuss the matter, it is again recommended that you do so in the presence of an administrator.
4. If formal charges are filed against you, the VCOE will conduct an investigation into the matter before deciding what action, if any, needs to be taken.

TO MINIMIZE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT YOU WILL BE CHARGED WITH ABUSE

1. Whenever possible, conduct dressing and toileting activities in the presence of another adult.
2. "High Fives," handshakes, etc. are welcome contact for most students. Unrealistic fears of child abuse charges should not turn us into cold people, afraid to reward children with our touch.
3. When working individually with a child, do so in an area that is open to other areas. If it is necessary to work in a quiet and private place, keep a log of when and where you went and what activities the student was engaged in for that period.

ARMATUS SEXUAL MOLESTATION PREVENTION PROGRAM

VCOE has teamed with the Ventura County Schools Self-Funding Authority, our insurance Joint Powers Authority (JPA), to contract with the Praesidium group in order to provide the Armatus Sexual Molestation Prevention training program for all employees. The purpose of this program is to raise everyone's awareness level regarding the compelling issue of Sexual Molestation in our schools today. Sexual molestation of children is a vital social issue that affects all of us. It is our duty to safeguard the children and young people we serve in our schools each day and we can do this most effectively by observing and understanding the "signs" that sexual abuse may be occurring. The system tracks your participation and makes a report available to VCOE automatically. All employees must complete the Armatus Sexual Molestation Prevention Program training. The program is now available online. It is simple to use and the average time of completion of all

modules is approximately one hour. Logging on is quick and simple by following these steps:

1. Logon to a high-speed Internet connections and go to: www.Praesidiuminc.com. Click on ***LOGIN*** under ***Online Training*** on the lower left side of the screen by the magnifying glass. You may need to scroll down.
2. Select ***Login to Armatus 2.0***.
3. Enter your login. Your login is the first letter of first name and full last name (example: Mary Smith = msmith). You must use lowercase keys.
4. Enter your password and click submit. Your password is your four digits employee identification number (which can be located on your paystub), followed by "ca". (example: 1234ca)
5. Click on Submit and begin.

EMPLOYEE MEDICAL EXAMINATION

All employees of VCOE may be required to undergo a periodic medical examination to insure that the employee is free from any communicable disease, or when there is evidence that a medical problem exists that interferes with the normal responsibilities of the employee's position. VCOE will either provide the required examination or cause the examination to be provided. A medical certificate stating that the employee is physically able to resume regular duties shall be placed in the employee's medical file.

FREEDOM FROM TUBERCULOSIS

During payroll orientation, employees will be given the necessary forms to ensure verification of freedom from Tuberculosis. Verification of freedom from tuberculosis is required upon employment and every four years thereafter. If you had a TB taken for employment in another district which has not expired, it will be accepted to meet this requirement. If you had a TB x-ray or intradermal skin test within the past 60 days, for another reason that can be verified in writing by the doctor or agency who administered the test, it will be accepted. VCOE must have TB verification within thirty days of beginning your services.

EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION DOCUMENT

Verification of the right to work in the U.S. is required by the Federal Government. Upon initial employment, the employee must show evidence of identity and employment eligibility when completing the I-9 Document.

FINGERPRINTS

As applicable to the position with VCOE, each employee shall be electronically fingerprinted in conformance with Education Code Section 45125 and as a condition of employment. Fingerprints are forwarded to the Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation for screening to assure that no employee has been convicted of a controlled substance, sex crime or other crime that would preclude employment by VCOE. Employees may not report to their assignments for duty prior to acceptance of their fingerprint clearance by the Human Resources Department.

OATH OR AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE

A signed Oath of Allegiance is required of all California public employees.

MANDATORY DISASTER SERVICE WORKERS

All employees are by law disaster service workers in the event of a declared emergency. (See Appendix A – Government Code, Chapter 8, Division 4, Title 1, Sections 3101) According to the type of emergency, specific duties shall be assigned to all employees. In addition, VCOE employees can be reassigned to other public agencies during a state of emergency.

VERIFICATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY CARD

VCOE requires a copy of your social security card be on file with the Payroll Department before any payroll checks will be processed. Per federal regulations, VCOE must pay you exactly as your name is listed on your social security card. This regulation is in place to protect both the employee and employer. By using the exact information printed on your social security card, earnings reported to state and federal agencies will be posted accurately to insure proper credit to you. If an employee is paid under an incorrect name or social security number, VCOE may be subject to penalties. A copy of your social security card is also required by the State Teachers Retirement System upon enrollment.

PERSONNEL FILES

The personnel file maintained in the Human Resources Department is the only official and legal permanent record that can be maintained on employees. A major purpose of the file is to protect employees against arbitrary and prejudicial personnel decisions. The personnel file is governed by Education Code 44031 which requires a procedure whereby employees can correct or rebut incomplete or inaccurate information in the hands of their employers which might affect their employment status. Additionally, no information of a derogatory nature can be entered or filed unless and until the employee is given notice and an opportunity to review and respond. To this end, any document relating to an employee's performance, whether it is a formal evaluation, observation, report, memorandum, commendation, written warning, reprimand, or otherwise, shall be put in the employee's personnel file.

All employee personnel files are confidential and are available only to the employee and to people with official access permission.

Every employee has the right to inspect his/her personnel file upon request, provided that the request is made when the employee is not required to render services to VCOE.

CHANGE OF NAME, ADDRESS or PHONE NUMBER

If you change your name, address or phone number, remember to report the change to your supervisor and to the Human Resources Department.

CONVICTION OF NARCOTICS OR SEX OFFENSE

Conviction of a sex offense or narcotics offense as defined in California Education Code Sections 44010 and 44011 will result in immediate termination of employment.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

DISTRIBUTION OF PAY CHECKS

Pay day is the last business day of each month. The following options are available for delivery of pay checks:

1. Direct deposit to a financial institution, provided employee has filed the appropriate forms with the Payroll Department. This option will electronically post the employee's pay check to a checking or savings account of the employee's choice each pay day; the employee will receive a pay stub (paper copy or e-mail) that looks like a regular check stub with all of the tax and deduction information. (One month processing time is required before the first direct deposit can be made.)

If you feel there has been an error in any pay check you receive, or if you have questions concerning the amount of your check, contact the Payroll Department immediately at 383-1949.

2. Employees, with the approval of their supervisors and as permitted by assignment, may pick up their check in the Payroll Department after 8:30 a.m. on pay day each month.

3. A specific employee, acceptable to the Business Office, may be authorized to receive pay checks for staff at various locations and distribute those checks to employees at that location. (This option is only available if there is a volunteer from your site that will come into the Payroll Department on pay day and pick up the checks.)

4. Employees may designate, **in writing**, a member of their immediate family to whom, with proper identification, the Payroll Department may release a pay check. This person will be required to sign for the check.

5. U.S. Mail may be utilized to forward pay checks to the employee's home. **We cannot assume responsibility for delays that may occur when mail is lost or delayed. A minimum of 7 days is required to report a pay check was lost in the mail.**

Your choice may be changed at any time. The Payroll Department must be notified at least 10 days prior to pay day for direct deposit, and at least 48 hours before pay day for any other option. Cancellation or change of any of the above options must be made to the Payroll Department in writing.

PAY DAY AND DEDUCTIONS

Employees are paid monthly, on the last working day of each month. Accompanying your check will be a statement of earnings and deductions. The following deductions are required:

1. Federal and State Income Tax
2. Retirement Contributions*
3. Survivor Benefit (currently $2.00 monthly)
4. Employee portion of Medicare contribution (applies to anyone employed after 4/1/86)

All other deductions are voluntary and require written authorization. If you choose, deductions will be made for such things as: Credit Union payments or savings, union dues (if applicable), Section 125, Tax Sheltered Annuities and some charitable contributions.

*Retirement contributions are deducted before state and federal tax is calculated. Retirement contributions will be taxable when received at the time of retirement or withdrawal from the retirement system. Withdrawal prior to retirement or age 59½ may also result in tax penalties.

SALARY SCHEDULE PLACEMENT

The salary schedule for VCOE classified employees is adopted annually by the County Superintendent. New employees are normally hired on the first step of the salary schedule, and shall serve a probationary period. Upon successful completion of probation, an employee shall advance to the next step, which shall establish the anniversary date for future annual increases on the salary schedule. If an employee starts on a higher step than step 1, advancement to the next step occurs one year from the employee's start date. Starting at a higher step than Step 1 is at the discretion of the branch head.

The salary schedule consists of a salary range, with an approximate twenty percent increase between the minimum and maximum rate. The salary range for each position is assigned according to the degree of responsibility and the nature of duties required.

There are five steps in each salary range. Each step is an approximate 5% above the previous step. Salary schedule adjustments alter the five step schedule by the percent of adjustment to each step, but do not affect probation status or anniversary dates.

Errors in the current salary schedule payment made by VCOE shall be corrected as follows: Overpayments or underpayments will be corrected retroactively no more than four (4) years if the error is based on a written contract or three (3) years if the error is based on a statutory entitlement. Doctoral stipends are pro-rated; it is the responsibility of the employee to provide documentation to the Human Resources Department.

STEP ADVANCEMENT

New or newly promoted employees are eligible for step advancement. Employees placed on Step 1 are eligible after six months of service and each twelve months of service thereafter, until they reach the top of their salary range. Employees placed on Step 2 or higher are eligible twelve months of service thereafter, until they reach the top of their salary range.

Classified Management staff is eligible for step advancement on July 1 following the first fiscal year in which at least fifty percent of the days in a full contract year have been served, and each July 1 thereafter until they reach the top of their salary range.

Step advancements are not automatic, but are based on supervisor's recommendation via performance evaluation reports.

TIME CARDS

Each employee is required to maintain a record of time worked, vacation, holidays, sick leave and other approved leaves of absence.

All time cards require recording of regular hours worked, overtime worked, and any absences. Each employee shall record, on the time card, the actual daily hours worked. The employee's signature on the time card will serve as certification that "ALL" time worked is reported on the time card. All time cards must be submitted to your supervisor whose signature of approval is required prior to submission to the Payroll Department.

It will be the supervisor's responsibility to ensure the following:

1. Overtime has been properly approved and reported.
2. Leaves taken have been approved and meet the requirements set forth for each type of leave.
3. No salary is paid for time not worked, (i.e., unofficial leave of absence, leaving work assignments early, tardiness, etc.)
4. Time off for industrial (work-related) injuries/illness must be coded appropriately on time card, (i.e. medical appointments, physical therapy, x-rays and/or diagnostic testing).

All time cards become a part of the employee's permanent record.

OVERTIME APPROVAL

All employees are advised that all overtime must be authorized in writing by the department head (or designee) prior to being worked. If the supervisor is aware, or should have been aware the overtime was worked, the employer is responsible for compensation of the overtime. Employees working overtime without proper authorization are subject to disciplinary action. Supervisors who knowingly allow employees to work unauthorized overtime are subject to disciplinary action. The Overtime Authorization Form shall be completed in triplicate. Upon approval, the department head (or designee) shall return one copy to the employee, retain one copy for departmental records and the original shall be attached to the time card when submitted to the payroll department. Overtime compensation may not be waived. An announcement by the employer (or supervisor) that overtime will not be compensated unless authorized in advance will not impair the employee's right to compensation for the overtime worked.

OVERTIME HOURS WORKED

If your position may require occasional overtime, your supervisor or department head should discuss the procedure implemented in your department or options that may be available. It shall be the mutual responsibility of the employee, supervisor and department head to assure the Authorization for Overtime Form is properly completed prior to the overtime being worked. Overtime may not be accumulated "off the record" for future comp time or overtime claims.

ON-CALL TIME

An employee who is not required to remain on VCOE premises and is free to engage in his or her own pursuits, subject only to the understanding that the employee leave word at his or her home or with a designated individual where he or she can be reached, is not working while "on-call." When the employee is called out on a job assignment, only the time actually spent completing the assignment shall be counted as hours worked. However, if calls are so frequent or the readiness conditions are so restrictive that the employee is not free to use the intervening periods effectively for his or her own benefit, the employee may be considered "engaged to wait." In this event, the time "engaged to wait" is considered work time.

SPLIT SHIFTS

VCOE employees who are assigned to split shifts shall be given a definite specified time to return to work. The time off in the middle of the workday shall be long enough to effectively use as he/she wishes. Employees on split shifts shall keep a daily log indicating the time he/she begins work and the time he/she ends work. If the time off during the middle of the workday is less than two (2) hours, it shall be assumed the employee worked the entire time.

OVERTIME COMPENSATION

COMPENSATORY (COMP) TIME OFF

The work schedule shall be adjusted to the degree possible to minimize the overtime pay requirement. Compensatory time off, at the rate of one and one-half (1½) times the hours worked will be credited to be taken within one year of the date the overtime was earned, up to 40 hours of comp time accrual.

OVERTIME PAY

When comp time accrued equals 40 hours, monetary compensation shall be paid at the rate of one and one-half (1½) times the regular pay rate for all overtime worked and not compensated by compensatory time off within one year of the date the overtime was earned. When an employee works at two or more different straight-time rates in a single work week, the regular pay rate shall be the weighted average of such pay rates.

EXCEPTION TO COMP TIME PROVISION

When requested by the employee and approved by the department head, the comp time provision may be waived. This option shall be available only at the time the overtime is authorized and shall not be available to pay off accrued comp time. The overtime authorization form shall include the notation "PAY FOR OVERTIME."

OVERTIME EXEMPTIONS

Executive, administrative and professional employees are exempt from overtime pay and compensatory time off requirements, e.g. vacation time. Each classified position will be reviewed individually for determination of exempt status, in accordance with Fair Labor Standards Act Regulations.

CANCELLATION OF SCHEDULED OVERTIME SHIFT

Occasions may arise when an overtime shift is scheduled in advance, in anticipation of an exceptional or unusually heavy workload. In the event the scheduled overtime is not required, the employee scheduled to work the cancelled overtime shift shall be entitled to four hours pay at straight time, unless the notice of cancellation is received at least 10 hours prior to the time the overtime shift was scheduled to begin.

To qualify for the "cancelled shift pay" the employee shall leave word where he/she may be contacted to receive the notification of cancellation.

The cancelled shift pay is not considered "pay for hours worked" and therefore is not subject to time and one-half pay, nor is it included for computation of the "regular" pay rate.

This section applies only to scheduled overtime shifts. It is not intended to guarantee a four hour minimum in all overtime situations. The purpose is to provide compensation for cancellation of a scheduled shift, when the notice of cancellation is given on such short notice the individual is unable to make alternative plans.

HOLIDAYS

Ventura County Office of Education facilities will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day (plus one additional day)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Lincoln's Birthday
- President's Day
- Spring Break
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans' Day
- Thanksgiving Day, and the day following Thanksgiving
- Winter Break (plus one additional day)

All regular employees will be paid for the above holidays, if in a paid status on the scheduled work days immediately preceding or succeeding the holiday.

Classes shall be closed for the normal winter and spring recesses, as provided in the school calendar adopted annually.

Time taken during the winter and spring recesses shall be recorded as leave (without pay) unless the employee has accrued vacation to offset the loss of pay. December 25, January 1, and the two days designated annually by the Board of Education are considered legal holidays.

VCOE may close schools or classes for cause. Employees may use vacation or accrued compensatory time to prevent a loss of salary on such occasions.

WORKING ON HOLIDAYS

Employees required to work on a paid holiday shall receive overtime for the time actually worked.

HEALTH AND DENTAL BENEFITS

VCOE contributes to health and dental insurance for all eligible employee and their eligible dependents. If employment is less than full-time, VCOE will be responsible for paying a prorated amount toward insurance. Employees must work at least 20 hours or more per week to be eligible. A brochure explaining benefits of the plan is provided to each employee during payroll orientation. Any questions regarding coverage or payment of benefits should be directed to the claims administrator as indicated in the brochure.

It is the employee's responsibility to request a change form, from the Payroll Department, to report a change

of address or changes in eligible dependents. All changes must be reported within 30 days to assure uninterrupted coverage.

The open enrollment period for changing health coverage is the month of September, with changes effective October 1.

RETIREMENT COVERAGE

Membership in the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) is mandatory for employees working four or more hours per day on a regular basis. A minimum of five years of service and age 50 is required to be eligible for retirement benefits. Upon termination, you may request a refund of your contributions, leave your contributions on deposit until retirement age is attained, or roll over funds to a personal IRA.

Members of PERS are also covered by a "Survivor Benefit" program with a mandatory monthly deduction of $2.00 (currently), which is not refundable. This provides an income for survivors in the event of the death of a member while in service before attaining retirement age.

For employees who are members of the retirement system, accrued, unused sick leave may be added to service to extend service credit at the time of retirement.

SECTION 125 FLEXIBLE BENEFIT PLAN

This plan allows for the use of "pre-tax" dollars to pay for the employee portion of certain benefits. Additionally, if you have dependent care or contribute to your health and dental insurance coverage, you may set aside more pre-tax dollars to pay for these. Contact the Payroll Department for more information.

TAX SHELTERED ANNUITIES

Tax sheltered annuities (TSA) may be purchased through a number of licensed insurance companies or agencies. The employee must select the plan desired and request the appropriate contract revisions. Neither VCOE nor any member of the staff may promote or recommend any particular plan. The Payroll Department may advise you of the names of companies currently providing plans to other staff members.

The amount of annual contributions to a TSA is limited by Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Regulations. The employee is responsible for assuring contributions are within the authorized limit. The untaxed retirement contributions may count as a part of the maximum allowable TSA contribution. Consult your tax advisor to assure proper calculation of maximum allowable contributions.

Once established, tax sheltered annuity deductions may be changed only one (1) time per calendar year. Contributions to a TSA are taxable when withdrawn and may be subject to tax penalties if withdrawn prior to age 59½.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE BENEFITS

Workers' Compensation Insurance benefits are provided for industrial injury or illness. Coverage is provided by participation in the Ventura County Schools Self-Funding Authority. If you are injured, follow the procedure for Industrial Injuries as outlined in the Health and Safety section of this handbook.

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

VCOE will share in the cost of textbooks, tuition, registration and laboratory fees to a maximum as approved for the employee classification of $350.00 per fiscal year for occupationally related courses presented by recognized schools and taken on the employee's time.

Permanent and probationary employees of the VCOE are eligible to participate in this program. However, new employees will not be reimbursed until they have completed six months of employment.

WHAT COURSES ARE ELIGIBLE

The following criteria will be used in determining eligibility for reimbursement:

- Courses must have a reasonable potential for resulting in more effective service.
- Courses directly related to the employee's occupational field are eligible.
- Courses must be presented by a school, college, university or other similar institution. Correspondence courses are eligible only in the absence of equivalent classroom programs in the area of Ventura, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles counties.
- Courses must be satisfactorily completed. A grade of 'C' or its equivalent is required for reimbursement.

WHAT COURSES ARE NOT ELIGIBLE

The following courses are not eligible for reimbursement:

- Those taken to bring unsatisfactory performances up to an acceptable level.
- Those which duplicate in-service training.
- Those which duplicate training the employee has already received.
- Those presented by associations, professional organizations and similar groups, workshop or seminar type classes.
- Costs for which reimbursement is received from other sources.

PROCEDURE

1. Complete the "Textbook and Tuition Reimbursement Application" and send it to the Human Resources Department **PRIOR** to the first class session - before you spend any money.
2. You will receive notification indicating whether your application is approved.
3. You should send an official record of your grades (copy of grade card), and receipts to the Business Office within **90 days after the last class session**.
4. Reimbursement will be made to you within two weeks after grade cards and receipts are received by the Business Office.

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLAN

1. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH COMMITTEE - The Professional Growth Committee shall be composed of five members, as follows:

Two classified employees (selected by the unrepresented classified staff); one paraeducator (appointed by the VCOE Paraeducators Federation); one management employee (appointed by the Superintendent or designee); and the Director of Human Resources.

Committee members shall serve one-year terms and shall select the chairperson at the first meeting of the school year. The Professional Growth Committee will meet periodically as needed to review individual proposals submitted for approval. The employee shall have the right to appeal by doing so in writing to the Professional Growth Committee; however, the final decision shall rest with the Committee.

2. ELIGIBILITY - All permanent, non-probationary, non-management classified employees are eligible to participate in the Professional Growth Program.

3. PARTICIPATION - Contact Human Resources for an application forms packet. The employee shall complete a "Declaration of Intent" form. The course(s) to be taken and alternate(s) shall be listed, the institution to be attended, and the estimated time involved to complete the program. It is the responsibility of the employee to apply for professional growth credit and verify completion of course work with the Human Resources Department. When all records are in order and have been submitted to the Human Resources Department for consideration, the Human Resources Department will submit a change of status to Payroll indicating approval of additional compensation for professional growth.

A certificate of courses completed will be filed permanently in the employee's personnel file.

4. REQUIREMENTS - Each program requires **advance approval** by the Committee. Programs must be submitted with "Declaration of Intent." This intent shall serve as an indication of the employee's future plans and may be changed or adjusted by the employee, pending Committee approval, as necessary.

Courses must be job-related or clearly related to a career path leading to upward mobility within the classified service of VCOE. Coursework taken as part of a degree program that is unrelated to specific VCOE job requirements is not eligible for this program.

No points are allowed for "credit by examination."

A course may be repeated for credit if so stated in the college catalog.

A grade of "C" or better or "pass" status must be earned. If letter grades are not given for a course, a letter of satisfactory completion, duly signed by the instructor, is required.

Service in a professional organization must be approved by the Committee and assigned points.

Attendance at educational conferences or conventions, participation at regional workshops, or serving on a state committee may be considered provided it is not on released time. Credit will not be given for course work or workshops taken during the employee's work time and/or at VCOE expense. In addition, credit will

not be given for coursework where tuition and/or books were paid for by VCOE. Released time to attend approved professional organization conventions cannot be counted for professional growth increments.

Courses may be approved for credit retroactively up to six months prior to and pending committee approval.

5. INCREMENTS - A professional growth increment shall be granted and effective the beginning of the pay period following submission of all documentation required for verification of completion of **fifteen approved professional growth points**.

No more than one professional growth increment shall be granted to an employee in a single fiscal year. A maximum of three professional growth increments may be earned.

A professional growth increment shall be on salary range above the normal range of the employee's position (approximately 2½%).

When an individual has qualified for a professional growth increment and has more points than are required for that increment, the most recently earned points shall be carried over to apply to the next growth increment, if applicable.

6. POINT SYSTEM - The point system, as listed below, includes credit for credit courses, job-related adult education courses, attendance at workshops and/or seminars, and membership in professional organizations.

Academic Course Work	***Points***
3 unit course	3.0
2 unit course	2.0
1 unit course	1.0
15-week non-credit course (1 absence only)	1.5
8-week non-credit course	.75
All day seminar	.5
Workshop	.5

Adult Education Courses and In-service Training Workshops		
Total Hours	***Absences Permitted***	***Points***
5-9 hours	None	.25
10-15 hours	None	.5
16-20 hours	1	1.0
21-30 hours	1	1.5
31-40 hours	2	2.0
41-50 hours	2	2.5
51 hours or more	2	3.0

Institutes, Lectures, Conferences	*Hours*	*Points*
Attendance verified for short learning program	20	1.0
Auditing a course (certification of attendance required)	20	1.0
Attendance at conferences & convention (maximum allowable 9 hours)	3 4 to 9	.25

Committee Service, Professional Organizations, etc.	*Points*
President of a job-related professional organization (1-year term)	.75
Officer of job-related professional organization (1-year term)	.5
Membership in a job-related professional organization	.25 per year
Committee chairperson of a recognized committee of a job-related professional organization	.25
Committee member of a professional organization (1-year term)	.15

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

State Unemployment Insurance benefits are provided to all employees as required by State law. Upon termination of employment, you are eligible to apply for benefits through any State Employment Development Department. Eligibility for benefits is determined by circumstances related to each individual situation. Only the Employment Development Department can determine your eligibility status.

SUMMER RECESS

Employees normally assigned to work for ten months shall, prior to the end of the school year in June receive reasonable assurance letters for continued employment or will be notified in writing they will not be reemployed after June 30, or the close of summer school session, whichever is the latest working date. Employees notified of termination shall be eligible to apply for unemployment benefits.

VACATION

VACATION POLICY - ACCRUAL

Vacation shall be authorized for regular employees, and shall be accrued on the following schedule:

Years of Service Completed	Full-time equivalent credit gained per month
1 – 4	6.67 hours or 0.83 days
5 – 9	10 hours or 1.25 days
10	10.67 hours or 1.33 days
11	11.33 hours or 1.42 days
12	12 hours or 1.50 days
13	12.67 hours or 1.58 days
14 and above	13.33 hours or 1.66 days

Maximum time to be accumulated may not exceed four-hundred (400) hours or fifty (50) working days. It is the mutual responsibility of the employee and department head to assure that no employee shall accumulate beyond the maximum accrual.

Vacation credit shall accumulate from the first day of **regular** employment.

VACATION POLICY - USE

Each department head shall be responsible for scheduling vacation periods. Time off shall be scheduled in advance so as not to interfere with the normal functions of the department.

Periods of less than an annual entitlement are discouraged so that full benefit of the vacation plan can be realized.

Regular full and part-time employees shall receive vacation benefits on a basis equal to that percentage that the actual work month bears to full-time.

Regular employees who terminate or who are terminated, shall be paid the hourly equivalent of their salary times the total accrued vacation. Such pay shall be at the pay rate at the time of termination.

While on vacation, employees shall be compensated at the rate of pay that would be earned had they been on the job.

Employees on leave for job related injury/illness shall continue to accrue vacation credit during the time they are on paid leave status.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

REQUESTS FOR LEAVES OF ABSENCE WITH OR WITHOUT PAY

Any request for a leave of absence, other than normal vacation, shall be filed with the Department Head who shall make a recommendation and forward it to the Human Resources Department for approval or denial.

Upon completion of the Request for Leave of Absence form, employees must await written approval before beginning any leave of absence.

An approved leave of absence guarantees return to an equal or similar position, not necessarily the same position or site.

An extended leave of absence without pay, (more than fifty percent of the scheduled working days in a month), shall result in establishing a new anniversary date for salary purposes. The anniversary date shall be adjusted one month for each month of leave without pay. Leave without pay for more than fifty percent of the scheduled work days in a month will be considered one month for purposes of establishing anniversary dates.

During any period you are on leave without pay, you will not accrue vacation credit. If in an unpaid status in excess of fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled work days in a month, your sick leave credit will be adjusted accordingly.

Health and dental insurance benefits may be continued while on approved leave of absence by arranging to make personal payments. Coverage will be cancelled without notice if monthly payment is not received on time. Contact the Payroll Department to arrange personal payment.

DISCRETIONARY PERSONAL NECESSITY LEAVE

Discretionary Personal Necessity Leave days (DPNL) are Personal Necessity Leave Days (Superintendent Policy 4261.22) an employee may use at his/her own discretion, without providing written or verbal justification for the leave. Employees will earn Discretionary Personal Necessity days based on the number of sick leave days accumulated and recorded on the July pay warrant. At no time can DPNL exceed the employee's accumulated sick leave. The following scale will be used to determine Discretionary Personal Necessity Leave days:

a) One (1) to thirty (30) days accumulated sick leave = three (3) DPNL days.
b) Thirty-one (31) to sixty (60) days accumulated sick leave = four (4) DPNL days.
c) Sixty-one (61) to one hundred (100) days accumulated sick leave = five (5) DPNL days.
d) One hundred-one (101) or more days accumulated sick leave = seven (7) DPNL days.

DPNL days must be approved by the supervisor/administrator and require forty-eight hour advanced notification. In the event that the number of employees at a school/program requesting DPNL leave will interfere, due to excessive absenteeism or other circumstances, with the normal functioning of the school/program and would result in severe hardship for the school/program, the DPNL leave may be denied. DPNL cannot be used to extend holidays or vacations, to seek or engage in remunerative employment or for concerted activities.

PERSONAL NECESSITY LEAVE

A maximum of seven (7) days per year of current and accrued sick leave may be used for personal necessity.

Personal necessity is defined as: Circumstances of serious nature, which the employee cannot reasonably be expected to disregard, and require the attention of the employee during assigned hours of work.

Events justifying personal necessity leave will include:

1. Death of a member of employee's immediate family when additional leave is required beyond that provided in the bereavement leave policy.
2. One day of leave shall be granted for the death of a relative (who is not a member of the employee's immediate family) or a close personal friend.
3. An accident involving the employee's personal property, or the person or property of a member of his/her immediate family.
4. Appearance in court as a litigant or a witness under subpoena.
5. Illness of or medical care for a member of the employee's immediate family.
6. Imminent danger to the employee's home as a result of earthquake, fire or flood.
7. One (1) day of leave shall be granted wherein the presence of the father is needed at the time of birth or when birth is considered imminent.
8. Religious holiday.
9. Discretionary leave.
10. Other occasions you cannot reasonably be expected to disregard until other than work hours.

There will be no carry-over of DPNL from year to year.

DPNL may be used in 1/2 or in whole day increments.

No more than two (2) DPNL days may be used consecutively.

Personal necessity leave shall be requested at least five (5) working days in advance, except for purposes of death, serious illness of immediate family members, or accident involving personal property.

Proof of the need for use of personal necessity leave may be required.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

An employee will be allowed up to five (5) working days off without loss of pay because of a death in the immediate family. If additional time off is required, the department head may allow use of personal necessity leave (charged against sick leave accrual), accrued vacation or compensatory time accumulated.

Immediate family is defined as: Mother, father, grandfather, grandmother, grandchild of the unit member or the spouse of the unit member, spouse, son, daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother or sister of the unit member or the spouse of the unit member, or any person living in the immediate household of the unit member. The "step" equivalent of any of the above relatives shall also be considered immediate family.

Immediate family does not include ex-spouses or family members of ex-spouse.

CATASTROPHIC LEAVE

A catastrophic leave program is available to allow employees to donate available accrued paid leave benefits to another employee, when that employee or a member of his/her immediate family suffers a catastrophic illness or injury and the employee has exhausted all available accrued paid leave benefits. Contact the Human Resources Department for specific rules and procedures regarding the use of catastrophic leave.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)

An employee who has been employed for at least 12 months AND who has been in a paid status for at least 1250 hours during the 12 month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave is eligible for FMLA. FMLA requires the employer to grant as much as twelve weeks of leave in a 12 month period. Leaves for any of the following purposes qualify for FMLA Leave:

- The birth of a child, and to care for a newborn.
- The arrival of a child for adoption or foster care.
- To care for an immediate family member who has a serious health condition, including a child, grandchild, spouse, sibling, parent, parent-in-law or grandparent.
- For an employee's own serious health condition.

Entitlement to leave for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care expires 12 months after birth or placement. Leave provided by FMLA in excess of available accrued paid leave shall be unpaid. Any available paid accrued leave shall be used prior to unpaid leave, (e.g. vacation), for the employee.

The 12 month period is measured forward from the date an employee's first leave began. All leave usage that qualifies under the terms of the FMLA leave shall be counted towards the available 12 work weeks within

a 12 month period, including intermittent and reduced workload leaves. Health care and dental benefits coverage shall be continued during the FMLA leave.

If an employee fails to return from leave, paid health and dental coverage will cease unless the employee does not return because of the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition, or other circumstances beyond the employee's control. The employee's desire to stay with a family member even though the family member no longer requires the employee's care, or a mother's decision to stay home with a newborn child and not return to work, do not qualify as "other circumstances beyond the employee's control." Except as provided above, if an employee fails to return after expiration for eligibility for FMLA leave, the employee shall pay the full cost of coverage for health and dental benefits during the entire period of unpaid FMLA leave. Any amounts due under this section may be deducted from any sums due to the employee (e.g. unpaid wages, vacation pay, etc.).

MATERNITY LEAVE and CALIFORNIA FAMILY RIGHTS ACT (CFRA)

Maternity leave shall be available to all expectant mothers upon request. Sick leave accrual and other sick leave available may be used during the period of actual disability as certified by a medical doctor. Vacation time accrued and/or compensating time accumulated may be used for maternity leave purposes. If additional time off is desired, it shall be without pay, in accordance with CFRA.

As soon as you learn you are pregnant, notify the Human Resources Department. Appropriate documentation will be prepared and sent to your doctor regarding the actual period of disability.

JURY DUTY

If a summons for jury duty is received, it must be presented to your supervisor immediately, in order that duties can be reassigned in advance of the absence. While on jury duty, employees are expected to report to work any day or significant portion of the day they are not required to be present in court.

The appropriate code must be entered on the time card. No deduction will be made from regular salary. Any payment for daily jury service received from the County or Federal Government must be turned over to VCOE. Employees may keep any payment received for mileage reimbursement. When the check for jury duty services is received, it will also include mileage reimbursement.

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT AND INDUSTRIAL ILLNESS LEAVE

Employees who have successfully completed an initial probationary period will be granted leave of absence with pay for a period of sixty (60) working days in any one (1) fiscal year for the same accident. If the sixty (60) days overlap into the next fiscal year, salary will be paid for only those days remaining at the end of the fiscal year in which the accident occurred. **To qualify for leave with pay**, the absence must be approved by the attending physician. (Industrial leave is not deducted from accrued sick leave.)

Such leave shall not be accumulated from year to year.

The employee will receive full salary through the regular payroll process with all normal payroll deductions.

This process enables the employee to receive full retirement service credit for the period of such paid leave.

Sick leave and any other available paid leave may be used to prevent loss of wages after the sixty (60) days industrial leave is exhausted.

A release from a VCOE contracted Industrial Clinic is required prior to return to work. Temporary modified work will be available if required.

SICK LEAVE

Sick leave is authorized for all regular employees. Employees shall accrue sick leave credit at the rate of twelve (12) days per fiscal year of service.

Employees who work less than full-time will accrue that proportion of twelve (12) days that the amount of time employed bears to full-time service. Full-time service is twelve (12) months per year, five (5) days per week, eight (8) hours per day.

Sick leave shall be cumulative from year to year, and shall be used as follows:
1. Injury or illness of employee.
2. Medical and dental office appointments for employee.
3. Injury, illness, medical and dental office calls for immediate family. (These are covered under Personal Necessity Leave and are limited to seven (7) working days per fiscal year.)

Upon employment, each regular classified employee shall be advanced one-half (½) of the sick leave accruable in the first year of service. Should it be necessary to use sick leave, it will be subtracted from this advance. Should sick leave exceed the amount advanced **before** the end of six (6) full months of service, there will be a monetary deduction for sick leave. No additional time shall accrue until the seventh month of service, at which time sick leave shall be credited for the balance of the current fiscal year.

Sick leave may not be used to increase any vacation accrual.

Sick Leave Accrual

VCOE employees have no limitation as to accrual of sick leave. Time accrued may be transferred to another VCOE employee through the Catastrophic Leave Process (see page 34), another school district in California, or the California State Department of Education.

An employee transferring from any of these agencies may be credited for sick leave accrued at the prior agency, when verified in writing by that agency.

Change to Sick Leave Status

An employee who becomes ill or injured while on vacation may change the status from vacation to sick leave by informing the supervisor on the first day of such disability. No time prior to the notification is subject to change.

Doctor's Certificate - Medical Evaluation
You will be required to furnish a certificate from a medical doctor during any period of absence for illness/injury exceeding five days. Before you return to work you may be required to submit to a medical evaluation by a physician designated by VCOE.

Pregnancy
Pregnancy is not considered an illness; however, paid sick leave may be used toward the necessary time off if the attending physician certifies it as a disability. Time beyond that may be charged to vacation, compensation time, or taken without pay, in accordance with Leave of Absence policies. At any time during pregnancy, the supervisor may require a doctor's certification indicating the employee is able to continue working. Leave of absence may be granted for up to one (1) year. Following childbirth, the employee must provide the supervisor with a doctor's certification that she is able to return to work, before she is reinstated.

Calling In
When it is necessary to be absent because of illness or accident, the employee shall notify the department head at the **beginning** of the normal work day, on the **first** date of absence. If the illness continues, the employee shall continue to notify the department head of the status on a daily basis. If the doctor or the condition indicates a specific period of absence will be required, and the supervisor is advised of the anticipated period of absence, it will not be necessary to report daily during the specified period. Additionally, if you are under the care of a doctor, notify HR for further guidance. Call in procedures may vary at school sites.

Regular and prompt attendance is an important requirement of your job. If illness or some other emergency causes an unplanned absence, you must notify your department head or supervisor as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Failure to call in shall be treated as unauthorized time off without pay. **Absence from work for three (3) consecutive days without authorization will be judged to be a voluntary resignation.** It is the sole responsibility of the employee to call in such instances.

OTHER SICK LEAVE

In the event accrued sick leave is exhausted and the employee is still medically unable to return to work, other sick leave is available at fifty percent (50%) of the employee's regular salary, up to a total of one-hundred (100) days per fiscal year. Only permanent members of the Classified Service are eligible for differential pay. If an extended illness absence is anticipated, confer with the Payroll Department as to the status and amount of sick leave available to you.

RETIREMENT CREDIT FOR ACCRUED SICK LEAVE

Upon retirement from employment with VCOE, any unused sick leave will be certified to the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) or Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) for purposes of extra service credit for retirement, if applicable under regulations of the Retirement System.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

AIR POLLUTION EMERGENCY ALERT PLAN

In the event of an air pollution emergency alert, the Human Resources Department will notify each site of the level of the alert. School staff will be expected to modify programs which require students to have prolonged or strenuous physical activities on the day of the smog alert. In determining whether a proposed activity can be conducted, assess each activity to ascertain its potential for increasing the respiration rate for an extended period of time. The intensity of an activity should be the determining factor in deciding to cancel an activity.

During a **Stage 1 Alert**, strenuous outdoor physical activity for all students shall be discontinued. Activities of a less strenuous nature shall be substituted. The following students shall be allowed to remain indoors:

- Students with respiratory difficulties which are aggravated by smog;
- Students who have notes from parents or doctors; and
- Students who are complaining about the effects of smog.

During a **Stage 2 Alert**, all students are to remain indoors.

VCOE believes that safety and health information should be shared openly with anyone using or working around hazardous substances and that all attempts should be made to minimize the use of hazardous substances.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE WORKPLACE

VCOE is fully committed to achieving a drug and alcohol free environment for its students and employees. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispersing, possession or use of a controlled substance or alcohol is prohibited in all VCOE work places.

While VCOE has no intention of intruding into the private lives of its employees, involvement with drugs off the job can affect job performance and safety. Employees who think they may have a drug/alcohol problem are urged to voluntarily seek assistance and get help immediately through their individual health plans. While VCOE will be supportive of those who seek help voluntarily, it will be equally firm in identifying and disciplining those who continue to be substance abusers and do not seek help. To this end, VCOE will act to eliminate any substance abuse (illegal drugs, prescription drugs or any other substance which could impair an employee's safety and ability to effectively perform the functions of the assigned job) that increases the potential for accidents, absenteeism, substandard performance, poor employee morale or damage to the reputation of VCOE. All employees must be aware that violations of the Drug Free Workplace Policy will result in discipline, up to and including termination.

Employee responsibilities for a drug free workplace include:

- Not having his/her ability to perform job duties impaired due to the use of illegal drugs or prescription drugs without a prescription.
- Not reporting to work or being subject to duty while his/her ability to perform job duties is impaired by use of illegal drugs or prescription drugs, with or without a prescription.
- Not possessing or being under the influence of illegal drugs or prescription drugs, without a prescription, during working hours or while subject to being called to duty, on breaks, during meal periods or at any time while on VCOE property.

- Not directly or through a third party selling or providing drugs to any person, including any employee, while either employee or both employees are on duty or subject to being called to duty.
- Submitting immediately to a drug test when requested by a responsible VCOE manager.
- Notifying his/her supervisor, manager or the Human Resources Department before beginning work, when taking any medications or drugs, prescription or non-prescription, that may interfere with the safe and effective performance of duties or operation of equipment.
- Providing within 24 hours of request, bona fide, verification of a current valid prescription for any potentially impairing drug or medication identified when a drug test is positive. The prescription must be in the employee's name.
- Notifying his/her supervisor or the Human Resources Department of any criminal drug statute conviction within five (5) days after such conviction.

As a condition of being employed to work under any federal grant received by VCOE, employees are required to abide by the terms of this statement. These employees are further required to notify their supervisor, (or the Human Resources Department), of any conviction for a criminal drug statute violation within five days after such conviction.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

VCOE maintains a Hazard Communication Program that complies with Cal-OSHA General Industry Safety Orders, California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5194. The full program is available on request to all employees or their designated representatives, Cal-OSHA personnel and other authorized persons as required by California law.

The following is a summary of VCOE's Hazard Communication Program:

- VCOE will label, tag or mark all hazardous substance containers with the chemical make/contents and appropriate health and physical hazard warnings;
- VCOE will maintain a list of all hazardous substances in the workplace;
- VCOE will maintain in a designated book in each area, Safety Data Sheets (SDS), recording when hazardous substances are used or stored; and
- Before being assigned to handle hazardous substances and before new hazardous substances are introduced into the work area, employees shall participate in Hazard Communication Training.

INDUSTRIAL INJURIES

It is imperative that the following procedures be followed when an industrial (on-the-job) injury occurs:

1. All injuries, illnesses, and near-miss incidents **must** be reported immediately to your supervisor and the Risk Management Department before the end of the work shift during which the incident occurred, regardless of whether medical attention is necessary. Risk Management Department's phone number is (805) 383-1916. (*Note: If an industrial accident occurs outside of normal work hours, the injured worker must call the Risk Management Department and leave a message before seeking medical treatment.*)

2. Injuries on the job, regardless of how slight, must be reported to your supervisor immediately and

cared for by First Aid, or if necessary, by a doctor. **Failure to report an injury at the time it occurs is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal**. (See item 15 under the "Rules and Regulations" section of this handbook.) Minor injuries (scratches, cuts, puncture wounds and contusions) should be treated immediately with appropriate First Aid procedures on site. Failure to apply First Aid to minor injuries can result in serious infections later. Reasonable precautions to prevent further complications are the responsibility of every employee.

3. The supervisor will complete and sign a "Supervisor's Report of Injury" form and submit it to the Risk Management Department.

4. Employee should contact the Risk Management Department to obtain (1) a Department of Workers' Compensation (DWC-1) and (2) an Employee Statement form. Failure to do this could result in a delay of payment of medical expenses or Workers' Compensation benefits.

5. If the injury requires medical attention, you will be given an authorization to seek medical treatment with a "designated medical facility." These facilities have been specifically selected for treatment of industrial injuries. The doctors are familiar with Workers' Compensation laws regarding reporting and billing. Unless a Pre-Designation of Personal Physician form is on file, **prior** to sustaining an injury, VCOE has the right to designate the treating physician in all industrial injury cases for the first 30 days of treatment. **DO NOT seek medical treatment without authorization from the Risk Management Department.** Proper procedure must be followed in order for VCOE to accept responsibility for your injury and required medical bills. Treatment at a hospital emergency room is only authorized when an actual emergency exists.

6. After 30 days from the date of injury, you have the right to be treated by a physician of your choice, within the Medical Provider Network (MPN) and within a reasonable geographic location. Contact the Risk Management Department if you desire a change in medical facilities during the course of treatment. A change in physician must be authorized by our Workers' Compensation Administrator before Workers' Compensation insurance will assume financial responsibility for any services.

7. As soon as you have been treated by a designated medical facility, report to the Risk Management Department and then to your supervisor the outcome of the visit. Submit all medical status reports from the medical facility to the Risk Management Department. If modified work or time off is required, the Risk Management Department must be notified immediately. Regularly update your supervisor on your progress.

8. If you have any questions regarding your injury, status during time off, medical bills, etc., please do not hesitate to call our Workers' Compensation Administrator at (805) 288-4072 or the Risk Management Department. For questions regarding salary continuation, contact the Payroll Department.

9. If, after treatment, you are dissatisfied with the physician or medical facility, contact Risk Management or the Workers' Compensation Administrator.

10. Prior approval must be obtained to leave the state while receiving Workers' Compensation benefits.

For additional benefits provided, refer to the Industrial Injury or Illness Leave section of this handbook.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES / BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN

VCOE's "Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Program" is in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogens Standard 29 CFR 1910.1030. The following summary outlines the VCOE Exposure Control Plan:

1. Exposure Determination

   Occupational exposure means reasonably anticipated skin, eye, mucous membrane, or parenteral contact with blood, saliva, semen, vaginal secretions or other potentially infectious body fluids that may result from the performance of employment related duties.

   The tasks/procedures that are considered potential routes of exposure for teachers, paraeducators, nurses and specialists include: specialized healthcare procedures; interaction which results in a student spitting at, biting or bleeding on an employee; clean-up of blood, saliva, semen or vomit; toileting or diaper-changing students; inspection of students for possession of weapons or drugs; and rendering first aid.

   The tasks/procedures that are considered potential routes of exposure for custodians include: clean-up of blood, saliva, semen or vomit; handling, repair or maintenance of equipment or tools that may be contaminated with blood, saliva or vomit.

   Although administrative and clerical staff do not routinely perform tasks/procedures that are considered potential routes of exposure, they may occasionally perform any of the tasks/procedures listed above. Therefore, they are included in all aspects of the Exposure Control Plan.

2. Implementation Methodology
   a. Work Practices - **Universal precautions will be observed at all VCOE facilities.** All blood, saliva, vomit and semen will be considered infectious regardless of the perceived status of the source individual. Work practices shall be implemented to eliminate or minimize exposure to employees.

   b. Personal Protective Equipment
      i. Personal protective equipment may include gloves, outer garments, masks, eye protection, face shields. Personal protective equipment shall be provided at no cost to the employee. The program manager/principal is responsible for ensuring that the proper personal protective equipment is available. Employees are responsible for wearing the designated personal protective equipment.
      ii. **Disposable gloves** shall be worn whenever it is reasonably anticipated that employees could have contact with blood, saliva, semen or vomit. Associated tasks/procedures which require the use of disposable gloves include: rendering first aid; clean-up of blood, saliva, semen or vomit; toileting and diaper-changing; specialized health care procedures; and decontamination of surfaces, tools or equipment. Disposable gloves are not to be washed or decontaminated for re-use. They shall be replaced after each use and when they become contaminated, torn, punctured, or when their ability to

function as a barrier has been compromised.

iii. **Utility gloves** may be worn to perform some of the above tasks. They may be decontaminated for reuse as long as their ability to function as a barrier is not compromised.

iv. **Barrier masks** shall be available in all first aid kits. They shall be used whenever possible, for administering rescue breathing or CPR. They shall be decontaminated after each use.

v. **Masks/Eye Protection/Face shields** shall be worn when performing specialized health care procedures, feeding students and rendering first aid if it is reasonably anticipated that blood, saliva or vomit would enter the employee's eyes, nose or mouth. Masks shall be replaced after each use. Face shields shall be decontaminated after each use.

vi. **Personal protective equipment is decontaminated by soaking in a solution of one part bleach to ten parts water for at least five minutes.**

c. Hand Washing **-** Employees shall wash their hands with soap and water following any contact with blood, saliva, semen or vomit and upon removal of personal protective gloves.

d. Decontamination - All surfaces contaminated by blood, saliva, semen or vomit will be decontaminated as soon as possible. A solution of one part bleach to ten parts water shall be used.

3. Hepatitis B Vaccine

Hepatitis B Vaccine (HBV) and vaccination series shall be offered at no cost to employees designated as having primary occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens. Employees not offered the vaccine may request it by completing the "Voluntary Request for the Hepatitis B Vaccine" form. The vaccine shall be provided at no cost to the employee. The HBV vaccine is administered in a series of three injections spread out over a six-month period. Side effects are minimal, but the vaccine is not recommended for persons who are allergic or hypersensitive to yeast. Employees are encouraged to discuss any questions/concerns about the Hepatitis B vaccine with their personal physician. Employees shall be notified in writing of the locations and dates where the vaccine will be administered.

Employees have the right to decline the vaccination. Those who do so shall sign a declination form. Employees who initially decline the Hepatitis B vaccine and later wish to have it may then have the vaccine provided at no cost to them.

The Hepatitis B vaccine program is administered by the Risk Management Department, in cooperation with program managers and principals.

4. Post-Exposure Evaluation and Follow-Up

All exposure incidents shall be reported to the Program Manager or Principal and the Human Resources Department immediately. Some examples of exposure incidents are: an employee bitten by a student; blood, saliva or vomit entering the eyes, nose, mouth or an open wound; clean-up of blood, saliva, semen or vomit without personal protective equipment; and a search resulting in a needle stick or cut by a contaminated sharp object.

Employees who experience an exposure incident will be offered post-exposure evaluation and follow-up in accordance with the OSHA Standard.

5. Training
   Training will be provided to all employees regarding all aspects of the Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The use of pesticides and chemicals has become increasingly common in schools when dealing with such problems as pests and weeds. Many of the pesticides currently in use in our society pose risks to human health and the environment. Therefore, VCOE has adopted a policy for managing pests on school sites in a manner that is safe for humans.

All employees are responsible for good housekeeping. Good housekeeping is an essential part of an effective pest management program. No chemical products shall be used directly around children. There will be no open food storage nor preparation in areas not intended and/or designated for the use. Classroom food and all lunches brought from home must be stored in a designated, sealable container. No chemicals or other pest management products shall be brought from home for use in the classroom.

When necessary to apply pesticide applications, warning signs will be posted prior to application at the school site. An annual written notification will be sent to parents and staff addressing expected pesticides to be used. The recipients of this notification will be given the opportunity to register to receive information regarding individual pesticide applications. School sites will maintain records of all pesticides use for a period of four years.

TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Tobacco use is prohibited in all facilities owned and/or operated by VCOE, including indoors, outdoors and in all VCOE vehicles whether located on or off the premises. Included in the prohibition is tobacco use in privately owned vehicles located on VCOE owned and/or operated property. This policy applies to employees, students, and the general public.

VIOLENCE-FREE WORKPLACE

The Ventura County Office of Education has adopted a Zero Tolerance Policy for workplace violence because it recognizes that workplace violence is a growing nationwide problem that needs to be addressed by all employers. Consistent with this policy, acts or threats of physical violence, including intimidation, harassment, and/or coercion, which involve or affect VCOE employees, or which occur on VCOE property will not be tolerated.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

VCOE's prohibition against threats and acts of violence applies to all persons involved in VCOE's operation, including but not limited to VCOE staff, outside contractors and temporary workers and anyone else on VCOE property. Violations of this policy by any individual on VCOE property, by any individual acting as a

representative of VCOE while off VCOE property.

Every employee and every person on VCOE property is encouraged to report incidents of threats or acts of physical violence of which he/she is aware. The report should be made to the Human Resources Department, the reporting individual's immediate supervisor, or another supervisory employee if the immediate supervisor is not available. Nothing in this policy alters any other reporting obligation established in policies or in state, federal or other applicable law.

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors have a crucial role in making VCOE a safe and secure working environment by reducing the potential for employee workplace violence through appropriate and consistent use of sound supervisory practices and by applying timely corrective action when necessary. Adherence to VCOE policies, workplace rules and regulations, documentation of employee performance problems appropriately identifying early warning signs, appropriate workplace conduct, and/or conflict resolution will greatly assist in the prevention of potential workplace violence.

It is the responsibility of all supervisors to report the results of their investigations into alleged violations of this policy to their next-in-line supervisor and to consult with the Human Resources Department on potential employee workplace violence situations as appropriate. Supervisors shall document all violations of the workplace violence prevention procedures so that appropriate corrective action can be taken.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE WARNING SIGNS

Acts or threats of violence include conduct that is sufficiently severe, offensive or intimidating to alter the employment conditions or to create a hostile, abusive, or intimidating work environment for one or several VCOE employees. Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. All threats or acts of violence occurring on VCOE premises, regardless of the relationship between the VCOE and the parties involved in the accident.
b. All threats or acts of violence occurring off VCOE premises involving someone who is acting in the capacity of a representative of VCOE.
c. All threats or acts of violence occurring off VCOE property involving a VCOE employee if the threats or acts affect the legitimate interests of VCOE.
d. Any acts or threats resulting in the conviction of an employee or of an individual performing services for VCOE on a contract or temporary basis, under any criminal code provision relating to violence or threats of violence which adversely affect the legitimate interests and goals of VCOE.

Specific examples of conduct that may be considered threats or acts of violence include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Hitting or shoving an individual.
b. Threatening an individual or his/her family, friends, associates, or property with harm.
c. Intentionally destroying or threatening to destroy VCOE property.
d. Making harassing or threatening phone calls.
e. Performing harassing surveillance or stalking.
f. Suggesting or intimating that violence is appropriate.
g. Unauthorized possession of firearms or weapons on VCOE property.

STRATEGIES TO DE-ESCALATE THREATENING BEHAVIOR

The following conflict resolution strategies may be helpful to de-escalate situations where an individual is exhibiting threatening or intimidating behavior:

a. Project calmness; move and speak slowly, softly and confidently.
b. Encourage the person to talk; listen actively and patiently.
c. Maintain a relaxed but attentive posture.
d. Position yourself at an angle to the person rather than directly in front.
e. Arrange yourself so your access to an exit is not blocked.
f. Seek assistance; ask someone to sit in or signal to call for additional support.
g. Acknowledge the person's feelings.
h. Make small, specific requests such as asking the person to move to a quieter area, open area, or to move outside.
i. Do not isolate yourself with the individual.
j. Provide the person time to calm down.
k. Point out options, break big problems into smaller ones.
l. Avoid sudden movements and maintain 3-6 foot distance.
m. From reception, use the call button to call an adjacent department for assistance.
n. Lock down building and department to prevent intruder entry.
o. Notify the Human Resources Department.

Any emergency, perceived emergency, or suspected criminal conduct shall be immediately reported to the Police Department. If someone is acting violently or is threatening someone, call 9-911 for <u>immediate police response</u>.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

The degree to which employees are able to survive an actual act of violence in the workplace may depend greatly upon recognition of potential problems and the measures taken in advance of an incident.

The following are basic building blocks for the development of a safety plan:

a. Identify the physical security needs of the workplace.
b. Discuss and coordinate emergency strategies with employees.
c. To the extent possible, arrange for limited and authorized access to the affected work area.
d. Establish protocol for calling the Police (emergency/non-emergency).
e. Develop prearranged office procedures to alert others to the need for help.
f. Develop a procedure to cease normal operations and secure the premises.
g. Outline emergency evacuation procedures.
h. Evaluate the need for security alarm, call button, surveillance cameras, security personnel, etc.

Employees should mentally "map out" a personal survival strategy in the event of workplace violence.

Workplace violence incidents will differ greatly and each situation will dictate a different response. The particular circumstances of a given situation will suggest which of, and in which order, the following should occur:

a. Report to the Police by dialing 9-911 at the safest opportunity.
b. Alert others (email, phones, signals, call button).

c. Activate prearranged safety and security plan.
d. Secure surroundings, lock doors.
e. If appropriate, evacuate employees/leave the area.

MANAGING THE AFTERMATH OF AN INCIDENT

Police and other emergency response personnel will be available to manage all emergencies. Police will deal with criminal activity. However, it remains the responsibility of VCOE employees, supervisors and managers to work together to try to normalize the workplace following an incident.

The aftermath of a violent situation can be traumatic, characterized by confusion and disorientation. The wave of uncertainty, panic and disbelief will pass and in its place will be the task of normalizing the workplace. Depending on the severity of the incident and the recommendations of the HR Department, the Director of Human Resources will normally coordinate post incident normalization. Managers will be expected to take the lead in initiating and participating in debriefings following a violent act, normally within 72 hours of an incident.

EMERGENCIES

Each site has a disaster plan in case of an earthquake or other major disaster. Assure you are familiar with the plan for your site. It is available to each employee and is on file in your school's office or department. Contact Pamela Heron, Risk Manager, for additional copies.

In the event of a bomb threat, learn as much as you can while on the phone. Complete the bomb threat checklist. This is available in the Disaster Drill Handbook available at all sites and departments. Call 911 (9-911 from facilities on the County of Ventura phone system) without delay. Be sure to identify yourself and location. Notify your supervisor immediately.

In the event of a medical emergency, immediately call 911 (9-911 from facilities on the VCOE phone system), and administer appropriate first aid (if trained) or make the individual as comfortable as possible without being moved until first aid can be administered.

VCOE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The key word in defining sexual harassment is **unwelcome**. When any unwanted, unwelcome, or unsolicited sexual conduct is imposed on a person who regards it as offensive or undesirable, it is sexual harassment. When a person finds the conduct is unwelcome, it becomes illegal. Even conduct implicit in nature--hidden in subtlety or innuendo--is unlawful if it is unwelcome. If the employee or student states that she (or he) finds the behavior offensive, the actions are unwelcome. Often victims will seek to avoid confrontation or may fear reprisals and consequently do not clearly state their objection. Therefore, all employees must learn to be sensitive to how their actions may be perceived by others, no matter what they personally may believe or intend. For the Sexual Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedure, refer to Superintendent Policy No. 4119.11.

DISCRIMINATION

If you feel you are being discriminated against, or if you observe that discrimination is being practiced in your work area, you should contact the Human Resources Department. It is your right to file a complaint under our Complaint Procedure, which is found in the Superintendent's Administrative Regulations.

COMPLAINT POLICY

The complaint procedure is the channel through which employees seek adjustment of complaints arising out of alleged violations of established VCOE rules, administrative regulations, policies or procedures. For more information, refer to Administrative Regulation No. 4144 and 4244. For the Sexual Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedure, refer to Superintendent Policy No. 4119.11.

CODE OF ETHICS

The maintenance of high ethical and moral standards in public business is the basis of effective government. Since public confidence is endangered when ethical standards falter, all officers and employees must act with unwavering integrity, absolute impartiality and devotion to the public interest.

Following are those principles which have not been mentioned previously, and must be observed.

1. There shall be no discrimination in any VCOE activity because of race, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical handicap or political affiliation.
2. No officer or employee shall accept any fee, compensation, gift, payment of expenses, or any other thing of monetary value in circumstances in which acceptance may result in, or create the appearance in: "Use of Public Office for private gain, preferential treatment of any person, impeding governmental efficiency or economy, any loss of complete independence or impartiality or any adverse effect on the confidence of the public in the integrity of VCOE."
3. Persons in the public service shall not disclose confidential information acquired by or available to them in the course of their employment with VCOE or use such information for speculation or personal gain.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

In conjunction with and in addition to the Code of Ethics, a list of rules has been established so that each employee might know exactly what is or is not permissible.

In addition to the "Causes for Disciplinary Action" listed in the Disciplinary Action Policy, the following acts will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal:

1. Falsifying personnel records or VCOE records,
2. Making false, vicious, profane or malicious statements concerning any employee, VCOE or the public,
3. Removing from the premises, without proper authorization, any public property or the property of any employee,
4. Willfully delaying work, wasting time or disobeying orders,
5. Gambling on VCOE property,
6. Possession of or trafficking in illegal drugs or narcotics on VCOE time or premises,
7. Threatening, intimidating, coercing, or interfering with fellow employees or the public,
8. Engaging in horseplay, scuffling or creating a disturbance on VCOE property,
9. Engaging in any immoral or indecent conduct,
10. Using VCOE telephones or credit cards for personal long distance calls,
11. Failing to maintain production standards,
12. Inability or unwillingness to work harmoniously with other employees,
13. Removing of records or release of confidential information,
14. Disregarding safety rules, codes of safe practice or failure to wear personal protective safety equipment,
15. Failing to report injury or accident,
16. Sleeping during working hours,
17. Use of VCOE letterhead for personal correspondence or other non-business purposes, and
18. Smoking on VCOE property.

The above listing of rules shall not be considered all inclusive. Disciplinary action may be initiated for reasons not listed in this handbook, as deemed appropriate by the County Superintendent of Schools.

CELL PHONE USAGE

The Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) maintains an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), as per Administrative Regulation 4040, which discusses the use of cell phones in the workplace and during work hours. As stated in the VCOE AUP:

"This Acceptable Use Policy provides direction regarding the appropriate and inappropriate use of technology, personal or otherwise:

- During the performance of duties;
- While at a VCOE location; and/or
- While using VCOE equipment and/or accessing VCOE resources.

"VCOE recognizes […] that some personal use is inevitable and that incidental and occasional personal use that is infrequent or brief in duration is permitted so long as it occurs on personal time, does not interfere with VCOE business, and is not otherwise prohibited by VCOE policy, procedure, or statute."

In the Presence of Students

For employees assigned to classrooms, use of cell phones, smart phones, tablets and similar mobile communication devices for calls, texts, emails, social media, internet use, etc. is prohibited during instructional time, in the presence of students, or during scheduled work hours, with the exception of emergencies. Examples of prohibited employee use of communication devices during the work day include:

- Checking, reading, composing, and/or sending personal texts, instant messages and/or emails in the classroom or in the presence of students;
- Using a cell phone to check voicemails in the classroom or in the presence of students
- Using a cell phone for personal calls in the classroom or in the presence of students;
- Accessing social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) in the classroom or in the presence of students.

Emergency Situations

The VCOE AUP, as quoted above, recognizes the occasional need for personal cell phone use in emergency situations. Although cell phones may be used to place and/or take calls in these situations, staff members must inform their supervisor of the need to step outside of the instructional setting to either place and/or take such a call. Additionally, even where calls made or received are reasonably characterized as "emergencies," such calls should not be excessive and should not interfere with VCOE's normal business practices and the performance of the individual's tasks.

Violation of Administrative Regulation 4040, as explained above, may result in discipline in accordance with VCOE Handbooks, collective bargaining agreements (if applicable), Board Policies, and state and federal law.

EMAIL POLICY

By using the email system, the employee expressly consents to VCOE's email policy. The user agrees not to misuse or abuse the email system, agrees to comply with all limitations on the use of the email system and understands that the email system is not a private communication medium.

The email system is a business tool owned and paid for by VCOE, therefore, the email system is VCOE's property. All email messages, including personal messages sent or received by VCOE resources, are the property of VCOE and are subject to office policy, procedures and control. As such, VCOE has the right to view them at any time. VCOE respects the individual privacy of its employees. However, that privacy does not extend to the employee's work-related conduct or to the use of VCOE provided technical resources or supplies. Therefore, employees have no right of privacy as to any information transmitted or stored through VCOE's email system. To ensure proper use, VCOE may monitor its technological resources at any time without advance notice or consent.

Employees shall use the email system for purposes related to their employment with VCOE. Use of the email system that promotes unethical practices, or any activity prohibited by law, the Education Code and/or any other statutes, or VCOE policy is strictly prohibited. Except as otherwise indicated in this policy, commercial or political use of the email system is also strictly prohibited. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities are strictly prohibited and will be reported to VCOE authorities and may be reported to legal authorities.

Employees may use the email system for occasional personal email communications and life-long learning outside of assigned work hours, provided that all provisions of the policy are followed. Personal activities should be limited and should in no way interfere with educational and professional responsibilities. Employees are reminded that they have no right of privacy in correspondence that is sent or received using VCOE technology. This includes personal correspondence via services such as America Online or Hotmail accessed using VCOE technology.

Employees should be aware that computer files and communications over electronic networks, including email are not private. This technology should not be used to conduct personal commercial business.

The transmission of information about students or VCOE affairs shall adhere to the following:

- Confidential information should never be sent or forwarded to outside individuals or outside agencies not authorized to receive that information; Confidential messages and information should never be sent or forwarded to others, including faculty, staff and students who do not need to know the information;
- Confidential information should not be forwarded to multiple parties unless there is a clear and legitimate need to do so;
- Confidential email should not be retained in an employee's personal mailbox, but should be deleted as soon as possible; and
- Confidential messages from or to legal counsel should not be forwarded to others without counsel's authorization, since such messages may constitute privileged communications between VCOE and its attorney.

Users shall not use email in ways that violate any copyright laws. This includes but is not limited to copyrighted information, graphics and software.

The email system is not provided as a public, student, or employee forum. Sending unnecessary messages to a large number of people (chain mail) is prohibited. Appropriate work related email may be sent to a group of VCOE users, such as Education Services Center or All Elementary Secretaries. The sender should select the appropriate group. Since email is not provided as a public forum, it should not be used to broadcast personal opinion or personal information.

Email shall not include the transmission of the type of material that is threatening, disruptive, sexually explicit, obscene, or that could reasonably be perceived as harassment or disparagement of others based on their race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, or political belief, or which is otherwise inconsistent with VCOE policies, regulations or procedures, or which is contrary to law.

Email shall not be used to produce, distribute, access, use or store information which would subject VCOE or the individual to criminal, civil or administrative liability for its use, production, distribution, access or storage. Electronic communication on VCOE computers could reflect upon VCOE since all messages sent from VCOE include the name of VCOE in the electronic address.

For VCOE employees provided with email, the email is considered a primary avenue of communication and should be checked by employees frequently.

Guests may receive an individual account with the approval of a VCOE administrator if there is a specific, VCOE-related purpose requiring such access. Use of the system by a guest must be limited specifically to the VCOE-related purpose. Guest accounts will not be included in any email groups or distribution lists without authorization from Information Technology Services.

Users must comply with the provisions of Education Code section 7054, which includes email when it states that, no public funds, services, supplies or equipment shall be used for the purpose of urging the support or defeat of any ballot measure or candidate including, but not limited to, any candidate for election to the governing board. Any email sent or received using VCOE system or resources, whether VCOE business or personal, may be inadvertently viewed, printed, forwarded, and/or saved. Users are advised that information and communication deleted by the user may be restored and retrieved from the computer by VCOE or a legal authority.

Security on the network is a high priority. The person in whose name an account is issued is responsible at all times for its proper use. Employees are responsible for preventing unauthorized access to the email system by:

- Logging off or taking other measures when they are away from their workstation;
- Ensuring that email windows are not left open on the screen when the workstation is unattended; and
- Keeping account passwords confidential and not allowing others to use them.

No employee shall send email that either masks the employee's identity or indicates that the email was sent by someone else. No employee shall access the email system using another employee's password.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

VCOE does not consider conduct in violation of this policy to be within the course and scope of employment or the direct consequence of the discharge of one's duties. Accordingly, to the extent permitted by law, VCOE reserves the right not to provide a defense or pay damages assessed employees for conduct in violation of this policy. VCOE requires employees to comply with the terms of the VCOE Email Policy.

In addition, the following guidelines should be considered in order to avoid unfortunate situations when using email:

- Be polite. Never send, or encourage others to send, abusive messages;
- Remember that humor and satire is often misinterpreted;
- Use appropriate language. Remember that you are a representative not only of yourself, but also your school or VCOE on a publicly accessible system. Never swear or use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language;
- Be brief. Few people bother to read a long message;
- Minimize spelling errors and make sure your message is easy to understand and read;
- Forgive the spelling and grammatical errors of others;
- Use standard upper and lowercase letters (not all capital letters);
- Do not repost a message that was sent to you privately without permission of the person who sent you the message;
- Respect the originator of communications. Use good judgment and follow all limitations identified in

this regulation when forwarding email messages; and

- Be selective when providing your email address to others. The wider you send out your email address, the more opportunity you provide for unwanted messages. Internet sites that offer daily emails, promotions such as contests, and online shopping areas will often rent their lists of email addresses to others who will send you mail you may not wish to receive.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

A VCOE employee shall not perform any work, service, or counsel for outside agencies during the employee's normal VCOE working hours except when the employee is in unpaid status or during supervisor-approved vacation. (The employee will not leave his/her VCOE position early nor call in sick or take personal leave days in order to work elsewhere).

Based upon generally accepted ethical standards of professional organizations and in compliance with Government Code §1126 and 87100, an employee seeking or acknowledging outside employment shall file a written disclosure statement with his/her immediate supervisor describing the nature of the employment and the time required.

For additional information, refer to Superintendent's Policy 4213.12.

CREATION, PUBLICATION AND SALE OF MATERIALS

VCOE recognizes that employees may create copyrightable materials at work, at home, or both at work and at home. The development of such materials during, or in part during, the workday shall be approved by the VCOE. However, VCOE's approval or lack of approval shall not affect the Superintendent's ownership of copyrights for materials developed during work hours. Materials written or developed by an employee during the normal workday are considered the property of the Superintendent.

Employees are not permitted to use VCOE-owned materials for any profit-making enterprise without written permission from the Superintendent.

The VCOE may publish and market various publications and other media throughout the year. A listing of such products may be brought periodically to the Superintendent upon request.

For additional information, refer to Superintendent's Policy 3598.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

As an employee you have the right and privilege to take or refrain from taking a stand on a political issue and to support or oppose any issue or candidate. Such activities, however, must be conducted on your own time and off the premises of VCOE. You cannot use VCOE property and/or resources, bulletin boards and letterhead/stationary to express your opinion on a political matter. You can wear political badges or buttons and display political stickers on privately owned cars while at work and express opinions and campaign during non-working hours. You are expected to exercise reasonable care to show that you are acting in the capacity of a private citizen and not as a member of the staff of VCOE.

VEHICLE USE

VCOE-Owned Vehicle

Simply having a valid California driver's license does not automatically qualify an employee to operate a motor vehicle on behalf of VCOE. In addition to a valid California driver's license, all employees who operate any vehicle on behalf of VCOE shall consent to participate in the DMV Pull Notice Program. Participation may be a condition of employment and continued employment, in accordance with the appropriate job description. Nonparticipation in the DMV Pull Notice Program may effect an employee's ability to perform duties as assigned.

Automobile Insurance / Private Vehicles

Employees who are using private vehicles for official business (whether or not mileage reimbursement is claimed), shall show evidence that such vehicles are insured for property loss and damage and personal liability in excess of the minimum amount required by California State law:

(a) $100,000 for bodily injury to or death of each person as a result of any one accident;
(b) $300,000 for bodily injury to or death of all persons as a result of any one accident; and
(c) $50,000 for damage to property of others as a result of any one accident.

This evidence shall be in the form of a sworn statement from each employee. It will be necessary to file this annually, or anytime a vehicle is replaced, deleted from, or added to your policy. The employee must advise the Business Office of a cancellation of coverage. It will remain the responsibility of the employee to maintain an up-to-date record of insurance coverage to assure receiving reimbursement for private vehicle use. If at any time such insurance coverage is not valid, mileage claims shall be returned to the employee without processing. The statement shall be filed in the Business Office.

In accordance with the appropriate job description, employees utilizing private vehicles shall also participate in the DMV Pull Notice Program as described above.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

In the event it is necessary for you to travel in the duties of your position, you will be reimbursed for mileage and other expenses based on the reimbursement rate currently in effect. You must file a Certification of Insurance Coverage with the Business Office before mileage claims can be processed for payment.

When air travel is necessary within California, utilize the carrier with the lowest fare, such as Southwest Airlines. Whether using Southwest or other carriers, make the reservations and submit a requisition indicating the vendor, airline and detailed flight information including purpose of travel and cost of ticket.

No personal travel costs can be included in this arrangement.

All travel expenses (meals, lodging, parking, etc.) that are reasonable, actual and necessary in the performance of job duties will be reimbursed and must be claimed on the Travel Expense Voucher with all required **itemized** receipts attached. The total cost of daily expenses cannot exceed the IRS allowed amount for the area of travel. To be reimbursed, the Travel Expense Voucher must be complete and include date, time and location of the start and end of travel, specific purpose and destination of travel and have copies of meeting, workshop or conference notices attached. This is the verification used to approve payment to the travel agency.

For additional information on Travel Expenses, refer to Superintendent's Policy 4133.

TRANSPORTING STUDENTS

No students may be transported in an employee's private vehicle without completing the necessary documents. For additional information on Transporting Students, refer to Superintendent's Policy 3541.1 and/or contact the Risk Management Department at (805) 383-1916.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Lunch Break

All employees who work more than five hours shall be completely relieved from duty for the purpose of eating a regular meal. When a work period of not more than six hours will complete the day's work the meal period may be waived by mutual consent of the employer and the employee. The duty-free meal period shall be a minimum of 30 minutes. Such duty-free meal period shall not be counted as time worked. If the duty-free meal period is rarely and infrequently interrupted for emergency calls, the period of time actually interrupted is counted as hours worked. If the meal period is frequently interrupted by calls to duty, all the meal periods shall be counted as hours worked. The supervisor is responsible for assuring the duty-free meal period is not frequently interrupted. (California Code of Regulations, Title 8. Industrial Relations, S 11010)

Rest Breaks

Employees working seven (7) or more hours per day are allowed a morning and afternoon rest break, not to exceed fifteen (15) minutes each. Employees working four (4) hours or more per day, but less than seven (7) hours are allowed one (1) fifteen (15) minute rest break. Supervisors are responsible for scheduling the appropriate time for these breaks. Rest breaks may not be used to come to work late, leave early or extend lunch breaks. (Exceptions may occur only when necessary to assure continuous supervision of students.) Rest periods are counted as hours worked. The rest period shall not be offset against other hours of work.

Work Week

The work week is the seven day period beginning at 12:01 a.m., Monday of each week. Most employees work five (5) days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with one (1) hour for lunch. There are exceptions. Work shifts are scheduled by department heads. The exact hours that you work each day will be arranged by your supervisor.

APPEARANCE AND DRESS

VCOE deals with the public. Common sense in your personal appearance should be considered in your neatness, cleanliness, and clothing and should be followed by all employees.

Inappropriate attire is identified as any item of clothing that causes a distraction to other employees, causes a break in the normal flow of office routine, or creates an unsafe situation for the job being done.

1. Employees working with students should consider the issue of safety and avoid wearing clothing or accessories which may cause an attractive distraction. Loose jewelry, such as necklaces, bracelets and dangling earrings, should not be worn as it could catch on apparatus or distract students.
2. Employees who work in areas that require climbing, lifting, and kneeling should consider the safety

factor and wear clothing that is compatible with the job function they are performing.
3. Employees who interface with the public should give extra consideration to the appropriateness of their apparel and overall appearance.

Extremes in fashion and leisure activity clothing should be reserved for wear during non-work time. If a special activity or environmental change requires special needs, these needs should be recognized by the supervisor. Common sense should be the guiding principle in selecting apparel. Refer to the Code of Safe Practice for additional information.

EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION BADGE

All VCOE employees are required, for security purposes, to wear a photograph identification badge. The badge must be prominently displayed on the front of the employee's body at all times. Employees will be photographed by the Human Resources Department when hired and asked to surrender their badge when separating form the Organization. Contact the Human Resources Department for more information.

VISITORS

Whenever possible, discourage friends, relatives or others from visiting you while you are on the job. This is obviously necessary in order to prevent possible confusion and work stoppage. If such visits are necessary, they should be made as short as possible and **must be pre-approved by your supervisor**. Abuse of this privilege will result in disciplinary action. Under no circumstances should children be brought to work in lieu of obtaining appropriate child care.

PERSONAL MAIL

You should arrange to have all personal mail sent to your home. Do not send your personal mail through the Ventura County mail system. You are welcome to place your outgoing mail in a U.S. mailbox near your facility.

VENTURA COUNTY FAST ACTION SCHOOL TRANSIT (VCFAST)

The primary purpose of VCFAST is to provide the service and other items necessary and appropriate for a countywide distribution system for the carrying of letters and other such materials as the participants in the Joint Powers Agreement may require to be carried in order to conduct business.

Service will be provided daily to VCOE departments at the Camarillo Airport, and three times per week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) to all participating school districts and other VCOE sites.

Each school district not participating has indicated they will have a courier pick up at the Administrative Service Center on a regular basis; therefore, participating districts may send mail for those districts through VCFAST. The mail will then be placed in the non-participating district box for their courier to pick up.

Contact your supervisor for a complete set of VCFAST operating rules, regulations and guidelines.

VCOE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

Care of VCOE Property

Every job in the organization requires the use of supplies and some type of equipment. All employees are charged with the responsibility of maintaining this property in the best possible condition and making the most efficient use of supplies issued to them. You can help keep costs down by exercising reasonable care over the property for which you are responsible.

Unsafe, inappropriate or wasteful use of the VCOE's property or equipment is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Copy Machines / Printers

Copy machines and printers are available in most of the VCOE facilities. Copiers and printers are provided for official use only, and are not to be used for reproduction of personal material.

Office Equipment Repair

Office equipment is generally under maintenance contracts and the vendor may be called directly. The Purchasing Office can confirm the vendor and procedure. Other equipment repair is accomplished by submitting a requisition to Purchasing, indicating the following information:

1. Make of equipment.
2. Type of equipment.
3. Inventory tag number.
4. Model and serial number of equipment.
5. Malfunction to be corrected.
6. Location of equipment.
7. Person to be contacted by repair person

Telephone System Changes / Repairs

Requests for telephone changes shall be reported to the Technology Services Department for action. These include:

1. Need for adding or deleting phones.
2. Any staff moves involving moving phones.
3. Any reassignment of staff to a new extension.

For repairs to telephones, contact the Technology Services Department at 383-1951 and provide specific information regarding the problem.

Repairing / Replacing Employee's Property

You may claim reimbursement for repair or replacement of personal property, necessarily worn or carried, when damaged in the line of duty, through no fault of your own.

Report any building or maintenance problems to your supervisor.

This applies to items such as eyeglasses, watches, and certain articles of clothing. This policy does not include personal electronic devices. In the event of a loss, contact the Risk Manager and request a claim form.

Requisition Supplies and Materials

When possible, supplies are purchased in quantities. Each department shall notify the Business Office of its needs on an as needed basis. These requests are grouped and ordered from the best source. Requisitions and the vendor supply list are available from the Business Office.

USE OF EQUIPMENT OFF THE PREMISES

VCOE's equipment may be taken from the office by staff members for use in their regular duties with school districts or professional personnel in Ventura County, provided that permission is obtained from the head of the department from which the equipment is borrowed; and provided further, that an accurate record of such use is made by that department. The record shall include the inventory tag number assigned to the equipment and the serial number, if the item has a serial number. **In all cases, the staff member is personally responsible for the proper care and return of the equipment.**

TRANSFER OF PROPERTY

When property or equipment is identified as surplus or obsolete, the department head or site administrator shall complete a "Request for Change of Inventory" form. The form will be submitted to the Purchasing Department to request removal of the item(s) from the present location (from one site to another.) The Purchasing Department will authorize appropriate disposition of the item(s) and initiate the work order to effect removal of the item(s). **Equipment may not be removed from its assigned location without proper authorization.**

The department head or site administrator may authorize equipment to be moved within the location (from one room to another.) A "Request for Change of Inventory" form must be completed and submitted to the Purchasing Department. Updated equipment inventory records will assure prompt and accurate settlement should an insurance claim be necessary.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Because you are employed by VCOE, you have an important public relations responsibility. Your work, attitude and appearance are all subject to close inspection by your employers and the taxpaying public. In many cases, you are the only VCOE employee a certain individual may know, and total judgment of the efficiency and character of the organization is based on the way you perform. For this reason, it is important that you give a good day's work and courteous treatment to people you have agreed to serve.

If you receive a call, complaint or request about something that you cannot or should not handle, take a personal interest in seeing that the call, request or complaint gets to the proper office. You are employed to serve the public.

Courtesy means, among other things: being prompt to wait on people; being patient and a good listener, and taking a personal interest in seeing that calls, requests or complaints are properly handled.

GIFTS TO EMPLOYEES

No employee is to receive any commission, expense-paid trip, or anything of value from individuals or companies selling equipment, materials, or services used in the operation of the public schools. This would include the purchase and use of all materials, supplies or other items needed for the repair, maintenance, or operation of school facilities, office or cafeterias, for school transportation, or materials used to conduct classes, activities, and organizations.

PEDDLERS OR SALESPERSONS

The following office policy shall be enforced on a permanent basis:
"No outside peddlers, solicitors or salespersons will be permitted to sell or demonstrate their products in the VCOE facilities, except on official business."

Employees are to direct solicitors to leave the building upon initial contact.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO A FAMILY MEMBER

All employee information related to employment with VCOE can only be discussed with the employee, unless the employee authorizes or designates a person (spouse/partner/dependent adult) to obtain information and such request must be provided in writing.

CUSTOMER SERVICE VIA TELEPHONE

The way you answer the telephone will have a great effect on the VCOE's image. Telephone contacts are most valued if a favorable impression is created with the people we serve. The following are a few tips that will help in maintaining efficient, courteous service when receiving calls:

1. Answer promptly.
2. Give your name and department.
3. Offer to take a message or transfer the call to voicemail if the person called is not available.
4. Be courteous and friendly.
5. Assure that your voicemail is updated each day and while you are away.

Telephones must have coverage at all times. If you are away from your desk for any length of time, make arrangements for someone to answer the telephones for which you are responsible.

When making calls...

1. Plan what you want to say ahead of time.
2. Identify yourself, your department and/or employer.
3. Keep all telephone conversations brief.
4. Be courteous and friendly.
5. Office telephones are for official business. If personal calls are occasionally necessary, they should be limited to three minutes or less. Careful use of the personal call privilege will preserve that privilege.
6. Personal long distance calls are prohibited.

GRAPHICS REPRODUCTION SERVICES

A complete Graphic Reproduction Department (Print Shop) is available to serve the printing needs of all departments. New employees, whose responsibilities include preparation of material to be printed, are encouraged to contact the Graphics Department at 437-1310 for an overview of the types of services offered and procedures required for submitting printing request forms.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION PROCEDURES – CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS
SUPERINTENDENT POLICY 5850

The discipline of any regular, non-probationary member of the classified staff shall be for cause only, and in compliance with the California Education Code, and procedures established by the VCOE and approved by the Ventura County Board of Education.

A. DISCRIMINATION

No employee in the classified service shall be suspended, demoted, dismissed or in any way discriminated against because of his or her: race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, sexual orientation, marital status or sex.

B. CAUSES FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The tenure of each classified employee who has permanent status shall be subject to his or her good behavior and the rendering of efficient service. Any classified employee may be disciplined for cause, including, but not limited to:

1. Incompetency or inefficiency in the performance of duties.
2. Insubordination.
3. Discourteous, offensive, or abusive conduct or language toward other employees, students, the public or any willful failure of good conduct.
4. Inattention to or dereliction of duty.
5. Dating or inappropriate socializing with a student of any age including those students who are eighteen or older.
6. Violation of the Education Code, or of rules, regulations, or procedures adopted by the County Board of Education pursuant to the Education Code.
7. Dishonesty.
8. Use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, or other dangerous drugs while on duty or on the premises of facilities or grounds under the authority of the VCOE.
9. Engagement in political activities during assigned hours of employment.
10. Conviction of any felony, or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude.
11. Making false or misleading statements on application or employment records.
12. Excessive and/or unexcused absences or tardiness.
13. Failure to report for required health examination after due notice.
14. Negligence.
15. Misuse or abuse of public property or equipment.
16. Abandonment of position.
17. Conviction of a sex offense as defined in Education Code Section 44010 or determination as a sexual psychopath pursuant to Education Code Section 45124.
18. Inability to perform the tasks or duties of the position.
19. Failure to comply with Office rules, policies, or regulations.
20. Theft.
21. Addiction to or use of narcotics or other controlled substances.

22. Failure to possess or keep in effect any license, certificate, or other similar requirement specified in the employee's class specification or otherwise necessary for the employee to perform the duties of the position.
23. Unlawful discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, sexual orientation, marital status, sex, or age against the public or other employees while acting in the capacity of a VCOE employee.
24. Other acts that are inconsistent with or incompatible with the employee's position or other failure of good behavior either during or outside of duty hours that is of such a nature that it causes discredit or reasonably tends to cause discredit to the employee, his/her fellow employees, or the Office.

C. ORAL WARNING / REPRIMAND

Whenever a permanent employee's job performance falls below a satisfactory level or when an employee's conduct presents just cause for disciplinary action, his or her supervisor shall inform the employee promptly, specifically outlining and discussing the improper conduct involved. When appropriate, following a discussion of the matter, a reasonable time for improvement or correction may be given to the employee before any further disciplinary action is initiated.

D. WRITTEN WARNING / REPRIMAND

In situations where an oral warning or reprimand has not resulted in the improvement or correction of an employee's conduct, or where more severe initial action is appropriate, a written warning or reprimand may be sent to an employee.

1. The written warning or reprimand shall be signed by the affected employee's supervisor, department head, or the Superintendent.

2. The employee who is being warned or reprimanded shall be given the opportunity to review the written warning or reprimand, and may submit a written response to be attached thereto. Any written response must be submitted by the employee to the Human Resources Department within ten (10) business days of the employee's receipt of a copy of the warning or reprimand.

E. SUSPENSION OF LESS THAN FIVE (5) DAYS

A Department Head may immediately suspend an employee, for cause, for less than five (5) days by serving on the employee a Notice of Suspension. The Notice of Suspension shall include: ordinary and concise language outlining the specific acts and/or omissions upon which the disciplinary action is based; the rule or regulation, or cause under Section B of this Policy which the employee has violated; the number of days of suspension to be imposed; any materials upon which the action is based; and the length of time allowed for the employee to submit an appeal.

1. **Appeal to Director of Human Resources**: Within five (5) working days after receiving a Notice of Suspension, an employee may, in writing, appeal the suspension to the Director of Human Resources. Upon receipt of such an appeal, the Director shall schedule a meeting with the employee to be held within five (5) working days. At that meeting, the employee shall be given the opportunity to respond to the charges in the Notice of Suspension. Following the meeting,

the Director shall consider the employee's response. Within ten (10) days of the appeal meeting, the Director shall respond to the employee's appeal in writing.

2. **Failure to Appeal to Director of Human Resources**: If an employee fails to file a timely appeal with the Director, the discipline imposed shall be final and affirmed in writing by the Superintendent.

3. **Appeal to the Superintendent**: Within five (5) days of receiving the Director of Human Resources' decision on an appeal, an employee who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Director of Human Resources may, in writing, appeal to the Superintendent and request a hearing pursuant to Section G of this Policy. Appeal to the Superintendent shall be on the following grounds only:

   (a) That the procedures set forth in this Disciplinary Action Policy have not been followed.
   (b) That the action was being taken because of: his or her race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, sexual orientation, marital status, or sex;
   (c) That the charges made do not constitute sufficient cause for the proposed disciplinary action; or
   (d) That the facts are not as stated in the charges.

4. **Failure to Appeal to Superintendent**: If an employee fails to file a timely appeal with the Superintendent, the discipline imposed shall be final and affirmed in writing by the Superintendent.

F. DISMISSAL, DEMOTION, AND SUSPENSION OF FIVE (5) DAYS OR MORE

Any employee may be suspended or demoted for cause. A probationary, limited term, or emergency employee may be dismissed at any time, without cause, and with no right of appeal under this Policy. Any regular, non-probationary employee may be dismissed for cause. To initiate a suspension of five or more days, a demotion of any employee, or the dismissal of any regular, non-probationary employee, a Department Head shall serve on the employee who is to be disciplined a Notice of Intent to Discipline. The Notice of Intent to Discipline shall include: ordinary and concise language of the specific acts and/or regulation, or cause under Section B of this Policy that the employee has violated; the disciplinary action intended to be imposed; any materials upon which the disciplinary action is based; and the length of time the employee has to submit an appeal.

1. **Appeal to Director of Human Resources**: Within five (5) working days after receiving a Notice of Intent to Discipline, an employee may, in writing, appeal the proposed disciplinary action to the Director of Human Resources. Upon receipt of such an appeal, the Director shall schedule a meeting with the employee to be held within five (5) working days. At this meeting, the employee may respond to the charges contained in the Notice of Intent to Discipline. Following this meeting, the Director shall consider the employee's response to the proposed discipline discussed during the meeting, and within ten (10) days respond in writing to the employee's appeal.

2. **Failure to Appeal to Director of Human Resources**: If an employee fails to file a timely appeal with the Director, the discipline imposed shall be final and affirmed in writing by the Superintendent.

3. **Appeal to the Superintendent**: Within five (5) days after receiving the Director of Human Resources' decision on an appeal, an employee against whom discipline is to be imposed who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Director may, in writing, appeal to the Superintendent and request a hearing. Appeal to the Superintendent can be made on the following grounds only:

   (a) The procedures set forth in this Disciplinary Action Policy have not been followed;
   (b) That the action was being taken because of: his or her race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, marital status, or sex;
   (c) That the charges made do not constitute sufficient cause for the proposed disciplinary action; or
   (d) That the facts are not as stated in the charges.

4. **Failure to Appeal to Superintendent**: If an employee fails to file a timely appeal with the Superintendent, the discipline imposed shall be final and affirmed in writing by the Superintendent.

G. TIME AND CONDUCT OF APPEAL HEARING

Upon receipt of a request for an appeal hearing from an employee, the Superintendent shall set a hearing date which shall begin not less than five (5) working days from the date of receipt of the request, but shall be within a reasonable length of time thereafter. The hearing shall be confined to the causes set forth in the Notice of Discipline presented to the employee and the grounds for appeal contained in the employee's written request pursuant to Part E(3) or Part F(3) of this Policy. The employee shall have the right to be represented by counsel of his/her choice during the appeal hearing. The hearing shall be conducted in the following manner:

1. The Superintendent shall serve as Hearing Officer and conduct the appeal hearing, or may contract for the services of a Hearing Officer pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 14 (commencing with Section 27720), Part 3, Division 2, Title 3 of the California Government Code to conduct the hearing. (California Education Code Section 35207.)

2. The Hearing Officer is authorized to issue subpoenas, receive evidence, administer oaths, rule on questions of law and the admissibility of evidence, receive testimony and weigh the credibility of witnesses, and see that a record of the proceedings is prepared.

3. Each side will be permitted an opening statement, the opportunity to present witnesses and evidence, and to present closing arguments. VCOE shall present the first opening statement, shall first present its witnesses and evidence to sustain the charges against the employee, and to give the first closing argument.

4. VCOE shall have the burden of proof regarding the charges upon which the proposed discipline is based.

5. Each side will be allowed to examine and cross-examine witnesses.

6. Witnesses who are employees of the VCOE shall be granted release time to appear at appeal hearings conducted pursuant to this Policy.

7. The Hearing Officer may, upon the request of either party, grant a continuance for any reason believed to be important to his or her reaching a fair and proper decision.

8. The hearing shall be conducted in closed session unless otherwise requested by the employee.

9. The Hearing Officer shall render a decision as soon after the conclusion of the hearing as possible, but in no event later than thirty (30) working days. The Hearing Officer's decision shall include factual findings based on the evidence, and conclusions regarding whether or not the charges against the employee have been sustained. The Hearing Officer may sustain or reject any or all of the charges filed against the employee. The Hearing Officer may sustain, reject, or modify the disciplinary action proposed against the employee. The Hearing Officer may not provide for disciplinary action which is more stringent than or in excess of the disciplinary action proposed in the Notice of Discipline.

10. If the Hearing Officer is the Superintendent, his/her decision shall be final and conclusive. If the Hearing Officer is designated pursuant to Part G(1) of this Policy, the Hearing Officer's decision shall be a recommendation and not binding on the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall review the recommended decision and issue a final decision within ten (10) working days of receiving the Hearing Officer's recommendations. The Superintendent's decision shall be final and conclusive.

H. FAILURE TO APPEAL OR ANSWER

If an employee against whom disciplinary action is proposed fails to appeal the disciplinary action within the time limitations contained herein, the intended disciplinary action shall be imposed upon the employee without any further action by the Superintendent.