



Employee Handbook

2023-2024



Development, Support and Standard Business Practices

Scope & Purpose of the Employee Handbook

This handbook has been prepared with input from district and campus departments to provide Advantage Academy employees with important information about the school, including brief overviews of school employee policies, benefits, work rules and work related environments under which this organization operates as well as provides guidelines for employment in an effort to foster a professional work environment that is mutually beneficial. Many policies and procedures have been abbreviated and summarized; therefore, this handbook is not to be considered as a substitute for the official district policy or administrative regulations. For more information, employees may confer with their supervisor, or call the Human Resources Department or appropriate district office.

The guidelines presented in this handbook are not intended to be a substitute for sound management, judgment and/or discretion. School employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the contents of this handbook; it will answer many common questions concerning your employment. However, this handbook cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question about employment. This handbook is intended to facilitate communications within the District and to serve as a quick reference guide on a variety of subjects. The provisions and information set forth in this handbook are intended to provide specific and non-specific direction to employees. This handbook is not intended and shall not be construed to constitute a contract between Eagle Advantage Schools Inc. and any employee; prospective employee; agency of the local, state, or federal government; or any other person or legal entity of any nature whatsoever.

Eagle Advantage Schools does not discriminate against students, employees or applicants for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law in providing equal access to the schools education programs or activities, including CTE programs, as required by Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Title I and Title V of the (ADA) Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended the (ADEA) Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the (GINA) Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008; and any other legally-protected classification or status protected by federal, state or local law.

For inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies, contact the Human Resources, Student Services or Special Programs Department (214-276-5800) 618 W. Wheatland Road, Duncanville, TX 75116. Eagle Advantage Schools, Inc. (dba Advantage Academy) 501©3 non-profit organization www.advantageacademy.org 618 W. Wheatland Road, Duncanville, TX 75116 ph. 214-276-5800.

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WELCOME

We would like to thank you for choosing Eagle Advantage Schools Inc., DBA (Advantage Academy) as your place of employment. We are confident that you will enjoy your time here and hope that this professional collaboration is long and beneficial to both parties. It is our experience that an employee, who reads, understands and abides by the information included in this handbook will most likely ensure themselves of successful employment, productive relationships and participation in an enjoyable work environment.

Employees, who use the acquired knowledge available in this handbook, abide by organizational expectations and meet the performance, attendance and conduct standards outlined by the District, while applying their own unique and personal contributions, succeed in assisting Eagle Advantage in its uncompromising commitment to quality by fulfilling its Vision and Mission while “Building Champions with a Future and a Hope.”

The foundation of Eagle Advantage Schools Inc. is based on the “Seven Pillars of Character and Leadership”, which all employees are expected to maintain, enforce and promote.

The "**Seven Pillars of Character and Leadership**" are:

Integrity - Integrity is having strong moral values and showing consistent character even when no one is watching. The honesty, truthfulness, or accuracy of one's actions.

Humility - Humility is a modest view of oneself. Not the opposite of confidence, humility is showing a lack of false pride, seeing the importance in others, and being willing to learn and grow.

Authority - Authority means being a leader that is willing to serve in order to support the team. Authority is leading with both confidence and humility.

Stability - Stability is having a firm purpose and consistently working towards that purpose with perseverance. Reliable and dependable; having strength or security.

Community - Community is a group of people linked by a common goal or purpose. People connected and empowered with knowledge and the skills needed to effect change for a shared interest.

Prosperity - Prosperity is a state of health of the mind, body, and spirit. To thrive; encompass happiness.

Victory - Victory is to achieve success by overcoming opposition and difficulties. To overcome; triumph.

EAGLE ADVANTAGE SCHOOLS Inc.

HISTORY

The Founder of Eagle Advantage Schools Inc. Dr. Allen Beck, was the son of migrant workers and was raised in poverty. In 1997, Dr. Beck began envisioning a school system that would be different from all others, public and private. Building upon the best of what each type of school offers, he set out to create a school that would inspire hope in children and give them purpose for their future. Opened in 1998, Eagle Advantage provides its revolutionary learning experience at four North Texas Campuses: Dallas (PreK-8), Grand Prairie West (PreK-8), Waxahachie (PreK-8), and Grand Prairie East (9-12). Our Central Office and Resource Center are located in Duncanville, Texas.

ADVANTAGE ACADEMY

Advantage Academy (AA) exists to accomplish and promote the broader purpose of Eagle Advantage Schools, Inc. Advantage Academy resides in Duncanville, Texas where it houses its Central Office and Resource Center buildings conveniently located next door to each other, which separately provide educational support and other related services for our students, parents and employees. AA believes that the success and subsequent growth of this organization can be attributed to employee knowledge, skill, and commitment. All entities must recognize their responsibility in maintaining the highest standards of quality in education, compliance, technology, support services and management. AA accomplishes this through the employment, retention and promotion of employees who demonstrate an attitude of excellence and a commitment to all aspects of the schools Vision and our students.

Vision

For every student to live with *Wisdom, Purpose* and *Victory* by instilling America's founding principles of *Knowledge, Character* and *Leadership*.

Mission

To prepare each student for the global society by meeting their unique needs - mind, body and spirit, through:

- *A safe, healthy, nurturing and faith-friendly environment*
- *Active and personalized learning*
- *Family and community engagement*
- *Character, servant leadership and personal responsibility*
- *Truth in American history, civic virtue and service*

Motto

"Building Champions with a Future and a Hope"

The objectives of Advantage Academy (AA) are achieved when its employees actively contribute to the success of our students and the school system itself through the effective performance of their job responsibilities and duties. Employees are expected to conduct themselves, their tasks and all company business using legal, ethical, professional and established organizational standards at all times.

Employees are expected to be dedicated to and show their commitment to AA's Vision and Mission by:

- Putting students first
- Being respectful
- Being inspired and motivated to go the extra mile
- Being a team player
- Being problem-solvers
- Being considerate
- Being present when scheduled and punctual
- Being flexible with time and schedule
- Refraining from negativity in the work place
- Being empathetic and caring

Advantage Academy strives to provide a safe work environment conducive to personal and professional growth. It is our desire that all employees become an integral part of the TEAM while we, as an organization, continue to value individual strengths and character. AA employees are observed, evaluated and reviewed based the company's philosophy of Performance, Attendance, and Standards of Conduct using established federal, state and local standards. Successful employment with Advantage Academy will be contingent upon the employee meeting all requirements as stated in:

- This and other District handbooks;
- The Company's Ethics and Business Conduct Manual;
- The Standard Practices for Texas Educators;
- Established local, state and federal law;
- TEA, District and Campus policies and procedures; and
- Occupational and professional requirements, rules and regulations.

Although we hope that your employment with us will be long term, either you or the company may terminate the relationship with notice while all contract and at-will terms, conditions and agreements remain in full force and effect. Notwithstanding any statements to the contrary made by Advantage Academy representatives or its employees or set forth in any other document, "no employment agreement shall be enforceable unless it is in writing and signed by the Superintendent or designee."

The District hereby reserves and retains the right to amend, alter, delete, or modify any of the provisions of the employee handbook at any time as school administration or the Board of Directors deem to be necessary or in the best interest of the District; these changes may be made without notice and shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change.

---DISTRICT INFORMATION---

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Advantage Academy employees are required by state law to promptly report any suspected child abuse to Child Protective Services. Teachers and other professional staff are required to make a report to a law enforcement agency or Child Protective Services within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. By state law, any person reporting/assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent.

MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN

As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being neglected, or maltreated. Maltreatment can be defined as any conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent maltreatment of a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be neglected or maltreated has a legal responsibility under state law to report their suspicions to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS). Employees are required to follow the procedures described above in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Eagle Advantage School's does not discriminate against students, employees or applicants for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law in providing equal access to the schools education programs or activities; , including CTE programs, as required by Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Title I and Title V of

the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended ("ADA"); the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended ("ADEA"); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 ("GINA"); and any other legally-protected classification or status protected by federal, state, or local law.

For inquiries regarding school policies and procedures related to student or employee discrimination or if an individual believes they have been a victim of unlawful discrimination in an education program or activity or in employment please contact the appropriate coordinator listed below:

Title IX and VII/ADEA Coordinator-Employee Welfare: Human Resources Director, 618 W. Wheatland Rd., Duncanville, TX 75116, (214) 276-5866.

Title IX Coordinator-Student Welfare: Director of Student Services, 616 W. Wheatland Rd., Duncanville, TX 75116, (214) 276-5888.

ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Special Programs Director, 618 W. Wheatland Rd., Duncanville, TX 75116, (214) 276-5857.

Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth (coordinates services for homeless students): District Special Programs Department, 618 W. Wheatland Rd., Duncanville, TX 75116, (214) 276-5861.

THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS and PRIVACY ACT

(FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties and under the following conditions:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school district.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. & 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99)

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Advantage Academy (AA) employees will maintain the confidentiality of "protected information" as defined by AA policies and other information that may be classified as confidential by other laws. Confidential information may be information in any form: e.g., written, electronic, oral, overheard or observed. Access to any information is granted on a "**need to know**" basis. A "**need to know**" is defined as information that is required in order for an employee to do their job.

During an employee's daily work, they may be exposed to information that is considered confidential. This information should not be discussed with anyone, including co-workers, students, parents, employees' family, or friends. Employees must be alert to others overhearing their professional discussions regarding a student's records or an employee's salary, conduct or performance, etc. Confidential information may include, but is not limited to, financial and/or business information on employees, students, parents or vendors. Information made confidential by law or by Advantage Academy policy shall include, but is not limited to:

- Payroll files
- Salaries
- Health files
- Health information
- Employee files
- Student files
- Personal data
- Business files
- Grade books
- Lesson plans

Advantage Academy strictly forbids confidential material from being removed from any of its offices or campuses, except under extreme supervision and using School Board approved guidelines. Employees must obtain pre-approval from their Division Director and the Operations Officer for any physical information transfer of any kind. (See the AA Code of Ethics for more information)

RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSAL

The AA Records Retention and Disposal Policy provides for the disposition of records created or maintained by the school. The goals of the policy are: 1) to identify and evaluate documents that must be retained permanently or temporarily due to federal or state legal requirements or for valid administrative reasons, 2) to provide for the routine and timely disposal of documents which need not be retained for legal or administrative reasons, 3) to provide guidance and clarification on which documents have lasting archival value to the school and should be preserved in the archives. The school's Business Department is responsible for developing, implementing, and governing the records

retention and disposal policy. The Business Department may designate others, on an ad hoc basis, to assist in implementing the policy, including the following:

- Publish a retention and disposal schedule that is in compliance with local, state, and federal laws
- Develop a training program for personnel responsible for record storage and maintenance
- Monitor for compliance with the record retention and disposal policy
- Monitor local, state, and federal laws affecting record retention
- Annually review the record retention and disposal policy

The records retention and disposal policy authorizes, but does not require, school officials to dispose of records after the expiration of the assigned retention period. School officials may however, destroy these records upon expiration of the retention period. Local situations may require retention beyond the posted periods, and there exist no provision that prevents the district from retaining records longer than the period scheduled.

SEX DISCRIMINATION / HARASSMENT

Advantage Academy is committed to safeguarding the rights of all members of the District's community and to providing an educational environment and activities that are free from all forms of sex discrimination and harassment. To this end, the school prohibits all forms of sex discrimination and harassment on school grounds, school buses, and at all school sponsored events, including those that take place at locations outside the school district. The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any person on the basis of sex, gender, or sexual orientation. Persons who feel they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment based on sex or have experienced a hostile environment based on sex are encouraged to immediately report such allegations to a campus or district administration or to the appropriate Title IX Coordinator listed below.

The District will promptly investigate all complaints of sex discrimination and harassment reported in any form, verbal, or written. To the extent possible, all complaints will be treated in a confidential manner. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. If, after an appropriate investigation, the District finds a violation of the schools sex discrimination/harassment policy, prompt corrective action will be taken in accordance with the Policy and applicable laws. Any law enforcement notification or reporting, and/or disciplinary action taken will be in accordance with the nature of the incident. The District will not tolerate retaliation against any individual who reports or files a complaint of sex discrimination or harassment.

Advantage Academy, administrators and staff, along with its students, their parents, and the school community as a whole will work together to promote an environment free from acts of sex discrimination and harassment of any kind. Individuals who believe they have been a victim of sex discrimination/harassment in an education program or activity or in employment please contact the appropriate coordinator as listed:

Title IX and VII/ADEA Coordinator-Employee Welfare: Human Resources Director, 618 W. Wheatland Rd., Duncanville, TX 75116, (214) 276-5866.

Title IX Coordinator-Student Welfare: Director of Student Services, 616 W. Wheatland Rd., Duncanville, TX 75116, (214) 276-5888.

ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Special Programs Director, 618 W. Wheatland Rd., Duncanville, TX 75116, (214) 276-5857.

Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth (coordinates services for homeless students): District Special Programs Department, 618 W. Wheatland Rd., Duncanville, TX 75116, (214) 276-5861.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Advantage Academy strongly supports the policies of the Americans with Disabilities Act and is completely committed to treating all applicants and employees with disabilities in accordance with the requirements of that act. The company judges individuals by their abilities, not their disabilities and seeks to give full and equal employment opportunity to all persons capable of performing the duties as indicated, in any of the company's available job position descriptions successfully.

EMPLOYERS PRACTICE REGARDING CRIMINAL HISTORY

Advantage Academy reserves the right not to employ any person whose criminal history record indicates an arrest or conviction for a felony, crimes against persons, drug-related crimes, job-related crimes, repeated arrests, offenses that pose a risk to children or any other criminal activity judged to be improper for a school employee. Relating to school safety issues, the state's Fingerprinting Bill requires all school district employees, including teachers, to submit their fingerprints into a national database for a criminal history background check. Employees fingerprint data will be integrated into the fingerprinting 'FACT Clearinghouse' system.

The database information will also be shared with the FBI and Texas DPS and may be used by the FBI for National Criminal History Reviews. AA reserves the right to perform an annual criminal record check on all current employees and to obtain criminal record information on any employee, at any time without notice.

ETHICS AND BUSINESS CONDUCT

Advantage Academy employees are required by virtue of the company's Code of Ethics and business conduct to act in the best interest of AA and perform their duties without being partial to any particular outside organization or their own personal interests; devote to AA their undivided loyalty and uncompromised integrity; conform to the highest standards of business practices, professional ethics and legal principles; and give the appearance, as well as the fact of such devotion, integrity and impartiality. AA expects all employees to strictly comply with the Code and to exercise good judgment and reasonable prudence in carrying out AA business. Other Ethic Codes include: *The Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators*.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS

School employees are expected to comply with the provisions of federal copyright law relating to the unauthorized use, reproduction, distribution, performance or display of copyrighted materials (i.e., printed material, videos, computer data and programs, etc.). Electronic media, including motion pictures and other audiovisual works, are to be used in the classroom for instructional purposes only. Duplication or backup of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement. School policy requires that employees uphold all copyright laws. Individuals who intentionally violate copyright laws do so outside the scope of their employment and could face serious legal consequences as well as termination.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Employees should be aware that all intellectual creations, including product ideas and business conceptions, created within the scope of the employee's job duties, become the property of Advantage Academy. All inventions, products, reports, charts, logs or any other information created, collected or maintained on behalf of one's job duties is also company property. Employees who willfully withhold or

destroy this property for any reason will by that action cause AA to pursue all legal means necessary to recover this property.

OBLIGATION TO REPORT CRIMINAL RECORD

All district employees shall notify his/her campus principal, immediate supervisor and the school's HR Department within three calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of the employee for any felony, any offense involving moral turpitude, and any of the other offenses as indicated below:

- Crimes involving school property or funds;
- Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator;
- Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity; or
- Crimes involving moral turpitude, which include:
 - Dishonesty; fraud; deceit; theft; misrepresentation;
 - Deliberate violence;
 - Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor;
 - Felony possession or conspiracy to possess, or any misdemeanor or felony transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance defined in Chapter 481 of the Health and Safety Code;
- Felony driving while intoxicated (DWI); or
- Acts constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code.

The requirement to report a conviction or deferred adjudication shall not apply to minor traffic offenses. However, offenses of DWI or DUI must be reported by an employee. Failure to report a conviction or adjudication and within the required reporting period will result in immediate termination. Additionally, if the conviction of a crime or receiving adjudication for a crime, in AA's judgment, presents a real or potential risk to the safety, security or health of AA students, employees, or property and/or is not in keeping with the position which the employee occupies, immediate termination shall be considered.

---EMPLOYMENT---

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT

Advantage Academy serves in and practices the principles of equal employment. With certain exceptions listed below, the district shall adhere to a policy of equal employment for all employees. Advantage Academy is an equal opportunity employer and operates all of its educational programs without discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability or other protected status, in accordance with applicable laws. The district shall not fail or refuse to hire or discharge, nor shall it otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, privileges or employment based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age. Further, the district shall not, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age limit, segregate or classify its employees, or applicants for employment in any way that would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities, or otherwise adversely affect the individual's status as an employee.

As an exception to the policy stated above, the Board may employ an individual on the basis of the individual's religion, sex, national origin or age in certain instances where religion, sex, national origin or

age is a bona fide occupational qualification reasonably necessary to the normal operation of the educational program.

No applicant or employee with a disability shall be subject to discrimination in employment with the district. With respect to employment, a "qualified disabled person" is a disabled person who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job in question.

Any equal employment incident or situation believed to involve discrimination should be brought to the immediate attention of the employee's supervisor, Division Director or the Human Resources Department.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS REGARDING PERSONNEL

The Board has established the following objective criteria for decisions regarding the hiring, dismissal, reassignment, promotion, and demotion of district personnel. The following criteria are not rank-ordered and may be considered in whole or in part when making such decisions regarding personnel:

1. Academic or technical preparations, supported by transcripts;
2. Proper certification for grade level, subject, or assignment, including emergency permits and endorsements for specific subjects, programs, or positions;
3. Experience;
4. Recommendations and references;
5. Performance reviews and evaluations;
6. Suitability for the position and professional competence; and,
7. The needs of the district.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

All employee information is considered confidential and will not be released without the employee's permission; however, authorized company personnel with a need to know will receive approval to review employee information. Employee personnel files are the property of AA and do not belong to the employee, however, employees are permitted to review their personnel records and obtain a copy of those records at any time.

If there is a change in your name, address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents and/or person(s) to notify in case of an emergency, please contact the Human Resources Department as soon as possible to have the appropriate information updated. It is the employee's responsibility to keep all personal information current. Personnel information can also be updated by the employee in Ascender Employee Portal.

SERVICE RECORDS / SERVICE CREDIT

It is the employee's responsibility to provide service records of previous employment. Employees will not be given service credit until the appropriate records are submitted and verified by the Human Resources Department. Service records will directly affect the employee's rate of pay and therefore must be submitted at the time of employment. All service records must meet TEA requirements.

CERTIFICATION / LICENSURE

Persons being considered for new or continued employment whose occupations are regulated by a State Certifying/Licensing Board or those whose job duties require a certification/license must present proof of current certification/licensure before beginning or continuing work. Employees are responsible for renewing their certifications/licenses when necessary and ensuring that the certification/license is kept current. An employee who fails to present or maintain his/hers valid certification/license as required and/or requested may not be allowed to work until the certification/license is updated and/or

presented. Employees, whose certification/license(s) become invalid due to renewal oversight, will be granted a 30 day grace period in order to achieve certification/license renewal (does not include bus drivers).

DUTY STATUS

Employees who become aware of an unavoidable or probable change in duty status for any reason, (i.e., personal obligations, medical situations, maternity leave), must contact the HR Department with this information as soon as the employee becomes aware of such information. Failure to provide timely duty status information may affect the employee's benefits and/or employment with AA.

AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT

Advantage Academy, also employs persons At-Will, unless or except as modified by applicable law. At-Will Employees shall be subject to and comply with all state and federal laws and all Advantage Academy policies, procedures, administrative directives, rules and regulations. AA and/or its At-Will employees each have the right to end the employment relationship with or without cause at any time, with or without notice, in accordance with company policy. This "At Will" employment status exists regardless of any other written statements or policies contained in this handbook or any other company documents or any verbal statements to the contrary.

WORK SCHEDULES

The work week and daily time schedules for all employees shall be determined in accordance with departmental/campus staffing requirements and school district needs as determined by the Superintendent. Employees are required to be at work and on duty during the established work day as determined by district administration. Directors and Supervisors shall inform all employees of their work schedule, which must include the required duty days and hours. The district has a reasonable expectation that employees will be available to attend school-related activities that may occur outside the established work day, including evenings and weekends. Employees may not be eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time in all instances.

Consistent with providing quality educational and support services, staffing requirements and non-company orientated scheduling; some employees may be required to work extended and/or irregular hours. Employees will be advised in advance if schedule changes become necessary to meet company needs or operational requirements. All work schedule changes must receive approval from the company's Operations Officer prior to being implemented. Employees must attend all scheduled professional development sessions, company/departmental meetings and related activities, which may from time to time be held after normal working hours, on weekends, holidays or vacation days.

EMPLOYEE DESIGNATIONS

AA employees will be designated accordingly into one of three Employee Designations; **12-Month**, **11-Month**, or **10-Month**.

- **12-Month employees** - work the full calendar year, with specified days off, as approved by the Superintendent.
- **11-Month employees** - work a total of 1 month during the summer months. The 1 month will be specified and scheduled according to staffing needs.
- **10-Month employees** - work through the end of the school year, as specified on the current year school calendar. End of year check out procedures must be completed and approved prior to summer dismissal.

At-will employees should speak with their supervisor to understand which employee designation their job position is assigned, and the full terms of that designation.

REGULAR FULL-TIME

A regular full-time employee is one who is employed on a regular basis on a schedule of at least thirty (30) hours per week. Regular full-time employees are fully eligible for all available benefits, as described in the Employees Benefits Package, the aa Employee Handbook, and all other established AA policies. Optional benefits may also be available to employees.

REGULAR PART-TIME

A regular part-time employee is one who is employed on a regular basis on a schedule of less than thirty (30) hours per week. Regular part-time employees who work at least twenty (20) hours per week are fully eligible for all available benefits as described. Optional benefits may also be available to employees.

SUBSTITUTE

A substitute employee is one who is employed on a continuous basis but only works as needed. The school's practice is to keep substitute employees on the payroll year-round. For this reason, no definite date of termination of the employment is communicated to these employees.

TEMPORARY

A temporary employee is one who is employed on a short-term basis for a specific project that is either for a limited period (less than 4 ½ months) of time or day to day and is so informed at the time of hire. Temporary employees are eligible for benefits if they work 10 or more hours in any given work week. Temporary employees are entitled to overtime pay and/or compensatory time under the federal and State Fair Labor Standards Acts.

SEASONAL

Seasonal jobs include duties that arise and that are or become available only during certain times of the year. A seasonal employee is one who is employed on a continuous basis but only works for a limited period of time. The school's practice is to keep seasonal employees on the payroll year-round. For this reason, no definite date of termination of the employment is communicated to these employees.

ADDITIONAL DUTIES*

AA employees may be required to perform additional duty assignments from time to time that may or may not be specifically listed on or as part of the employee's job description. Employees will be duly informed if they are assigned an additional duty by a Campus Administrator in order to fulfill campus or district operational requirements. Assigned duties are those that are in addition to specific job duties. Such "additional" duties are not eligible for extra pay and may be during or after normal business hours and may include the following: (list is non-exhaustive)

1. Drop-off, Pick-up duty;
2. Testing duty;
3. Lunch monitor duty;
4. Recess or hall duty;
5. Family and community engagement events;
6. Extracurricular activity duty; and
7. Any other duty(s) assigned by the Campus or District Administrator.

****Additional duty or extracurricular assignments may be reassigned at any time. Administrators will prepare a schedule of these duty assignments. A copy of the schedule will be available and orientation will be provided for duty requirements.***

EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

Advantage Academy's Employee Orientation Program is designed to welcome new employees into the spirit and culture of AA, to clearly define company expectations and to set the stage for employee success. During the Employee Orientation period, employees will receive important fundamental information from various representatives of AA that include, company policies and procedures, information regarding the basic performance requirements of your position as well as campus, office and departmental safety and security programs. Other information necessary to acquaint new employees with Advantage Academy and their prospective duties will also be provided during orientation.

Employees will be asked during this orientation period to complete all necessary paperwork such as medical benefits plan enrollment forms, beneficiary designation forms and appropriate federal, state and local tax forms, if not previously completed. Employees will be required to present information establishing their identity and their eligibility to work in the United States in accordance with applicable federal laws. No employee will be allowed to begin working until all required information has been provided and verified.

INTRODUCTORY REVIEW PERIOD

All *new employees*, *current employees* (who have been promoted or transferred to a new division/department/campus/location) and *rehires* (past 90 days), shall be placed on a 90-day review period. During this 90-day period the employee's job performance will be reviewed using specific criteria. This period gives both Advantage Academy and the employee time to assess the new job duties, responsibilities and capabilities. During the review period, employee's job performance along with other essential attributes will be carefully monitored by the company. The review period may be extended, if additional time is required to further review the employee. During the Review Period, the following shall apply for ***new employees***:

- Introductory review period is first 90 days of employment, beginning with start date. You will be evaluated by your supervisor by the end of the 90 day period. *New employees* understand there are no "personal leave absences" within the 90-day probationary period. "*Personal leave absences*" within the 90-day probationary period will be deducted from payroll.

STAFF / PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT*

A critical component of school improvement is collaboration between employees, their supervisors and administrators with on-going support by the district. The Texas Education Agency has approved a select number of school days that Advantage Academy may designate as development days, in order to assist AA with the continued education and professional training of its employees. Growth opportunities are available throughout the school year and during the summer and shall include SD/PD sessions and weekly Staff and District Meetings.

Staff/Professional Development opportunities and campus and district staff meetings endeavor to serve two broad purposes: (1) improving the skills and knowledge of educators through training, study, expert exchange and professional dialogue, and (2) improving the educational aspirations, achievement and attainment of students through stronger leadership and teaching. SD/PD opportunities may also include

small-group training sessions where educators will work collaboratively while training in specific skills and sharing expertise.

Advantage Academy will provide professional development and other learning opportunities to all its employees. Employee attendance at all scheduled Staff Development opportunities is mandatory. If an employee must be absent, that request must be pre-approved by the HR Department at least 24 hours in advance. Employees who do not comply with Staff/Professional Development attendance requirements will receive an automatic deduction of one day's pay, per each day missed and may face possible disciplinary action.

****If an absence is due to employee illness or medical situation, HR and the employee's immediate supervisor must be notified and proper documentation must be provided.***

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

The performance review process is intended to assist the company in maintaining consistent high level job performance. All Advantage Academy employees will receive at least one evaluation each school year. Teachers will be formally appraised at least annually using the TTESS appraisal system.

a) Performance reviews are intended to document or rate the performance of employees using approved performance standards as a means of measuring their effectiveness on the job and identifying areas where improvement may be needed; **b)** Improvement plans when applicable, may be implemented in order that an employee meets the performance standards and requirements set by the company and their position; **c)** Employees who receive an overall performance rating of "Needs Improvement" will not be eligible for a pay increase or any approved incentive pay; **d)** Based on yearly budget projections, employees who become eligible by meeting the performance standards and requirements on the following review will not receive approved pay increases or incentive pay until the following school year; and **e)** Employees who receives (2) two consecutive "Needs Improvement" ratings may be demoted; have their rate of pay decreased accordingly; or be dismissed.

Employees and their Supervisors are responsible for working together on a one-to-one basis throughout the school year to achieve and maintain the company's performance standards, expectations and their relative priority.

TEACHER OBSERVATIONS

AA has adopted the TTESS system for teacher classroom observation, this appraisal process includes:

- a) At least one appraisal each year;
- b) A conference between the teacher and the appraiser that is diagnostic and prescriptive with regard to remediation needed in overall performance by category (domains); and
- c) Criteria based on observable, job-related conduct, including:
- d) Teachers' implementation of discipline management procedures; and
- e) Performance of the teachers' students.

TEACHER EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

The Teacher Excellence program establishes a thoughtful approach to measuring the impact educators have on each student and acknowledges those individuals. Its purpose is to define and assess educator excellence through a fair, accurate, and rigorous evaluation system. The goal of the program is to improve the quality of teacher evaluations, provide meaningful feedback on student learning and growth, and increase teacher retention and overall professional growth. Certified teachers, both nationally and with the State of Texas, can apply for a designation to add to their teaching certificate:

Master, Exemplary or Recognized Designation. The TEP evaluates educator performance annually through 3 distinct perspectives:

- teacher practice,
- student growth and performance, and
- student experience.

Advantage Academy uses the TTESS rubric and process for teacher observation. All National Board and Texas Certified educators qualify for the program.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITIONS

Advantage Academy recognizes its employee(s) for outstanding school contributions, professional achievements, service performance, character and leadership qualities. Award candidates are nominated by their respective Campus Principal or Department Director with final determination made by District Leadership. To be considered for a recognition award, individuals must be a regular full-time or regular part-time employee, must have completed their introductory review period (90 day) with a positive result and must meet all company performance, attendance and conduct standards.

District Recognitions:

- Teacher of The Year
- Employee of The Year
- Pillars of The Year
- Above and Beyond Awards
- Professional Growth (graduations and certifications)
- Retiring from AA per TRS guidelines

Additionally, the District will recognize employees for their years of service to the organization at 5 year, 10 year, 15 year or 20 year mark and at each 5 years thereafter. Service awards are distributed in the fall of the following year of completed service.

Campus and Departmental Recognitions (list is non-exhaustive):

- Maternity
- Weddings/Newly Married
- Position Recognitions (administrative professional, nurses day, etc.)

PROMOTIONS / JOB OPENINGS

All employees shall be considered for promotion based on predetermined qualifications that do not arbitrarily discriminate against any qualified person in accordance with the (EEOC) Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. It is Advantage Academy's intent to identify and promote individuals who demonstrate the greatest and most desirable level of skills, knowledge, abilities, adaptations, fitness and other qualifications appropriate to the position available. Job vacancies are posted on the company's web site at www.advantageacademy.org under "Careers." Postings will remain for a minimum of five days or until openings are filled. Current employees interested in a job opening may apply by completing a new employment application and submitting it online. Teachers who receive designations from their formal evaluation receive additional compensation. There are 3 designations a teacher can achieve: **Recognized**, **Master** and **Exemplary**.

REASSIGNMENTS AND TRANSFERS

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the Superintendent or designee when the Superintendent determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the district.

Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract. Campus reassignments must be approved by the district and accepted by the receiving principal except when reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes. An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor.

MEDICAL / HEALTH / ALCOHOL / DRUG TESTING

The district shall conduct medical, health, alcohol and drug testing in accordance with federal and state regulations, as well as district policy, of employees for use of alcohol or a controlled substance that violates any law or district policy.

As a condition of employment, some applicants may be required to undergo medical, health, alcohol and/or drug testing. Any offer of employment that an applicant receives from AA is contingent upon, among other things, the satisfactory completion and clear result (non-positive) of job or duty applicable screenings and a determination by AA that the candidate is capable of performing the essential functions of the position that has been offered, with or without reasonable accommodations.

As a condition of continued employment, current employees may also be required to undergo periodic medical, health, alcohol or drug testing. These screenings may be a result of basic job requirements, poor duty performance, incident policy requirements or changes in company policy and will be set at times specified by Advantage Academy. It should be understood that AA must receive a full examining physician report from the employee regarding a required test.

---COMPENSATION---

REGULAR PAY PROCEDURES

AA's compensation programs are designed and administered in such a way as to comply with all applicable laws and to provide fair and equitable treatment for all employees. The position of each employee's salary within the pay range that has been established for his/her job will be primarily determined by the job position, employee's relevant experience, service years and job performance, including conduct and attendance. The pay ranges that have been established for each of the organization's job positions have been determined in an effort to be: (a) internally equitable, i.e., fair when compared with the ranges established for other Advantage Academy job positions, as well as (b) externally competitive when compared with the rates paid by other employers for comparable jobs.

An employee whose performance review indicates a "Meets Standards" rating or better will continue to receive a rate of pay that falls within the pay range that has been established for his/her job. Employees beginning work after the payroll cut-off date of their hire month will be paid on the payday of the following month. All required deductions, such as federal, state and local taxes and all authorized voluntary deductions such as health insurance contributions will be withheld automatically from your paycheck.

Approved timesheets and other payroll related requests must be submitted in time to meet the company's payroll cut-off dates. Compensation for payroll requests made after cut-off dates will be paid the following month. For specific payroll cut-off dates, please refer to the school website or the employee calendar.

- *Employees who fail to sign-in or check-out as required, risk the loss of related compensation.*
- *Payroll advances are not allowed and will not be considered or approved.*

DIRECT DEPOSIT

All regular compensation (monthly paychecks) to AA employees must be deposited into an appropriate financial institution, checking or savings account. Monthly paychecks will be automatically deposited into an account of the employee's choice, at no cost.

ANNUALIZED COMPENSATION

The district pays all salaried employees over 12 months regardless of the number of months employed during the school year. Salaried employees will be paid in equal monthly payments, beginning with the first pay period of the school year.

NON EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

Employees who are non-exempt are not allowed to work over forty (40) hours in any standard work week without prior written approval from their immediate supervisor and the HR Department.

EXTRA DUTY PAY

Employees, who may be required by organizational obligations to temporarily work outside their department, fill-in for a position with a higher pay range or work extended hours, may be eligible to receive additional compensation. All extra duty assignments must receive prior written consent from the employee's supervisor and the supervisor must obtain written approval from the HR Department.

ON-CALL PAY

Some employees, depending on job position, scheduling or divisional obligation may be required to be available for work on an "On-Call" basis. "On-Call" pay or "Comp-Time" may be made available to qualifying employees. Supervisors will notify employees of the proper procedures if "On-Call" work is required.

INCENTIVE PAY

Incentive pay is additional compensation paid to an employee or group of employees that is in addition to their normal compensation. The purpose of incentive pay is to recognize and/or reward employee performance, achievements or accomplishments for a specific task or work accomplished over a designated period of time. Special project work or completion due dates may also be considered for incentive pay. An employee's *performance review* will be considered before incentive pay is awarded (**see Performance Reviews.**)

NOTE: *Some incentive pay is based on specific grant criteria and may not at the discretion of the District.*

STIPENDS

Employees who perform extra-curricular or co-curricular duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their regular pay. The company's "Stipend Listing" will include all duties/responsibilities that qualify for a set stipend, such as: coach, coordinator, sponsor, etc. In all cases, stipend compensation will be paid at the successful completion of all program duties/responsibilities. AA will not honor stipend compensation if the stipend recipient does not meet all program expectations.

AA will not honor stipend compensation if recipient employment with the school is terminated for any reason. Stipend duties/responsibilities are not part of the recipient's contractual agreement with the School District and as such, the recipient should hold no expectation of continuing assignment to any stipend program. Performance stipends become available from time to time based on grant awards, which are specifically designated as such. Any such performance stipend is not part of the District's stipend policy.

(See District (stipend) Policy Criteria for more details)

REDUCTIONS IN PAY

From time to time employees may experience a "Reduction in Pay" for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: organizational downsizing, departmental job reclassification, budgetary constraints, employment reassignment or job performance. In such cases, the company reserves the right to reduce an employee's rate of pay in order to meet company/divisional situational requirements. An employee who receives (2) two consecutive "Below Expectations" performance review ratings may have their rate of pay decreased accordingly. Employees will be properly notified prior to any "Reduction in Pay."

GARNISHMENT OF WAGES

Advantage Academy shall honor all federal and state wage garnishment requests. Employees will be notified by the payroll department immediately upon receipt of such a request.

EARLY SEPARATION

An employee who separates from Advantage Academy for any reason within their first 30 calendar work days will have their compensation converted to the substitute/temporary pay rate.

---BENEFITS---

Employee benefits will include participation in the Texas Teacher Retirement System, group health insurance, and group life insurance with partial premiums paid by Advantage Academy. Eligible interested employees must submit appropriate forms and other required paperwork directly to the Human Resources Department. The District's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the Board of Directors. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, premiums, and eligibility requirements are available from the HR Department.

ELIGIBILITY

Full-time and part-time (*see above*) employees are eligible for benefits enrollment. Coverage will be continued as long as the employee remains on active status. In order to prevent loss of coverage while on leave without pay, you must make arrangements to continue to pay your premiums.

TOTAL COMPENSATION STATEMENT

This benefit statement will briefly outline the benefits that are provided by Advantage Academy as well as the cost of these benefits. The statement summarizes each benefit and illustrates the significance of your benefits package as part of your total compensation.

FLEXSYSTEM (FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT)

This plan will increase your take-home pay by reducing your taxable income. It allows you to save up to 30% on your eligible healthcare and/or dependent care expenses every year by using pre-tax dollars. This plan is a valuable pre-tax benefit; by considering how much you spend on healthcare and/or dependent care expenses for you and your qualified dependents in one year including prescription drugs/medications, medical/dental office visit copays, eye exams and prescription glasses/lenses, vaccinations, and daycare tuition.

403(b) PLAN

All eligible employees may participate in a special tax sheltered savings plan, known as a 403(b) or Tax Sheltered Annuity (TSA). To participate, employees contribute a portion of their pay (through payroll deduction) to an annuity or mutual fund on a pre-tax basis. The money earned through these accounts is not subject to taxes as long as the money remains in the plan.

BENEFIT ENROLLMENT

All eligible employees must waive or accept each benefit offered. The plan year for benefits is Sept.1-Aug.31 of each year. Employees will have the opportunity to make changes in the benefits of their choice at open enrollment in August. Changes may also be made if you have a Qualified Family Status Change.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Group health insurance coverage is available through TRS ActiveCare in accordance with TRS Active Care provisions. One of the goals at Advantage Academy is to keep employees insurance costs as low as possible. Therefore, starting with the 2nd year of employment, the school will increase its contribution toward the eligible employees TRS medical insurance premium, even if TRS premiums do not increase that year. Employees can access the TRS website at <https://www.trs.texas.gov/Pages/Homepage.aspx>.

DENTAL INSURANCE

Advantage Academy offers two dental plans to choose from, a DHMO plan and a PPO plan. The DHMO plan provides coverage when you visit a dentist who is in-network with the insurance plan. You pay copay for each covered procedure. The PPO plan allows you to go to any dentist and it pays 100% for preventive procedures, 80% for basic procedures, and 50% for major procedures.

VISION INSURANCE

When an employee has vision insurance, that employee pays a premium and the insurance company will cover part or all of the cost for vision care. Coverage may differ between in and out of network eye doctors. Employees will typically pay a portion of their eye care cost through copays.

ACCIDENT PLAN

Accident insurance helps protect you financially in the event of an accident. Medical insurance doesn't in most cases cover all the expenses that result from an accident/injury. Accident insurance can help fill in coverage gaps as you pay out of pocket medical bills, including deductibles and copays. Accident insurance may be used to cover various expenses associated with an accident such as: fractures, dislocations, burns, concussions, lacerations, eye injuries, torn knee cartilage, and ruptured discs. Medical services and treatment such as ambulance, emergency room care, hospital confinement, and physician follow up visits are also examples of available coverage.

CRITICAL ILLNESS

Critical Illness insurance helps supplement your regular medical coverage in the event of a major critical illness such as a stroke or heart attack. Critical Illness insurance is designed to cover out of pocket expenses not covered by your medical plan, such as your deductible and coinsurance. Illness can often lead to extended time away from work, and critical illness benefits can help offset some of those lost wages and help you pay routine living expenses.

CANCER PLAN

Cancer insurance benefits may be used to cover various expenses associated with cancer such as: inpatient hospital stays, chemo and radiation, new or experimental treatment, travel and lodging cost, routine living expenses, rent or mortgage, and out of pocket medical expenses such as your deductible and coinsurance. Cancer insurance helps supplement your regular medical and disability insurance as you incur various medical and related expenses during cancer treatment.

BASIC LIFE INSURANCE & AD&D

To make sure that an employee's family is protected, Advantage Academy provides all full time employees with \$25,000 of life insurance and accidental death insurance.

VOLUNTARY TERM LIFE INSURANCE

Voluntary term life insurance is available to those employees that want more coverage than is provided them by Advantage Academy. Voluntary group term life insurance is an affordable option for those employees seeking additional coverage or who wish to purchase coverage on their spouse and children.

SHORT TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE*

Short term disability can help a person remain financially stable should they become injured or ill off the job and cannot work for the short term. Short term disability plan benefits begin on the 8th day for injury and 8th day for illness. It will pay 60% to a max of \$1,000 per week for up to 12 weeks depending on the injury or sickness. **Employee must opt for this benefit when enrolling for or waiving benefits.*

LONG TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE*

Long term disability can help you remain financially stable should you become injured or ill off the job and cannot work during a long term. Plan benefits begin on the 91st day and pay 60% of your monthly income up to a max of \$5,000 a month. **Employee must opt for this benefit when enrolling for or waiving benefits.*

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Employee Assistance Program is intended to promote well-being and productivity. Our Employee Assistance Program is provided through TRS ActiveCare Behavioral Health Services. These services are provided through TRS ActiveCare Primary, TRS ActiveCare Primary+, TRS ActiveCare 2 and TRS ActiveCare HD plans. Wellness tools as well self-management programs are available to improve overall well-being and health.

Participation in the Employee Assistance Program will not excuse employees from complying with established AA policies or from meeting normal job requirements during or after receiving assistance. Participation in the Employee Assistance Program will not stop or delay any evaluation or disciplinary action against an employee who is not performing up to acceptable standards or who has violated Advantage Academy rules or policies.

--- LEAVES OF ABSENCE---

PERSONAL LEAVE

Regular full and part-time employees are eligible for four personal days. Personal leave can only be taken in (4hr) half or (8hr) full day increments. Leave (days) taken beyond the employee's available leave will be deducted from the employee's payroll according to the days that fall within that payroll period. Employees who exhibit terminal or excessive absences will be subject to policy consequences.

An employee wishing to take personal leave must submit an Absence Request, at least 5 days in advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the campus principal and the supervisor.

- Employees may not take leave during the first two or last two weeks of the school year. Exceptions include personal and family medical emergencies with proper notification from a

licensed physician. An employee will be disciplined and deducted the daily rate of pay for any leave taken on these days.

- Employees serving a probationary period must first satisfactorily complete that probation before taking leave (does not include transfers). Exceptions include personal and family medical emergencies only with proper certification from a licensed physician. An employee will be deducted the daily rate of pay for leave taken on these days.
- Personal leave may not be used to extend days off before or after breaks, holidays or vacations. An employee will be deducted the daily rate of pay for leave on these days unless the leave is approved by the HR Department. If an employee is sick on those days, that employee must submit a medical certification of illness upon return to work.
- Personal leave may not be more than 2 consecutive workdays. Any days at and above three will be deducted at the employee's daily rate of pay except in extenuating circumstances.
- Available vacation days will be used to cover any personal leave taken once an employee has exhausted their accrued leave time/days*.

**** Other restrictions may apply for employees who have exhausted their accrued leave and must be absent.***

Personal Leave Blackout Days*

Blackout days are days in which NO personal leave may be taken. An employee who must take a personal day on a blackout day will be docked for that day. Blackout days include the following:

- First ten days and last ten days of the instructional school year (check instructional calendar.)
- Any day(s) prior to or following a break, holiday or vacation.
- Any day(s) where state assessments are required, including STAAR, EOC, ACT/SAT and TELPAS.
- Any SD/PD day.

**** Extenuating circumstances will be taken under consideration. Please contact the HR Department for approvals.***

ROLL-FORWARD DAYS*

Advantage Academy allows eligible employees* to roll-forward unused personal leave days. Unused Personal Leave that has been rolled-forward can only be accessed after the current year allotted personal leave days have been exhausted.

**** Roll-Forward Days must be approved by the HR Department prior to use.***

**** An "eligible employee" is an employee that has been employed with Advantage Academy for at least 12 months and has worked at least 1,250 hours during a 12 month period prior to the start of the supplemental leave. The 12 months do not need to be consecutive months.***

**** Restrictions apply for employees who have exhausted their accrued leave and must be absent***

EMERGENCY SICK / BEREAVEMENT LEAVE*

In addition to four days of personal leave, regular full and part-time employees are eligible for five Emergency Sick/Bereavement Leave days each year. Reasons for this type of leave allow very little, if any, advance planning. Emergency Sick/Bereavement Leave will be granted to employees who contact their supervisor at least 1 hour prior to the beginning of their shift or when possible submit their request by using the online absence system. In cases where advanced notice isn't possible, employees must contact their supervisor as soon as possible and submit an Absence Request immediately.

****Employees who take advantage of emergency sick/bereavement leave must submit documentation supporting the reason for their leave within two days of returning to work.***

****All personal and other accumulated leave must be exhausted before using Emergency Sick/Bereavement Leave.***

**** Emergency Sick Days are awarded for “employee” sickness only. Employee must use available “Personnal Days” to cover any absence related to a sick family member.***

EXTENDED SICK / PARENTAL LEAVE*

In addition to Emergency Sick/Bereavement Leave, regular full-time employees who have been employed by Advantage Academy for one (1) calendar year (when leave begins) are eligible for Extended Sick/Parental Leave. Extended Sick/Parental Leave includes up to four (4) weeks of paid leave. Extended Sick/Parental Leave is available to employees who are absent from work for five or more consecutive days due to a medical issue affecting the employee or for maternity leave. Extended Sick/Parental Leave will be granted to employees who submit their request by using the online absence system. Employees without prior knowledge must submit their Absence Request within 3 days of their return to work.

**** Employees absent due to a contagious illness shall submit, upon return to work, a medical certification of illness and of his or her fitness to return to work.***

****Employees who take advantage of extended sick/parental leave must submit documentation supporting the reason for their leave within two days of returning to work.***

****All personal and other accumulated leave must be exhausted before using Extended Sick/Parental Leave.***

NOTICE: Advantage Academy defines the term “immediate family” as: **1)** spouse, **2)** Son or daughter, including a biological, adopted, or foster child, a son-or daughter-in-law, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis, **3)** Parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, or other individual who stands in loco parentis to the employee, **4)** Sibling, stepsibling, sibling-in-law, **5)** Grandparent and grandchild, and **6)** Any person who may be residing in the employee’s household at the time of illness or death or who is dependent on the employee for care or assistance. To confirm a family relationship, the district may require the employee using leave to provide reasonable documentation, such as a child’s birth certificate, a marriage license, a court order or a sworn statement from the employee.

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)

The FMLA provides employees who meet certain eligibility criteria with unpaid leave for certain family and medical reasons during a 12-month period. During a period of FMLA leave, eligible employees are entitled to continue group health plan coverage as if they had continued to work. At the conclusion of the leave, subject to some exceptions, eligible employees generally have the right to return to the same or an equivalent position and equivalent pay, benefits and working conditions.

NOTE: The following FMLA provisions and all references to FMLA in this Handbook and in school policy are applicable only to employees eligible for FMLA. The following text is adapted from the federal notice, Employee Rights Under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Specific information that Advantage Academy has adopted to implement the FMLA follows this general notice.

Leave Entitlements

Eligible employees who work for a covered employer can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the following reasons:

- (1) The birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- (2) To bond with a child (leave must be taken within one year of the child’s birth or placement);
- (3) To care for the employee’s spouse, child, or parent who has a qualifying serious health condition;

- (4) For the employee's own qualifying serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job; or
- (5) For qualifying exigencies related to the deployment or military service of a family member who is the employee's spouse, child, or parent.

An eligible employee who is a covered service member's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin may also take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member with a serious injury or illness.

An employee does not need to use leave in one block. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, employees may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule.

Employees may choose, or an employer may require, use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave.

If an employee substitutes paid leave for FMLA leave, the employee must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

Benefits and Protections

While employees are on FMLA leave, employers must continue health insurance coverage as if the employees were not on leave. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to the same job or one nearly identical to it with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions. An employer may not interfere with an individual's FMLA rights or retaliate against someone for using or trying to use FMLA leave, opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA, or being involved in any proceeding under or related to the FMLA.

Eligibility Requirements

An employee who works for a covered employer must meet three criteria in order to be eligible for FMLA leave. The employee must:

- Have worked for the employer for at least 12 months;
- Have at least 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months before taking leave; and
- Work at a location where the employee has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the employee's worksite.

Requesting Leave

Generally, employees must give 30-days' advance notice of the need for FMLA leave. If it is not possible to give 30-days' notice, an employee must notify the employer as soon as possible and, generally, follow the employer's usual procedures.

Employees do not have to share a medical diagnosis, but must provide enough information to the employer so it can determine if the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. Sufficient information could include informing an employer that the employee is or will be unable to perform his or her job functions, that a family member cannot perform daily activities, or that hospitalization or continuing medical treatment is necessary. Employees must inform the employer if the need for leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employers can require a certification or periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. If the employer determines that the certification is incomplete, it must provide a written notice indicating what additional information is required.

Employer Responsibilities

Once an employer becomes aware that an employee's need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, the employer must notify the employee if he or she is eligible for FMLA leave and, if

eligible, must also provide a notice of rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. If the employee is not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for ineligibility. Employers must notify its employees if leave will be designated as FMLA leave, and if so, how much leave will be designated as FMLA leave.

Enforcement

Employees may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer. The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

Please use the following for additional information:

- 1) 1-866-4-USWAGE
- 2) (1-866-497-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627
- 3) www.dol.gov/whd

Calculating FMLA Leave Year

Advantage Academy uses the following method to establish the 12-month period in which FMLA leave may be used:

- A fixed 12-month period starting on an employee's employment anniversary date (i.e., the 12-month period starting on the employee's first day of employment).

Use of Paid Leave

FMLA leave runs concurrently with accrued personal leave, temporary disability leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. Advantage Academy will designate the leave as FMLA, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

Employees who have been employed by Advantage Academy for one (1) calendar year or more at the time that their FMLA leave begins will be entitled to a total of four (4) weeks of paid leave, which must be used concurrently with any accrued personal leave the employee has at the time of their FMLA leave. For example, an employee who has been employed by Advantage Academy for more than one (1) year and who has one (1) week of accrued personal leave at the time that they begin taking FMLA leave, will receive a total of four (4) weeks of paid leave at the beginning of the employee's FMLA leave. All personal leave must be used during the first four weeks of the employee's FMLA leave.

Combined Leave for Spouses

Spouses who are employed by Advantage Academy are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of FMLA leave to care for a parent with a serious health condition, or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. Military caregiver leave for spouses is limited to a combined total of 26 weeks.

Intermittent Leave

When medically necessary or in the case of a qualifying exigency, an employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule. Advantage Academy does not permit the use of intermittent or reduced-schedule leave for the care of a newborn child or for adoption or placement of a child with the employee.

Fitness for Duty

An employee that takes FMLA leave due to the employee's own serious health condition shall provide, before resuming work, a fitness-for-duty certification from the health care provider. If certification of the employee's ability to perform essential job function is required, Advantage Academy shall provide a

list of essential job functions (e.g., job description) to the employee with the FMLA designation notice to share with the health care provider.

Reinstatement*

An employee returning to work at the end of FMLA leave will be returned to the same position held when the leave began or to an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment. In certain cases, instructional employees desiring to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue on family and medical leave until the end of the semester. The additional time off is not counted against the employee's FMLA entitlement, and Advantage Academy will maintain the employees group health insurance and reinstate the employee at the end of the leave according to school policy and procedure.

****Employees may not return to work without written approval from the Superintendent. HR will acquire approval on behalf of employee.***

Failure to Return

If, at the expiration of FMLA leave, an employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, Advantage Academy may require the employee to reimburse Advantage Academy's share of insurance premiums paid during any portion of FMLA leave when the employee was on unpaid leave. If the employee fails to return to work for a reason beyond the employee's control, such as a continuing personal or family serious health condition or a spouse being unexpectedly transferred more than 75 miles from Advantage Academy, the school may not require the employee to reimburse Advantage Academy's share of premiums paid.

Contact

Employees that require FMLA leave or have questions should contact the Human Resources Department at 214-276-5866 or hr@advantageacademy.org for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

CIVIL LEAVE

Civil Leave is a form of leave for absences required due to a court appearance for a subpoena or for jury duty.

Subpoena Covered by Civil Leave

When an employee is subpoenaed or directed by proper authority to appear as a **witness** in a court case that is directly related to school/work and court is conducted during the employee's regular work schedule, court proceedings are considered work time, not Civil Leave. When an employee attends court in connection with official school/work duties, no leave is required. If court attendance is required on a non-work day, the hours noted will be considered Extra-Duty.

Subpoena NOT Covered by Civil Leave

An employee who is a **witness, plaintiff or defendant** in a court case that is not directly related to school/work is not eligible for Civil Leave. The employee may, however, use available leave or other paid time off to cover absences as approved.

JURY DUTY

Only hours of jury duty that occur during an eligible employee's regular work schedule are considered Civil Leave. This includes required appearance at the court during jury selection. Jury duty hours occurring outside the employee's regular work schedule are not compensable.

Return to Work

If more than half of the work day remains after the employee completes his/her court duties for the day, the employee must return to work or use other available leave for the absence. If less than half of the work day remains after the employee completes his/her court duties for the day, the employee may designate the remainder of the day as Civil Leave or return to work at employee's discretion.

Upon return to work if not submitted prior, the employee must submit a LOA Request and provide HR with a copy of the Certificate of Service from the court clerk or bailiff. Failure to submit a certificate may cause the employee to be denied compensation and/or result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

Please contact HR for more information concerning Personal Leaves.

MILITARY LEAVE (USERRA)

A military leave of absence will be granted to employees who are absent from work because of service in the United States uniformed armed services in accordance with the Uniformed Armed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Advance notice of military service is required.

VOTING

An employee who is a registered voter, scheduled to work during the time when the polls are open and does not have two (2) hours of continuous time off-duty before or following their shift assignment, according to the State law, will be granted two (2) hours of continuous leave for the purpose of voting while the polls are open. Voting leave will be granted for local, state and federal elections.

Off-duty time prior to or after work is to be considered when determining the two (2) hours of continuous time off-duty. *(If polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m.)*, an employee scheduled to work from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. will be allowed to report to work one-half hour late but has two (2) continuous hours of time off-duty following the end of their shift assignment before the polls close and therefore, they are not eligible for a company LOA. An employee, who is scheduled to work from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., will be allowed to report to work one-half hour late or leave one and one-half hour early for the purpose of voting.

---HOLIDAYS AND VACATIONS---

HOLIDAYS

The following holidays are observed by Advantage Academy. Please check the School Calendar as these days may change from year to year.

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Spring Break
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day

Employees are required to be in attendance on the day before and the day following any holiday. Employees will be deducted (pay) if they are absent on those days. Furthermore, Holidays are not

considered as time worked for the purpose of satisfying the notice requirement for employment separation.

Since it is not always possible for all employees to be off on a given holiday due to divisional/departmental/campus requirements, outside scheduling, time sensitive or special projects, employees will be compensated for hours worked outside of the fixed holiday schedule under "Extra Duty". Compensation method shall be agreed upon and approved prior to days worked. Holiday schedules are published on the Advantage Academy School Calendar.

VACATIONS

Employees designated as **10** or **11-month employees** shall consider their non-duty obligated months as their "vacation period." Advantage Academy has designated the first week of July as a **12-month employee** vacation week; all other remaining vacation must be approved by the Superintendent and will be based on campus/department requirements, scheduling and/or specific needs. Employees are required to be in attendance on the day before and the day following their vacation period.

Requests for vacation must be approved in advance by the employees Supervisor, Director and the Superintendent; approval will be awarded in accordance with departmental/campus staffing requirements and school district needs as determined by the Superintendent and therefore is subject to change.

12-month employees (part time employees are not eligible) receive vacation allotments as follows:

- Departmental restrictions apply;
- Earned days only for the first year of employment;
- Employees with ten (10) years or less of creditable service shall be eligible for two (2) weeks of vacation annually;
- Employees working in years eleven (11) through twenty (20) of creditable service shall be granted three (3) weeks of vacation annually;
- Employees beginning their twenty first (21) year of creditable service shall be granted four (4) weeks of vacation annually.

12-month Consistent with providing quality educational and support services, staffing requirements and non-company orientated scheduling; some employees may be required to work during the vacation period. Employees will be advised in advance if schedule changes become necessary to meet company needs or operational requirements. Designated employees who are required to work during the vacation period or who do not wish to/cannot use their vacation period or part of their vacation period may be compensated for the vacation days not taken, with prior district approval.

NOTICE: *Vacation days must be taken consecutively and not before, after or during a blackout period. Fridays are included in a vacation week (equivalent to a 40 hour week).*

NOTICE: *Actual number of vacation days allotted, will be determined based on date of hire (prorated.)*

NOTICE: *All vacation period days that are not compensated must be taken by the end of the first semester.*

NOTICE: *All employees should be aware that the Payroll Department posts vacation days in advance at the beginning of the new school year. It is possible, upon separation from the district prior to completing the school year that all vacation days may not have been earned and the employee will have to repay the monies for the unearned days.*

---EXPECTATIONS---

All district employees are role models for the district's students, co-workers and the school district and are therefore responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees shall be courteous to one another and the public, working together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the district. All employees shall be expected to adhere to the standards of conduct set out in this handbook, the districts "Ethics and Business Conduct" and, if applicable, the "Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators."

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND POLICIES

Employees of AA shall be subject to and comply with all state and federal laws, district policies, procedures, administrative directives, rules and regulations that are in effect at the time of their employment or that may become effective during their employment.

SAFETY AND HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

All employees shall read, understand and adhere to district safety policy rules and regulations and shall report unsafe/unhealthy conditions or practices to the appropriate supervisor.

ATTENDANCE AND PROMPTNESS

Proper workplace decorum is required of all employees and is an essential employment function. This requirement includes regular attendance at work as well as arriving and departing at the times established for the employees position, duties or the facility. It is the responsibility of the employee to meet standards of attendance. Chronic, habitual and/or excessive absenteeism or tardiness is not acceptable behavior. Directors schedule employees to work in order to meet operational requirements and quality standards. Failure to report for work on time or not to report at all affects AA's ability to provide its educational, business and support services to its customers. It also places an undue burden on those who do report for work as scheduled. It is, therefore, essential that employees report to work on time in accordance with departmental work schedules.

An employee's absenteeism and tardy records are significant factors used in the evaluating process to determine pay increases, promotions and performance stipends. An employee who arrives past their start time will be considered tardy. Employees who arrive 1.5 hours after their scheduled start time will be charged a half-day's absence. Employees who arrive 4 hours after their scheduled start time will be charged a full-day absence. Employees who leave work 1.5 hours before their scheduled end time will be charged a half day absence. An employee who has excessive absences, excused or unexcused, shall be disciplined according to district policy. If an employee is absent and does not call in for three (3) consecutive scheduled workdays, he/she will be subject to abandonment of position.

Please contact the HR Department for full Absence/Tardy Policies and Procedures.

Employees who will be absent are required to submit an absence request online and contact their supervisor prior to their beginning time. Employees should check departmental procedures regarding who to contact and when contact must be made. Excessive and/or undocumented absences may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination. A doctor's release will be required and must be presented to the department office or supervisor before returning to work for any absence of more than three (3) consecutive work days because of personal illness. Advantage Academy does reserve the right to check with the doctor on an employee's work status to determine if the employee can perform his/her assigned duties.

Time and Attendance System

Employees are required to utilize the established time and attendance system by scanning their ID badge, using the app, or logging into the system. This system records all in and out swipes by badge number. An employee who clocks in after their beginning time will be officially counted as tardy. Frequent occurrences of arriving to work late, will be addressed with the employee for corrective measures. All swipes on the time and attendance computer shall be made by the employee personally and no one else. Any attempt to alter or edit time records or the system is unauthorized. Excessive tardiness can justify termination.

DRESS

AA must ensure that the appearance of each employee is consistent with a professional image and includes standards of hygiene and safety. Employee's dress should always be neat, exhibit good judgment in style and be professional in appearance. AA has established three levels of dress for its employees who are on duty or performing any type work for the school. All new employees should contact their supervisor regarding appropriate levels of dress including all departmental exceptions or district dress requirements and restrictions. Company Dress Levels are as follows:

Business Dress: Business Dress wear will be required as communicated and shall be announced for select special occasions. Slacks/dresses/skirts, dress shirts/blouses and ties are required. Business suits, jackets, or blazers are mandatory. Shoes should be considered dress.

Business Professional: Business Professional wear is the company's standard dress option. This dress option is displayed Monday through Friday, unless otherwise indicated. Business Professional wear is defined as dress that is appropriate for a professional office environment and AA purposes. This includes: slacks, dress pants/skirts, wool or flannel pants/skirts, long sleeved, collared dress shirts that must be tucked in (men). Jackets and ties are optional. Synthetic materials are acceptable but must be appropriate for professional dress. Shoes should be considered dress. This dress option may be a standard requirement per the employee's position, department or location.

Business Relaxed: This dress option may be displayed every Monday through Friday unless otherwise indicated. Business Relaxed wear is defined as dress that is appropriate for a professional office environment and AA purposes. This includes: cotton (khaki type) pants/skirts, long or short sleeved cotton shirts or collared polo (must remain tucked in (men)). Synthetic materials are acceptable but must be appropriate for business wear. Shoes can be casual but appropriate for business wear. Tennis shoes may be displayed with this dress option provided they are neutral in color. This dress option may be a standard requirement per the employee's position, department or location.

Spirit Days: AA will designate "Spirit Days" throughout the school year. Spirit Days dress includes; district provided employee spirit shirt to be worn with neat professional appearing jeans (no cuts, frays, excessive fading, or writing); and casual shoes. Tennis shoes are acceptable for Spirit Days (no restrictions). Spirit Days participation is not mandatory; however, employees who choose not to participate are required to wear the standard dress which doesn't include jeans. Spirit Days dress may be altered by district administration to suit special occasions or when casual dress is not appropriate for the day's activities.

Spirit Days Restriction: When business, work or duties require an employee to be outside of the district on a designated Spirit Day, he or she must dress accordingly. Employees who have business outside the school district for any reason may **NOT** wear jeans. Business Professional or Relaxed wear is

required unless otherwise indicated. Employees should contact the HR Department to ensure compliance.

Appearance and Grooming

All employees must be mindful of their appearance, practice good grooming, and consider safety:

- Dress /clothing must be clean, neat and appropriately fitted (no holes, frays or tears).
- Footwear must be clean, polished, securely fitted, contain strings where applicable, and in good condition. Footwear must be constructed of leather, simulated leather or microfiber material; sandal type shoes (women) must have a heel and not resemble or be considered flip-flops. Spiked high heels are not appropriate for daily operational duty requirements (Heels can be no longer than two inches.)
- Belts are required when applicable (clothing has loops for belt).
- Employees (men) must be clean shaven; beards and mustaches must be neatly trimmed and of a professional length.
- Hair must be clean and well groomed. Hair must be of a natural color. Hair should be styled in a manner that would be acceptable in a professional work environment.
- Body piercings other than appropriate ear piercings may not be exhibited.
- Expensive, flashy or an overabundance of jewelry is not recommended.
- Visible tattoos *should* be covered. Inappropriate/Explicit/Offensive tattoos *must* be covered.
- Company issued Identification badges are mandatory and must be worn at all times.

Dress Restrictions

Advantage Academy employees may **NOT** display or wear:

- Improper fitting dress or clothing
- Dress or clothing that exposes inappropriate body parts
- Dress or clothing that shows an unacceptable amount of skin
- Dress or clothing that contain holes, is frayed or includes symbols or wording
- Dress or clothing that depicts, endorses, or promotes other schools or school districts (does not include colleges)
- Clothing designed with "Cut Outs"
- Low cut, tube or tank tops
- Capris or sundresses
- Boot length above the knee
- Leggings or tights
- Cut-offs
- T-shirts (approved only for certain events)
- Headwear, head coverings, caps, hats, etc. (see Dress Exceptions)

Dress Exceptions

Employees providing specialized services or working in certain environments may wear the following approved Divisional, Departmental or location dress (*per operating unit*). Employees should check with their supervisor concerning appropriate and approved dress. Dress exceptions may include:

- School logoed shirt (cotton or polo)
- Headwear, caps or hats
- Work boots

- Coach/Athletic wear (may include athletic attire, i.e. shorts or warm-ups) (shorts may not be worn in the classroom)
- Nurse Scrub wear

TESTING SUPPORT

Due to the overwhelming support needed during STAAR, Benchmark, and other district or campus testing days, employees will not be permitted to be absent (during these days) without a doctor's excuse. Employees should schedule appointments or other activities accordingly. Leave requests will not be approved for these days under any circumstance. Violations of this policy will result in an automatic deduction of one day's pay, per day and may include additional disciplinary action. Tardiness on testing days will also be likewise disciplined.

EQUIPMENT / MATERIALS ACCOUNTABILITY

Each employee must sign for the equipment/materials he/she is issued. Inventory records will be kept by the district's Inventory Control Manager. Each campus, department, and required employee will perform at least two inventories per school year. All missing/damaged or additional equipment or materials must be accounted for and in some cases; employees may be subject to disciplinary action and may also be monetarily responsible for the missing or damaged equipment/material(s).

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES*

Advantage Academy offers school leadership opportunities in matters that affect students and the school at the campus and district level. As such, employees may be elected to serve or be assigned to a district or campus committee or serve as a club, organization or class sponsor. School leadership volunteers and/or assigned employees may be responsible for:

1. Parental engagement service;
2. Attendance committee service;
3. Supervising projects and activities selected by clubs, organizations or class groups;
4. Scheduling projects and organizational work so that class time is not used for that purpose.
5. Establishing proper and adequate procedures for the collection and accounting of funds derived from fund-raising projects; or
6. Ensuring that all projects and activities of clubs, classes or organizations are approved by the district.

****All employees are urged to participate in at least one leadership area as time and convenience permits.***

CONSULTANTS / INSPECTORS

Advantage Academy uses many consultants and advisors which from time to time include TEA personnel. These persons provide a wide array of services which include Region 10, SPED services, TEA quality assurance services and other support services. It is imperative that all AA employees cooperate fully with these consultants as the company considers them an integral part of our team and of the AA mission. Inspectors from many agencies, including state agencies also have business on our campuses from time to time; cooperation with these individuals is essential and mandatory. Employees are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner when engaging in company business with these persons away from company facilities as well.

EMPLOYEE'S DUTY DURING AN INVESTIGATION

In the event of a district investigation or inquiry, every district employee has an affirmative duty to provide to his/her supervisor(s) or any other district official assigned to investigate all relevant and factual information about matters inquired. Employees failing to volunteer such information shall

receive a directive from an administrator to provide a statement. The employee's failure to comply with the directive constitutes "insubordination," a violation that will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

---FINANCIAL PROCEDURES---

PURCHASING PROCEDURES

Purchasing Procedures, including Cash Handling, will be closely monitored for proper and legal compliance. All requests for purchases must be submitted using the available online district purchase requisition form in **TxELS** or the Check/Payment Request Form in **Eduphoria**. No purchase, charge, or commitment to buy goods or services for the district can be made without administrative approval. The district will not assume responsibility or reimburse employees for purchases made outside established procedures or without proper authorization. Employees must not purchase supplies or equipment for personal use. Contact the Business Department for additional information on purchasing procedures.

CASH HANDLING PROCESS

Internal controls are necessary to prevent mishandling of funds to safeguard against loss. Cash is defined as coins, currency, checks, money orders and credit/debit card transactions.

- Cash must be secured to restrict access at all times
- Employees are not authorized to collect funds for unapproved purposes
- Cash is never to be left in campus safes over weekends or holidays
- All cash must be deposited on scheduled days

Please contact the Business Department or visit the School's Website to view the District's Purchasing, Activity Fund, Business Procedures, and Records Retention Manuals.

FRAUD AND FINANCIAL IMPROPRIETY

All district employees have the responsibility to protect district assets and shall be expected to be alert to the potential for theft of property, theft of services, theft of anything of value, fraud, misappropriation or financial impropriety. Any employee who knows or has reason to know of or suspect an occurrence of fraud, misappropriation, financial impropriety, or covered activity shall immediately notify his/her supervisor. If the employee has reason to believe that the supervisor may be involved, the employee shall immediately notify district administration or the Superintendent. All employees, vendors, contractors, consultants, volunteers and any other party who has involvement in or with the district's financial transactions shall act with integrity and diligence in their duties involving the district's fiscal resources. Fraud and financial impropriety shall include but not be limited to:

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities

- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district

Financial Controls and Oversight

Each employee who supervises or prepares district financial reports or transactions shall set an example of honest and ethical behavior and shall actively monitor his/her area of responsibility for fraud and financial impropriety. The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a system of internal controls to deter and monitor for fraud or financial impropriety in the district. Any person who suspects fraud or financial impropriety in the district shall report the suspicions immediately to any supervisor, the Superintendent or designee. Reports of suspected fraud or financial impropriety shall be treated as confidential to the extent permitted by law. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a full investigation or to comply with law. All employees involved in an investigation shall be advised to keep information about the investigation confidential. Neither the Board nor any district employee shall unlawfully retaliate against a person who in good faith reports perceived fraud or financial impropriety.

Fraud Investigations

In coordination with legal counsel and other internal or external departments or agencies, as appropriate, the Superintendent or a designee shall promptly investigate reports of potential fraud or financial impropriety. If an investigation substantiates a report of fraud or financial impropriety, the Superintendent or designee shall promptly inform the Board of the report, the investigation, and any responsive action taken or recommended by the administration. If an employee is found to have committed fraud or financial impropriety, the Superintendent or designee shall take or recommend appropriate disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment.

If a contractor or vendor is found to have committed fraud or financial impropriety, the district shall take appropriate action, which may include cancellation of the district's relationship with the contractor or vendor. When circumstances warrant, the Board, Superintendent, or designee may refer matters to appropriate law enforcement or regulatory authorities. In cases involving monetary loss to the district, the district may seek to recover lost or misappropriated funds. The final disposition of the matter and any decision to file a criminal complaint or to refer the matter to the appropriate law enforcement or regulatory agency for independent investigation shall be made in consultation with legal counsel.

Investigation Analysis

After any investigation substantiates a report of fraud or financial impropriety, the Superintendent or designee shall analyze conditions or factors that may have contributed to the fraudulent or improper activity. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that appropriate administrative procedures are developed and implemented to prevent future misconduct. These measures shall be presented to the Board for review.

---ORGANIZATIONAL STANDARDS---

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Employees must avoid external business, financial or professional interests that conflict with AA's normal business interest or with an employee's ability to perform his/her job duties. This shall apply to possible relationships with any other employee, employer, consultant and parent or shared agreement personnel. (See the AA Code of Ethics for more details). Employees are required to disclose to their supervisor any situation that creates or may create a conflict of interest with proper discharge of

assigned duties and responsibilities or conflict with the best interests of the district. This includes the following:

- ☐ A personal financial interest
- ☐ A business interest
- ☐ Any other obligation or relationship
- ☐ Non-school employment

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT (MOONLIGHTING)

AA discourages its employees from taking outside employment (moonlighting). Employees who wish to take outside employment must first obtain permission from their Division Director and the Company's Operations Officer. Work requirements and schedule for AA, including extra duty assignments, must take precedence over any outside employment. AA will not approve any employee to take an outside job with a company in the same or related business as AA or which is in any way a competitor of AA, or a company or individual who has a business relation with AA. (See the AA Ethics and Business Conduct for more information)

If AA permits an employee to take outside employment, the employee must report to the AA Human Resources Department when the outside job has started. If, as a result of the moonlighting, the employee is unable to work when required and/or requested by AA, including extra duty assignments or is unable to maintain an acceptable performance level at AA, permission to moonlight will be rescinded and disciplinary action may be taken up to and including termination.

PRIVATE SESSIONS / SERVICES

Employees shall not provide private tutoring or any other type of private services to any student except for approved District sponsored initiatives such as mentoring, tutoring programs, or athletic clinics of which the employee is a duly appointed member. Conditions of these District sponsored initiatives must be strictly adhered to. All approved initiatives should take place on school property when possible. For the protection of employees and students, no employee should ever be alone with a single student. Another employee should be within sight/sound at all times. Employees should protect themselves by **(not being alone with a student)** and **(leaving doors open)** while appropriately monitoring students and their activities.

LANGUAGE

No employee shall, at any time, for any reason, use obscene, vulgar, profane or suggestive language or gestures of any kind or possess printed or written materials of obscene, vulgar, profane or suggestive nature while on duty or school property. Any employee found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

WORKPLACE VISITORS

Advantage Academy employees are not permitted to receive personal visitors while on duty. With the exception of emergency situations, no one may enter the work area unless working or conducting school business. AA wants to ensure that visitors will not:

- Distract employees
- Be exposed to danger
- Pose undue threats to property

EMPLOYEES' CHILDREN

Employees may not bring children to work or have their children present in the work area while on duty. Children of AA employees should be cared for by available campus "After School Programs." This is to allow the employee and fellow employees to perform their duties without distractions and interruptions and to avoid possible accidents.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

All letters of recommendation for any cause or reason must be requested and distributed through the district's HR Department. The scope of an AA employee's duty does not authorize any Director, Principal or other employee outside the HR Department to author, provide or otherwise forward recommendations of any kind.

SOLICITATION

The distribution of handbills or other written material intended to solicit is forbidden at all AA events and/or facilities at all times. Employees may not solicit other employees, visitors, parents or students for any purpose, during normal or extended duty work hours or while on school property without prior approval. Persons who are not employed by AA may not solicit the company, its employees, post or distribute literature on AA premises or at any AA event without prior approval from the Districts Central Office.

---COMPLAINTS / GRIEVANCES---

Under the district's policy, the terms "complaint" and "grievance" have the same meaning. It is the policy of Advantage Academy to encourage fair, efficient, and equitable solutions for problems that arise out of the employment relationship and to meet the requirements of state and federal law. This policy shall apply to all employee complaints concerning the following: demotion, dismissal, unlawful discrimination on any basis, harassment, or retaliation. If a grievance or "complaint" occurs, the employee has the right under the AA Grievance and Appeals Policy to have that complaint resolved without fear of penalization, prejudice or retaliation. Employees are encouraged to discuss concerns or complaints with their supervisor or an appropriate administrator at any time.

In an effort to hear and resolve employee concerns or complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the Board of Directors has adopted an orderly grievance process. The formal process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response.

Employees, wishing to file a grievance or who have a legitimate "complaint", must use the provided AA Employee Grievance Form; available from the HR Department. All grievances will be handled in a confidential manner.

APPEALS

Employees, who do not receive the resolution requested per their grievance, may appeal to the next level up to and including the Superintendent. All decisions made by the Superintendent or designee are final and not subject to further appeal.

---COMMUNICATIONS---

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

The district's technology resources, including its network access to the Internet, are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the

technology resources are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use. Employees who are authorized to use the system are required to abide by the provisions of the acceptable use policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the IT Department.

DISCLAIMER

The district's system is provided on an "as is, as available" basis and applies to stand-alone computers as well as computers and electronic devices connected to the Network/Internet. The district makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, including, without limitation, the services it is providing and any information or software contained therein. The district does not warrant that the functions or services performed by, or that the information or software contained on the system will meet the system user's requirements, or that the system will be uninterrupted or error free, or that defects will be corrected. Therefore, the district is not responsible for any damages suffered by its users including but not limited to loss of data resulting from user errors, omissions or delays.

The district is not responsible for phone/credit card bills or any other charges incurred by users. Use of any information obtained via the Network/Internet is at the user's own risk. The district specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. Opinions, advice, services, and all other information expressed by system users, information providers, service providers, or other third party individuals in the system are those of the providers and not the district. The district will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the district's electronic communications system.

NETWORK ETIQUETTE

Employees are expected to observe proper network etiquette when using electronic media or other communication messaging systems. Employees must:

- Be polite; refrain from messages that may be considered rude.
- Use appropriate language; swearing, vulgarity, ethnic or racial undertones or slurs and any other inflammatory language is considered inappropriate.
- Never pretend to be someone else when sending/receiving messages. This behavior is considered inappropriate.
- Never transmit obscene messages or pictures.
- Not reveal personal addresses or phone numbers of others.
- Never use the network in such a way that would damage, disable or disrupt the system.
- Not attempt to circumvent the networks safety measures or filtering tools.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AT WORK

AA is committed to high standards in the workplace, requiring the focus of all employees on contributing positively to the education of students. To maintain these high standards, employees may not use personal electronic communications devices that interfere with their performance of job responsibilities. Personal electronic/social media sites may not be accessed during on-duty or working hours. Personal electronic devices are prohibited on school premises unless such device is being used for specific educational purposes. A personal electronic device includes, but is not limited to, smart phones, MP3 players, portable audio and video players, cameras, video cameras, video game players, etc. Portable data storage devices such as flash drives or external hard drives are prohibited unless its use has been explicitly approved by the Information Technology Director on a case-by-case basis.

Personal cell phones may only be used for work related or emergency purposes. Personal calls may not be made or received during on-duty or working hours. During planning periods, teachers may use cellular phones for business calls, including parent contacts. School district telephones are for district business and personal use should be incidental. Personal electronic devices including cell phone use must in no way defer from an employee's performance of job duties, work related objectives or schedule.

NOTE: Employees who are provided a school cell phone are required to use that phone for business calls (personal cell phone should not be used.)

NOTE: Employees, who disrupt, neglect or discontinue the performance of their school duties using a personal cell phone or other personal electronic device for any reason other than student instruction, school business or an emergency situation may be subject to disciplinary action.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA GUIDELINES

Electronic Media includes all forms of social media (e.g., Facebook, Google+, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn), electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing Websites (e.g., YouTube and Vimeo), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and includes text messaging and instant messaging. *Electronic media* also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications. As role models for the district's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct and content even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic media as they are for any other public conduct.

If an employee wishes to use a network site or similar media for professional purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the page, including content added by the employee or members of the public who can access the page and for Web links on the page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content. The employee shall not use the district's logo or other copyrighted material of the district without express, written consent.

The employee is subject to all local policies and regulations, applicable state and federal laws and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, even when communicating personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. Employee subjection also includes:

- Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records.
- Copyright law including images.
- Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student.
- Prohibitions against using school community members' images without written permission. Includes; student images.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Social Media is a term commonly associated with online platforms that allow anyone to create, share and interact with a wide range of digital or electronic content. The term describes a variety of Web-based platforms, applications and technologies that enable people to socially interact with one another online. Social media is a collection of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration and includes:

- Forums
- Blogs
- Newsfeeds and information sharing tools
- Information networks
- Social Networks
- Audio and video sharing sites.

Some examples of social media sites and applications include Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest and other sites that are content based and provide user-generated content through user participation. Social media communication also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones and Web-based applications. Employees are hereby cautioned about proper social media use and are directed to refrain from *inappropriate* social communication with students as well as other stakeholders. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether a communication is *inappropriate* include, but are not limited to:

- the nature, purpose, timing and amount of the communication;
- the subject matter of the communication;
- whether the communication was made openly or the employee attempted to conceal the communication;
- the time of the communication (employees should not communicate with students through social media between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.). An employee may, however, make posts to appropriate school approved network sites, blogs or similar district approved applications at any time;
- whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as harassment, retaliation, soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
- whether the communication was explicit;
- whether the communication involved discussion(s) of actual physical harm, threats of physical harm or any other kind of non-physical activity, perceived as threatening or harmful to the coworker or the student;
- whether the communication involved discussion(s) of physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences or fantasies of the employee, the coworker or the student; and
- the use of a private account or group messaging account and all members/users within that group were not included in the message (a school/campus administrator and/or the student's parent/guardian must be included in every communication regardless).

For more electronic and social media guidelines see “*Communicating with Students Using Electronic Media.*”

FILTERING

The IT Department Director, with input from School Officers, will select, implement, and maintain appropriate technology for filtering Internet sites containing material considered inappropriate or harmful. All Internet access will be filtered for minors and adults on computers with Internet access provided by the school. The categories of material considered inappropriate and to which access will be blocked will include, but not be limited to: nudity/pornography; images or descriptions of sexual acts; promotion of violence, illegal use of weapons, drug use, discrimination, or participation in hate groups; instructions for performing criminal acts (*e.g.*, bomb making); and on-line gambling.

Requests to Disable Filter(s)

The IT Director will consider requests from users who wish to use a blocked site for district approved educational research or other lawful purposes. The IT Director will make a recommendation to the appropriate School Officer regarding approval or disapproval to disable the filter for the requested use.

MATERIAL GUIDELINES AND RESTRICTIONS

Only educational material, publications relating to school sponsored activities or school-recognized clubs and organizations may be communicated (oral or written), posted or distributed at or on school property, in a classroom or other instructional setting, or at school related/sponsored activities. Employees and/or other individuals may not materially disrupt the educational interest of the school district or adversely affect working relationships (students, parents, and co-workers). Personal beliefs do not contribute to instructional curriculum and therefore, are considered incompatible with the schools normal activities. All material must meet the following guidelines to be considered for posting or communication: (a) meet school mission/purpose standards; (b) maintain an educational atmosphere; (c) avoid disruption of educational and/or campus/school functions; and (d) prevent student exploitation.

Private convictions may not negatively affect the integrity of the school district or the effectiveness by which the school accomplishes its fundamental mission. Content that adheres to a particular ideological viewpoint that does not have a legitimate educational purpose or is contrary to the schools mission/vision is prohibited. Restrictions will be placed on oral and written expressions that are discriminatory, harassing or are disruptive in nature. Restrictions include signs and symbols. Employees may be immediately terminated from position for a material act (oral or written) that is outside the confines of class, subject, course or curriculum and includes sexually subjected matter. Campus Principal, Division, Department Supervisors/Managers must review and approve all material posting and communication requests.

DISTRICT EMAIL

District wide emails are essential for communication, serve as reminders of important events, such as meetings, proper protocol, or safety concerns, and are used to inform employees of changes in company policies or procedures. Emails should be checked at least twice daily including breaks, holidays and vacations. Employees should be aware of and abide by the district's email disclaimer that is electronically attached to all e-mails distributed by employees of Advantage Academy.

DISTRICT WEBSITE

The school's Website is the primary communication tool between the school and community, and has been designed for use by all community members, groups and demographics including all staff/administration, parents, students, community partners, and potential, as well as, former students and alumni. The school views its Website as the public face for the school while it continually strives to provide updated newsletters, events and campus advertisements. The school communicates educational outcomes for the school community while providing tangible learning benefits such as the streamlining of information access within and between faculties, campuses and educational departments. Using the Website, traditionally isolated teachers/staff members are now able to network ideas and resources in ways that afford real professional development. The Website is also used to:

- Provide students, and parents with information such as grades and attendance;
- List academic objectives and school curriculum;

- Provide teachers, administrators, students, and parents current information such as news, calendars of events and sports activities;
- Provide students, parents and staff with an entrance (Student Portal) (Parent Portal) (Staff Portal) to locally hosted documents and resources;
- Provide access to District handbooks and policies;
- Direct visitors to other resources and links;
- Introduce people who don't know about the school (such as parent or students who are considering enrollment, community members who don't have children, and teachers seeking employment) to current events, general culture and existing opportunities;
- Show school excellence with regard to achievements and awards in comparison to competitive schools; and
- Display the schools “corporate identity.”

NEWSLETTERS AND OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES

The District newsletter is published on a monthly basis and is intended to provide information on campus and district activities, schedules, sporting events and student and school achievements. Campus newsletters are published at the campus level and provide more specific local information. The Human Resources Web Bulletin provides updated information on new hires, benefit updates and the latest HR news. Bulletin boards located throughout Advantage Academy keep employees up to date on district, campus and local announcements and other current information. Parent communications are provided as needed and/or necessary.

---DISTRICT / CAMPUS MEETINGS---

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS*

All organizational meetings are mandatory unless otherwise stated. Professional development sessions are included. Please contact your supervisor for clarification. Dress for all organizational meetings is business casual or relaxed unless otherwise communicated.

ADMINISTRATIVE MEETINGS*

All levels of management routinely hold meetings to communicate information and discuss matters of importance.

DEPARTMENT MEETINGS*

Departments meet to communicate goals and objectives and to discuss workplace issues of interest to employees. Employees should contact their supervisor to obtain a schedule of these meetings.

CAMPUS STAFF MEETINGS*

All campus staff meetings are mandatory. Campus staff meetings are normally held Monday, Tuesday, or Thursdays unless extenuating circumstances require a change. Please contact your campus principal for scheduling. Campus staff meetings are usually held after regular school hours.

***Meetings may extend beyond an employees daily schedule.**

---EMPLOYEE CONDUCT---

Employees of Advantage Academy, by virtue of employment are expected to accept certain responsibilities and adhere to accepted personal, business and professional principles, practices and conduct. Employees are required to exhibit a high degree of professionalism and integrity at all times. Employees are to conduct themselves in a manner that is normally considered acceptable in matters of

their conduct and behavior with a sincere respect for the rights and feelings of co-workers and others. Professional conduct standards require that all AA employees refrain from any behavior that might be harmful to students, parents, visitors, co-workers and other school community members. This policy also includes consultants, contractors and vendors. All employees are expected to work in a manner that best serves the interests of the district and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Advantage Academy has established standards of conduct in order to promote and maintain the orderly and efficient operation of Advantage Academy for the benefit and protection of the rights and safety of all students, parents, visitors, employees, vendors, consultants and other school community members. These standards are what Advantage Academy considers acceptable or what is not acceptable in all operating areas of the school district. All applicable rules, regulations or established laws cannot be included in the employee handbook. Employees are expected to observe the following standards of conduct (list is non-inclusive):

- Recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the school community.
- Perform your duties in accordance with local, state and federal law.
- Know and comply with established TEA regulations as they apply to your duties.
- Know and comply with campus, department and district policies and procedures.
- Use district time, funds, and property for authorized district business and activities only.
- Understand and comply with the company's Ethics and Business Conduct, and the Standard Practices for Texas Educators.
- Know and comply with your occupational and professional regulations and requirements.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Observe all safety/health rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Notify the absence line and their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action.
- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels.

Violations of company or professional policies, regulations, guidelines, or criminal conduct as established by law may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If an employee violates Advantage Academy's policies, procedures, standards of conduct, or established laws, his/her supervisor or divisional/departmental director is responsible for acting promptly to correct the situation and to prevent further occurrences for mutual benefit. Disciplinary action shall be administered in a manner which should provide the employee understanding of the mis-behavior and opportunity to correct his/her conduct to meet company expectations and standards. The determination of when disciplinary action is to be administered and the action/consequence to be applied for any particular violation in any situation is wholly within AA's, its Directors', Managers' and Supervisors' discretion. Disciplinary actions used by AA are as follows:

Informal

- Redirection
- Documented Verbal Warning

Formal

- Written Warning
- 1 Day Suspension*
- 2 Days Suspension*
- 3 Days Suspension*
- Other*
- Pending (input is required prior to appropriate action/consequence being applied)
- Termination

****May be with or without pay.***

Procedures For Disciplinary Action

When an employee's mis-behavior is reviewed, supervisors, division directors and/or school officers may consider offenses or infractions in different areas or categories of behavior/conduct collectively.

1. When administering disciplinary action, the seriousness of the infraction, the impact of the conduct on the victim and/or school district, and conduct history shall be considered. In most cases, the employee will be immediately informed that his/her conduct is inappropriate and an Employee Disciplinary Action form will be presented.
2. Prior disciplinary actions (conduct history) shall be considered, however, employees will not be unduly penalized for their prior write-ups when their record has remained free of disciplinary action for a specific time frame. Example: A write-up which is more than six months old will generally not be considered.
3. Supervisors, managers and directors shall strive to increase the effective use of any disciplinary action(s) by promptly investigating all reported infractions/incidents or mis-conduct when applicable. The preparation and presentation of the "Employee Disciplinary Action" form to the employee should be made in a timely manner.

SERIOUS OFFENSES

Advantage Academy maintains sole discretion in determining which offenses are sufficiently serious enough that immediate termination must be considered. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Defaming/Slandering Advantage Academy and/or persons associated with (AA)
- Noncompliance in connection with any (AA) policy or procedure
- Actions or conduct of a sexual nature
- Sexual harassment or misconduct
- Possession, use, transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance, illegal drugs/substances, alcohol or related paraphernalia
- Gross insubordination
- Possession of a weapon
- Acts of violence, including fighting
- Verbal or written threats
- Gross negligence
- Acts constituting of abuse or neglect that involve a student(s)
- Inappropriate behavior with a student, including transporting a student(s) in a personal vehicle

- Leaving a student(s) unattended at anytime and anywhere
- Misappropriation or mishandling of funds
- Dishonesty; fraud; deceit; theft; misrepresentation
- Unauthorized means to obtain, falsify, alter or destroy records
- Breach of confidentiality
- School property offenses
- Abandonment of position
- Sleeping on duty

The district shall consider the following factors in determining if termination of employment is appropriate for a serious offense:

1. Circumstances behind the offense;
2. The impact of the offense on the victim and/or school district;
3. Employees conduct history; and
4. The relationship between the offense and the position which the employee occupies.

Incidents of certain misconduct by educators may result in immediate termination and must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the Superintendent first learns of the incident. *(see Obligation To Report Criminal Record under District Information)*

Advantage Academy reserves the right to change its “Employee Conduct” rules and regulations as it, in its discretion, feels is appropriate or necessary.

---TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT---

TERMINATION PROCEDURES

Employees leaving the District will receive, either by scheduled exit interview or regular mail, important information relative to their separation of employment concerning final pay conditions and arrangements, including payment of unused vacation days. Insurance coverage information will also be communicated by the Human Resources Department. Employees are required to provide a current forwarding address and phone number for tax purposes. All company property, including laptop computers, keys, ID badges and other issued equipment or materials must be returned upon separation of employment.

RESIGNATION*

An employee wishing to resign shall submit to his/her supervisor a resignation letter dated and signed stating the effective date of the proposed resignation. Employees are expected to give at least two (2) weeks’ notice of resignation. Employees in Director/Principal roles are expected to give at least four (4) weeks’ notice. An employee who fails to comply with these stipulations shall have such failure documented in their personnel file and may be considered ineligible for rehire. Letters of recommendation will not be provided for employees who do not meet all separation and resignation requirements. AA Employees may resign at any time convenient to the District with approval from the Superintendent and as set forth below.

At-Will Employees

At-will employees may resign their positions at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Human Resources Department with a copy to the supervisor. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation, but are not required to do so.

Additionally, while at-will employees are not required to give notice, the District appreciates the standard two-weeks' notice; four-weeks' for administrators.

***Once submitted and accepted, resignation cannot be rescinded without the Superintendent's approval.**

DISMISSAL / NON-RENEWAL

The District will not dismiss any employee for reasons based on race, religion, national origin, disability, sex, military status or any other basis protected by law or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Employees on probationary period can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in District policies.

Dismissal or Non-Renewal of Contract Employees

Employees on term contracts can be released during the school year or non-renewed at the end of the school year in accordance with procedures outlined in the District's One-Year Term Contract. Contract employees released during the school year or who are non-renewed at the conclusion of the school year will receive proper written notification.

Dismissal of Non-Contract (At-Will) Employees

AA is committed to negotiating with its employees fairly and ethically while maintaining efficiency and productivity. However, At-Will employees must realize that they may be released from employment with or without notice and with or without cause.

OTHER SEPARATION FROM THE DISTRICT

Employees may be separated from the district because of conditions or circumstances beyond their control, such as budget limitations, elimination of positions, reorganization, or other reasons deemed necessary by the administration. When circumstances permit, as determined by the administration, the following process may be used.

1. The superintendent or designee shall identify classifications or position(s) within classifications for elimination.
2. If all positions within a classification are not eliminated, and more than one employee possesses the same classification, the ability, performance, and fitness of the employee(s) involved shall be considered as compared to other members in the same job classification, along with any other relevant criteria identified by the administration.
3. An employee who separates from Advantage Academy for any reason within their first 30 calendar work days will have their compensation converted to the substitute/temporary pay rate.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DISTRICT PROPERTY

In the event of a termination of employment, whether voluntary or involuntary, employee shall return or satisfactorily account for all grade books, student, instructor or school records and reports, teacher editions, toolkits and other classroom materials or school equipment such as laptop computers, cellular telephone and charger, camera, keys, electronic access cards, emergency radio, or other Advantage Academy property checked-out, assigned or provided to employee. The district will deduct from the employee's final paycheck, the cost of such equipment and/or supplies, all sums that remain due, and all money owed to the district for any reason.

Employee agrees that the last salary payment is conditioned upon receipt from the employee of all such items under employee's control. Employee also authorizes Advantage Academy to deduct from said

final payment any compensation necessary to reimburse Advantage Academy for AA property under employee's control which was lost, damaged or misplaced, except as otherwise provided by law.

REPORTS CONCERNING COURT-ORDERED WITHHOLDINGS

The district is required to report the termination of employees that are under a court order of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance to the court (Texas Family Code §8.210, 158.211). Notice of the following must be sent to the court:

- Termination of employment not later than the seventh day after the date of termination
- Employee's last known address
- Name and address of the employee's new employer, if known

RETIREMENT

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least one-half of the normal work schedule are members of the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS). TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits. After 5 years of TRS membership service credit, an employee with military service years may be able to purchase up to 5 years of service credit for his/her active duty. Employees planning to retire under TRS should notify the Human Resources Department as soon as possible to obtain the application procedures. Employees may contact TRS directly for more information or additional inquiries: Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS), 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698.

ABANDONMENT OF POSITION

Employees who are absent from the workplace for three (3) consecutive workdays without proper call-in or other form of notification, authorized leave or proof of incapacity shall thereby be deemed to have effectively submitted his/her resignation to the company. Once documented and processed, the resignation may not be withdrawn without consent of the Superintendent. The employee and the employee's supervisor will be notified by the Human Resources Department of the abandonment of the position. An employee charged with abandonment of position is ineligible for rehire.

Furthermore, inability to work for any reason, excused or not excused, for a period of more than 12 weeks may be cause to discharge the employee from AA with the exception of leaves which may be governed or affected by legal statutes, e.g., FMLA, military leave. The Human Resources Department will be responsible for the documentation of this type of action/resignation. Proper documentation will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

REHIRING GUIDELINES

Former employees who may be rehired and return to work within three months (90 days) of their separation date will resume their employment status without cause. However, duties, titles and work location shall reflect the rehired position. Former employees who may be rehired and return to work after 90 days of their separation date shall be designated a new employee, be evaluated as such and must complete a new hire orientation. All rehired employees (more than three months) will be considered new employees for any and all benefits. Advantage Academy will not rehire former employees who:

- Violated AA policies, procedures, or safety regulations
- Were dismissed by the company for conduct or disciplinary reasons
- Were dismissed as a result of abandonment of position
- Were dismissed as a result of alcohol/drug use

- Had a poor attendance record (includes tardiness)
- Had poor employee performance reviews
- Were dismissed for inability to perform job duties
- Resigned without giving proper notice

---SAFETY / HEALTH AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS---

Advantage Academy believes in providing and maintaining a safe, secure, and healthy working environment for our employees. To attain the maximum results from the district's "Safety Program", each employee must understand their personal responsibility to the program and be dedicated to the idea that every accident/incident or loss can be prevented. All employees must believe that it is worth the time and effort to prevent even one minor injury that could have been serious, or one minor damage accident/incident that could have been a major loss. Each employee is expected to follow all program policies, procedures and guidelines, and to act safely. Employees involved in a safety or health related accident/incident while on the job shall notify their immediate supervisor, campus nurse or SDA as to the nature of the accident and any medical care required.

If the accident/incident requires medical attention, the employee shall be sent to their personal doctor or the district medical professional facility if applicable for medical care. The employee shall report to his/her immediate supervisor as soon as possible and within a 24-hour period in order to prepare the accident/incident report form.

MAINTAINING A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Employees are required to participate in establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. This includes but is not limited to the following requirements:

- Follow all established safety and health rules
- Attend all safety training classes
- Refer to the districts safety program manual and this handbook section as required
- Report all safety hazards and/or violations to your supervisor

REPORTING UNSAFE CONDITIONS

Employees are expected to continually keep safety awareness in mind and be on the lookout for unsafe/unhealthy working conditions or practices. In keeping with the district's Safety Program, if an employee observes an unsafe/unhealthy condition, they should warn others, if applicable, and report that condition to their supervisor immediately.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

If you should experience or witness a medical or other emergency or an accident requiring immediate attention, dial "911" and get emergency help immediately!

Emergency services for AA employees who are injured on the job or encounter health related or other emergencies are conducted using local emergency services and school ERP personnel. Employees must report any signs of a possible medical, health related or other emergency immediately, regardless of severity to their supervisor. All on the job, work related injuries, or medical emergencies must be properly documented and reported to the Business Department. Completion of an Accident/Incident Report by the Campus Nurse and the SDA is required and must be forwarded to the Business Department.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

AA Emergency Response Plan may be implemented in the event of a civil or military disaster, civilian disturbance or internal disaster. It will take priority over all other activities. Employees will be notified that the plan is in effect and what actions should be taken by any or all of the following forms of communication: telephone, voicemail, cell phone and media broadcasts.

FIRE PREVENTION

Safety is the responsibility of every Advantage Academy employee. Every reasonable precaution is taken to provide a safe environment for employees. Safety rules are for the employees' protection and for the protection of our co-workers, students and visitors. AA needs employee support and cooperation to maintain a good fire safety program. **To Help Prevent Fires:**

- Keep work areas free from unnecessary combustible materials.
- Be especially careful handling flammable materials.
- Know the location of and how to use fire fighting equipment in your work areas.
- Stay away from the fire scene if you are not directly involved in removing persons to safety.
- Avoid using the telephone after the fire is reported. All telephone lines must be kept open for emergency calls.
- Above all, be ready and know the special fire procedures in your work area. Know what you should do in the event of a fire.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

Advantage Academy strives to maintain a safe and secure environment for its students, staff and visitors. In pursuit of this objective, selected areas of the school campus premises are equipped with video surveillance equipment. The school's campus video security system shall be used for the protection and safety of students, employees, visitors, assets, property and to assist law enforcement if required. Surveillance equipment will be positioned to record only those areas specified by the school's Safety and Security Committee.

Video surveillance is intended to complement other measures used by the school to maintain a safe and secure environment in compliance with state and federal laws. Only designated employees are authorized to operate video surveillance equipment and systems. Access to video recordings shall be limited and may only be accessed in association with an employee's regular duties. Authorized persons shall not violate relevant laws in the performance of their duties and functions as they relate to video surveillance systems.

Reasonable efforts shall be made to safeguard the privacy of students, employees and visitors. Video cameras shall not be positioned in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of personal privacy such as restrooms, dressing or changing rooms. Cameras may not be used in areas where confidential and/or personal information or materials are or could be visible. Signage may or may not be posted at all locations disclosing these activities and the use of video surveillance systems.

To protect legal obligations and evidentiary values, recordings produced by the video security system are kept in a secure manner, and managed appropriately by campus administrators. It is the policy of the school to typically retain recorded images for approximately 7-10 days. Furthermore, video recordings may:

- be used to identify the person or persons responsible for school or campus policy violations, criminal activity or actions considered disruptive to normal school operations.

- be used to identify person(s) violating school policies or engaged in criminal activity and to maintain a safe, secure and policy-compliant environment.
- be used to assist law enforcement agencies in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.
- with the Superintendent or designee's authorization be released to law enforcement. (*Except in criminal cases, video recordings will not be released to a third-party*).
- be shared with authorized employees when appropriate upon approval by school officials.

Information inappropriately obtained and/or in violation of this policy may not be used for any purpose regardless of content. Employees who violate statutes of this policy may be disciplined up to and including termination.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

AA is committed to maintaining an alcohol and drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of alcohol and illegal drugs in the workplace and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours shall be terminated.

TOBACCO USE

State law prohibits smoking or using tobacco products on all district-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off campus (including the use of electronic cigarettes or any other electronic vaporizing device). The District will strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of all tobacco products while on or within 300 feet of school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or event on or off school property: Violations will constitute stiff penalties. Drivers of district-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking while inside the vehicle. Notices stating that smoking is prohibited are displayed in prominent places in all district buildings.

IDENTIFICATION BADGES & ACCESS CARDS

As a vital part of Advantage Academy's safety program, employees will be photographed at the time of employment and an ID badge will be prepared for the employee's use. Most employees will also receive an electronic access card. Employees are required to display their ID badge and have their access card on their person at all times while on district property or when conducting district business. The ID badge must be clearly visible, except in cases where the type of work does not permit the display.

Badges are School District property and should not be altered in anyway, including writing, attaching stickers or adhesive tape or punching holes. If the ID or Access badge is lost or destroyed, the employee must contact his/her campus/department supervisor immediately. Employees must pay a nominal replacement fee of \$10.00 should their badge or card become damaged, lost, mis-placed or defaced. Upon End-of-Year checkout or termination of employment, badges and cards must be returned to campus administration or the Human Resources Department.

CAMPUS VISITORS

In order to comply with Advantage Academy's safety/security requirements, AA requires all visitors, including parents and volunteers, to **check-in** and **check-out** at the main office prior to entering a campus or other business location. All district and campus employees are required to ensure that visitors are displaying a Visitor Badge. Visitors who are found not to have a Raptor generated "Visitor's Badge" must be escorted to the office in order to obtain the badge. All visitors are required to enter AA campuses through the main entrance (no exceptions.)

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Advantage Academy is committed to providing a safe and secure workplace and an environment free from physical violence, threats and intimidation. AA believes that violence is a form of serious misconduct that undermines the integrity of the employment relationship. Therefore, it is expected that all employees will report to the work site and perform their jobs in a nonviolent manner. Conduct and behaviors of physical violence, threats or intimidation by an employee will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination and/or other appropriate action which may include the filing of charges with local authorities.

POSSESSION OF FIREARMS AND WEAPONS

Advantage Academy prohibits the use, display or possession of firearms, handguns, restricted knives, clubs, and prohibited weapons on School Premises unless explicitly permitted in related school policy or unless otherwise permitted by applicable federal or state law (*see below*). This prohibition and related exceptions apply to all individuals on School Premises including but not limited to employees, students, parents, visitors, vendors and contractors. Furthermore, firearms, handguns, restricted knives, clubs, and prohibited weapons are prohibited in the room or rooms where a public meeting of the governing body of the Eagle Advantage School's Inc. is being held pursuant to a properly noticed meeting under the open meetings law. *Penal Code § 46.03 (a)(14)*.

Per the federal Gun Free School Zones Act, Advantage Academy prohibits the possession of firearms on or near school property. Thus, an individual may not knowingly possess a firearm in a school zone. For purposes of this federal law, the term "school zone" means property in, or on the grounds of, or within 1,000 feet from the grounds of a public, parochial, or private school.

Exception to the Federal Prohibition

The federal prohibition does not apply to the possession of a firearm.

- a. When the carrier is licensed to carry under state law;
- b. When the firearm is unloaded and stored in a locked container or a locked firearms rack that is in a vehicle;
- c. If the firearm is carried for use in a program approved by the school;
- d. If the firearm is carried as allowed by a written contract between the school and the licensed individual; or
- e. If the firearm is carried by a law enforcement officer acting in his/her official capacity.

NON-DUTY AND AFTER HOURS

From time to time, employees may be on campus during after-hours, weekends or holidays. Primarily, this would involve teachers or other staff who may be staying late or coming in on off days to complete class work or other responsibilities. After-hour, weekend or holiday work on campus or in district offices should be reported to both the District Facility Coordinator and the employees Campus Student Discipline Administrator. Furthermore, employees must indicate the activity and the approximate time of arrival and departure from the building, office or campus. For Safety considerations AA has established the following prohibitions and recommends that:

- Female employees never be in school buildings or on school property alone.
- All after-hour activities be completed no later than 7pm.

AA cannot be held liable for accidents or incidents that occur as a result of safety prohibition violations.

TRANSPORTING STUDENTS

An Advantage Academy employee when acting in his/her capacity as an employee may NOT transport AA students in a private vehicle to or from school or a school related, sanctioned or sponsored activity. This prohibition does not apply to an employee who has a child enrolled at AA and is transporting his/her own child. Employees may be terminated and may face legal action by the student's parent/guardian in the event of an accident.

INCLEMENT / HAZARDOUS WEATHER*

The District may close schools because of inclement weather or hazardous conditions. The Superintendent, or designee, shall make the official decision concerning the closing of the District's facilities. When it becomes necessary to close schools, start late or release students early, appropriate established avenues will be notified by school officials. Official notifications may be found on the schools website, social media platforms and on TV channels 8 and 11. It is essential that all employees make every effort to be present when their campus is open. Considering safety first, employees will not be recorded Tardy/Late on these days.

****Employees must remain in communication with their immediate supervisor and may be required to perform their job function(s) while at home.***

EQUIPMENT

Equipment such as space heaters, candles, cooking type equipment, coffee makers, refrigerators, and microwaves are strictly prohibited except in the employee lunch/break room. These and other type items have been classified as fire hazards and are prohibited by company safety standards.

EXPOSURE TO BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

It is essential that exposure risk to any body fluid be handled using extreme caution. In case of an exposure incident please do the following: **1)** Immediately wash exposed area with soap and water; **2)** If exposed area involved is your mouth, rinse your mouth thoroughly with water, or if water is not available, rinse with mouthwash; **3)** Eyes - flush with water thoroughly at least five minutes; **4)** Notify the school nurse of exposure or Health Services Coordinator. The nurse will:

- Assist with first aid, as needed.
- Assess and document the route(s) of exposure and the circumstances related to the incident o Identification and documentation of the source individual to obtain consent for source testing.

After first aid has been rendered, the following actions should be completed:

- Notify campus or department administrator.
- A medical evaluation must be conducted as soon as possible after exposure in accordance with Advantage Academy Workers Compensation Medical Evaluation Procedures.

PEST CONTROL

Advantage Academy's routine pesticide applications are made on a regular calendar-based schedule and/or as needed to control pests. Although the district strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non-chemical control measures, pesticide use is sometimes necessary to maintain adequate pest control and ensure a safe, pest-free school environment. All applications are applied only by certified pesticide applicators and include:

1. Prevention of pest population.
2. Application of pesticides only as needed.
3. Selection of the least hazardous pesticides effective for control of targeted pests.

4. Precision targeting of pesticides to areas not contacted or accessible to employees.

The school's Pest Management Program attempts to maintain a high standard of pest control while reducing reliance on pesticides. Certified pesticide applicators consult with the school on a set of detailed procedures describing how particular pest problems can be avoided and/or managed.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The District is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for all District property. The District's plans currently contain the inspection reports and the appropriate response actions. They also contain plans for periodic re-inspections and post-response activities.

Asbestos Management Plans are available for review at the following locations:

- The District's Central Office located at 618 W. Wheatland Rd. Duncanville, TX. 75116
- The Main Office of each campus during normal school hours

---GENERAL PROCEDURES---

DISTRICT PROPERTY

Employees who use or are provided company property and equipment, including company materials, information and other supplies must be reminded that such property belongs to AA and that AA is responsible and accountable for that property. Employees remain responsible and accountable for all property provided them for any reason until its return. Company property must be properly maintained, cared for and secured by the employee. All property must be complete and in good working condition when returned to the district.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Employees are discouraged from bringing personal property to work and, therefore, do so at their own risk. Advantage Academy will not be responsible for employee's personal property that may become lost, damaged, or stolen at any time while on company property or while in attendance for any reason at any work/school sponsored activity.

COMPANY AND PERSONAL SEARCHES

Advantage Academy reserves the right to inspect/search company property (e.g., company electronic devices, desks, vehicles, lockers, or other storage areas) at any time with or without cause. The district also possesses the right to conduct personal searches of employees, visitors and parents if probable cause exists to believe that such a search would uncover evidence of a violation of AA policies or established law. This may include the right to inspect/search personal property (e.g., purses, briefcases, cell phones, backpacks, bags, etc.) and other personal belongings during working hours or while on any property owned, leased, or rented by AA. This policy also includes the hours related to any work/school sponsored activity.

Vehicle Searches

All vehicles parked on Advantage Academy properties, including facilities leased or rented are subject to involuntary search. AA reserves the right to search vehicles or items in said vehicles at any time with or without cause.

USE OF DISTRICT VEHICLES

District vehicles may only be used for company business and must be suitable for the intended purpose and use. Operators are responsible for damages resulting from misuse, neglect, failure to follow

established procedures, unauthorized or unlawful use. Unauthorized use of district vehicles should be reported to the Operations Officer. Operators of district vehicles will be responsible for any parking fines, traffic violation fines and/or any impoundment or towing fees acquired during use. Vehicle operators must take prudent measures to protect all company assets in their possession. Items of value should not be left in plain sight and should be locked in the trunk or back compartments of the vehicle. AA is not liable for personal property that may become lost, damaged, or stolen. **Texting is strictly forbidden in company vehicles. Smoking is strictly forbidden in company vehicles.**

Before district vehicles may be used, the driver must:

- check all fluids, including oil and water;
- ensure the tires meet safety standards;
- perform a safety walk around being alert for potential problems;
- check that all lights are in working order; and
- record the vehicles mileage and report any apparent damage immediately.

Failure to report vehicle damage immediately may result in the employee being held liable for damage discovered.

When the vehicle is returned, the driver shall:

- park the vehicle at the central office gated compound or other secure location (with prior approval);
- record the ending mileage, including any damage or mechanical problems encountered or observed;
- close and lock all windows;
- leave the vehicle clean and orderly;
- ensure the vehicles doors are locked; and
- upon exiting, ensure the compound gate is locked and return the vehicles key.

Drivers who are involved in traffic accidents or property damage may be required to undergo an alcohol and drug test per company policy. Refusal to submit to alcohol/drug testing will be considered just cause for the employee's immediate termination. (Other restrictions may apply).

Operators of Vehicles and Persons Who Receive Mileage Reimbursement

All employees who drive a district vehicle, use their personal vehicle for work, receive mileage reimbursement, or possess a district fuel card must undergo an annual driver's license record check. An acceptable driving record of (less than 10 points in a three year period) as determined by the Texas Department of Public Safety must be shown to maintain eligibility to drive/operate vehicles for the school or receive mileage reimbursements.