

# EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

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***“Leaders Soaring to Excellence”***

## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

2026-2027

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## Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY policies and procedures are included. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to the Superintendent.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official Charter policy manual. Nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of non-contract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to, and a brief explanation of Charter policies and procedures related to employment. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY has, and reserves, the right to adopt new procedures and policies, or modify, alter, change or cancel existing policies and procedures at any time. Violation of any board policy or a provision within this handbook may lead to disciplinary action up to and including discharge from employment. The administration of EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY reserves the right to make the final decision regarding compliance with the policies and procedures listed in this Employee Handbook. For more information, employees may confer with their supervisor or call the Charter's office. Policy manuals are located at the Business Office and are available for employee review during normal working hours.

The Board shall make a copy of the board's employment policies available for inspection at the campus at a reasonable time on request. A copy of the Board's employment policies is located on the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY's website under School Board Policies.

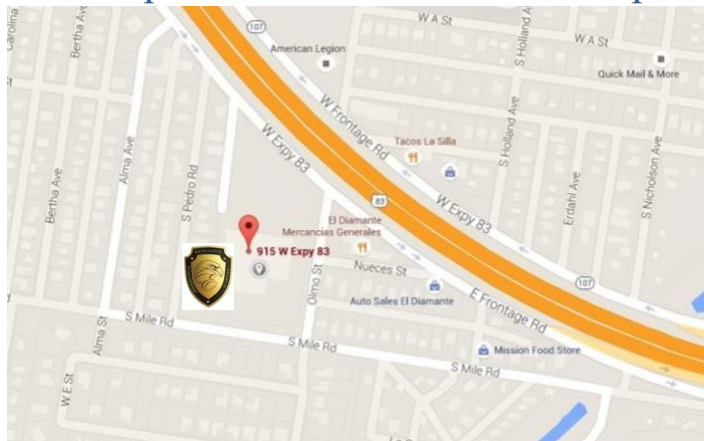
## Description of the Charter

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (ELA) is an open-enrollment public charter school in Hidalgo County in the City of Mission. The school opened its doors to students PK-4 to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in August 2012. Due to our proximity to Mexico, a Bilingual/ESL Transitional program is provided to assist limited English proficiency students in maintaining their culture and language while gaining proficiency in the English language. This program also assists non-limited English proficiency students to gain proficiency in the Spanish language. The Charter provides full day programming for PK-3 to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition to the TEKS curriculum and STAAR preparation, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY also provides character education, Bilingual/ESL instruction, financial and entrepreneurial literacy, and gifted and talented programming.

In summary, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY'S vision is to provide a quality educational environment that inspires each student to develop leadership skills with a spirit of EXCELLENCE. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY provides small learning communities, opportunities for growth, dedicated and passionate staff members, a strong leadership component, employee benefit program, and an opportunity to participate in preparing our future generations of values-driven leaders.

All of this coupled with a supportive Board of Directors and a visionary administration is designed to assure your employment at EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is most fulfilling.

## Map of Excellence in Leadership Academy



## Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives

The TEAM of EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Board of Directors, administrators, teachers, staff and parents, in partnership with community and public educational agencies, is committed to providing the resources and opportunities for all students to achieve educational excellence.

### Charter Goals and Objectives are as follows:

*Professional Learning Opportunities*– Learning opportunities for all employees.

*Technology* – Current in all technological changes, advances, and applications.

*Academic Excellence* – Focus on literacy, critical thinking, relevancy, and problem solving.

*Communications* – Clear, concise, and accurate exchange of information and increased oratory skills.

*Family Involvement* – Participation of parents and siblings as partners in the education of their children.

*Learning Environment* – Safe, efficient, state-of-the-art facilities and resources.

*21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills*-Collaboration, character education, conflict resolution, and growth mindset.

### Public Education Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The mission of the Texas Public Education System is to ensure that all Texas children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their full potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities in our state and nation. That mission is grounded on the conviction that a general diffusion of knowledge is essential for the welfare of Texas and for the preservation of the liberties and rights of Texas citizens. It is further grounded on the conviction that a successful public education system is directly related to a strong, dedicated, and supportive family and that parental involvement in the school is essential for the maximum educational achievement of a child. The objectives of public education are:

**Objective 1:** Parents will be full partners with educators in the education of their children.

**Objective 2:** Students will be encouraged and challenged to meet their full educational potential.

**Objective 3:** Through enhanced dropout prevention efforts, all students will remain in school until they obtain a diploma.

**Objective 4:** A well-balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students.

- Objective 5:** Educators will prepare students to be thoughtful, active citizens who have an appreciation for the basic values of our state and national heritage and who can understand and productively function in a free enterprise society.
- Objective 6:** Qualified and highly effective personnel will be recruited, developed, and retained.
- Objective 7:** Texas students will demonstrate exemplary performance in comparison to national and international standards.
- Objective 8:** School campuses will maintain a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning.
- Objective 9:** Educators will keep abreast of the development of creative and innovative techniques in instruction and administration using those techniques as appropriate to improve student learning.
- Objective 10:** Technology will be implemented and used to increase the effectiveness of student learning, instructional management, staff development, and administration.

The academic goals of public education are to serve as a foundation for a well-balanced and appropriate education. The students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in:

- Goal 1:** The reading and writing of the English language.
- Goal 2:** The understanding of mathematics.
- Goal 3:** The understanding of science.
- Goal 4:** The understanding of social studies.

### **Instructional Goals and Objectives**

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY provides an educational program that will help each student to develop personal knowledge, skills, and competence to maximum capacity, and to learn behavior patterns that equip each student to become leaders with integrity in all areas of our society. In terms of their individual abilities, all students should achieve:

1. Competence in fundamentals of reading and writing, in English and Spanish, and mathematics in the early elementary grades. These will be accompanied by an elective course which will address a variety of areas, such as, Art, Theater, Music, Dance, Leadership & Financial Literacy. Skills in the logical processes of research, analysis, evaluation, and problem solving will be incorporated through emphasis on higher order thinking skills and project-based activities. Competence and motivation for continuing self-evaluation, self-instruction, and adaptation to a changing environment will be addressed through leadership instruction and cooperative learning opportunities.
2. Knowledge of the fundamental economic structure and processes of the American system, of the contribution of free enterprise, and of the opportunities for individual participation and success in the system as producers. Occupational skills needed to enter and advance in the economic system or academic preparation for acquisition of technical, professional, and entrepreneurial skills through post-high school training. Competence in the application of economic knowledge to practical economic functions, such as planning and budgeting for the investment of personal income, calculating tax obligations, financing major purchases, and generating income.
3. Knowledge about the United States and Texas systems of government and their political subdivisions. Competence in judging the merits of comparative political systems and ideologies with emphasis on democratic institutions, the American heritage, the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship, and the comparative merits of candidates for political position. Skill for communicating with public officials at different levels of government, national and internationally.

Skill for participating in the processes of public and private political organizations and influencing decisions made by such organizations.

4. Knowledge about the requirements of personal hygiene, nutritional consumption, and physical exercise essential to the maintenance of personal health. Knowledge of the dangers to health from addiction to harmful substances or consumption of harmful materials. Skills in sports and other forms of recreation which will permit life-long enjoyment of physical exercise. Competence in recognizing and preventing environmental, ecological, and health problems. Knowledge and experiences to provide information and develop skills and values needed to perform daily activities in a safe manner free from injury or other losses.
5. Knowledge of the arts, music, literature, drama, oratory, and other aesthetic expressions of various cultures. Competence in the critical evaluation and appreciation of diverse cultures and languages.
6. Knowledge of basic psychological, sociological, and cultural factors affecting human behavior. Skills in interpersonal and group relations and information of ethical and moral standards of behavior. Competence for adjusting to changes in personal status and social patterns. Skills for coping with stress and pressure. Development of a self-image that includes leadership with excellence and principles and values.
7. Competence and skill in creative and responsible use of leisure time.

## Vision Statement

To provide a quality educational environment that inspires each student to develop leadership skills with a spirit of EXCELLENCE.

## Mission Statement

The TEAM of the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY: Board of Directors, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents, in partnership with public and private agencies, is committed to provide an education that exemplifies excellence; to provide opportunities to obtain proficiency in English and Spanish, financial and entrepreneurial literacy, and ethical leadership skills that will prepare our students to achieve prominent positions of influence in our society.

## We Believe Statements

- We believe all our children are leaders.
- We believe in encouraging the hearts of our children.
- We believe all obstacles can be overcome through a culture of excellence.
- We believe multi-language skills increase opportunities to succeed.
- We believe all our children can achieve financial and entrepreneurial literacy.
- We believe that proficiency in technology is an essential tool.
- We believe we should All Model the Way.
- We believe successful leaders with character and integrity can transform our society.

## Highlights of Excellence in Leadership Academy

- Excellent Facilities
- Highly Qualified and Committed Staff
- Rigorous and Relevant TEKS Curriculum
- Integration of College and Career Readiness Standards
- Financial and Entrepreneurial Literacy
- Family and Community Involvement
- Environment of Excellence
- Smaller Learning Communities
- Bilingual/ESL Transitional Program
- Leadership Curriculum emphasizing Values, Integrity & Principles
- Gifted & Talented Program

## Board of Directors

Texas law grants the Board of Directors the power to govern and oversee the management of the Charter. The Board is the policy-making body for the Charter and has overall responsibility for the curriculum, annual budget, employment of the Superintendent and other professional, paraprofessional, and support staff and facilities. The Board has the complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal law and regulations.

The Board of Directors are selected by the Board, Administration and Founder to represent the vision and commitment to a strong educational program for the Charter's children. Directors are selected and serve 3-year terms. Directors serve without compensation. Current Board of Directors include:

Harry Reyes Romero  
*President*

Roberto Ortiz  
*Member*

*Vice President*

Karla Mendoza  
*Member*

Maria Guadalupe Rivera  
*Secretary*

Alma Muñoz  
*Member*

Narcedalia Garza  
*Member*

Dr. Debra Arce  
*Member*

The Board of Directors usually meet on the third Tuesday of the month at EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Auditorium at 915 West Interstate Highway 2, Mission, Texas 78572. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the front door outside the administration office at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with two-hour notice. All meetings are open to the public. In certain circumstances, Texas law permits the Board to go into a closed session from which the public and others are excluded. Closed sessions may occur for such things as discussing prospective gifts or donations, real-property acquisition, certain personnel matters including employee complaints, security matters, student discipline, or consulting with attorneys regarding pending litigation.

## District Administration

### **Superintendent**

Dr. Ana Mendoza

### **Business Manager**

Gonzalita Mayree Moreno

## Campus Administration

### **Principal**

Joy Morales Fonseca

## **Counselor**

Flor Alvarez Taylor

## **Instructional Support**

### **IT Coordinator**

Gabriel Perez

## **Accuracy of Information**

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other information presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Employees are expected to provide truthful and accurate information in connection with their employment at EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY. Any falsification or misrepresentation in connection with application materials, or during the course of employment, is a serious offense and may lead to discharge from employment or non-selection of an applicant.

Employment Application & Other Forms: New employees are asked to review and/or complete the following forms:

- Employment Application
- W-4 Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate
- I-9 Employment Eligibility Form
- Employee Election Form to Withhold Certain Information from Public Access
- Acknowledgement of Receipt of Personnel Handbook
- Authorization for Direct Deposit
- Applicable Healthcare/Benefit Forms
- Service Record
- Pre-Employment Affidavits

Current employees may be required to update or execute any of the above forms. Any employee who fails or refuses to complete the above forms or to provide EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY with requested documentation in a timely manner may be subject to the loss of employment benefits, the delay of employment benefits, disciplinary action, or withdrawal of the employment offer.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, military status, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Employment decisions will be made based on each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any of the reasons listed above should contact the Title IX Coordinator at (956) 424-9504.

## **Job Vacancy Announcements**

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis to the Region Omni Hire website <https://apps.esc1.net/omnihire>

## **Employment After Retirement**

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed in limited circumstances on a full or part-time basis without affecting their benefits, according to TRS rules and state law. Detailed information about employment after retirement is available in the TRS publication:

Employment After Retirement: Employees can contact TRS for additional information by calling (800) 2238778 or (512) 542-6400. Information is also available on the TRS Web Site: [www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us)

Individuals who are planning retirement and retirees who are considering employment after retirement should contact EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Human Resources' office for the current administrative procedures regarding the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY'S Retire/Rehire Program. Note: Please be advised that recent legislation may impact this program.

## Fingerprinting and Criminal Background Checks

Senate Bill 9 (SB 9), enacted by the 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, requires school organizations, including charter schools to require fingerprint-based criminal background reviews of school employees before they report to work.

Student teachers, classroom observers and volunteers are not required to submit to fingerprinting but must undergo a name-based, via driver's license, background check.

A person may not be employed or serve as a teacher, substitute teacher, librarian, educational aide, administrator, or counselor unless the person has been approved by the Texas Education Agency following a review of the person's National Criminal History Record Information. Each individual serving or expected to serve in the aforementioned roles will be expected to comply and submit the necessary information for the background check.

Additionally, other employees and contractors subject to criminal background checks will be required to comply and submit the necessary information for the background check.

All new hires are required to submit to a fingerprint-based criminal background check prior to beginning the first day of work. The Business Office will supply new hires with a FAST Fingerprint Pass with instructions on how to submit their fingerprints. Fees charged by the vendor taking the fingerprints will be the responsibility of the new hire.

State law requires the dismissal of any employee convicted of certain felonies or who is a registered sex offender.

Immediate termination of employment will result should EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY be notified of an unsatisfactory criminal background investigation report.

## Name Based Criminal Background Check

A name-based criminal background check will be conducted on all applicants. Each applicant is required to respond to any inquires made by EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY regarding conviction or a plea of guilty or no contest to a misdemeanor, felony, or offense involving moral turpitude (including, but not limited to, theft, attempted theft, rape, murder, swindling and indecency with a minor) and/or placement on probation or deferred adjudication.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY reserves the right to perform a criminal history record check at any time during employment on current employees. National criminal history checks based on an individual's fingerprints, photo, and other identification will be conducted on certain employees and entered the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Clearinghouse. This database provides the Charter and SBEC with access to an employee's current national criminal history and updates to the employee's subsequent criminal history.

## Pre-Employment Affidavit for Applicants and Applicants Offered Employment

All applicants for employment for educator positions (as defined by Texas Education Code §21.003) must submit a pre-employment affidavit indicating whether the applicant has ever been charged with, or adjudicated for, having an inappropriate relationship with a minor.

An applicant offered employment for an educator position (as defined by Texas Education Code §21.003) must submit a Pre-Employment Affidavit for Applicant Offered Employment prior to the start of employment with EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.

## Obligation to Report Criminal Record

An employee must notify his or her Principal or immediate supervisor within three calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of any felony, any offense involving moral turpitude, and any of the other offenses listed 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 at school property or at a school-sponsored activity
- Crimes involving moral turpitude, which include the following: 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, transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to possess, transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance defined in Chapter 481 of the Health and Safety Code, acts constituting public intoxication, operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, or disorderly conduct, drug or alcohol related offenses, and/or acts constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code.

## Contract and Noncontract Employment

State law requires the Charter to employ Bilingual and Special Education Teachers who meet State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) in their respective areas. All employees are employed at-will and not by contract. Employment may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the Charter with or without advance notice and with or without cause. Nothing in this handbook will be construed as creating an employment contract or agreement. No one other than the Superintendent has the authority to alter the at-will employment arrangement, to enter into an agreement for employment for a specified period of time, or to make any agreement contrary to this policy, and any such agreement must be in writing and must be signed by the Superintendent of EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.

## Certification and Licenses

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification, or a professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to the Business Office in a timely manner. Employees licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (TDLR) must notify their immediate supervisor or Principal when there is action against, or revocation of, their license. A certified employee's contract may be voided without due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact your Principal if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

## Recertification of Employment Authorization

At the time of hire all employees must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) and present documents to verify identity and employment authorization. Employees whose immigration status, employment authorization, or employment authorization documents have expired must present new documents that show current employment authorization. Employees should file the necessary application or petition sufficiently in advance to ensure that they maintain continuous employment authorization or valid employment authorization documents. Contact the Business Office if you have any questions regarding reverification of employment authorization.

## Audio & Video Recordings

An employee is prohibited from making any audio or video recording while acting in the course and scope of their employment or while on school property without the written consent of each person subject to the recording. School functions such as athletic activities or performances are exempt from this prohibition. Furthermore, an employee is prohibited from using his or her personal cell phone or school issued cell phone to photograph students and/or to post

student photographs unless the employee has received expressed written consent from the student's parent or legal guardian, the employee has confirmed with the Principal that the charter school has received expressed written consent from the student's parent or legal guardian, *and* the employee has received authorization from an Administrator to photograph and/or to post the student photograph(s).

## Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

Non-investigatory searches in the workplace, including accessing an employee's desk, file cabinets, or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes may occur when an employee is unavailable. Therefore, employees are hereby notified that they have no legitimate expectation of privacy in those places. In addition, the Charter reserves the right to conduct searches when there is reasonable cause to believe a search will uncover evidence of work-related misconduct. Such an investigatory search may include drug and alcohol testing if the suspected violation relates to drug or alcohol use. The Charter may search the employee's personal items, work areas, including Charter-owned computers, and private vehicles parked on Charter premises or worksites. All employees are required to complete the employee agreement and consent to drug and/or alcohol testing form. Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact the Business Office.

## Drug-Free Workplace

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is committed to maintaining a drug-free work environment and each employee is responsible for the maintenance of such an environment. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of a controlled substance (i.e. drugs) and/or the use of alcohol or tobacco in the workplace, or while conducting EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY business, are strictly prohibited. Additionally, an employee must notify EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace, or while conducting EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY business, no later than five days after such conviction. A report of a conviction must be made to the Superintendent.

Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY may ask an employee to submit to a drug or alcohol test whenever it reasonably believes that the employee may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the work place in violation of this Drug-Free Workplace policy, including, but not limited to the following circumstances: evidence of drugs or alcohol on or about the employee's person or in the employee's vicinity; unusual, bizarre or erratic conduct that suggests the employee is impaired by, or under the influence of, drugs or alcohol; or an on-the-job accident or injury under circumstances that suggest the possible use or influence of drugs or alcohol in the injury.

Nothing in this policy prohibits, or in any way limits, the lawful use of prescription or nonprescription drugs. However, an employee must inform his/her immediate supervisor if he/she is using a prescription or nonprescription drug which could impair work performance or pose a risk of harm to the employee, to others, or to property. It is the employee's responsibility to determine from his or her physician(s) if the medication can impair work performance or pose such a risk. If the lawful use of lawful prescription or nonprescription drugs does limit or otherwise impair the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of his or her position or otherwise creates a safety risk, the Business Office will meet with the employee to determine whether a reasonable accommodation is required.

## Suspicious Behavior

Employees are encouraged to report any suspicious behavior observed at school or at any school-related or school-sponsored activity. Strangers or former employees walking unaccompanied in areas not generally open to the public should be pointed out to a supervisor.

## Former Employees

Unless granted permission by a central office or campus administrator, former employees may not enter areas that are not open to the public after they are no longer employed by EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.

## Health Safety Training

All Charter employees must maintain and submit to the office proof of current certification or training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) and First Aid. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, University Inter-Scholastic League or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees must submit their certification or documentation to the Business Office at the start of each school year and anytime an employee is recertified.

## Standard Response Protocol

### Student Safety

A critical ingredient in the safe school recipe is the classroom response to an incident at school. Weather events, fire, accidents, intruders, and other threats to student safety are scenarios that are planned and trained for by students, teachers, staff and administration.

Our school is expanding the safety program to include the **Standard Response Protocol (SRP)**. In the event of an emergency, the action and appropriate direction will be called on the PA.



**Hold** is followed by the Directive: **“In Your Room or Area”** and is the protocol used when hallways need to be kept clear of occupants.



**Secure** is followed by the Directive: **“Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors”** and is the protocol used to safeguard people within the building.



**Lockdown** is followed by **“Locks, Lights, Out of Sight”** and is the protocol used to secure individual rooms and keep occupants quiet and in place.



**Evacuate** and may be followed by a location, and is used to move people from one location to a different location in or out of the building.



**Shelter** State the **Hazard and Safety Strategy** for group and self protection.

### Training

Please take a moment to review these actions. Students and staff will be trained and the school will drill these actions over the course of the school year. More information can be found at <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> <http://iloveugays.org>

## Dating

Employees who are in administrative, management, or supervisory roles are prohibited from dating any employee over whom they have direct or indirect supervision. Also, individuals who work within the Human Resources Department are prohibited from dating any EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY employee.

If two employees are involved in a dating relationship, it will be presumed by EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY that the relationship is welcomed by both parties unless one or the other notifies EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY to the contrary. Public displays of affection and favoritism during work hours and school activities are prohibited.

Conduct that occurs during a disagreement or following a termination of the relationship must not violate EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY's harassment policy.

## Reassignments and Transfers

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the Superintendent or designee when the Superintendent or designee determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the Charter. Reassignment is a transfer to another position or department that does not necessitate a change in the employment requirements. The Superintendent has final placement authority. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the Charter's process for employee complaints as outlined in this Handbook.

## Classification of Employees: Hours Worked

*Full-Time Employees.* Full-time employees are employed at least 40 hours per week. Full-time employees are eligible for the employee benefits set forth in this Handbook.

*Part-Time Employees.* Part-time employees work less than 40 hours per week. Part-time employees are regularly scheduled to work during the work week at a fixed part-time schedule. Part-time employees ordinarily are not eligible for the employee benefits set forth in this Handbook in Section 4, but a part-time employee could qualify for TRS Retirement benefits depending on the employee's tenure and the number of hours worked by the employee.

*Temporary Employees.* Temporary employees are hired as interim replacements to temporarily supplement the workforce, such as substitute teachers, or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of a limited duration.

## Classification of Employees: Non-Exempt Status vs. Exempt Status

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY assigns positions, determines wages and compensates employees for overtime in accordance with state laws, local laws, and the federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

*Exempt vs. Non-Exempt Designation.* Each employment position is designated as either non-exempt or exempt as required by the federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

*Exempt Positions.* Exempt employees are expected to work the hours necessary to complete their assigned work to the satisfaction of their supervisor without regard to scheduled hours and without expectation of additional compensation. Exempt employees are not entitled to overtime compensation. Generally, teaching and administrative positions are designated as exempt positions.

Teaching positions are classified as exempt positions if:

- The primary duty is teaching, tutoring, instructing or lecturing in the activity of imparting knowledge; and
- They are employed and engaged in this activity as a teacher in an educational establishment.

Administrative positions are classified as exempt positions if:

- The position is compensated on a salary basis at a rate of \$455 or more per week; and
- The primary duty is performance of office or non-manual work directly related to the management or general business operations of the employer or the employer's customers; and
- The primary duty includes the exercise of discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance.

*Non-Exempt Positions.* Non-exempt employees are entitled to minimum wages and overtime pay. Overtime payment is pay at a rate of at least one and one-half times an employee's "regular rate of pay" for any hours worked over 40 hours in a workweek. Generally, paraprofessionals are classified as non-exempt employees. All non-exempt employees must review and approve their timesheets at the end of every pay period. Business Office must review and approve the employees' timesheets at the end of every month.

A non-exempt employee is never permitted to work "off the clock". This includes sending text messages or emails after the employee's scheduled work hours unless in response to a supervisor's directive or supervisor's designee. While all hours worked will be compensated appropriately, an employee's failure to report hours accurately whether too low or too high is cause for disciplinary action. Employees should immediately report to the Business Office any effort by a supervisor to participate, encourage, or even permit an employee to work "off the clock" in violation of this overtime provision. Failure to comply with Overtime Policy may result in disciplinary action.

## Workload and Work Schedules

*Professional Employees.* Professional employees and administrators are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10-, 11-, or 12-month basis, according to the work schedules set by the Charter. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule for teachers and all school holidays. Notice of work schedules including required days of service and scheduled holidays will be distributed each school year. **Teachers are expected to be in their respective classrooms by 7:30 am.** Teachers are **released by 4:15 p.m.** unless they are at tutorials, faculty meetings, or other commitments. Tutorials will begin at 3:45 p.m. and end at 4:15 p.m. - Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday. Classroom teachers have planning periods/conferences for instructional preparation. The schedule of planning periods is set at the campus level at the discretion of the Administration. Teachers are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes. The Charter may require teachers to supervise students during lunch one day a week when no other personnel are available.

*Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees.* Support employees are employed at-will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. **Paraprofessionals and auxiliary employees are not exempt from overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned 40-hour work week schedule without prior written approval from their supervisor.**

## Lunch Times

Remember to check the schedule regarding pick up and drop off of your students during lunchtime. The schedule is provided to help all students be accommodated quickly. Teachers and aides should be prompt in dropping off and picking up students.

## Visitors in the Workplace

All visitors are expected to enter the Charter's facility through the main entrance and will have their ID run through the RAPTOR system. Authorized visitors will receive a pass after being signed in, given directions and/or be escorted to their destination. **Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the Charter premises should immediately direct him or her to the main office and contact the administrator in charge.**

## Release of Students from Classroom

All visitors must enter through the front office and register with the school receptionist/front office personnel. Several students have custodial parents/guardians and/or specifications in the files that must be observed, therefore the person requesting a student(s) must be in our system and have permission to pick-up student(s). If they are not included on our system, the student(s) will **not** be released; a form of identification will be required as proof **every** time. If an adult comes to the classroom asking for a child, request that he/she return to the receptionist to sign the student out. Someone from the office will notify you to send the student to the front desk. All staff members should support this procedure to ensure safety for all students. Notices are posted on all doors requesting all parents and visitors to sign in with the receptionist. No students shall be released after 2:30 p.m. due to the interruption of instruction; the principal or designee shall make the final determination.

## Employee's Children

Our campus should be a place to learn and work. In order to protect the rights of all staff members and to maintain safe standards for the children, the following guidelines should be consistently enforced for all employees' children.

- Children of employees should be in the same area as the parent each morning or under ELA supervision.
- After school, children should remain with their teacher until the last student is dismissed. Student is then dismissed to the parent's room and should not be allowed to roam and play in the halls, or other areas. Teachers may work together to assist in quiet activities and supervision. **Employees must always monitor their personal children.**
- **Due to the required duty schedule (am/pm), staff children must be at their designated waiting areas at 7:30 am and are not allowed to be dismissed until afterschool duty has ended.**
- Children are requested to remain in a designated routine area during faculty functions and meetings. Children should not attend faculty meetings.
- Children should not be in the teacher workroom area during the school day.
- If adults are meeting or talking on the phone, children should not be present.
- Children of employees should abide by the same guidelines as other students.
- If a staff member, secretary and/or administrator are tutoring/working, our personal children may not be present in the room/office. Staff members must make arrangements to have their personal children picked up.

## Lesson Plans

Lesson plans are to be planned one week in advance - there is no excuse for not being prepared with lesson plans. Lesson Plans will be submitted electronically in the designated folder by the Thursday to the week prior. It is the teacher's responsibility to keep their lesson plans up -to-date and organized. A printed copy of lesson plans is to be placed in a visible area of the classroom.

Teachers who do not have lesson plans on time are subject to documentation in their personnel folder and TTESS.

Lesson plans are the teachers' "road map". Format should be simple, and content should be detailed enough that others could follow the plan. A well written lesson plan signifies thorough planning and consideration of the expectations for learning. Daily lesson plans in each subject must contain the following:

- Objective: What is to be learned? What are the expectations for student learning as a result of the instruction?
- NOTE: Teachers must document which TEKS, STAAR, and language objectives are addressed.
- Activity: What items are needed to conduct the lesson?
- Evaluation: How will the degree of success of the lesson be determined?
- Supports: Indicate special provisions for struggling students, EB students, special education students, and for high achieving students.

## Grade Book

Each teacher will use an Internet based Grade book (Ascender). This gradebook is documentation for accountability of student progress. Grade books must contain accurate attendance records, including tardiness, and labeled columns of grades. There should be a minimum of 12 grades in a six-week period. In addition, grade books should contain a written explanation of how grades are weighed and how averages are obtained.

If utilizing a computerized grade book, you must print and keep accurate current information in a folder or notebook in case of parent conferences, computer failures, etc. Your grade book is the official record for academic assessment, enrollment, and attendance recognized by TEA. Failure to maintain a grade book or substandard grade book recording will result in a markdown in the teacher evaluation.

## Grading Procedures/Progress Reports

With respect to the rubric for grading, all teachers should adhere to the following guidelines:

- 50% tests
- 50% Classroom Assignments, Quizzes, Projects, Journals, Portfolios, etc.
- K-8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers should record a minimum of 2 grades per subject per week, a minimum of 12 grades per six weeks. Progress reports should be issued every 4<sup>th</sup> week of the six weeks.
- Teachers will keep up-to-date records in the grade book so parents can be notified in a timely manner of student's progress. At the three-week point in the grading period, teachers should send a progress report. **Parents should sign and return the form immediately.**
- No recorded grades in the grade book can be lower than a **50**.
- All students will be able to substitute the failing grade for the retest grade, but the grade will be no higher than a **75**.
- The student must participate in some form of re-teaching/tutoring prior to the re-test.
- Teachers must have administrative approval before giving a 6-week grade of "I" incomplete to any student. Students must clear all incompletes within 2 weeks of the end of the 6 weeks.

## Make-up Work

**"Reasonable opportunity" to make-up a major/minor assessment or assignment due to absence:**

- **Excused absence:** The number of days afforded to students for make-up work will be equal to the number of days absent. A teacher will have the option of assigning an alternate assessment in lieu of the original. In extenuating circumstances with absences, the campus principal will make a decision on the assignment and make-up days. Homework assigned prior to student's absence is due the day student returns to class.
- **Unexcused absence:** The number of days afforded to students for make-up work will be equal to the number of days absent with a progressive grade penalty of points per day. A teacher will have the option of assigning an alternate assessment in lieu of the original.
- A student should not, on the day of returning to school, be required to take a major/minor assessment that was announced during his/her absence. However, if a student received all instruction for the announced major/minor assessment, student is responsible for taking major/minor assessment or submitting major/minor assessment upon return to school.

## Late Work

**"Reasonable opportunity" for late submission of major/minor assessment:**

All students will have up to 3 days to submit late major/minor assessments and/or assignments with progressive grade penalty of points per day.

## Academic Reports to Parents

Grading periods at EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY are divided into 6 six-weeks reporting periods. The student's progress will be assessed through class assignments, class participation, homework, tests, quizzes, projects, etc.

These assessments determine the grade for the period. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will communicate each student's academic progress through the following methods:

- Report cards will be sent home on the Wednesday following each grading period as indicated in the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Family Handbook.
- Progress reports will be sent at regular intervals of three weeks.
- Final report cards will not be issued until all records are cleared. Students must pay for lost or damaged books in order to have records cleared.

Students (other than Pre-K) are graded on the following scale:

|          |   |                                              |
|----------|---|----------------------------------------------|
| 100-90   | A | Demonstrates exceptional mastery of material |
| 89-80    | B | Demonstrates mastery of material             |
| 79-70    | C | Demonstrates average mastery of material     |
| 69-60    | D | Demonstrates some knowledge of material      |
| 59-below | F | Demonstrates lack of mastery of material     |

Pre-K is graded on the following scale:

|    |                   |
|----|-------------------|
| E  | Excellent         |
| S  | Satisfactory      |
| NI | Needs improvement |
| U  | Unsatisfactory    |

Students who show exceptional mastery in all content classes may earn A Honor Roll status. Recognition will also be acknowledged for students who earn A & B Honor Roll or B Honor Roll.

Academic grades that are below average and behavior grades below satisfactory will require a parent/teacher conference. If needed, an Administrator/Parent/Teacher conference may also be required. Behavior grades below satisfactory may prohibit students from participating in school-sponsored activities such as whole-school activities, assemblies, etc.

## Honor Roll

Will be based on all subject areas and conduct grade. Honor Roll must be maintained throughout every six weeks to receive all "A" Honor Roll or all "B" Honor Roll for the year.

## Promotion

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level, the recommendation of the student's teacher, the score received on any criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessment (e.g. STAAR), and any other necessary academic information as determined by ELA (e.g. TPRI). *Physical, emotional and maturational factors will be considered in addition to academic achievement in making decisions regarding the most appropriate instructional placement of each student.*

**Final decisions of promotion, placement, or retention shall be the responsibility of the Grade Placement Committee including child's teacher, administration, and parent/guardian. Students in Kindergarten may be promoted/retained using portfolio assessment, teacher observation, and/or teacher recommendations.**

Students in grades Kinder-8<sup>th</sup> grade may be promoted from one grade level to the next by obtaining an overall average of 70 or above in each core subject area for the school year. In addition, the student must show adequate mastery of minimum skills for the current grade level. State mandated and skills-based assessments, teacher recommendations and local assessments will also be used to determine students' academic achievement progress for the year. **Student retesting**

**and extra credit work will be considered when determining a teacher's recommendation for retention. Students who do not meet these requirements may be retained for the school year.**

## Homework Procedures

The purpose of homework should be clearly communicated to students and parents and should:

- Preview: Provide background knowledge for upcoming lesson and unit of study.
- Practice: Provide opportunities for concept and skill development.
- Application: Extend classroom learning and/or provide practice in applying concepts initially learned in the classroom.
- Enrichment: Provide opportunities for enrichment or accelerated practice.
- Provide opportunities to identify and to use resources, such as the library, the internet, reference books and other community resources.
- Homework should always be practice of “known” and “taught” material.

### Guidelines

- Homework assignments are to be directly related to instructional objectives and skills.
- Homework is not graded for elementary grades (Pre-Kinder to Kindergarten); however, when projects are assigned, they count for 10% of the six weeks grade.
- No homework is to be assigned Wednesday night. It is a Family Night.
- Homework is not to be assigned during the Holidays within the school year.
- All grade level teachers must include homework assignment(s) within their lesson plans.
- Students are not to be overloaded with homework from all subjects in one evening. Communication among the grade levels is key to ensure this does not occur.
- Benchmark and weekly tests cannot be sent for homework to correct and/or copy problems, strategies, and answers.

The following time guidelines should be used in planning homework:

- Pre-Kinder, Kinder and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade: 35 minutes per night
- 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: 45-60 minutes per night
- 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: 60-75 minutes per night
- 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade: 75-90 minutes per night

## Faculty and Grade Level Meetings

Staff and department meetings will be conducted on an as-needed basis. Faculty meetings are scheduled for the third Thursday of each month after school, subject to change. Grade level PLC meetings are scheduled every Wednesday. Attendance and punctuality are expected, therefore documented.

## Cell Phone (calls or texts)

- Cell phone use is permitted only during conference, lunch, or after school.
- No cell phone use during instructional time; for emergencies, let us know how we can help.
- No cell phone use during meetings or trainings.

## Dismissal Procedures

All students will be dismissed at 3:30 p.m.

- It is crucial that no teacher or staff member allow a student to be released early from class without office approval.
- All students must remain seated while in the cafeteria, with belongings on their laps.
- Teacher will dismiss student to pick-up line when name is called; each student will be escorted to parent/guardian by pick-up line personnel.
- Teachers must supervise students to ensure the safety of students and to expedite parent pick up.
- Avoid “socialization” that inhibits/slows the dismissal process. Students should read their book(s).

- Avoid parent conferences at this time.

## Textbooks

The principal is the textbook coordinator. All textbook requests must go through the principal. This includes teacher editions, core teaching kits, and student textbooks. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will receive an allotment of textbooks for each subject, and they will be responsible to return their allotted number of textbooks at the end of the year. In addition, teachers are required to write their student's name and their name in each textbook that they issue. Extra textbooks should be kept in a locked cabinet. Teacher will be accountable for undocumented lost books. A textbook inventory form will be completed at the beginning and end of the school year.

## Use of Office Telephone

Phone calls should be school-related. Log all phone calls in the notes section of DMAC, which can be printed as needed. Personal calls should be made during a conference period, lunch, or after school. Do not leave your class unattended to make any phone calls. In the event of an emergency, ask a team member to supervise the classroom. The office staff will take messages when calls are received outside your conference time and will place notification in the teacher's box. If you are expecting an important call or message, please make the office staff aware in order to assist you with the situation. Use your two-way radio for on-campus communication; personnel are to use designated safety protocols designated by the Charter.

## Assembly Procedures

Practice assembly procedures to ensure success. Students are expected to enter the room quietly and leave quietly. Remind students they are setting an example for the younger students who are watching them by embodying the leadership qualities of the Charter's vision and mission statements. This is a time to shine in front of parents and peers.

- Students will sit with legs crossed on the cafeteria/auditorium floor in rows and by classes if chairs are not available. If an assembly is in the cafeteria/auditorium, students will file in quietly and sit in the areas designated for their class. Hands are to be kept on lap.
- Classes will be called to come to the assembly area. Teachers will lead classes into the assembly area and sit with their students. A center aisle should be left open, as well as space on either side of the seating area, if in the cafeteria/auditorium.
- Classes will be seated with the younger children at the front (closest to the stage) and the older children behind.
- Care should be taken to separate children with behavioral problems in the seating arrangement. You may wish to seat some children close to you for "easy access"!
- Teachers are expected to sit with their classes and remain for the entire assembly. Teachers should not be taking anything with them that will distract them from properly supervising the students such as reading materials, grading papers, etc.
- Support staff and part-time staff will assist in monitoring students as they arrive and exit.
- Students should remain quiet and behave courteously to our guests. Unacceptable: whistling, yelling, chanting, and extra clapping, unless encouraged by the Presenter or Administration.
- At the close of an assembly, students will remain seated and quiet until their class is dismissed. Individual classes will be called to leave with their teacher. Support staff and part-time staff should be available to take those students assigned to them at that time.
- Teachers are responsible for student behavior and to teach proper assembly procedures. Do not allow students to leave assembly. Restroom breaks should be taken prior to assembly.

## Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications

Since EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY receives Title I funds, the Charter is required by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. ESSA also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified. Texas law also requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notification under ESSA is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) or individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call the Business Office at (956) 424-9504.

## Outside Employment and Tutoring

Employees are required to disclose in writing to their immediate supervisor any outside employment that may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest of the Charter. Supervisors will consider outside employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

## Performance Evaluation

Evaluation of an employee's job performance is a continuous process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor at least annually. Written evaluations will be completed on forms approved by ELA. Reports, correspondence, and memoranda also can be used to document performance information. All employees will participate in a performance conference with their supervisor and have the opportunity to respond to their evaluation. All employees who receive a written evaluation will receive a copy of that evaluation while classroom teachers will have access to their evaluation digitally on DMAC. Please Note: Classroom teachers will be appraised following the instrument and timelines of the TEXAS-Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS).

## Employee Involvement

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY offers opportunities for input in matters that affect employees and influence the instructional effectiveness of ELA. As part of ELA's planning and decision-making process, employees are elected to serve on the Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM) committee. Plans and detailed information about the shared decision-making process are available in the Superintendent's office.

## Professional Development

Professional development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and ELA. Professional development for instructional personnel is predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, addressed in the campus improvement plan, and approved by a campus-level advisory committee. Professional development for non-instructional personnel is designed for continued employee skill development.

Individuals holding renewable SBEC certificates are responsible for obtaining the required training hours and maintaining appropriate documentation.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY shall provide for the recruitment, development, support and retention of highly qualified administrators, teachers, and auxiliary staff through the implementation of the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Professional Development Plan.

## Compensation and Benefits (Salaries, Wages, and Stipends)

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. ELA's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed and with board approval. All ELA positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as non-exempt and are paid on an hourly basis and are covered by the overtime provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and by the Texas wage and hour laws. All employees are required to fill out timesheets / clock in and out at the designated schedules, accounting for all hours worked in a pay period. All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules each school year. Classroom teachers will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Extra duty payments are made in accordance with approved pay date schedules.

## Annualized Compensation

ELA pays all salaried employees over a period of 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.

## Supplemental Duties and Related Stipends

The Superintendent may assign formal supplemental duties to personnel from time to time for activities such as athletic coaching and student club sponsoring.

- Supplemental Duty Pay for Exempt Employees. Exempt employees assigned supplemental duties shall be compensated for these assignments according to the compensation plan set by EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.
- Supplemental Duty Pay for Non-Exempt Employees. Non-exempt employees assigned supplemental duties shall be compensated for the supplemental duties on an hourly rate. The hourly rate set for the employee's supplemental duty may differ from the hourly rate set for the employee's core employment position. Overtime wages will be paid if the employee works over 40 hours per work week, whether the work is performed in the employee's core duties, supplemental duties, or a combination of both duties.
- No Contractual Obligation Committed. Paid supplemental duties do not create any contractual obligation by ELA to continue the assignment of the supplemental duty. An employee shall hold no expectation of continuing assignment to any paid supplemental duty.

## Automatic Payroll Deposit

All exempt employees are paid on the 25th of each month. Non-exempt employees are paid on the 1st and 16th of each month. **If a scheduled payday (25th, 1st, or 16th) falls on a weekend or district holiday, payment will be paid on the last day of work prior to the regularly scheduled payday.** All paychecks are processed electronically through direct deposit.

Employees may access their payroll statements via Ascender Employee Access, which provides detailed information including salary, deductions, tax withholdings, and accumulated leave balances.

## Payroll Deductions

The Charter is required to make the following automatic payroll deductions: Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) or Social Security employee contributions. Federal income tax is required for all full-time employees and Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired after March 31, 1986).

Other payroll deductions employees may elect include deductions for the employee's share of premiums for health, dental, life, vision insurance; and other voluntary insurance; annuities; and higher education savings plans. Employees may also request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

The following deductions will also be made if owed to EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY in the final payroll check at the end of the fiscal year:

- Overpayment of wages for any reason.
- Cost of personal long-distance calls or faxes.
- Cost of repairing or replacing any supplies, materials, equipment, money or other property that was damaged (other than normal wear and tear), lost, failed to return, or taken without appropriate authorization from EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.
- Cost of fair value, of meals, lodging, and other facilities furnished to me by EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.
- Any monies owed to Child Nutrition Program, Uniforms, or any other fees payable to EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.

Any indebtedness to EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will be deducted from the employee's last paycheck (e.g. Uniforms, meals, etc.).

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will only deduct wages from an employee's paycheck under circumstances that are allowable under state and federal law. Additionally, any wages that an employee has requested and authorized in writing will be deducted.

*Errors in Deductions.* If there is a deduction that has been made that the employee believes is in error, the employee should immediately contact the Business Office. Retaliation against an employee who has questioned what he/she believes may be an incorrect deduction in pay is prohibited.

*Administrative Fees.* Texas law authorizes an employer to make certain deductions from pay for costs incurred in servicing a garnishment or wage attachment order. Accordingly, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY may charge the following administrative fees:

- Court-ordered child support: an employer may make a deduction for an administrative fee of up to \$10.00 per month.
- Court-ordered spousal maintenance: an employer may make a deduction for an administrative fee of up to \$5.00 per month
- Guaranteed student loan wage attachments: an employer may make a deduction for an administrative fee of the actual cost, or \$10.00, whichever is less per month.

## Payroll Advances and Financial Loans

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY does **not** issue payroll advances to any employee under any circumstance. Additionally, ELA does not extend financial loans to its employees.

## Mistake in Payroll or Expense Reimbursement

Employees are required to immediately notify their supervisor in the event of a suspected mistake in their payroll or expense reimbursement. Failure to report an overpayment in payroll or in an expense reimbursement may result in disciplinary action.

## Attendance Records

Employee attendance records must be kept complete and accurate. Attendance records are subject to unannounced reviews to ensure proper use. Falsification of time records is a serious offense and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from employment.

## Final Paycheck

If an employee is laid off, discharged, fired, or otherwise involuntarily separated from employment, the final payday will be within six (6) calendar days of discharge. If the employee quits, retires, resigns, or otherwise leaves employment

voluntarily, the final payday will be on the next regularly scheduled payday following the effective date of resignation. Any school employee who receives annualized pay and who has been overpaid wages as of their last day of employment either must reimburse the school for the amount of overpaid wages or must provide written consent for the amount of the overpaid wages to be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

## Overtime Compensation

The Charter compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. Only nonexempt employees (hourly employees and paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. Nonexempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance *written approval* from their supervisor. **Overtime will only be paid when the Overtime Authorization Form is completed by employee and supervisor and turned into the Business Office.**

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:01 A. M. Saturday and ends at 11:59 P.M. Friday.

Employees may be compensated for overtime at time-and-a-half rate of direct pay or with compensatory time off (comp time). The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

Written approval of comp time must specify the job to be completed, and the amount of maximum comp time allowed. Comp time must be used in the duty year that it is earned. Use of comp time may be at the employee's request with supervisor's written approval as workload permits or at the supervisor's direction. An employee may be required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation). Weekly time records will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.

## Employee Time Clock

The employee time clock is required to be used by all staff. Every employee is assigned an employee number to be used to clock in and out. Employees are responsible for knowing their ID number and protecting it from unauthorized use. Exempt staff are required to clock in daily. All nonexempt employees must "clock in" and "clock out" at the start of their shift, during lunch breaks, and at the end of their shift. Employees may be subject to immediate corrective action, and or termination if they commit the following infractions:

- tampering with the hardware and software
- punching in or out for another employee
- viewing another employees' time
- conducting personal business or not working while on the clock
- failing to clock in and out
- failing to submit a timesheet or sign-in form

## Travel Expense Reimbursement

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor must give written approval. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures including city and local hotel tax according to the current rate schedule found on the Texas State Comptroller's Website. Employees must submit all meal and hotel receipts and proof of attendance no later than 5 days after returning to their daily work schedule. Employee will be held responsible for returning any amounts not used or lacking documentation for reimbursement.

Mileage reimbursement forms must be submitted by the **15th of each month** for mileage or travel anticipated in the **following month**. Reimbursement will **not** be issued for accumulated or prior mileage if the form is not submitted on a monthly basis as required.

## Same Sex Spouses

In compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) and the final judgment rendered by the Texas courts in *Pidgeon v. Turner* (2017), EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY extends spousal benefits, where applicable, to same-sex spouses.

## Health, Dental, and Life Insurance

Group health insurance coverage is available to full-time employees. The Charter's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the Board of Directors. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, prices, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet entitled EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY EMPLOYEE BENEFITS HANDBOOK.

The health insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. New employees must complete enrollment forms within the first 7 days of employment. New employees can make changes to elected insurance coverage within the first 30 days of employment. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during approved open enrollment or within 30 days of a change in family status. Employees should contact the Business Office for more information.

## Continuation of Health Insurance

Employees who perform service in the Armed Forces may elect to continue their health plan coverage at their own cost for a period not to exceed 24 months. Employees should contact the Business Office for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## Supplemental Insurance Benefits

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for Vision, Cancer, Heart/Stroke, Critical illness, Long Term Care, Accident, Supplemental Life, and Disability. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Business Office for more information.

## Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)

Employees may be eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) and, under IRS regulations, must either accept or reject this benefit. This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pretax basis (i.e. Health, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer and dread disease, dental, and vision insurance). A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts. New employees must accept or reject this benefit during their first month of employment. All employees must accept or reject this benefit on an annual basis during ELA's open enrollment.

## Workers' Compensation Insurance

ELA, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The Charter has workers' compensation coverage from **Employers Preferred Insurance Company**, effective **July 1**. Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case. All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the Worker's Compensation Specialist (Business Manager). Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code.

## Unemployment Compensation Insurance

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months if they have employment contracts or reasonable assurance of returning to service. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact the Business Office.

## Teacher Retirement System

The Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) administers a pension trust fund that has been serving the needs of Texas public education employees for over 75 years. A charter school employee is eligible for membership in TRS when the employee has:

- Regular employment with a **single** public, state-supported education institution in Texas that is expected to last for a period of 4 ½ months or more,
- For one-half or more of the full-time workload, and
- With compensation paid at a rate comparable to the rate of compensation for other persons employed in similar positions.

An employee of a public, state-supported educational institution in Texas is considered to meet these requirements if the employee's customary employment is for 20 hours or more each week at a single employer and lasts for 4 ½ months or more in one school year.

An employee is **no longer eligible** to receive retirement annuity from TRS if the person is convicted of a qualifying felony against a student. A qualifying felony includes the continuous sexual abuse of a young child or children, an improper relationship between an educator and student, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.

Substitutes not receiving TRS service retirement benefits, who work at least 90 days a year, are also eligible for TRS membership and to purchase a year of creditable service. TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits. Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the Business Office as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX. 78701-2698, or call (800)223-8778 or (512) 542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web ([www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us)).

## Dress Code / Grooming

All employees are expected to dress professionally. Dress and grooming shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for their assignments, and in accordance with any additional standards established by their supervisor. Examples of clothing fostering a professional appearance include: collared shirts; dress slacks; dress coordinates, suits, dresses, ties and sports coats. Exceptions would include those positions which have specified separate dress expectations, such as Physical Education, Food Service, Transportation, and Maintenance. Blue jeans are allowed only on Fridays and must be worn with a college or school shirt.

- No worn out or torn jeans are permitted.
- No faded or worn-out clothes are permitted.
- No shorts are permitted.
- No strapless or spaghetti-strap blouses/dresses permitted.
- No visible tattoos that depict offensive, inappropriate, distracting subject matter or are considered inappropriate for the school environment.
- Professional footwear is expected. No flip-flop sandals are allowed.
- Tennis shoes will be allowed **only if** they are clean and appropriate.
- Hairstyles and fashions, (ex. low cut blouses, tight-fitting/leggings) which cause or may cause a distraction are unacceptable.
- Hair color for men and women, including highlights and extensions, is limited to only natural hair colors.
- Appropriate undergarments are expected.
- Always dress professionally during In-Service/Professional Learning Days.
- Men are to wear shirt and pants. Ties and sport jackets or suits are optional. Men may wear sports shirts with collars. **No t-shirts or jeans** unless on days designated by administration. Shirts should be pressed, buttoned, and tucked in. Hair should be neatly combed, and the back must not extend over the top of the buttoned-up collar of the shirt. Men should not wear earrings or ponytails. Mustaches and beards are permitted provided they are neat and trimmed; otherwise, men should be clean-shaven.

- Women may wear dresses or slacks. Dresses should be of modest lengths (no more than 2" above the knee). Women may wear sports shirts with collars. No halter-tops, leggings, jeggings, bare midriff tops, etc. **No t-shirts or jeans** unless on days designated by administration.

*The administration of EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY reserves the right to make the final decision regarding compliance with dress code / grooming. Exceptions to the dress code may be considered in order to make reasonable accommodations for an employee's disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, or an employee's sincerely held religious belief.*

## Purchasing Procedures

To ensure proper use of school funds, please follow these key purchasing requirements:

1. **Do Not Make Purchases Without Approval**  
All purchases must be pre-approved through the formal purchase order (PO) process. Teachers are **not allowed** to make purchases on their own and seek reimbursement later.
2. **Submit Purchase Requests in Advance**  
Submit purchase requisitions within two weeks in advance to give sufficient time for administrative review and approval before placing any orders.
3. **Use Approved Vendors Only**  
Items must be purchased from vendors that are pre-approved and qualified. If unsure, check with the Business Office. If the vendor is not in the system, provide the business office with a W9 and CIQ (Conflict of Interest) form.
4. **No Splitting Purchases**  
Do not split larger purchases into smaller ones to avoid required approvals or thresholds.
5. **Campus Budget Responsibility**  
Each campus or department is responsible for staying within their approved budget. Check availability before requesting a purchase, especially for fundraising events or purchases.
6. **Purchasing with Credit Card (if applicable)**  
Only authorized staff (Secretary, Principal, Superintendent & Business Manager/staff) may use the district credit card and must submit itemized receipts immediately after use.
7. **Failure to Follow Procedure = Personal Liability**  
If a teacher bypasses the proper purchasing process, **they may be held financially responsible for any purchase using the Charter funds and may result in disciplinary action.**

Only the Superintendent or his/her designee may sign contracts or negotiate grants.

## Financial Ethics

Excellence in Leadership Academy strictly prohibits all forms of fraud and financial impropriety by its Board members, employees, vendors, contractors, consultants, volunteers, or any individuals or entities seeking or maintaining a business relationship with Excellence in Leadership Academy.

**Fraud and financial impropriety** include, but are not limited to, the following actions:

- Soliciting or accepting anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or service providers, except as permitted by law or Excellence in Leadership Academy policy.
- Failing to disclose conflicts of interest as required by law or policy.
- Failing to provide financial documentation required by state or local authorities.
- Forging or unlawfully altering checks, bank drafts, or other financial documents.
- Forging or unlawfully altering any document or account belonging to Excellence in Leadership Academy.
- Mishandling funds or misreporting financial transactions of Excellence in Leadership Academy.

- Improperly destroying, removing, or misusing records, equipment, furniture, or fixtures.
- Misappropriating funds, securities, supplies, or other assets, including misuse of employee time.
- Profiteering from insider knowledge of school operations or activities.
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information.
- Unauthorized disclosure of current or contemplated investment activities.
- Any other dishonest or unethical act involving the financial affairs of Excellence in Leadership Academy.

## Reporting Suspected Misconduct

Any individual who suspects fraud or financial impropriety must report their concerns immediately to a supervisor, the Superintendent, the Business Manager, the Board President, or local law enforcement.

## Confidentiality and Non-Retaliation

Excellence in Leadership Academy is committed to protecting the privacy of complainants, respondents, and witnesses. Disclosure of information will be limited to what is necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law. All employees involved in investigations are expected to maintain confidentiality to ensure the integrity of the process.

Excellence in Leadership Academy strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who, in good faith, reports suspected fraud or financial impropriety.

## Consequences for Violations:

If an employee is found to have engaged in fraud or financial misconduct, the Superintendent, Business Manager, or Board of Directors will take appropriate disciplinary action. This may include termination of employment and, when warranted, referral to the appropriate law enforcement or regulatory agency.

## Fieldtrip Procedures

- Field trips should be based on the educational value and the experience it will provide for the students. Field trip requests must be made at least four weeks in advance and must be approved by the principal and/or Administrative Designee. Teachers must submit a Field Trip Request Form.
- All purchase orders for field trips must be submitted to the principal at least two weeks prior to the field trip. Attach the corresponding Lesson Plan with TEKS objectives to the purchase order.
- All field trips must have written administrative approval before final commitments are made to organizations.
- Once administrative approval is received, teachers are responsible for sending home with the students the *Notice to Parents: Acknowledgment of Responsibility and Permission*, and *Authorization for Emergency Treatment* forms. Teachers must have copies of the Permission and Emergency Treatment forms for all students participating in the field trip. Teachers must carry these forms with them during the entire field trip. Permission slips must be sent home with each student along with what they will need to bring. A student who fails to return the appropriate forms will **not** be allowed on the field trip.
- Forms that are sent out or posted to parents must be approved by the principal and copies must be provided.
- The office staff should receive a copy of the parent letter and agenda in order to answer any questions in case parents call the office requesting information. Teachers should leave a contact number with the principal and office staff.
- The nurse or approved staff personnel should be notified at least one week in advance to prepare needed medications.
- Teachers should have a student roster and call roll to check attendance before all departures.
- Teachers will remain with students throughout the field trip. If students are divided into small groups, then meeting points and times should be coordinated with their chaperone so that teachers/staff can check on all groups periodically. Students should always remain with their group.
- Teachers will report alternative lunch plans two weeks before trip to the Business Office.

- Teachers should notify support staff (Fine Arts) when they will not be reporting to class.
- An itinerary should be submitted to the principal two weeks prior to the field trip.
- All chaperones must receive prior approval by an administrator and must have been cleared through the RAPTOR system.

## Expressing Breastmilk in the Workplace

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY supports the practice of expressing breast milk and makes reasonable accommodations for the needs of employees who express breast milk. A location, other than a multiple user bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from other employees and the public where the employee can express milk will be provided.

A reasonable amount of break time will be provided when the employee has a need to express milk. For nonexempt employees, these breaks are unpaid and are not counted as hours worked. Employees should meet with the principal to discuss their needs and arrange break times.

## Mail

All Charter mail will be opened by office staff. No personal mail or packages are to be mailed or received through the school's mail.

## Personal Property

Due to safety concerns, Administration will have access to all personal property on campus (ex. Keys to locked drawers and/or cabinets).

## Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the Business Office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. The form to process a change in personal information can be obtained from the Business Office.

A completed W4 form is required for all permanent changes of: Address, marital status, withholding allowances, or name changes. In addition, a copy of the employee's social security card is required for all name changes.

## Personnel Records

Most Charter records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. Pursuant to an Open Records Request under the Freedom of Information Act, employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld from disclosure: Address, Phone number, Social Security number, and/or information that reveals whether they have family members.

The choice to not allow public access to this information may be made at any time by submitting a written request to the Business Office. New or terminating employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information will be released to the public.

## Termination of Employment and Resignations

At-will employees may resign their positions at any time. A written notice of resignation is encouraged and should be submitted to the Principal and Business Office at least two weeks prior to the effective date. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY reserves the right to require the employee to resign immediately rather than work during the notice period.

In order to reduce the risk of employee violence or vandalism, upon an employee's discharge from employment, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY administration may request that an employee leave the facility immediately upon separation from employment. If accompanied by an EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY administrator, the employee will be permitted to gather his/her personal belongings before being escorted to the exit.

The exiting employee is prohibited from taking any EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY property or information with him/her; the employee is not to retain a hard copy or soft copy of any EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY information. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY reserves the right to examine any boxes, briefcases, or other receptacle of an employee to ensure these rules are being followed, prior to the employee exiting the premises.

An employee who has been discharged is not permitted to return to the premises of EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY without prior written approval from the Business Office or the Principal.

## Dismissal of Noncontract Employees

Noncontract employees are employed at-will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the Charter to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance.

## Exit Interviews and Procedures

Exit interviews may be scheduled for employees leaving the Charter. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time. Separating employees are asked to provide the Charter with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the Charter with feedback on his or her employment experience. All Charter keys, books, property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment. Noncompliance with this section of the handbook may result in adverse action against the employee.

## Reports to the State Board for Educator Certification

The dismissal or resignation of a certified employee will be reported to SBEC when the Superintendent first learns about an alleged incident of conduct that involves the following:

- A reported criminal history
- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other illegal conduct with student or a minor
- Soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of school property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle the individual to a professional position or to receive additional compensation associated with a position
- Committing a crime on school property or at a school-sponsored event
- Violating assessment instrument security procedures

## Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding

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

- 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

## Attendance

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY employees are expected to be reliable and punctual in reporting for work each scheduled day. If an employee will be late to work or is unable to work as scheduled, the employee should notify their supervisor immediately.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY recognizes there will be occasions when an illness or other personal event may result in an unscheduled absence. As such, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY has a leave policy (see Section below). It is the Charter school's expectation that each employee attends work every day unless approved paid or unpaid leave is granted pursuant to the charter school's leave policy.

Poor attendance and/or repeated tardiness are disruptive to the operations of EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from employment. Failure to attend work for up to three days in a row without notice to the Charter school will constitute job abandonment and EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY shall treat such job abandonment as a voluntary resignation from employment without notice.

## Leaves and Absences

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY offers employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence in times of personal need. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence. Employees who expect to be absent for an extended period of more than five days should call the Business Office for more information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums and requirements for communicating with the Charter.

## Reporting Absences

Employees must follow the procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate leave documentation.

- Employees must first notify the administrator in charge prior to using SubHub/OmniSub .
- Employees are expected to contact their supervisors no later than 9:00 p.m. the night before or no later than 6:30 a.m. on the day of absence.
- All employees are required to process their own absences on SubHub/OmniSub .
- All employees are required to make sure they have someone to cover their duty.
- Administration **will not** be responsible for posting absences or requesting substitutes.
- An employee who is unavoidably detained or unable to report to work must notify his/her supervisor or designee prior to scheduled arrival.
- It is important that employees attend work as scheduled. Dependability, attendance, and punctuality are always essential.

## Use of Leave

State leave is available for the employee's use effective September 1. However, local leave is earned  $\frac{1}{2}$  day for every 18 days worked. If an employee leaves the Charter before the end of the work year, the cost of any unearned leave days taken shall be deducted from the employee's paycheck.

Employees that do not begin the year or are out on extended leave are only entitled to use leave accumulated from prior years plus what is earned in current year. Any absence beyond the leave available will result with a pay deduction in the month that the leave is exceeded.

Leave must be used in 4-hour or  $\frac{1}{2}$  day increments. However, if an employee is taking family and medical leave, leave shall be recorded in 15-minute increments. Earned comp time must be used before any available paid state or local leave. Available Local Leave will be used prior to State Leave.

There are times when all teachers and campus personnel are needed to be in attendance. If employees are absent during the following list of "blackout dates" it will be grounds for reprimand:

- The first 10 days of school
- The last 10 days of school

Will be docked for the following day(s):

- The day before or after a school holiday
- Professional or staff development days
- Days scheduled for local exams and state testing

Employees must follow Charter procedures to report or request any leave of absence including completing the appropriate forms. **An employee, who is absent 3 or more days because of personal or family illness, must submit medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and in the case of personal illness, the employee's fitness to return to work. Failure to provide medical certification within 5 days will result with unauthorized absence and is subject for payroll deduction of the absence at the employee's daily rate of pay.**

Employees on an approved leave of absence other than family and medical leave may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health Insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave designated under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the Charter as they were prior to the leave. Otherwise, the Charter does not pay any portion of insurance premiums for employees who are on unpaid leave.

## State Leave

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to an assigned workday. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school districts, and generally transfers to education service centers. There are two types of personal leave: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

*Nondiscretionary* - Leave taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, a death in the family or active military service is considered nondiscretionary leave. Reasons for this type of leave allows very little, if any advance planning. Nondiscretionary leave will be granted to employees in the same manner as state sick leave.

*Discretionary* - Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to his or her Principal or supervisor 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 Principal or supervisor.

## Local Leave

Previously accumulated local leave up to a maximum amount of 10 days is available for use and it is not transferrable to other school districts. Local leave can be used only in 4-hour increments, except when consolidated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis or when coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

The maximum amount of local leave that an employee may have at any time is 10 days. If after the second year of employment, the employee has accumulated a total of 10 days of local leave, 5 of those days will be paid at a scheduled rate during one of the following months: June, July or August. Only 5 days of local leave are allowed to be rolled over into the following year.

Employees that do not start the school year or are out on extended leave are only entitled to use accumulated leave from the prior year and what is earned in current year. Leave used beyond available balance will result with pay deductions for exceeded days at the employee's daily rate of pay. Local leave is limited to 10 days. Local leave is forfeited at the time of separation of employment.

## Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) – General Provisions

The following text is from the federal notice, Employee Rights and Responsibilities Under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Specific information that the Charter has adopted to implement the FMLA follows this general notice.

*Basic Leave Entitlement.* The FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons: For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth, to care for the employee's child after birth, or placement from adoption or foster care, to care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition, or for a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

*Military Family Leave Entitlements* Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter or parent on active military duty and deployed to a foreign country may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

The FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list. It also includes a family member who is a veteran with an illness or injury that occurs in the line of duty while on active duty and manifests itself before or after the service member became a veteran. The veteran must have been on active duty during the five years preceding the need for treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

*Benefits and Protection.* During FMLA, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. Use of FMLA cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave, except for incentive attendance supplement for applicants.

*Eligibility Requirements.* Employees are eligible if they have worked for a covered employer for at least one year, for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months.

*Definition of Serious Health Condition.* A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

*Use of Leave.* An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block.

Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

*Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave.* Employees may choose or employers may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA. To use paid leave for FMLA, employees must comply with the district's normal paid leave policies.

*Employee Responsibilities.* Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days' notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave.

Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

*Employer Responsibilities.* Covered employers must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are eligible the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for the ineligibility.

Covered employers must inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FMLA, the employer must notify the employee.

*Unlawful Acts by Employers.* The FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to: Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right protected under the FMLA; Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to the FMLA.

*Enforcement.* An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor 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 which provides greater family or medical leave rights. FMLA section 109 (29 U.S.C. § 2619) required FMLA covered employers to post the text of this notice. Regulations 29 C.F.R. § 825.300 (a) may require additional disclosures. For additional information: 1866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627 [www.wagehour.dol.gov](http://www.wagehour.dol.gov)

*Local Family Medical Leave Provisions.* Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12month period measured backward from the date an employee uses FMLA

*Use of Paid Leave.* FMLA runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leave, compensatory time, assault leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. The district will designate the leave as FMLA if applicable and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

*Combined Leave for Spouses.* A husband and wife who are both employed by the district are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of FMLA 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. The Charter 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.

*Charter Contact.* Employees that require FMLA or have questions should contact the Business Office for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

*Compensation During FMLA Leave.* Other than compensation from other sources, family and medical are leave shall be without pay. During FMLA leave, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will continue to pay its share of the employee's insurance. If at the expiration of the FMLA leave, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will require the reimbursement of the employee benefits contribution made by EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY during the period in which such leave was taken as unpaid leave. Any

portion of health insurance premiums being paid by the employee will need to continue to be paid by the employee during the 12 weeks leave period in order for benefits to continue. The failure to make timely payment of any employee's share of insurance premium shall result in loss of insurance coverage if the premium is more than thirty days late.

*Returning to Work.* On return from FMLA leave, an employee is entitled to be returned to the same position the employee held when leave began, or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

- An employee is entitled to reinstatement even if the employee has been replaced or the employee's position has been restructured to accommodate the employee's absence. However, an employee has no greater right to reinstatement or to other benefits and conditions of employment than if the employee had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period.
- An employee is entitled to any unconditional pay increases that may have occurred during the FMLA leave period, such as cost of living increases.
- The charter school may deny job restoration to a key employee if such denial is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the operations of the district.
- When reinstating an employee to the same or equivalent position, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY shall consider the title, job description, duties, supervisory responsibilities, required degrees, required certifications, experience, salary, typical hours, professional capacity, and other factors related to the terms and conditions of employment for that role.

*Failure to Return to Work.* If, at the expiration of FMLA leave, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the Charter shall require reimbursement of the premiums paid by the Charter during the leave.

*Retaliation.* EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is prohibited from retaliating against any employee for requesting or taking FMLA leave.

*Applicable Forms.* For the purpose of providing notice and certifications required by this policy, the employee and the charter school shall use the charter school's "Employee Request for Leave Form" and the FMLA forms promulgated by or substantially similar to the forms promulgated by the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor.

## Temporary Disability Leave

**Certified Employees.** Any full-time employee whose position requires certification from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) is eligible for temporary disability leave. The purpose of temporary disability leave is to provide job protection to full-time educators who cannot work for an extended period of time because of a mental or physical disability of a temporary nature. Temporary disability leave must be taken as a continuous block of time. It may not be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule. Pregnancy and conditions related to pregnancy are treated the same as any other temporary disability. Temporary disability leave runs concurrent with FMLA.

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. An employee's notification of need for extended absence due to the employee's own medical condition shall be accepted as a request for temporary disability leave. The request must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days. If disability leave is not approved, the employee must return to work or be subject to termination procedures.

If an employee is placed on temporary disability leave involuntarily, he or she has the right to request a hearing before the Board of Directors. The employee may protest the action and present additional evidence of fitness to work.

When an employee is ready to return to work, the Business Office should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able to resume regular duties. Professional employees returning from leave will be reinstated as soon as an appropriate position is available. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, professional employees will be reinstated at the beginning of the following school year.

## Workers' Compensation Benefits

An employee absent from duty because of a job-related illness or injury may be eligible for workers' compensation weekly income benefits if the absence exceeds seven calendar days.

An employee receiving workers' compensation wage benefits for a job-related illness or injury may choose to use accumulated sick leave or any other paid leave benefits. An employee choosing to use paid leave will not receive workers' compensation weekly income benefits until all paid leave is exhausted or to the extent that paid leave does not equal the pre-illness or injury wage. If the use of paid leave is not elected, then the employee will only receive workers' compensation wage benefits for any absence resulting from a work-related illness or injury, which may not equal his or her pre-illness or injury wage.

## Assault Leave

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person's age or mental capacity renders the person non-responsible for purposes of criminal liability.

An employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to two years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. At the request of an employee, the Charter will immediately assign the employee to assault leave. Days of leave granted under the assault leave provision will not be deducted from accrued personal leave and must be coordinated with workers' compensation benefits. Upon investigation the Charter may change the assault leave status and charge leave used against the employee's accrued paid leave. The employee's pay will be deducted if accrued paid leave is not available.

## Bereavement Leave

Full-time and part-time employees are eligible for bereavement leave. Temporary employees, substitutes, or employees classified on an "as-needed" basis are not eligible for bereavement leave.

In the unfortunate event of a death in an eligible employee's immediate family, the employee may take a paid leave of absence of up to three (3) days (up to five (5) days if air travel is required). For purposes of this policy, an "immediate family member" includes the following:

- Spouse.
- Child/stepchild.
- Parent/stepparent.
- Grandparent/step-grandparent.
- Sibling/stepsibling.
- Spouse's parent.
- Spouse's grandparent.
- Daughter-in-law/son-in-law.
- Any other family member residing in the employee's home.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will provide up to two days of paid bereavement leave in the event of a death in an employee's extended family. For purposes of this policy, "extended family" includes the following:

- First cousin.
- Brother-in-law/sister-in-law.
- Aunt/uncle.
- Niece/nephew.
- Spouse's aunt/uncle.
- Spouse's niece/nephew.

Bereavement leave days should be taken consecutively, within a reasonable time from the date of the death or day of the funeral and may not be split or postponed.

If an employee experiences a death in the family, he or she should inform the principal or your immediate supervisor as soon as possible. Supporting documentation may be required.

## Jury Duty

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will grant employees time off for mandatory jury duty or for court appearances as a witness when the employee must serve or is required to appear as a result of a jury summons, court order, or subpoena. A copy of the jury summons, court order or subpoena must be supplied to the employee's supervisor when requesting time off. The employee is entitled to full pay for each day of jury duty or service as a witness up to a maximum of five (5) days per year, in addition to any other applicable paid leave. Employees must present documentation of the service and may keep any compensation they receive.

## Other Court Appearances

Employees will not be granted paid leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding. Employees are required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances. This is also including cases involving immigration and required appointments with state or federal offices will be considered personal leave and will not be paid.

## Religious Observance

The Charter will reasonably accommodate an employee's request for absence for a religious holiday or observance. Accommodations such as changes to work schedules or approving a day of absence will be made unless they pose an undue hardship to the Charter. The employee may use any accumulated personal leave for this purpose. Employees who have exhausted applicable paid leave may be granted an unpaid day of absence.

## Military Leave

Paid leave for Military Service. Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, or reserve component of the United States Armed Forces will be granted a paid leave of absence without loss of any accumulated leave for authorized training or duty orders. Paid military leave will not exceed 15 days each federal fiscal year (October 1-September 30). In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during a time of active military service. Employee is required to provide written request to use available leave.

## Reemployment after Military Leave

Employees who leave the Charter to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active state military duty (Texas National Guard or Texas State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the Charter will be reemployed in the position they would have held if employment had not been interrupted or reassigned to an equivalent or similar position provided, they can be qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and apply for reemployment to the Business Office. In most cases, the length of military service cannot exceed five years, and the employee must apply for reemployment within the period specified in law.

## The Planned Absence-Preparing the Students

If you know that you're going to be absent, let the students know the day before. Tell them what you expect their behavior to be and expect a favorable report. It's important to be proactive in this respect. Setting your expectations prior to absence allows validity if a follow-up consequence and/or write up is warranted. Please have lesson plans prepared for substitute. **Important: Emergency lesson plans should not be used during a planned absence.** Page 43 | 70

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## The Unplanned Absence-Emergency Plans

To prepare for this, teachers submit 2 days' worth of emergency lesson plans to the designated personnel. These should be materials that can be used by the substitute in the event your lesson plans aren't available. Run off enough worksheets for two days' work in each subject area. Place the worksheets in folders labeled "Day 1" and "Day 2" and store everything in a box or file drawer. Remember to replenish the materials when you return after any absence.

## Substitute Lesson Plans

Substitute folders should contain a note to the substitute, requesting comments regarding that day's activities and student behavior as well as the following information:

- ☐ Class roster
- ☐ Seating Chart
- ☐ Lesson Plans
- ☐ Daily Schedule
- ☐ Duty Schedule
- ☐ Lunch schedule & instructions
- ☐ Planning Period/Conference
- ☐ Forms, passes, and instructions, etc.
- ☐ List of helpful students

Incomplete substitute lesson plans will be documented in teacher's T-TESS evaluation.

## Food in the Classrooms

While it is recognized that classes may have a daily snack on a special event such as FMNV days, teachers are asked to limit the consumption of other foods in the classrooms and to maintain an environment clean of food wastes. This request is made to discourage the infestation of ants, mice and other pests. In addition, all classroom activities must be aligned with the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Policy. Both children and adults may have water bottles at school to drink water as needed. Food should not be consumed while teaching or supervising students.

## Employee Recognition and Appreciation

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the Charter. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the Charter's newsletter, and through special events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities include, but are not limited to, teacher of the Month/Year, professional achievement, punctuality, team player, and no absences.

## Traffic Violations

If an employee, during the course of EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY'S business, receives a traffic violation, the employee will be personally liable for any expenses incurred from that violation. If, during the course of transporting a student(s), an employee receives a traffic violation, that employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

## District Communications

Throughout the school year, we will publish newsletters, a variety of brochures, information flyers, news releases, Facebook posts, Class Dojo, School Messenger communication, website updates, newspaper advertisements and other communication materials. These publications provide parents, employees and the community with information promoting school activities, student and staff achievements, campus achievements, and news on issues that relate to EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY and education.

## Complaints and Grievances

In an effort to hear and resolve employee concerns or complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the Board has adopted an orderly grievance process. Employees are encouraged to discuss their concerns or complaints with their supervisors or an appropriate administrator at any time.

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. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted, employees can bring concerns or complaints to the Board of Directors. A hard copy of the Charter's policy can be found in the principal's office, or the charter's Business Office, or as follows on pages 64-66 of the Employee Handbook: (Please feel free to copy complaint forms as needed). Excluding a complaint against the Superintendent, each complaint must initially be brought at the lowest level of review, at the campus principal review level. If the complaint is against the principal, then the complaint may be initially brought at the Superintendent level.

### ***Campus Principal Review of Complaint***

Where an employee has a complaint or concern regarding their terms or conditions of work, the individual shall first bring their complaint or concern in writing to the principal. The complaint must be brought within 15 business days of the date that the complainant knew or should have known of the alleged harm. The complaint must be specific, and where possible suggest a resolution. The principal/supervisor must consider the complaint, attempt to remedy the complaint in the best interest of the affected parties, and document the outcome. The principal/supervisor must respond to the complainant and issue a final decision in writing within 10 business days of the principal's/supervisor's receipt of the complaint.

### ***Superintendent Review of Complaint***

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final decision of the campus principal/supervisor, then the individual may file a written appeal to the Superintendent. This written appeal shall be filed with the Superintendent's office within 10 business days of the individual's receipt of the final decision from the campus principal/supervisor. The complaint shall include a copy of the prior written complaint, along with a copy of the final decision of the campus principal/supervisor. A copy of the appeal shall also be delivered to the campus principal/supervisor. The appeal must be specific, and where possible suggestion a resolution. The complaint shall not include any new issues or complaints unrelated in the original complaint. The Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee, shall respond to the complaint and issue a final decision in writing within 15 business days of receipt of the written appeal.

### ***Board of Directors Review of Complaint***

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Superintendent's final decision, then the individual may appeal their complaint in writing to the Board of Directors within 10 school days of receiving the Superintendent's final decision. The complaint shall be directed to the President of the Board and shall include a copy of the written complaint to the Superintendent along with a copy of the Superintendent's final decision. A copy of this appeal shall also be delivered to the Superintendent.

The President of the Board, at the next regular meeting of the Board, shall provide a copy of the complaint record to all board members. The Board's decision shall be decided on a review of the record developed at the Superintendent's level. Any action of the Board of Directors regarding the complaint shall be taken in compliance with the Texas Open Meeting Act.

### ***Definition of "Business Day"***

For purposes of this grievance policy, "school day" means any calendar day that the school's central administrative office is open without regard to whether students are attending school.

## Workplace Investigations

There are instances when EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY may wish to investigate personnel matters. Employees are required to cooperate in any investigation. Refusal to participate, or actions taken to compromise the effectiveness of any investigation, may result in termination. If the employee is instructed not to discuss the matter being investigated,

failure to abide by this instruction may also result in termination. This restriction excludes the employee's privileged communications with his or her own private legal counsel.

Employees who are the subject of a workplace investigation may be suspended with or without pay by the Superintendent or Designee pending the results of the investigation. During the suspension, the employee will not be permitted to access EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY campus. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the Superintendent or Designee will inform the suspended employee the results of the investigation and of his or her employment status with the school.

## Employee Conduct and Welfare Standards of Conduct

All employees are expected to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the Charter and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public. Employees are expected to observe the following standards of conduct:

- Recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees and members of the community.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify your immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that you 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.
- Teachers should not leave students unattended at any time.
- Know and comply with Charter policies and procedures.
- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use Charter time, funds, and property for authorized Charter business and activities only.
- An employee shall not use his or her position with the Charter to attempt to sell products or services.

All Charter employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, Charter policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the Superintendent first learns of the incident.

The Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification, which all Charter employees must adhere to, is reprinted below:

## Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community.

## Professional Standards

### 1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

Standard 1.1 The educator shall not knowingly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district or educational institution.

Standard 1.2 The educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

Standard 1.3 The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses or pay. Standard 1.4 The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

Standard 1.5 The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

Standard 1.6 The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

Standard 1.7 The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other applicable state and federal laws.

Standard 1.8 The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility based on professional qualifications.

## 2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

Standard 2.1 The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 2.2 The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

Standard 2.3 The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.

Standard 2.4 The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Standard 2.5 The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, or family status.

Standard 2.6 The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.

Standard 2.7 The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC under this chapter.

## 3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

Standard 3.1 The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 3.2 The educator shall not knowingly treat a student in a manner that adversely affects the student's learning, physical health, mental health, or safety.

Standard 3.3 The educator shall not deliberately or knowingly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

Standard 3.4 The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student or grant an advantage to a student based on race, color, sex, disability, national origin, religion, or family status.

Standard 3.5 The educator shall not engage in physical mistreatment of a student.

Standard 3.6 The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student.

Standard 3.7 The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or knowingly allow any student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

## Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees or students. While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment of other persons, including Board of Directors, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents. A substantiated charge of harassment will result in disciplinary action.

Employees who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against or harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to their immediate supervisor, Principal or appropriate Charter official. If the Principal, supervisor, or Charter official is the subject of a complaint, the employee should report the complaint directly to the Superintendent. A complaint against the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board.

## Prohibition of Harassment

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment free of all forms of unlawful harassment. Employees are prohibited from engaging in all forms of unlawful harassment, including harassment based on race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual harassment, and any other protected class status. Harassment based on any of the aforementioned protected classes may include, but is not limited to, many different types of actions: verbal (e.g. derogatory comment), physical (e.g. assault), or visual (e.g. internet materials).

*Workplace Harassment* Workplace harassment is defined as unwelcome verbal or nonverbal conduct, based upon a person's protected status, that shows hostility or aversion because of that status, and which affects the person's term or conditions of employment or has the purpose of creating an intimidating or hostile work environment. Examples of workplace Harassment may include:

- Epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping
- Threatening, intimidating or hostile acts
- Denigrating jokes
- Display of circulation of emails, text messages, tweets or other graphic materials that denigrates a person based on their protected status.

### *Sexual Harassment.*

Sexual harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature and can include offensive remarks about a person's sex. Both victim and harasser can be either a woman or a man, and the victim and harasser can be the same sex. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination defined as: (1) submission to or rejection of harassing conduct used as the basis of employment decisions, (2) harassing conduct that has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment, or (3) submission to harassing conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment. Examples of sexual harassment include:

- Unwelcome or unsolicited sexual advances
- Displaying sexually suggestive material
- Unwelcome text messages, IM's, or emails of a sexual nature
- Sexually oriented or obscene jokes
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Unwelcome physical contact or touching.

### *Retaliation*

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY prohibits retaliation against an employee who makes a claim alleging to have experienced discrimination or harassment or another employee who, in good faith, makes a report, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation. Examples of retaliation may include termination, refusal to hire, demotion, and denial of promotion. Retaliation may also include threats, unjustified negative evaluation, unjustified negative references, or increased surveillance.

**False Claims, False Statements, Refusal to Cooperate.** An employee who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY investigation regarding harassment or discrimination is subject to appropriate discipline.

## Sexual Harassment

The definition of sexual harassment promulgated by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is defined as: (1) unwelcome sexual advances; or (2) unwelcome requests for sexual favors; and (3) other behavior of a sexual nature where:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or participation in a Charter-sponsored educational program or activity; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual; or

3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or working environment. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the same or different genders.

Examples of sexual harassment, as defined above, may include but are not limited to the following behavior directed at a person because of his or her gender:

- Direct or implied threats that submission to sexual advances as a condition of employment, work status, promotion, grades, or letters of recommendation.
- Unwelcome physical contact, including unnecessary touching, patting, hugging or brushing against a person's body; or,
- Pervasive and or unwelcome sexual comments, jokes or conversations.

In assessing whether a particular act constitutes sexual harassment as defined by this policy, the standard shall be the perspective of a reasonable person. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will look at the record as a whole and at the totality of the circumstances such as the nature of the sexual advances and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. The determination of the legality of a particular action will be based on the findings of fact, on a case-by-case basis. The rules of common sense and reason shall prevail.

## Informal Resolution

In certain cases, where the nature of an alleged incident may not be so serious that the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY must intervene in a formal way and the Complainant indicates that she or he does not want to pursue a formal complaint but simply wants the harassment to stop, informal resolution may be the preferred way to handle a complaint. However, informal resolution must always be voluntarily agreed to in writing by the Complainant with no requirement that the Complainant use informal procedures before filing a formal charge. The individual is free to withdraw from informal procedures altogether and file formally within the Charter.

The informal way an incident is handled will depend upon the severity of the incident and the wishes of the Complainant. Possible alternatives include but are not limited to: the Complainant telling the alleged offender the behavior is unwelcome and must stop; the Complainant sending a letter to the alleged offender, giving a factual account of what happened, describing the writer's feelings about what happened, describing what the writer wants to happen next (e.g., "I want your behavior to stop."), and delivery of the letter by certified mail.

## Procedures for Filing Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment

### 1. Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment

- A formal complaint occurs when: (a) a person who believes that he/she has been the victim of sexual harassment; or (b) an employee with knowledge of the allegations, notifies his/her Supervisor, Superintendent, Board of Directors or Business Office of the allegations. If either the Supervisor or Superintendent receives notification, they shall promptly refer the notice to the Business Office. The person who complains, who is referred to as the "Complainant", may be an employee or student. An Administrator will interview the Complainant, or such other person designated by the Superintendent or Board of Directors and asked to provide a written statement of his/her complaint but is not required to do so.
- There is no such thing as an "unofficial" complaint of sexual harassment. Once the Supervisor, Superintendent, Business Office, or Board of Directors learns of a sexual harassment complaint, written or oral, the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is required to investigate the matter unless the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY and the complainant agree to pursue the matter informally.
- The EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY shall have no obligation to investigate complaints received more than 12 months after the date on which the alleged harassing conduct is alleged to have occurred unless it chooses to do so.

### 2. Reporting a Complaint

Any employee who obtains knowledge of an incident of sexual harassment occurring within the

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is required to notify their Supervisor, Superintendent, or the Business Office whether the Complainant indicates that they do not want anyone to do anything about the harassment. Employees failing to report incidents of sexual harassment may be subject to disciplinary action. Once notified, the Superintendent shall promptly notify, in writing, the Board of Directors of the receipt of a sexual harassment complaint. If the Board of Directors receives the complaint, the Board of Directors shall promptly notify the Superintendent in writing.

### 3. Notice of Charge to the Person Accused of Sexual Harassment

Upon receiving a complaint, the Superintendent shall notify the person(s) accused of sexual harassment. The written notice will inform the person accused of sexual harassment that a complaint has been filed, the name of the Complainant, and a general statement of the nature of the complaint. It will also advise the Accused that the Accused will be provided with detailed information regarding the allegations and will have an opportunity to respond to each allegation in an interview to be scheduled by the Superintendent.

### 4. Investigation and Report on Investigation

The Superintendent shall promptly conduct an investigation that must include but is not limited to an interview of the Complainant, person accused of sexual harassment, witness(es) and a review of documentation. Employees, including the Accused, refusing to cooperate with the internal investigation shall be subject to disciplinary action, ranging from reprimand to termination.

### 5. Findings of Fact and Recommendations for Action

The written findings of fact derived from the investigation and recommendations for action by the Superintendent shall be confidentially reported to the Board of Directors. Recommended sanctions for employees accused of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, reprimand and termination. Recommended sanctions for students accused of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, suspension and expulsion.

The Superintendent may advise the Complainant and the Accused of the result of the investigation (that is, whether harassment has been confirmed). Neither the Complainant nor the alleged harasser are entitled to receive a copy of the findings of fact and recommendations for action; except where disciplinary action is involved, the accused shall be provided with notice of the findings of fact which resulted in the recommendation for disciplinary action.

In instances where the Superintendent's findings of fact sustain any of the Complainant's allegations and a recommendation for disciplinary action is made, procedures to proceed with disciplinary action shall include, but are not limited to:

- A recommendation for termination. Failure of the Accused to appeal within five (5) working days shall result in imposition of the prescribed disciplinary action.
- Recommendations for action based upon a finding of sexual harassment committed against a member of the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (employee or student) by a person external to the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (an independent contractor, a vendor, a third party) will depend upon the circumstances of each case and may include, but are not limited to, termination of a contractor's contract with the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY; referral to officials of the criminal justice system.

## Confidentiality

Sexual harassment is a matter of grave concern for both the Complainant and the Accused. Therefore, information gathered during the investigation of sexual harassment complaints will be handled discreetly and with the utmost sensitivity and care. Notwithstanding the above, in the course of any investigation, the release of some information is necessary in order to gather relevant information.

## Retaliation

Any member of the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY who attempts to interfere, restrain, coerce, discriminate against, or harass any individual for participation in the procedures set forth in this policy will be subject to disciplinary

action including but not limited to: for employees - termination, suspension, or formal reprimand; and for students - suspension or expulsion.

## False and Malicious Charges

The use of this policy for false or malicious purposes is strictly prohibited. Any student or staff member who exercises bad faith and brings a false or malicious charge of sexual harassment against another member of the school community may be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to: for employees - termination, suspension, or formal reprimand; and for students - suspension or expulsion.

## Confidentiality Records

Education records and information maintained about students that is related to their education are confidential under federal law. Employees are not to discuss students or their families, their conduct, their academic or personal information with anyone other than their direct supervisor for a reason related to the child's education. Student records are also confidential and protected from unauthorized inspection or use.

All employees are subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, including compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004 (IDEA), all employees must ensure the confidentiality of any personally identifiable data, information, and records collected or maintained by EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.

## Harassment of Student

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the principal or other appropriate Charter official. All allegations of prohibited harassment or abuse of a student will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law.

## Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying or registering a facility) within **48 hours** of the event that led to the suspicion. Abuse is defined by Texas Family Code and also includes any sexual conduct involving an educator and a student or minor. Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to a local office or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.

Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the charter is prohibited from retaliating against an employee who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agency. In addition, employees must cooperate with investigators of child abuse and neglect. Reporting the concern to the Principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report it to the appropriate state agency. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an

interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited.

## Child Sexual Abuse

The Charter has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse. 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 sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS). Employees are required to follow the procedures described above in Reporting Suspected Child Abuse.

## Reporting Crime

The Texas Whistleblower Act protects district employees who make good faith reports of violations of law by the district to an appropriate law enforcement authority. The Charter is prohibited from suspending, terminating the employment of, or taking other adverse personnel action against, an employee who makes a report under the Act. State law also provides employees with the right to report a crime witnessed at the school to any peace officer with authority to investigate the crime.

## Computer Use and Data Management

The Charter's electronic communications systems, including its network access to the Internet, is primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use of the system is permitted if the use:

- Imposes no tangible cost to the Charter.
- Does not unduly burden the district's computer or network resources.
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance.

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the Charter's electronic communications systems are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use. Employees who are authorized to use the systems are required to abide by the provisions of the Charter's communications systems policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the Business Office.

## Personal Use of Electronic Media

Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing Web sites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.

As role models for the Charter's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as Charter 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's use of electronic media interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for Web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

An employee who uses electronic media for personal purposes shall observe the following: The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the Charter's computers, network, or equipment. The employee shall not use the Charter's logo, Charter identifying information, or other copyrighted material of the Charter

without expressed, written consent. The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:

- Confidentiality of student records.
- Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
- Confidentiality of Charter records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses.
- Copyright law
- Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

## Use of Electronic Media with Students

A certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated in writing by the Superintendent or Principal, may communicate through electronic media with students who are currently enrolled in the Charter. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. All other employees are prohibited from communicating with students who are enrolled in the Charter through electronic media.

An employee is not subject to these provisions to the extent the employee has a social or family relationship with a student. For example, an employee may have a relationship with a niece or nephew, a student who is the child of an adult friend, a student who is a friend of the employee's child, or a member or participant in the same civic, social, recreational, or religious organization.

The following definitions apply for the use of electronic media with students:

- Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing Web sites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn).
- Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Webbased applications.
- Communicate means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or a blog) is not a communication; however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See Personal Use of Electronic Media, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a communication.

Certified or licensed employee means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, and licensed therapists.

An employee who uses electronic media to communicate with students shall observe the following:

The employee may use any form of electronic media except text messaging. Only a teacher or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility. The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity). The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page ("professional page") for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee's professional page. The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents. The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, including:

- Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records.
- Copyright law
- Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any students. Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication. All communication regardless of means, should be solely for school-related purposes.

An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.

## Public Information on Private Devices

Employees should not maintain district information on privately owned devices. Any district information must be forwarded or transferred to the district to be preserved. The district will take reasonable efforts to obtain public information in compliance with the Public Information Act. Reasonable efforts may include:

- Verbal or written directive
- Remote access to district-owned devices and services

## Alcohol-and Drug-Abuse Prevention

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY 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 Charter-related or Charter-sanctioned activities on or off Charter 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 may be dismissed.

## Smoke Free School Zone

State law prohibits smoking or using tobacco products (including e-cigarettes) on all Charter-owned property and at Charter-related or Charter-sanctioned activities, on or off Charter property. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for other activities. Notices stating that smoking is prohibited by law and punishable by a fine are displayed in prominent places in all Charter buildings.

## Fraud and Financial Impropriety

All employees should act with integrity and diligence in duties involving the Charter's financial resources. The Charter prohibits fraud and financial impropriety, as defined below. Fraud and financial impropriety include the following:

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the Charter
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other Charter assets including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of Charter financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of Charter information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the Charter
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the Charter
- 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 Charter.

## Asset Replacement

Fees for replacement of electronic equipment issued to an employee due to damage or loss will be enforced. Employee will be responsible for paying the replacement value of the item damaged or lost.

To obtain the replacement value of an item, a work order for a quote is to be completed and submitted. A purchase requisition will then be placed using the quote provided to request the replacement of a damaged or lost item.

The Business Office will provide a copy of the payroll deduction form to the employee who will complete and return the form to the Business Office for processing. The payroll deduction plan will allow for repayment to be done in accordance with Texas Payday Laws. Should the employee leave EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY and require replacing lost or damaged technology equipment; the total replacement value will be deducted from the employee's last paycheck.

## Disciplinary Action

An employee with a performance or behavior issue will undergo the following disciplinary action:

- Verbal warning
- Verbal warning with a documented conference
- Written Professional Growth Plan
- Reassignment
- Recommendation for termination

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY reserves the right to proceed directly to a written warning, reassignment, or termination when EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY deems such action appropriate or necessary.

An employee may be placed on leave without pay without prior written warning in order to review or investigate actions, including but not limited to insubordination, acts endangering others, or other allegations of serious misconduct.

## Conflict of Interest

Employees are required to disclose to their supervisor any situation that creates a potential conflict of interest with proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or creates a potential conflict of interest with the best interests of the Charter. This includes the following:

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

## Gifts and Favors

Employees may not accept gifts or favors that could influence, or be construed to influence, the employee's discharge of assigned duties. The acceptance of a gift, favor, or service by an administrator or teacher that might reasonably tend to influence the selection of textbooks may result in prosecution of a Class B misdemeanor offense. This does not include staff development, teacher training, or instructional materials, such as maps or worksheets that convey information to students or contribute to the learning process.

## Charitable Contributions

The Board or any employee may not directly or indirectly require or coerce an employee to contribute to a charitable organization or in response to a fundraiser. Employees cannot be required to attend a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions. In addition, the Board or any employee may not directly or indirectly require or coerce an employee to refrain from making a contribution to a charitable organization or in response to a fundraiser or attending a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions.

## Copyrighted Materials

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.). Rented videos are to be used in the classroom for educational purposes only. Duplication or backup of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

## Associations and Political Activities

The Charter will not directly or indirectly discourage employees from participating in political affairs or require any employee to join any group, club, committee, organization, or association. Employees may join or refuse to join any professional association or organization.

An individual's employment will not be affected by membership or a decision not to be a member of any employee organization that exists for the purpose of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work.

Use of Charter resources, including work time, for political activities is prohibited.

## Safety

The Charter has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students and to protect and conserve district equipment, employees must comply with the following requirements:

- Observe all safety rules.
- Always keep work areas clean and orderly.
- Immediately report all accidents to their supervisor.
- Operate only equipment or machines for which they have training and authorization.
- Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the principal at (956) 424-9504.

## Possession of Firearms and Weapons (Gun Free Zone)

Employees, visitors, and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs, weapon-resembling objects, or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. Gun-free zone applies to open carry and concealed weapons (HB910). To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the Charter's weapons policy should report it to their supervisor or call the office at (956) 424-9504 immediately.

## Firearms Exception

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY may not prohibit a person, including a school employee, who holds a license to carry a handgun under Government Code Chapter 411, from transporting or storing a handgun or other firearm or ammunition in a locked, privately owned or leased motor vehicle in a parking lot, parking garage, or other parking area provided by a charter school, provided that the handgun, firearm, or ammunition is not in plain view.

## Asbestos Management Plan

The Charter is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. A copy of the charter's Asbestos management plan is kept in the Superintendent's Office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

## Pest Control Treatment

Employees are prohibited from applying any pesticide or herbicide without appropriate training and prior approval of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Coordinator. Any application of pesticide or herbicide must be done in a manner prescribed by law and the Charter's integrated pest management program. Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in the Charter's building 48 hours before the treatment begins.

## Bad Weather Closing

The Charter may close schools because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the Charter's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late, to release students early, or to cancel school, administrators will post a notice on the Charter's web site and notify the following radio and television stations:

### Radio Stations

|              |                |           |                |
|--------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| K-TEX FM100  | (956) 973-9202 | Country   | Weslaco, Texas |
| KBFM 104     | (956) 973-9202 | Hip Hop   | Alamo, Texas   |
| KGBT FM 98.5 | (956) 631-5499 | Spanish   | McAllen, Texas |
| KVMV FM 96.9 | (956) 787-9700 | Christian | Pharr, Texas   |

### Television Stations

|                           |                |                    |
|---------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| KGBT TV Channel 4         | (956) 366-4423 | Harlingen, Texas   |
| KRGV TV Channel 5         | (956) 631-5555 | Weslaco, Texas     |
| KVEO NBC Channel 23       | (956) 544-2323 | Brownsville, Texas |
| UNIVISION Channel 48      | (956) 687-4848 | McAllen, Texas     |
| KTLM Telemundo Channel 40 | (956) 686-0040 | McAllen, Texas     |

## Security and Emergency Procedures

Employees should report to the Superintendent any threats made by a student, rumors of violence or criminal type activities. Everyone is expected to report any real or perceived safety or security related observations.

All employees should be familiar with the safety procedures for responding to a medical emergency and the evacuation diagrams posted in their work areas. Emergency drills will be conducted to familiarize employees and students with safety and evacuation procedures. The Charter is equipped with an automatic external defibrillator (AED). Fire extinguishers are located throughout the building. Employees should know the location of these devices and procedures for their use.

Employees should be aware that EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY does not assume any liability for damages or loss to personally owned vehicles parked in EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY parking spaces. As such, any related incidents should be reported to the Superintendent.

## Equal Educational Opportunities

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, age, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students based on any of the reasons listed above should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator Ms. Gonzalita Moreno, Title VI Coordinator Alma Salgado, Section 504 Coordinator Ms. Flor Alvarez Taylor, the Principal, or Superintendent.

The Family Handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the Principal for assistance.

## Parent and Student Complaints

In an effort to hear and resolve parent and student complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the board has adopted orderly processes for handling complaints on different issues. Any campus Administrator can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint.

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teacher or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved to their satisfaction should be directed to the principal. In general, a parent or student should submit a written complaint and a request for a conference should be sent to the principal. If still unresolved, the Charter provides for the complaint to be presented to the Superintendent and then if still unresolved to the Board of Directors. The formal complaint process provides parents and students with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with a principal's response.

## Administering Medication to Students

Only the school nurse and/or Principal-assigned employee may administer medication to a student who must take medication during the school day.

Prescription medications must be properly labeled and in the original container. Medications will only be given according to the instructions on the label. A Parental Permission Form for Administering Medications at school must be filled out and signed by the parent at the nurse's office/front office. We are not allowed to give prescription medications labeled with one student's name to any other student, even a brother or sister. Medications will not be administered without proper documentation. Medications that your child needs during the school year can usually be given at home: once a day-before or after school, twice a day-before school and in the evening, three times a day-before school, after school, and at bedtime. NO over the counter, samples, herbal products, dietary supplements or medications from Mexico or another country will be administered at school. Students may not have ANY medications with them during school hours.

Unapproved medications will be confiscated. It is the parent's responsibility to pick up medications kept at school throughout the school year. Medications not picked up will be disposed of after the students are dismissed for the school year.

## Dietary Supplements

Charter employees are prohibited by state law from knowingly selling, marketing, or distributing a dietary supplement that contains performance-enhancing compounds to a student with whom the employee has contact as part of his or her Charter school duties. In addition, employees may not knowingly endorse or suggest the ingestion, intranasal application, or inhalation of a performance-enhancing dietary supplement to any student.

## Psychotropic Drugs

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of disease or as a component of medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior- altering substance.

Charter employees are prohibited by state law from doing the following:

- Recommending that a student use a psychotropic drug
- Suggesting a particular diagnosis
- Excluding from class or school related activity a student whose parent refuses to consent to a psychiatric evaluation or to authorize the administration of a psychotropic drug to a student.

## Student Records

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records. The following people are the only people who have general access to a student's records:

- Parents: Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights
- The student: The rights of parents transfer to a student who turns 18 or is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. A district is not prohibited from granting the student access to the student's records before this time.
- School officials with legitimate educational interests

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the Front Office for assistance.

## Student Conduct and Discipline

ELA personnel, students and parents are expected to become familiar with the provisions outlined in the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Code of Student Conduct. Carefully review the responsibilities of the students, parents, teachers, administrators, and Board of Directors. All stakeholders must work together to ensure the safety, educational, and social development of the child.

Each student will be given a copy of the Code of Student Conduct. Parents and students are to review this information; sign then return the acknowledgement page to the homeroom teacher. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY teachers and administrative staff have the right and responsibility to respond to student acts of misconduct that interfere with the goals of education. According to law, **unruly students will not be allowed to disturb the educational process for others in our student population.**

## Behavior Expectations for ELA

| Common Area  | Be Safe                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Be Respectful                                                                                                                           | Be Responsible                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common Areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walk facing forward</li><li>• Keep hands, feet, objects to self</li><li>• Get an adult to help when necessary</li><li>• Use school equipment and materials appropriately</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use kind words and actions</li><li>• Wait your turn</li><li>• Follow adult directions</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow school rules</li><li>• Follow dress code</li><li>• Solve problems with words</li><li>• Be honest</li><li>• Take care of personal belongings and school equipment</li><li>• Clean up after self</li></ul> |

### ALL COMMON AREAS BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS ARE TO BE INCLUDED WITH SETTING-SPECIFIC BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cafeteria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No sharing food</li><li>• Sit properly in assigned seat and/or designated area</li><li>• Report problems or spills to lunch monitor(s)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be polite</li><li>• Allow others to sit next you</li><li>• Use 'quiet' voices</li><li>• Use food table manners</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get all condiments, utensils, and milk before sitting down</li><li>• Raise hand and wait to be dismissed</li><li>• Throw your tray</li><li>• Clean your table</li></ul> |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Playground / Recess</b>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk to and from recess quietly</li> <li>• Stay within boundaries</li> <li>• No play fighting</li> <li>• Keep rocks, sawdust, mulch, etc. on ground</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play fair</li> <li>• Include everyone</li> <li>• Use kind words and actions</li> <li>• Follow adult directions</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put playground equipment in designated area when finished using it</li> <li>• Walk promptly to line when asked to do so</li> <li>• Return to class quietly</li> <li>• Follow game rules</li> </ul> |
| <b>Hallways</b>                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay and/or walk on the right side of hallways, walking forward</li> <li>• Hall pass required</li> </ul>                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold door for the person behind you</li> <li>• Use quiet voices</li> <li>• Respect displays</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep feet quiet when in halls</li> <li>• Refrain from making loud noises which disrupts learning</li> </ul>                                                                                        |
| <b>Bathrooms</b>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep water in the sink</li> <li>• Use soap and water for washing hands</li> </ul>                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give people privacy</li> <li>• Use quiet voices</li> <li>• Quiet, Quick, clean</li> <li>• Use only needed paper</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flush toilets after use</li> <li>• Put paper towels in garbage can</li> <li>• Return to class promptly</li> </ul>                                                                                  |
| <b>Arrival &amp; Dismissal Areas</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay on sidewalks</li> <li>• Walk at all times</li> <li>• Use crosswalks</li> </ul>                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use kind words and actions</li> <li>• Wait your turn</li> <li>• Follow adult directions</li> <li>• Be a good community member</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrive on time</li> <li>• Leave on time</li> <li>• Escort students into office if tardy for check-in</li> </ul>                                                                                    |
| <b>Classrooms, Library, Computer, Gym, &amp; Music Room</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep hands, feet, objects to self</li> <li>• Use school equipment and materials appropriately</li> </ul>                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use quiet voices</li> <li>• Follow adult directions and class rules</li> <li>• Use kind words and actions</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave area neat and in order</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Assemblies</b>                                           | Enter and leave in an                                                                                                                                                                                   | • Applaud at appropriate                                                                                                                                                          | • Participate appropriately                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                             | orderly fashion                                                                                                                                                                                         | times                                                                                                                                                                             | (ex: hand-raising)                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                         | • Use audience manners                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Office and health Room</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report problems and concerns</li> <li>• Follow emergency procedures</li> </ul>                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use 'quiet' voices</li> <li>• Wait your turn</li> <li>• Sit and wait quietly</li> <li>• Follow adult directions</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State your needs politely</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Field Trips</b>                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk facing forward</li> <li>• Stay with your group</li> </ul>                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiet voices</li> <li>• Follow adult directions</li> <li>• Use kind words and actions</li> </ul>                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a good impression</li> <li>• Be responsible for own belongings</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     |

**BE SAFE\*\*\*\*\*BE RESPECTFUL\*\*\*\*\*BE RESPONSIBLE**

## Lesson Format for Teaching School Rules and General Expectations

**BE SAFE** - Always behave in a way that is safe for you and those around you. Examples for lessons are found on the behavioral expectations grid above.

### Step One: Introduce the Rule

- Briefly outline what you will be focusing on during the lesson. "Today we are going to learn about behaving in a way that is safe."

- Check for understanding by asking students to tell you what they will be doing and learning during the lesson. (safety- being safe).
- State the rule and provide a definition for the rule that is clear to the students.

*Always behave in a way that is safe for you and those around you. Safety means that no one gets hurts physically or emotionally.*

### **Step Two: Demonstrate the Rule**

- Model or provide a story that shares at least two positive examples of **being safe** and two negative examples of **being unsafe**.
  - Have students generate examples of situations in which they know how to be safe.
- Role plays: Choose 1-3 students to participate in a role-play. Below are some examples of role play topics:
  - The bell rings and you want to get to class fast. What is the safe thing to do? Ex. Walk to class at a safe speed.
  - You are angry with another student. What is the safe thing to do?
  - Your ball rolls into the parking lot. What is the safe thing to do?
  - Someone says/does something mean to you. What is the safe thing to do? Ex. Take time to cool down; tell an adult.
  - Many other examples may be utilized.

### **Step Three: Provide Monitoring and Feedback Follow-Up**

- Discuss the role play with students
  - Ask a student to tell what the role players did that was **safe**.
    - **Encourage** other students to share observation.
- Continue to use real situations as examples during class discussions.
  - **Precorrection.** Before students engage in an activity, ask them to give an example of how to be **safe**.
- When you observe students being **safe**, provide **specific praise**.
- If a student is seen being unsafe, etc., **stop** the student, **state the expectation**, and **redirect the student**. Follow-up with **immediate feedback**.

**BE RESPECTFUL – Be respectful of the rights, feelings and property of yourself and others.**

### **Step One: Introduce the Rule**

- Briefly outline what you will be focusing on during the lesson. “Today we are going to learn about behaving in a way that is respectful.”
- Check for understanding by asking students to tell you what they will be doing and learning during the lesson. (respect, being respectful)
- State the rule and provide a definition for the rule that is clear to the students.

*Always behave in a way that is respectful of the rights, feelings and property of yourself and others. Respect means to honor the rights and feelings of others.*

### **Step Two: Demonstrate the Rule**

- Model or provide a story that shares at least two positive examples of **being respectful** and two negative examples of **being disrespectful**.
- Have students generate **examples of situations** in which they know how to be **respectful**.
- Role plays: Choose 1-3 students to participate in a role play. Below are some examples of role play topics:
  - You see someone drop his or her notebook. What is the respectful thing to do? Ex. help/offer to help pick it up.
  - A presenter at an assembly is speaking. What is the respectful thing to do? Listen with eyes/ears and body language.
  - You hear an unkind story about someone. What is the respectful thing to do? Do not be a part of telling others; keep it to yourself).
  - An adult gives you directions. What is the respectful thing to do?

- Many other examples may be utilized.

### Step Three: Provide Monitoring and Feedback Follow-Up

- Discuss the role play with students
- Ask a student to tell what the role players did that was **respectful**.
- **Encourage** other students to share observations
- Continue to use real situations as examples during class discussions.
  - **Precorrection.** Before students engage in an activity, ask them to give an example of how to be **respectful**.
- When you observe students being **respectful**, provide **specific praise**.
- If a student is seen being **disrespectful**, etc., **stop** the student, **state the expectation**, and **redirect the student**. Follow-up **with immediate feedback**.

**BE RESPONSIBLE – Being responsible means to be honorable, trustworthy, and dependable always; taking responsibility for your actions and success; respectful of the rights, feelings and property of yourself and others.**

### Step One: Introduce the Rule

- Briefly outline what you will be focusing on during the lesson. “Today we are going to learn about behaving in a way that is responsible.”
- Check for understanding by asking students to tell you what they will be doing and learning during the lesson. (being responsible)
- State the rule and provide a definition for the rule that is clear to the students.

*Always behave in a way that is honorable, trustworthy and dependable. Take responsibility for your actions and success.*

### Step Two: Demonstrate the Rule

- Model or provide a story that shares at least two positive examples of **being responsible** and two negative examples of being responsible.
  - Have students generate **examples of situations** in which they know how to be **responsible**.
- Role plays: Choose 1-3 students to participate in a role-play. Below are some examples of role play topics:
  - You have a homework assignment. What is the responsible thing to do? Ex. Do the assignment.
  - You spill milk in the cafeteria. What is the responsible thing to do? Clean it up/get help cleaning it up, tell an adult.
  - You accidentally break something that is not yours. What is the responsible thing to do? Tell owner of the item/offer to replace it.
  - You know someone is being harassed. What is the responsible thing to do? Inform an adult of what is happening.
  - Many other examples may be utilized.

### Step Three: Provide Monitoring and Feedback Follow-Up

- Discuss the role play with students
- Ask a student to tell what the role players did that was **responsible**.
  - **Encourage** other students to share observations
- Continue to use real situations as examples during class discussions.
  - **Precorrection.** Before students engage in an activity, ask them to give an example of how to be **responsible**.
- When you observe students being **responsible**, provide **specific praise**.
- If a student is seen being **irresponsible**, etc., **stop** the student, **state the expectation** and **redirect the student**. Follow-up **with immediate feedback**

## Level of Offenses

**Level I Teacher Intervention:** These offenses generally occur in the classroom and can be corrected by the teacher. This is a partial list of the Level I offenses. Other Student Code of Conduct Violations may be available with the Administrators.

- Class Disruption (mild)
- Disrespect (mild)
- Use of Cellular Telephones/Electronic Devices
- Dress Code Violation
- Playing with Cafeteria Food
- Cheating (Academic Dishonesty)
- Throwing Objects
- Horse Playing/scuffling/running
- Throwing Tantrums
- Failure to follow instructions

Some actions (consequences) may include Verbal Warning, Student Conference, Change Seating, Time Out, Written Warning/ Reprimand, Parent Conference, Teacher Consultation with Counselor, Loss of Privileges. This is a partial list of the Level 1 actions (consequences).

**Level II Administrator Intervention:** These offenses are more serious than Level I and/or represent the student's inability to control Level I misconduct. This is a partial list of Level II offenses.

- Disrespect (repeated offense)
- Biting
- Profanity (towards student/adult)
- Public Display of Affection (PDA)
- Leaving class without authorization
- Hitting/Kicking/Hurting others
- Rude/profane language/gestures toward student and/or adult
- Robbery/Theft/Stealing
- Insubordination/gross failure to comply
- Forgery

Some actions (consequences) may include Detention, Loss of Privileges, Behavior Contract, ISS (In-School Suspension), Consult with Counselor. This is a partial list of Level II consequences. **Level III Administrator, SECOND Intervention:** (Repeated Level I and/or Level II offenses).

- Student in possession of matches and/or lighters
- Fighting with another student • Mutual Combat
- Instigating a Fight/Food fight
- Leaving school without authorization
- Class cutting (a.k.a. skipping class)
- False Fire Alarm
- Threat/incite threat toward adult (BTA)
- Vandalism/Criminal Mischief School Property < \$200
- Vandalism/Criminal Mischief School Property > \$200
- Possession of fake/look alike weapons

Some actions (consequences) may include Detention, Loss of Privileges, Behavior Contract, ISS (In-School Suspension), Consult with Counselor. This is a partial list of Level III consequences.

**Level IV District Office Administration Intervention:** Involves more serious criminal offenses. This includes any felony, whether school-related or not, unless it is one of which expulsion is required. A Behavioral Threat Assessment by the ELA Safety and Support School Program (SSSP) Committee may be needed.

- Explosives and Explosive Devices
- Sexual harassment toward student

- Sexual harassment toward adult
- Terroristic Threat - TEC 37.006 (a)(2) Page 39 of 67
- Arson - TEC 37.007 (a)(2)(B)
- School Related Gang Violence
- Harassment of School Employee TEC 37.006 (a)(2) (g)
- Bullying - TEC 37.0052(b)
- Possession of a Firearm
- Use of a Firearm
- Possession of drugs/controlled substances
- Possession of Weapons as Defined by the Penal Code

Some actions (consequences) may include Discretionary Expulsion, Mandatory Expulsion, Behavior Threat Assessment. This is a partial list of Level IV consequences.

**Level V District Office Administration Intervention:** Serious criminal offenses that will result in expulsion. A Behavioral Threat Assessment by the ELA Safety and Support School Program (SSSP) Committee may be needed.

- Retaliation Against School Employee - TEC 37.006 (b)(d)
  - Retaliation against another student
  - Aggravated Assault Against School Employee/Volunteer
  - Sexual Assault Against School Employee
  - Indecency with a child TEC 37.007(a)(2)(D) (On Campus)
  - Criminal Mischief TEC 37.007 (f)

Some actions (consequences) may include Discretionary Expulsion, Mandatory Expulsion, Behavioral Threat Assessment. This is a partial list of Level V consequences.

**Administrative review will be the final decision on all the above offense levels and actions. For a complete list of offenses please visit the ELA Website/ For Parents/ Code of conduct Offenses List and Actions.**

## Student Attendance

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the Charter's policies and procedures for attendance accounting, including truancy procedures. These procedures require minor students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student, upon returning to school, must bring a note signed by the parent or medical excuse that describes the reason for the absence. Teachers are also to keep track of habitually tardy students as well as those that are consistently picked up early - student is missing vital instruction and this needs to be addressed and documented. Any documentation can be written but must be entered into the DMAC system (Student Profile NOTES section). These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the Family Handbook. Contact the Principal for additional information.

## Bullying / Cyberbullying

All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying to the principal. The Charter's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students.

Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to promptly report an alleged act may impair the Charter's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, principal or other Charter employee.

## Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY prohibits bullying, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process.

## **Definition**

Bullying means a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that satisfies the applicability requirements and that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property.
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or Excellence in Leadership Academy; or
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

The school also prohibits cyberbullying, which means bullying done using any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

## **Application of Policy**

This Policy applies to:

- Bullying that occurs on school property or at the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity, whether on or off school grounds.
- Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately-owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
- Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying:
  - Interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, Excellence in Leadership Academy, or a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

## **Reporting Procedures**

Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. Any student who believes that he or she has experienced any form of bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to the principal, a teacher, or other school employee. A report may be made anonymously, orally or in writing. Any school employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal.

## **Notification Procedures**

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY employees must notify the principal immediately after an incident of bullying is reported to the employee. Principal will provide notice of an incident of bullying to:

- a parent or guardian of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the date the incident is reported; and
- a parent or guardian of the alleged bully within a reasonable amount of time after the incident.

## **Investigation of Report**

If a report is made orally, the principal documents the incident report to written form. The principal shall determine whether the allegation in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct and if so, proceed under that policy instead. The principal shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegation in the report. The principal shall take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during an investigation, if appropriate.

## **Concluding the Investigation**

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten business days from the date of the report; however, the principal shall take additional time, if necessary, to complete a thorough investigation. The principal shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including determination of whether bullying occurred, and send a copy to the Superintendent.

## **Charter District Action**

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Family Handbook. Disciplinary action may not be imposed on a student who after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying. The charter may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the charter concludes that the conduct did not arise to the level of bullying under this policy.

## **Counseling Options**

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY provides counseling options for a student who is a victim of or a witness to bullying or who engages in bullying.

## **Confidentiality**

To the greatest extent possible, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against who a report is filed, and witnessed. Limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation.

## **Special Education**

Discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities will comply with applicable requirements under federal law, including IDEA.

## **Appeal**

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcomes of the investigation may appeal through EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Policy, beginning at the appropriate level.

## **Hazing**

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of “initiation rites” of a school club or organization. While most initiation rites are permissible, engaging in or permitting “hazing” is a criminal offense. Any teacher, administrator, or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, who has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing or has engaged in hazing must report that fact or suspicion to an administrator.

## **Grievance Forms**

On next page(s)





## EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

### Grievance Form: Level Two Notice of Appeal

This form must be filled out completely by an employee appealing a Level One decision to the Superintendent or designee in accordance with the Charter's policies or any exceptions outlined therein.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Name of Person Filing Grievance:                                                                                                                                                                | Position:           |
| To whom did you last present your grievance?                                                                                                                                                    | Date of Conference: |
| <p>If you will be represented in pursuing your grievance, please identify the individual or organization representing you:</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Telephone: _____</p> |                     |
| Attach a copy of the original grievance.                                                                                                                                                        |                     |
| Attach a copy of the Level One decision being appealed.                                                                                                                                         |                     |
| Signature:                                                                                                                                                                                      | Date Submitted:     |

**SUBMIT A COPY TO THE BUSINESS OFFICE**



## EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

### Grievance Form: Level Three Notice of Appeal

This form must be filled out completely by an employee appealing a Level Two decision to the Superintendent or designee in accordance with the Charter's policies or any exceptions outlined therein.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Name of Person Filing Grievance:                                                                                                                                                                | Position:           |
| To whom did you last present your grievance?                                                                                                                                                    | Date of Conference: |
| <p>If you will be represented in pursuing your grievance, please identify the individual or organization representing you:</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Telephone: _____</p> |                     |
| Attach a copy of the original grievance.                                                                                                                                                        |                     |
| Attach a copy of the Level One decision being appealed.                                                                                                                                         |                     |
| Attach a copy of the Level Two decision being appealed.                                                                                                                                         |                     |
| Signature:                                                                                                                                                                                      | Date Submitted:     |

**SUBMIT A COPY TO THE BUSINESS OFFICE**



# EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

## Employee Handbook Acknowledgment Form

**2026-2027**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print Legal Name)

- I hereby acknowledge receipt of the **EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY** Employee Handbook.
- I understand that I may request a copy by e-mail or from the Business Office.
- I understand that a hard copy is located at the Business Office.
- I understand that **EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY** may amend or withdraw any or all portions of this handbook at any time. I understand that it is my responsibility to comply with the board policies and the provisions in this handbook, including any revisions, and that failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action.
- By remaining employed by **EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY** following any modifications to this handbook, I thereby accept and agree to such changes.
- Specifically, by signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to comply with all policies in this handbook, including but not limited to, the Harassment Policy, the Overtime and Timekeeping Policy, the Technology Acceptable Use Policy, and the Violence in the Workplace Policy.
- The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in the **EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY** policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in this booklet.
- As **EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY** provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding the changes.
- I understand that no modifications to contractual relationships or alterations of at-will employment relationships are intended by this handbook.
- I understand that I have an obligation to inform the Business Office of any changes in personal information, such as phone number, address, etc.
- I also accept responsibility for contacting my supervisor if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

**PLEASE COMPLETE AND SIGN THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO THE BUSINESS OFFICE.**  
**NOTE: PLEASE FEEL FREE TO MAKE A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date