



FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

September 10, 2026 | 6:00–9:00 p.m.
15920 W. 10th Ave., Golden, CO 80401

1. Call to Order

Call to Order — 6:02 p.m. by Bekky Robbins

Roll Call- BR, MM, RL, KK, LS, SS, AM

Mission, Vision & Motto

Mission

Free Horizon Montessori School provides a rigorous education grounded in Montessori Philosophy. We nurture and inspire students through a dynamic and inclusive environment that fosters curiosity, creativity, and confidence.

Vision

Our vision is to cultivate a modern Montessori educational experience that inspires students to lead their communities with grace, excellence, and respect for others, self, and the environment.

Motto

Montessori for the 21st Century — A Place to Learn, A Place to Belong.

2. Approval of the Agenda

- Action: Motion to approve the Agenda- KK, 2nd AM
- Vote: uniamious

3. Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda includes routine items that may be approved together with a single motion. Any Board member may request that an item be removed from the Consent Agenda for separate discussion and action.

- Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Attachments: 26 27 FHM Board Aug Minutes

Action: Motion to approve the Consent Agenda. KK 2nd RL Vote: unanimous

4. Public Comment

The Free Horizon Montessori Board of Directors welcomes public comment and values the opportunity to hear from families, staff, and members of the public.

Public Comment Procedures

- Speakers are generally provided up to three (3) minutes.
- Speakers will be called in an order determined by the Board President or presiding officer.
- Comments should be directed to the Board as a whole.
- Speakers are expected to communicate respectfully and may not materially disrupt the meeting.
- Public comment is an opportunity for the Board to listen. Board members generally will not respond to questions or engage in discussion during public comment.
- Concerns involving individual students, employees, personnel matters, or confidential information should be addressed through the appropriate school complaint, grievance, or administrative process.
- Written comments may be submitted to any Board member via email.

The Board President or presiding officer may make reasonable adjustments to these procedures based on the number of speakers, available meeting time, or other circumstances.

Speakers:

Julia Holsey- Staff Liaison re: Testing disruption, Board Processes, Soft Start going well, Excitement around electives

Jo Trujillo- Shout out to Mallory, facilities help!

5. School & Board Reports

5.1 Principal & Executive Director Report

- MAKE SURE DONNETTA SENDS ME HER REPORT
- School & Facilities Update
 - New FM Mr. Lucas, DM has work order oversight
 - Custodial gaps- creates a childcare licensing issue
 - FMs and Custodial pay based on sq footage, we will always struggle to meet pay scales at other JeffCo facilities
 - Right sizing Admin support 13 when were previously a charter, 8 now, need to staff up
 - District staff turnover is having a dramatic impact,
 - Committees are all staffed
 - Grant spending is finally rolling
 - Toddler classroom is prepping to launch, anticipated opening in January
 - SPED 55 identified IEP students, roughly 15% of our enrolled

5.2 Board President's Report

- JeffCo school board approved tax measures
- District has an expensive, federal lawsuit with national news coverage
- PPR formula changing to support higher needs students, encourage families to complete student benefits form
- Gateway Partnership for Early Childhood, funding for quality improvement for Colorado Shines

- We do not currently have D&O and E&O insurance

5.3 SAC Presentation — Mr. Jesse

- CMAS 25/26 GET JESSE SLIDESHOW
 - We are back in performance!!
 - Reading up and math up
 - Staff working on the specific standards that we need to improve on

5.4 Committee Reports Discussion

- Governance Committee
 - 1st meeting, outlined tasks for the year,
- Finance Committee
 - New School Funding Model, district changes are creating challenges,
 - Toddler classroom
 - Grant spending started, need to spend \$1,400 in board training,
 - CSN donated \$25,000
 - Enrollment is lower than anticipated 263 students, preschool at 68 vs 93 last year
- Facilities Committee
 - 2nd meeting, more parent interest
 - Board needs facilities training so we can decide if we are staying, buying, etc
 - Working on campus beautification day
- CSN
 - CSN beat last year's fundraising goals, focused on supporting school move back to charter, and engagement
 - Spring Fling committee starts back this month
 - Expanding Business sponsor program
- Marketing
 - First meeting tomorrow, objective to understand the boundaries between the staff, committee and CSN
 - Starting consultant process

6. Board Discussion & Action Items

6.1 CLCS Training Debrief & Follow-Up

Discussion

- Consider assigning Module 1 as a pre-req for prospective board members
- New board members done with it by Aug 1
- Will inform our onboarding

6.2 Electives Complaint Update

Discussion

6.3 CORA Policy

Discussion

Action: Emergency Motion to approve the CORA Policy as present.. LS 2nd RL Vote 7 yes

Attachments: FHM CORA Policy

6.4 Staff Handbook Review & Approval

Discussion

Action: Motion to approve the Staff Handbook. KK 2nd MM Vote 7 nos

- Staff Input:
 - It is always in draft. Who decides who makes changes and what is that process.
 - Cell phone policy is not executable. JeffCo two step verification
 - Friday meetings outside of work hours
 - Black out days notice was in adequate, policy is unclear
- VP official duty to be added as official point of contact for the league
- Pres official point of contract

Attachments: Current Staff Handbook (New Draft 91)

7. Board Assignments & Follow-Up

Review open actions and new assignments from the meeting.

- Board to explore meeting the CLCS about issues with JeffCo MM
- Send the Student Benefits form to What's App, CSN Facebook, etc
- BR to connect with Julie re: Gateway Partnership for Early Childhood, funding for quality improvement for Colorado Shines
- MM will reach out to the League re: D&O insurance and E&O
- DM time on the agenda to present facilities pros vs cons
- MM will coordinate CLCS facilities training, done by Dec
- KK to send doodle poll for facilities training
- KK to add new CORA policy to Policy Manual
- KK to send PDF CORA policy to LK for the website
- KK to send staff CORA email
- MM will reach out the league for a handbook review, HR audit and facilities training
- New POIs by next board meeting
- Set link for virtual meeting, explore how this works
- BR to get signed FUA from Tim
- Add process to policy manual for getting changes to Jeffco
- KK to talk to exboard members about email offboarding

8. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn KK 2nd LS 7 yeses 9:52pm

Anticipated adjournment: 9:00 p.m.

9. Attachments

Free Horizon Montessori Board Meeting Minutes – August 13, 2026

Call to Order: 6:04 PM by BR

Location: Free Horizon Montessori

Recorder: Kristy Kibler

Attendees

Board: Kristy Kibler (KK), Bekky Robbins (BR), Lisa Smith (LS), Rae Lyon (RL), Alison Milan (AM), Matthew Muhm (MM), Donetta McDonald (DM)

Absent: Samantha Smith

1. Reading of Mission, Vision, Motto – by BR
2. Agenda Approval - KK motion, MM second,
Vote: Unanimous

4: Public Comment & Celebration

- School starts next week!
- Facilities committee had first meeting, next meeting Sept. 8 3:30pm Virtual
- Mallory! Got a shout out at a District meeting about her Mill Levy Work
- Admin team for a crazy summer.

5. Principal Update

- New school year launching celebrations
- 25th Anniversary & Charter Launch
- Everytime there's a new system that's used something goes wrong and then JeffCo can't really help
- Facilities managers have been a revolving door
- Enrollment is an issue district wide

6. Presidents Update

- 2 Mill Levys going to the ballot jeffcopublicschools.org/future-funding
- Colorado Shines Rating is 1 diamond, most other charters have the same rating, we should be a 2, LK has been working on it for 2 years
- Board should set up their JeffCo emails

7. Insurance & Marketing

- Coverage in place

8. Creative Programming Brainstorm- punted to Sept

Committee meetings will all be noticed and need minutes and agendas

9. Principal Evaluation

- Intent to offer will happen in Dec
- Aim for offer letter to go March
- Look at quarterly checkins for Compensation Package
- Principal Eval Committee will be Pres & Tres
- CDE Educator Effectiveness reference
- Evaluation committee to put together new process and bring to governance

10. Committee Updates

- Finance- JeffCo changing/lowering PPR, Mallory adjusted budget, enrollment is lower, contingency budget is active
- Growth & Outreach- not launched yet, LS created a scope of work, will need help recruitment, will try to meet before the next board meeting
- SAC- won't meet for a few months, Jesse will give CMAS data at next board meeting
- Governance - Staff Handbook quick fast and in a hurry! Looking at options for HR audit, onboarding new board members
- Facilities- first meeting happened, working on a scope of work
- CSN- absent Campus clean up Saturday

10. Open Action Items;

1. Governance to review/update staff handbook- in progress
2. DM create a volunteer agreement for field trips- Suzanne is working on it with DM
3. KK will work with LK that district gets paperwork they need by Sep 1- KK will get oath of office docs out
4. BR will send policy documents, anything needed for governance to MM and KK- in progress
5. RL will talk to League about Board training- DONE
6. KK will create a board snack sign up sheet- in progress
7. LS will get Visibility and Growth Committee up and going- DONE
8. KK will get details on BOD calendar and send everyone- in progress
9. KK will make sure policy manual gets updated with the new committee- GOV
10. KK will add on-boarding section to policy manual- GOV

11. Assignments

- Library art needs plaque - CSN
- BR will send signed copies of FUA to KK for Box
- Mallory, board training for facilities on the calendar
- Everyone needs to get their new JeffCo emails set-up
- Governance needs to review Staff Handbook and have it ready for the board for our next meeting
- All board members need Mandatory Reporter Training by Sept 1
https://coloradocwts.com/wbt/mandatory_reporter_guest/story.html
- All CLCC training completed by Sept. 1
<https://coloradoleague.org/events/trainings/board-governance-training.html>
- KK to send training expectations email
- Tim to review insurance package and make sure we are covered KK
- Board needs to do Adult Sexual Misconduct training, DM to look if module is shareable
- KK to review Board section of the website

- RL to find out when out budget is due to JeffCo
- BR to get Principal Evaluation advice from the League
- Governance to bring a change to principal evaluation policy for approval in October
- Principal Eval present in Dec,
- KK will send Alison the FUA
- August 28 CLCC Finance Training
- Governance will write a Record Retention policy

Meeting adjourned at 9:27PM.

Motion: RL | Second: LS| Result: Carried

Free Horizon Montessori Policy on Open Records Requests

General

The purpose of this policy is for Free Horizon Montessori (“School”) to establish a policy and a process for responding to requests for records pursuant to the Colorado Open Records Act (“CORA”).

To the extent required under CORA, all public records of the School shall be open for inspection by any person within a reasonable time.

Before making a request for records pursuant to this policy, requesters are encouraged to visit the School’s website or other publicly available sources to see if the information sought is already publicly available. Parents seeking their children’s school records or interested in making a FERPA request for student records should follow the applicable procedure and not the CORA process outlined in this policy.

This policy shall be governed by CORA, and to the extent there are any inconsistencies between this policy and CORA, then CORA and/or the School’s interpretation of CORA shall control.

Requests for Public Records

For the fastest and best response, requests for public records should be addressed to the School’s custodian of records at the following e-mail address:

corarequest.fhmboard@gmail.com

Or by completing this form: <https://forms.gle/hAtboSH5ApppDuZ76>

Each request must be as specific, clear, and narrow as possible. Requests should include:

- A description of the record(s) or document(s) being sought, in the most descriptive terms possible
- A date range for search, as narrow as possible
- The types of documents to be searched (emails, written documents, reports, etc.)
- Any other information that will help the School provide the correct records

If requesters fail to meet these guidelines, and as a result the request is too vague or voluminous, the School may be unable to respond promptly to fulfill the request.

Public Records Not Subject to Disclosure

The School is permitted or prohibited by law from disclosing certain records, including certain confidential records like student records or personnel files, to the public. Additionally, some records are not subject to disclosure because they are privileged under the law. In such instances, when the law allows or requires non-disclosure, the School may deny a request for records. Also, it is possible that the records requested do not exist. CORA is not a record retention statute and the School is not obligated to create records that do not exist. Likewise, general questions and requests for information that are not a request for a record or document, as defined in CORA, are not requests for “public records” as defined by the law. Therefore, the School is not required to respond to those inquiries

Responses to Requests

The School will ordinarily respond to a request for records within three (3) business days, meaning days that the School is open. The time for production will begin on the first business day after the request is received. If the request meets all the required elements, the School will send the requester an initial response to the request within three (3) days, unless there are extenuating circumstances. This initial response will acknowledge receipt and provide any additional follow up needed to assist the School in fulfilling the request. If the records are readily accessible and not exempt from disclosure, the School may provide them with the initial response.

The initial response may also include an estimate of how long it will take to produce the requested records and an estimate of the costs associated with fulfilling the request. If there are extenuating circumstances the School will attempt to produce the requested documents within seven (7) additional working days. Extenuating circumstances include a broadly stated request that encompasses all or substantially all of a large category of records and the request is without sufficient specificity to allow the School reasonably to prepare or gather the records within a 3 day period; a broadly stated request that encompasses all or substantially all of a large category of records and the School is unable to provide the records within a 3 day period because the School would need to devote all or substantially all of its resources to meeting the deadline or there is a period of peak demand that is either unique or not predicted to recur more frequently than once a month that the School is experiencing; or a request involves such a large volume of

records that the School cannot reasonably provide the records within a 3 day period without substantially interfering with the School's operations.

If the requested records, or any portion thereof, are exempt from disclosure the School will notify the requester and the notification will include an explanation of the reasons that the records will not be produced.

If the request is too broad or vaguely worded, the School may make a request for clarification, which will be in writing, to the requester. The School will not consider the request "received" and the reasonable time within which the School must respond will not commence until the requester responds to the School's inquiry for clarification.

If the School stores the public record in a digital format, the School will provide a copy of the record in a digital format. Public records stored in a searchable format will be provided in a searchable format and public records stored in a sortable format will be provided in a sortable format. However, public records do not need to be provided in a searchable or sortable format if any of the following exceptions apply:

- a. producing the record in the requested format would violate the terms of a copyright or licensing agreement;
- b. producing the record in the requested format would result in the release of third party proprietary information;
- c. after making reasonable inquiries, the records custodian determines that:
 1. it is not technologically or practically feasible to permanently remove information that the School is required or permitted to withhold
 2. it is not technologically or practically feasible to provide a copy of the record in a searchable or sortable format; or
 3. producing the record in a searchable or sortable format would require the purchase of software, or the creation of additional programming or functionality in existing software, to remove information the School is required or permitted to withhold.

Inspection of Records

If the requester wishes to inspect the records responsive to the request in advance of receiving copies, such inspection shall be by appointment only during normal business hours. A School representative will supervise the requester during the inspection period.

Estimation & Payment of Fees

The School will ordinarily include an estimate of the costs associated with responding to a request for records in its initial response to the requester, unless the requested records are not subject to disclosure or are readily retrievable with less than 1 hour of staff time. The School will

not continue work on the request, and any timelines will be paused, until the requester remits payment of the estimated fee. If the actual costs are less than the estimated fee, the School will refund to the requester the difference between the actual costs and the estimated fee. If the actual costs exceed the amount of the estimated fee, the School shall collect the balance owed by the requester prior to delivering the records. Upon receipt of payment, unless extenuating circumstances exist, the records will be transmitted within 3 business days after such payment.

Copies

The School may charge a reasonable fee for copies of documents, not to exceed twenty-five cents per standard page (\$0.25) or fifty cents per double-sided page (\$0.50) or a fee not to exceed the actual cost of providing a copy, printout, fax, email or photograph of a public record in a format other than a standard page. Printing fees may still apply when records are transmitted electronically if it is necessary for the custodian to print documents in order to redact exempt information and/or scan the record to create an electronic file.

Fees

The School may charge a reasonable fee for time spent researching and retrieving documents in response to a request. The first hour of time spent on research and retrieval shall be free. When researching, retrieving, reviewing, manipulating, or producing records takes longer than one hour, a fee of \$41.37 per hour, or the maximum amount allowed by law, will be charged for all staff time after the first hour. This fee will also apply to services rendered by School staff in supervising the copying, printing out, or photographing of any records. Any costs charged to a requester shall not exceed the actual cost of producing the records.

Transmission of Documents

The School shall not charge a transmission fee when sending electronic documents, except when printing is required, as noted above. If possible, the School will attempt to transmit records electronically. If the cost of converting the documents to electronic form exceeds the cost of transmitting hard copies of the records based on the \$41.37 per hour fee, the School will transmit hard copies of the records instead. When transmitting records by United States mail, other delivery service, or facsimile, the School shall charge requesters a fee not to exceed the actual costs of the service.

**A Jefferson County Option School of Innovation
Serving Students in Preschool through 8th Grade**



Employee Handbook

15920 W. 10th Ave

Golden, Colorado 80401

Telephone: 303.982.0275

Fax: 303.982.0274

Attendance: 303-982-0280

www.FreeHorizonMontessori.org

The Free Horizon Montessori (FHM) Employee Handbook provides policies and procedures that we each hold responsibility to abide by in service to students, colleagues, parents, and our school.

Please read, understand, and utilize the information contained herein. One component of your annual performance evaluations will reflect your adherence to these policies and practices. Policies and procedures may be changed from time to time. You will be given notification of updates as they happen.

Most importantly, please remember that we are a Charter School within Jefferson County Public School District, and as such also adhere to all Jeffco Policies and Procedure. These are acknowledged each year. We serve the general public and are subject to the rules and regulations denoted by the district unless otherwise specified herein, within our Charter, Governance Agreement, or other school policy documents.

All Jeffco Policies may be found here:
<https://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/about/board-of-education/board-policies>

Our Mission

Free Horizon Montessori School provides a rigorous education grounded in Montessori Philosophy. We nurture and inspire students through a dynamic and inclusive environment that fosters curiosity, creativity, and confidence.

Our Vision

Our vision is to cultivate a modern Montessori educational experience that inspires students to lead their communities with grace, excellence, and respect for others, self and, the environment.

Our Motto:

Montessori for the 21st Century – A Place to Learn, A Place to Belong.

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1. The FHM Organization

1.2 FHM Organizational Structure

The core leadership and organizational structure at Free Horizon Montessori is comprised of leadership teams that work together to further the mission of Free Horizon Montessori in delivering a comprehensive program grounded in Montessori educational excellence, the Free Horizon Montessori Board of Directors as well as the Free Horizon Montessori Administrative Team.

2. Employment

2.1 Personnel Administration

Questions regarding interpretation and application of policy should be referred to the HR Specialist and/or the Principal.

For payroll inquiries please fill out a Jeffco Help Ticket through ESS.

Benefit questions should be directed to Benefits@jeffco.k12.co.us

2.2 Personnel Files

- All personnel employed by Free Horizon Montessori have an onsite personnel file. Any employee may request to review their file. Requests for copies of your personnel file must be in writing and administration has 14 business days to comply with request. No originals can be given to employee. Employees may schedule an appointment to review their personnel files with Administration.

2.3 FHM's Commitment to Employees

Free Horizon Montessori is committed to fostering a safe, collaborative, and inclusive work environment. FHM's employee relations policy is to:

- **Maintain Equal Opportunity:** Hire, promote, compensate, and evaluate employees strictly on the basis of qualifications, skills, performance, attitude, and character. FHM does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or hairstyle/hair texture, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.
- **Maintain Safe & Professional Operations:** Operate a safe, orderly, and supportive school environment aligned with Montessori principles, CDE regulations, and Jeffco Public Schools professional standards and ethics.
- **Provide Competitive Compensation & Conditions:** Regularly review wages, benefits, and working conditions with the goal of providing competitive compensation consistent with sound fiscal practices.
- Free Horizon Montessori Employees are considered "at-will" employees.
- **Foster Open Communication & Problem-Solving:** Communicate directly, transparently,

and honestly with staff members. FHM provides fair, prompt, and practical assessments of workplace concerns and assures employees equal opportunity to bring issues to Administration.

- **Support Professional Growth & Teamwork:** Hire, train, and retain highly competent staff who embrace FHM's objectives, collaborate as team players, and engage constructively with feedback.
- **Cultivate Respect & Transparency:** Respect individual rights, treat all community members with courtesy and dignity, and keep staff informed regarding school progress, goals, and institutional aims.

2.4 FHM Expectations of Employees

Employees are expected to know and fulfill the requirements of their specific job description(s) and employment parameters as specified in their Employment Agreement(s) Jeffco Board Policy GBEB, Staff Conduct (and Responsibilities), also applies to Free Horizon Montessori employees and governs all work of employees.

2.5 Codes of Ethics

2.5.1 FHM Code of Ethics

To support our students and community, FHM employees commit to the following principles:

- **Commitment to Students:** Prioritize the physical safety, emotional well-being, and academic growth of every child. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times and uphold non-discriminatory, equitable practices in alignment with Montessori philosophy.
- **Integrity & Professionalism:** Conduct all school business with honesty, transparency, and accountability. Represent FHM positively and professionally in interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and the broader community.
- **Confidentiality:** Protect student, family, and personnel privacy by strictly adhering to FERPA, HIPAA, and school privacy policies regarding records, conversations, and digital data.
- **Respect & Collaboration:** Foster a respectful, inclusive working environment. Engage constructively with feedback, resolve conflicts professionally through direct communication, and support fellow team members.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Avoid situations where personal interests, outside employment, or relationships conflict (or appear to conflict) with professional duties and the best interests of Free Horizon Montessori.
- **Compliance & Stewardship:** Uphold all local, state, and federal laws, CDE regulations, Jeffco authorizer policies, and FHM operational guidelines, ensuring responsible stewardship of school resources.

2.5.2 Code of Ethics of the American Montessori Society (AMS)

Free Horizon Montessori is an affiliate member of the American Montessori Society (AMS). This professional education association requires that all members of Free Horizon Montessori staff comply with the AMS Code of Ethics (Adopted 1969, AMS Board of Directors. Expanded 1975. Updated 2008 and 2010.

As American Montessori Society members, we pledge to conduct ourselves professionally and personally, in ways that reflect our respect for each other and for the children we serve. We will do whatever is within our talents and capacity to protect the right of each child to have the freedom and opportunity to develop his full potential. AMS requires that all

member schools and teacher education programs agree to comply with the AMS Code of Ethics. AMS relies solely on self-compliance of this Code.

2.5.3 Professionalism

All Free Horizon Montessori staff members are expected to uphold the highest professional standards as they teach, model, and emulate the principles stated in the FHM Mission. To maintain these standards, all employees must adhere to the following expectations:

- **Maintain Confidentiality:** Respect student, family, and personnel privacy at all times in compliance with FERPA and school privacy guidelines.
- **Demonstrate Dependability & Punctuality:** Arrive on time, fulfill duties reliably, and manage work hours responsibly.
- **Seek Collaborative Problem-Solving:** Work constructively with colleagues and leadership to seek consensus and resolve conflict.
- **Maintain the Prepared Environment:** Take personal responsibility for the cleanliness, organization, and overall aesthetics of the school facility.
- **Adhere to the Professional Dress Code:** Present an appropriate, and professional appearance aligned with school guidelines.
- **Limit Personal Device Use:** Avoid personal cell phone or smart device use while "on duty" or supervising students.
- **Maintain Professional Boundaries with Families:** Ensure all communications and relationships with parents and guardians remain professional, transparent, and focused on student success.
- **Maintain Strict Boundaries with Students:**
 - Avoid fraternization with students outside the scope and hours of your employment.
 - Never invite students to your home or personal residence.
 - Never transport students in a personal vehicle.
 - Do not engage with or follow current students on personal social media platforms.
- **Avoid Conflicts of Interest & Inappropriate Relationships:** Never seek or engage in romantic or sexual relationships with students or parents/guardians. Romantic relationships between supervisors and direct reports are strictly prohibited.

2.6 Employee Professional Responsibilities

2.6.1 Core Work Rules for Employees

1. Children must be under the direct supervision of an adult at all times. This means that teachers must have adult coverage of their classrooms if they leave. Children cannot be left unaccompanied in any room of the school for any length of time, regardless of their age. This includes times before and after school and children of staff members. The requirement (see Jeffco Board Policy GBEB) is for 100%, line-of-sight supervision of students. Students must always be in view of an employee
2. All purchases require pre-approval. No sales tax is paid on school purchases.
3. Staff who must occasionally use restraint with children must be trained and document restraints. Our protocol is the non-violent Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training. Otherwise, staff should not touch students.
4. Comply with all applicable laws, policies, rules, and directives.
5. Cell Phones are not allowed for use in front of any children by instructional staff.
6. Never be alone with a child in a situation or location that is not expected or communicated. Keep doors open, whenever possible, when working alone with children, especially if the door does not have a vision light or window.

7. Never transport students in your personal vehicle without following Jeffco policy.
8. Never invite students to your residence.
9. Do not share personal contact information with students.
10. Do not friend students on Facebook or other social media sites, see Jeffco policy.
11. Do not engage in behavior or conduct on or off campus, including cyber threats and harassment that threatens or endangers the safety or welfare of students, staff, parents, or property. These shall face serious repercussions, including suspension without pay or dismissal and referral to law enforcement.
12. Never disparage Free Horizon Montessori, its staff, its students, or its families.
13. Meet a minimum of 95% attendance rate, based on Employment Agreement .
14. Professional Appearance & Boundary Cues: Staff members are expected to maintain professional standards of dress as outlined in the *Staff Dress Code Policy*. Attire that is intentionally revealing, excessively tight, or inappropriate for an educational environment undermines professional boundaries and can create ambiguity in adult-student interactions.

2.6.2 Gross Misconduct

Gross Misconduct & Immediate Dismissal

Free Horizon Montessori expects all employees to uphold high standards of professional and personal conduct. Employees who engage in gross misconduct are subject to immediate termination of employment following an investigation.

Pending the outcome of an investigation into alleged gross misconduct, the employee will generally be placed on **administrative leave**.

Definition: Gross misconduct is defined as a willful, deliberate, or reckless act or omission that violates law, district/school policy, or basic standards of workplace safety and integrity. Gross misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

1. **Sexual Harassment, Misconduct, or Abuse:** Any form of sexual harassment, inappropriate boundary crossing, or sexual abuse involving a student, parent, colleague, or visitor.
2. **Child Abuse or Neglect:** Any act or failure to act resulting in child abuse, neglect, or the filing of a knowingly false abuse/neglect report.
3. **Violence & Bullying:** Assault, battery, physical violence, threats, or severe bullying/cyberbullying directed toward students, staff, parents, or community members.
4. **Theft & Vandalism:** Theft, embezzlement, or intentional destruction/vandalism of school, district, employee, or student property.
5. **Substance Use:** Being under the influence of, possessing, or using alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty, on campus, or at school-sponsored events.
6. **Insubordination:** Severe or persistent refusal to comply with reasonable, lawful directives from school administrators or direct supervisors.
7. **Criminal Conduct:** Conviction of, or entering a plea for, a felony or a misdemeanor involving crimes against children, violent acts, or drug offences.
8. **Weapons & Safety Violations:** Bringing unauthorized weapons, explosives, or hazardous materials onto school grounds, or committing arson/fire safety violations.
9. **Negligent Supervision:** Failure to provide required supervision of students resulting in harm, injury, or significant safety risk to a child.
10. **Fraud & Dishonesty:** Falsifying school records, timecards, employment applications, credentials, or Workers' Compensation claims.
11. **Job Abandonment & Unauthorized Absences:** Job abandonment or excessive, unauthorized absences/tardiness not protected by applicable state or federal leave laws (e.g., HFWA, FMLA, ADA).

12. **Violation of Zero-Tolerance Policies:** Serious violations of FHM or Jeffco Public Schools zero-tolerance policies.

Note regarding criminal allegations: Employees accused of criminal conduct may be placed on administrative leave during law enforcement investigations. FHM reserves the right to conduct an independent internal review and take appropriate administrative action regardless of law enforcement or judicial outcomes.

2.6.2 Jeffco Employee Professional Responsibilities

As an employee of Free Horizon Montessori, you are also required to follow all policies not expressly waived for FHM that have been established by Jefferson County Public Schools. Your professional responsibilities as required by Jeffco are outlined in the document titled, *Employee Professional Responsibilities*.

2.6.3 Staff Conflicts of Interest

Jeffco Policy GBEA, defines areas of staff conflicts of interest as well as policies pertaining to such. Please see Policy GBEA and read it in its entirety.

2.6.4 Compliance with the Colorado Fair Campaign Practices Act

In accordance with the Colorado Fair Campaign Act, no resources at Free Horizon Montessori, including copiers, fax machines, and e-mail, may be used to urge a vote for or against any candidate, group of candidates, or ballot issue.

You should not include any information in your publications or materials sent to parents urging people to support candidates, policies, or positions endorsed by any group. Please note that this differs from appropriate teaching about political practices and campaigns, especially in the course of social studies and cultural education.

2.7 Employment Policies

This section describes policies used to hire and manage employees of Free Horizon Montessori. Jefferson County Public Schools zero tolerance policies are located within the Jeffco Board policies and available online.

2.7.1 At Will Employment

Employment with Free Horizon Montessori (FHM) is strictly "at-will." This means that either the employee or FHM may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, and with or without advance notice, except as otherwise provided by law or by the express terms of a written Employment Agreement executed by the school.

No Contract Guaranteed: Nothing in this handbook, school policies, benefit summaries, or verbal statements by supervisors creates an express or implied contract of employment for any definite period.

Authority to Modify: No individual administrator, supervisor, or school representative has the authority to enter into an agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to alter the at-will status of any employee, unless such modification is made in a formal written agreement signed by the Principal.

2.7.2 Equal Employment Opportunity

Free Horizon Montessori is an equal opportunity employer committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace. FHM prohibits discrimination and harassment of any kind based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin,

ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, veteran or military status, political affiliation, disability (that does not prohibit performance of essential job functions with or without reasonable accommodation), genetic information, or protective or hair historically associated with race, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

Responsibility & Shared Commitment:

While School Administration is primarily responsible for implementing and overseeing equal opportunity policies, all staff members share in the responsibility to ensure these principles are upheld in daily school operations. Employees who engage in discriminatory, harassing, or retaliatory practices are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Reporting Procedures:

Any employee who believes they have been subjected to discrimination, or who witnesses behavior that violates this policy, is strongly encouraged to report the matter immediately to the HR Specialist, the Principal, or the Board Governance Committee. FHM strictly prohibits retaliation against any employee who reports a concern or participates in an investigation in good faith.

2.7.3 Title IX Compliance & Investigations

Free Horizon Montessori is committed to maintaining an educational and employment environment free from sex-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and gender-based misconduct in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and applicable state and authorizer policies.

- **Trained Personnel:** Designated administrative staff members receive specialized training to serve as Title IX Coordinators, Investigators, and Decision-Makers. Training covers proper intake, trauma-informed interviewing techniques, impartial evidence gathering, conflict-of-interest prevention, and fair adjudication procedures.
- **Scope of Review:** FHM conducts prompt, thorough, and equitable Title IX investigations whenever formal complaints or reports of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or related misconduct involving students, staff, or third parties are received.
- **Procedures & Rights:** All formal Title IX proceedings follow prescribed federal timelines and procedural safeguards, ensuring equal rights, clear communication, and due process for both complainants and respondents.
- **Reporting:** Inquiries or reports regarding Title IX rights, interim supportive measures, or formal complaints should be directed immediately to the designated FHM Title IX Coordinator.

2.7.5 Adult Sexual Misconduct

1. Policy Overview & Commitment

Free Horizon Montessori is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and secure environment for all students. FHM maintains a zero-tolerance policy for Adult Sexual Misconduct (ASM), boundary violations, grooming behaviors, and child abuse or neglect. All staff members, contractors, substitutes, and volunteers are required to maintain strict, professional boundaries with students at all times, both on and off campus. All Staff will be trained every 3 years or upon hire in ASM.

2. Definitions

- **Adult Sexual Misconduct (ASM):** Any sexual, romantic, or inappropriate physical, verbal, written, or electronic conduct between an adult school employee/volunteer and a student, regardless of the student's age, consent, or who initiated the contact.
- **Grooming Behavior:** Actions taken by an adult to establish trust, emotional connection, or isolation with a student or their family to prepare the student for sexual abuse, exploitation, or boundary crossing.
- **Boundary Violations:** Actions that blur or cross the line between a professional educator-student relationship and an inappropriate personal relationship.

3. Professional Boundary Expectations

To protect students and staff, employees must adhere to clear boundaries in all interactions:

- **Electronic Communications:** All digital communication with students (including email, messaging apps, and learning platforms) must occur exclusively through official school-issued accounts and platforms during appropriate hours. Employees must **never** communicate with students via personal cell phones, personal text messages, or private social media accounts.
- **Physical Contact:** Physical contact with students must always be non-sexual, age-appropriate, public, and suited to the Montessori educational environment (e.g., side hugs, high-fives, or comforting a distressed young child in an open area).
- **Individual Meetings:** One-on-one meetings with students must occur in visible, accessible spaces (e.g., open door, windowed room, or with another staff member nearby).
- **Gifts & Favoritism:** Staff may not give personal gifts, money, or special privileges to individual students, nor favor a specific student over others.
- **Transportation & Off-Campus Interaction:** Staff members are strictly prohibited from transporting students in personal vehicles or spending non-school-related time with students off campus without prior administrative and parental written authorization.

4. Mandatory Annual Training

In compliance with state standards and authorizer expectations, **all employees must complete mandatory Adult Sexual Misconduct and Prevention Training annually** prior to or upon the start of the academic year. (generally on the Jeffco platform, or in person for new employees)

- Training covers identifying boundary violations, recognizing grooming signs, mandatory reporting laws, and reporting procedures.
- Completion certificates and training logs will be tracked and maintained in the HR compliance system.

5. Mandatory Reporting Requirements

Every school employee is a **Mandatory Reporter** under Colorado Law (C.R.S. § 19-3-304).

- **Immediate Local Report:** If an employee knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a student has been subjected to abuse, neglect, or adult sexual misconduct, they must **immediately** report the concern to local law enforcement or the **Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-844-CO-4-KIDS)**.
- **Internal Notification:** Immediately following the external report, the employee must notify the Principal, Dean of Students, or HR Specialist. Internal notification does **not** replace the statutory requirement to contact law enforcement or child protective services directly.

6. Investigation & Authorizer / CDE Reporting

When an allegation of Adult Sexual Misconduct is made:

- **Immediate Administrative Action:** The accused employee will be immediately placed on administrative leave pending an investigation, in accordance with district and authorizer protocols.
- **Jeffco District & CDE Notification:** FHM will immediately notify Jefferson County Public Schools, local law enforcement, and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) as required by state law and authorizer agreements.
- **Confidentiality:** Investigations will be conducted with maximum discretion to protect the safety and privacy of the student, while ensuring due process.

7. Consequences of Non-Compliance

Violations of professional boundaries or failure to complete required ASM training will result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment and referral to the Colorado Department of Education for license revocation. Failure to report suspected abuse or misconduct is a misdemeanor under Colorado state law.

2.7.5 Re-Hiring

Letters of at-will re-employment are issued during the school year. Current employment does not ensure employment for the next year.

2.7.6 Outside Employment

Free Horizon Montessori recognizes that employees may seek outside employment or engage in secondary business activities. However, for full-time staff members, employment at FHM is considered your primary professional commitment. To ensure that outside employment does not interfere with school operations or student success, employees must adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Performance & Attendance:** Outside employment must not conflict with your scheduled work hours,

attendance expectations, or ability to perform assigned job duties effectively. Fatigue or scheduling conflicts resulting from outside employment do not excuse failure to meet FHM performance standards.

- **Conflict of Interest:** Outside activities must not create a financial, professional, or ethical conflict of interest with exempt employees of Free Horizon Montessori.
- **Use of School Resources:** Staff members may not use FHM facilities, equipment, technology, supplies, or confidential student/family data for outside business or personal gain.
- **Private Services for Current Students:** **Private tutoring or babysitting is conducted as an independent arrangement outside of FHM's scope of employment**, and that school facilities/materials cannot be used for these private paid services.

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2.7.7 Confidential Information

Free Horizon Montessori families and employees entrust our school with sensitive personal, educational, and medical information. Safeguarding this information is both a legal mandate and a foundational responsibility that protects the integrity, respect, and trust of our school community.

As a condition of employment, all staff members are required to maintain strict confidentiality regarding student, family, and personnel information—both during their employment at FHM and following their separation from the school.

1. Student & Family Privacy (FERPA compliance)

In accordance with the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**, the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**, and state privacy statutes:

- **Need-to-Know Access:** Student records, educational progress, behavioral logs, medical information, and family circumstances may only be discussed or shared with school personnel who have a direct, legitimate educational need to know.
- **External Disclosures:** Staff members may never disclose or share student information, academic records, or personal family details with unauthorized third parties without prior written parental consent or a legal directive.
- **Informal Discussions:** Confidential matters must never be discussed in public areas of the school (e.g., hallways, staff lounge, carline, or off-campus settings).

2. Personnel & Operational Privacy

- **Staff Privacy:** Employee personnel files, performance evaluations, disciplinary records, medical accommodations (HIPAA/ADA), and personal contact information are strictly confidential.
- **School Operations:** Proprietary school business, internal communications, and legal or administrative proceedings must remain confidential and used solely for professional purposes.

3. Social Media & Digital Communications

- Staff members may not post photos, videos, names, or identifiable work/details of FHM students or families on personal social media accounts or non-approved digital channels.
- Official school communications involving student information must occur strictly through school-issued email accounts and approved administrative systems.

4. Violations & Consequences

Unlawful or unauthorized disclosure of confidential information violates state and federal laws, damages community trust, and compromises student safety. Any breach of confidentiality will result in immediate investigation and disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, professional licensure reporting to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), and potential legal liability.

2.7.8 Harassment Policy

Free Horizon Montessori is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and professional work environment free from harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. FHM strictly prohibits harassment or discrimination of any employee, contractor, applicant, or community member based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual

orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, status as a veteran or military personnel, disability, genetic information, or protected hairstyles/hair textures.

This policy applies to all conduct occurring on school grounds, during school-sponsored events or travel, and off campus (including digital, social media, and electronic communications) when such conduct impacts the work environment.

2. Definition of Unlawful Harassment (POWR Act Alignment)

In accordance with Colorado law (C.R.S. § 24-34-402), workplace harassment includes any unwelcome physical or verbal conduct, or any written, pictorial, or visual communication, directed at an individual or group based on an actual or perceived protected category.

Legal Standard: Conduct need **not** be "severe or pervasive" to constitute unlawful harassment under Colorado law.

Actionable harassment includes any unwelcome behavior that is subjectively offensive to the recipient and objectively offensive to a reasonable person within the same protected class.

Harassment can take many forms, including verbal, visual, physical, overt, covert, or cyber communication. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- **Verbal/Written:**
- **Visual:**
- **Physical:**
- **Sexual Harassment:**

Complaint & Reporting Procedures

FHM encourages prompt reporting of all incidents of perceived harassment or discrimination so the school can take immediate corrective action. Employees do not need to follow a rigid chain of command and may report concerns to any of the following contacts:

1. **HR Specialist:** Direct reporting for workplace concerns, complaints, or guidance.
2. **School Principal / Administration:** Primary administrative reporting contacts.
3. **Board of Directors Governance Chair:** If the complaint involves the Principal reports should be submitted directly to the President or Governance Chair of the FHM Board of Directors.

6. Retaliation Prohibited

FHM strictly prohibits retaliation against any employee who, in good faith, reports harassment or discrimination, files a complaint, or participates in an investigation. Any employee who engages in retaliatory behavior will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

7. Enforcement & Indemnification

Any employee found to have engaged in harassment, discrimination, or retaliation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures, up to and including immediate termination of employment and referral to legal authorities where applicable.

Employees who violate state/federal anti-discrimination laws or act outside the scope of their professional duties and FHM policy act at their own personal legal liability.

2.7.9 Fire, Weapons, Illegal Substances, and Drug and Alcohol Abuse

As per policy GBEC and JICH of Jeffco Public Schools, observance of this policy shall be a condition of employment. Possession or the use of fire (arson), explosives, weapons of any kind, illegal substances, liquor, or tobacco products within the school building, school facilities, or on school grounds or school buses by any individual, including school personnel, students, and parents is prohibited at all times. Smoking and use of any tobacco product, including electronic cigarettes, is strictly prohibited on school grounds or at school-sponsored events (on or off campus) or anywhere that is visible to students and parents.

Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or using drugs or alcohol during work hours is grounds for immediate

dismissal. If abuse or neglect is suspected, you will be placed on administrative leave until such time that the matter can be resolved.

2.7.10 Dress Code/Personal Appearance

Dress Code/Personal Appearance

Staff Dress Code Policy

Free Horizon Montessori is committed to maintaining a safe, professional, and welcoming educational environment. Establishing and adhering to a professional dress standard sets clear boundaries in a school setting, signaling respect for our roles, our colleagues, and the students in our care. Except on designated spirit or casual days, all staff members are expected to maintain a business casual appearance during working hours and at school-sponsored functions.

General Appearance Standards

Clothing should fit comfortably, allow for ease of movement appropriate for a Montessori environment, and present a clean, neat appearance.

- Professional Coverage: Attire should provide appropriate coverage suitable for working with children. Clothing that exposes undergarments, midriffs, lower backs, or cleavage is not permitted.
- Denim: Clean, well-fitted denim is permitted for daily business casual wear.
- Shorts & Skirts: Tailored, dress-style shorts (such as knee-length Bermuda shorts), skirts, and dresses must reach near knee-length. Athletic shorts, sweat shorts, cargo shorts, and cutoffs are prohibited. Shorts are not permitted during formal school events.
- Footwear: Footwear must be worn at all times while on campus. Bare feet are strictly prohibited. Footwear must allow staff to safely navigate campus and perform emergency duty responsibilities.
- Colorado law strictly protects hair texture and protective hairstyles from discriminatory dress/grooming rules.

Specific Guidelines & Exceptions

Relaxed Fridays & Spirit Days

On Fridays, staff may wear FHM-branded apparel, Montessori-themed clothing, clean professional sweatshirts, or school-appropriate graphic t-shirts paired with denim or casual pants or shorts /skirts. *(Note: Hooded sweatshirts and graphic tees are discouraged for daily business casual wear).*

Activity-Specific Attire

For specific outdoor activities (e.g., Field Day, Field Trip, Fun Runs, outdoor education, or work projects), athletic wear—such as yoga pants, athletic leggings, or sweatpants—may be permitted. Outside of these designated activities, athletic wear is not permitted. (Position specific exemptions are allowable by Principal, ex. PE Lead)

Hats & Head Coverings

Hats and casual head coverings (such as baseball caps) are not permitted indoors unless designated for a special school event. *Head wraps, turbans, headscarves, or hair coverings worn for religious observance, medical reasons, or culturally significant reasons are fully permitted at all times.*

Content Restrictions & Political Messaging

- Attire & Body Art: Clothing, accessories, and visible body art/tattoos must not feature vulgar, violent, sexual, alcohol/drug-related, defamatory, or discriminatory content.
- Political Activity: In accordance with public school guidelines and district policy, employees may not wear or display political buttons, campaign messaging, or political slogans while on duty or representing FHM at school functions.

Business Formal Requirements

Certain high-impact occasions—such as Back to School Night, Parent-Teacher Conferences, District meetings, and formal school presentations—require business formal attire. Denim and shorts are prohibited during these events. Administration will provide advance notice for business formal days.

Scents and Perfume

Personal Fragrances: We ask that everyone refrain from wearing perfumes, colognes, heavily scented body sprays, and strong scented lotions while on school grounds or attending school events. If you need medical accommodation contact the Human Resource Specialist. The use of air fresheners (plug-ins, aerosols, gels), essential oil diffusers, scented candles, incense, and artificial deodorizers is strictly prohibited in all classrooms, offices, and common areas.

Compliance & Resolution

If an employee's attire does not align with the standards outlined in this policy, Administration or HR will discuss the matter privately and respectfully with the staff member.

- **Corrective Action:** Employees may be asked to adjust their attire or change into appropriate clothing.
- **Time Away:** Under Colorado wage law, any time required away from duties to change clothing must be logged accurately. Employees may use accrued paid personal leave (ELT) or unpaid break/lunch time to cover necessary travel time.

Professional Boundaries & Attire Standards

Clothing choices play a key role in maintaining a professional environment and setting positive standards for students. Staff attire must maintain clear professional coverage during all regular classroom activities, including bending, lifting, and sitting on the floor.

- **Coverage Requirements:** Attire that is sheer, revealing, or exposes undergarments, midriffs, lower backs, or cleavage is prohibited.
- **Professional Role Modeling:** Wearing neat, appropriate workplace attire helps maintain clear educator-student boundaries and reinforces FHM's commitment to a respectful, student-focused learning environment.

2.7.11 Required Knowledge and Practices

All employees of Free Horizon Montessori are required to have read, understand, and practice the policies and procedures as set forth in this Employee Handbook, and any other documents disseminated each year. These include on-going notes/memoranda from administration.

2.7.12 Job Descriptions

Individual Job Descriptions exist for each staff role within the Free Horizon Montessori professional community and are considered material components of each employee's Employment.

2.8 Professional Development

All professional staff members are expected to continue their education and experience in their profession. Eight (8) clock hours of continuing education (CE) are minimally expected each year.

Many school employees are required to hold current CPR / First Aide certifications. For any employee Free Horizon Montessori will approve 2 hours of leave for CPR coursework. Employees may request to use personal ELT time for CPR course work following the guidelines outlined within this document.

Staff development (“professional development”) days are mandatory attendance for all required staff, and employees may not use Earned Leave Time on these days, without permission from administration.

2.9 Wages, Salary, and Benefits

It is the desire of Free Horizon Montessori to offer salaries and benefits that are competitive with other employers in the marketplace in a fair and equitable manner, dependent upon individual education and qualifications, and school evaluations and performance, and in compliance with all applicable statutory requirements. Current Free Horizon Montessori Salary Schedules are available.

2.9.2 Payroll

Most employees at Free Horizon Montessori are paid on an annualized, monthly salaried basis, even if their position is non-exempt.

Each non-exempt employee is responsible for properly filling out a time sheet. Time sheets are accessed in a Jeffco system and it is the employee’s responsibility to complete the time sheet accurately each day. Failure to comply with time sheet guidelines may produce disciplinary action.

Each staff member is responsible for having a current W-4 form on file as completed through Employee Self Service/Access Jeffco.

Paychecks are issued on the last business day of the month following the month worked for hourly employees, with hours accrued through the payroll entry date.

2.9.3 Employer Contribution Toward Health, Dental, and/or Vision Insurance

Benefits-eligible employees are offered an employer-paid monthly contribution toward the purchase of the Jefferson County School District’s medical, dental, and/or vision group insurance.

2.9.4 Other Benefits

Staff members who have children enrolled at Free Horizon Montessori may use Before Care for their children without charge. Staff members may enroll their child(ren) in After Care at a 20% discount. It is expected that the staff member will notify After Care Program Coordinator of the need for After Care as soon as possible, but in all cases prior to 10:00 am of the date of need. Space must be available (based on staffing ratios) in order for After Care to accommodate the staff child(ren)’s drop-in, and is offered on a first come, first served basis. Children not enrolled at Free Horizon Montessori may not use Before or After Care programs. Staff who are substituting during After Care may elect to have their own child(ren) attend free of charge on days when they are subbing. Employees who work during aftercare hours will be able to enroll children free of charge until the end of their shift.

Staff members who are employed full time (30 or more hours per week) who have children enrolled in the tuition-based program(s) can receive a 40% discount on Preschool tuition for their own child(ren).

Staff members who are employed at least 20 hours per week but less than 30 hours per week can receive a 20% discount on tuition-based Preschool programs for their own child(ren).

All staff members may also receive a discount toward their child(ren)’s enrollment in Free Horizon Montessori’s after-school club programs. The discount is 40% of registration fee cost; payment for materials fee cost is still required at

100%. (Enrichment programs, hosted at but external to Free Horizon Montessori, are not eligible for staff discounts.)

2.9.5 Deductions From Paycheck (Mandatory)

Jefferson County Public Schools is required by law to make certain deductions from your paycheck each time one is prepared. Please contact Payroll for a current list.

2.9.6 Errors in Pay

Every effort is made to avoid errors in your paycheck. If you believe an error has been made, complete a Jeffco HELP ticket as well as the Business Manager.

2.9.7 Jury Duty

FHM follows the requirement set forth by Colorado law regarding Jury Duty. Employees will be paid at their equivalent hourly rate for the first three days of Jury Duty, up to \$50 per day, the amount required by state law (§13-71-126, C.R.S.). Employees also have the option of taking Earned Leave Time. Employees who use paid Earned Leave Time will continue to receive their normal paycheck amount and must endorse over to FHM any funds they receive from the Court for their jury duty participation. Evidence of Jury Summons and selection must be provided to the FHM HR Specialist.

2.989 Voting Leave

In accordance with Colorado Revised Statute§ 1-7-102, employees may, with prior notice to the school, take up to two hours paid leave time from work during the dates/times polls are open for the purpose of voting. The school may specify the hours the employee will take off, but the period must fall at the beginning or end of the work period, if the employee so requests. No voting leave will be approved if there are three or more hours between the time of opening and the time of closing of the polls during which the voter is not required to be on the job.

2.9.9 Worker's Compensation

On-the-job accidents must be reported to the HR Specialist.

2.9.10 Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Eligible employees may take up to **12 workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave** within a rolling 12-month period for qualifying family and medical reasons.

- **Eligibility Criteria:** To qualify for FMLA, an employee must have worked for FHM for at least **12 total months** (which need not be consecutive) and have worked at least **1,250 hours** during the 12-month period preceding the leave.
- **Qualifying Reasons:**
 - The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child (bonding leave).
 - To care for the employee's spouse, child, parent, or expanded family member with a serious health condition.
 - A serious health condition that renders the employee unable to perform essential job functions.
 - Qualifying military exigencies or military caregiver leave.

Colorado Family Member Expansion

In alignment with Colorado state law, FHM expands the definition of "family member" for applicable leave beyond federal standards. Employees may utilize leave to care for a child (regardless of age or dependency), spouse, domestic partner, partner in a civil union, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, in-law, or any individual related by blood, adoption, legal

custody, or a committed live-in relationship.

Coordination with Colorado FAMLI & Paid Time Off

- **Colorado FAMLI Integration:** FMLA runs concurrently with Colorado Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) benefits where applicable.
- **Paid Leave Substitution:** FMLA leave is inherently unpaid. However, employees may elect—or FHM may require, subject to state law constraints—to substitute accrued paid leave (such as Equal Leave Time/ELT or sick leave) to cover some or all of the FMLA period.

Notice & Medical Certification Requirements

- **Foreseeable Leave:** Employees must provide at least **30 days' advance written notice** to Human Resources when the need for leave is foreseeable.
- **Unforeseeable Leave:** When 30 days' notice is not possible, notice must be provided as soon as practicable following standard call-in procedures.
- **Certification:** FHM requires complete medical certification from a healthcare provider supporting the need for leave within 15 calendar days of the request, as well as a fitness-for-duty clearance prior to returning to work.

2.9.12 Bereavement Leave

Free Horizon Montessori (FHM) recognizes the importance of taking time off during times of personal loss. Because FHM utilizes an Earned Leave Time (ELT) structure, time taken for bereavement is applied against an employee's available ELT balance.

- **Usage & Notification:** Employees should notify their supervisor and HR as soon as practical when bereavement leave is required.
- **Exhausted ELT / Unpaid Leave:** If an employee has exhausted their accrued ELT balance, up to 3 consecutive business days of unpaid bereavement leave may be granted upon approval by the Principal and HR Specialist, based on the need to travel or make end-of-life arrangements.
- **Extended Leave:** Requests for additional leave beyond the standard allowance will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis under the school's general unpaid leave policies.

2.10 Performance & Compensation Reviews

Various personnel in the school have authority and responsibility to conduct employee evaluations. The Principal is the default evaluator for any employee, regardless of who their direct supervisor is at Free Horizon Montessori.

2.11 Corrective Actions

If the supervisor and/or Principal perceives that there is a deficiency in an employee's performance, behavior, or actions relative to the expectations set forth in the employee's job responsibilities, description, and professional expectations, the following procedures may be indicated. Free Horizon Montessori's desire is to provide employees an opportunity to improve on areas of needed growth and take personal and professional responsibility and action to improve and remedy deficiencies/problems. Free Horizon Montessori is not obligated to adhere to the steps in any progressive manner since all employees are at-will and actions/remediation will vary depending on the concern:

1. **Observation of Problem or Investigation of Incident/Allegation**
2. **Discussion/Conference:** Such a discussion/conference is considered to be a verbal warning or directive.
3. **Improved Performance Plan and/or Letter of Direction:** The Principal, Human Resources, and the employee's supervisor (if the employee has a supervisor other than the Principal) will meet with the employee to develop a specific written plan of action that addresses the performance issue.
4. **Administrative Leave :** Conduct that is serious but not an immediate-termination level offense may be dealt with via an administrative leave for a period of time. Additional investigation may be undertaken during this period, as needed.

5. **Termination** - If the Letter of Direction, Performance Plan, and/or the Suspension/Probation do not result in desired improvement in the employee's job performance, as determined by the employee's supervisor and/or Principal, then the Principal may use discretion as to when to terminate the employee's employment.
6. **Immediate Termination** - Should an action be of such a serious nature as to cause harm (physical or mental) to a student, staff member, or community member at large, or if the conduct was an egregious violation of local, state, and/or federal laws, work rules, policies, directives, this handbook, or other school norms, an Improvement Plan or Suspension/Probation may be forgone and immediate termination be imposed.

The foregoing are general guidelines only. All of Free Horizon Montessori's employees are employed "at-will," meaning neither Free Horizon Montessori nor an employee is required to give notice or advance notice of termination or resignation. Additionally, neither Free Horizon Montessori nor an employee is required to give a reason for the separation from employment.

2.12 Resignation/Retirement/Termination

Free Horizon Montessori realizes that it may become necessary to make employment changes. If you anticipate having to resign or retire your position, you are expected to notify the Principal in writing at least four (4) weeks in advance of the last planned work date as a professional courtesy.

2.13 Return of School Property

Any property issued to you must be returned to Free Horizon Montessori at the time of your dismissal or resignation, or whenever it is requested by the Administration.

2.14 Continuation of Benefits (COBRA)

Jeffco's benefits office and benefits providers designated will provide COBRA benefits information to employee by mail within 30 days of separation from employment.

2.15 Jeffco Public Schools Employment Policies

As an employee of Free Horizon Montessori School, you must also adhere to all applicable Jeffco Public Schools policies, accessible through the Board of Education page of the Jeffco web site at

<http://www.boarddocs.com/co/jeffco/board.nsf/Public#tab-policies>. Certain Jeffco policies are included below that employees must annually acknowledge reviewing and sign a form in Employee Self Service/Access Jeffco affirming such. This list may be updated by the Jeffco School District during the course of an employee's contract, and thus may not be exhaustive; employees are expected to read and acknowledge all Jeffco policies as required by the district.

- Jeffco Policy AC – Unlawful Discrimination/Equal Opportunity
- Jeffco Policy GBEB – Staff Conduct
- Jeffco Policy GBEE – Staff Use of the Internet & Electronic Communications
- Jeffco Policy IMDB – Flag Displays & Daily Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance
- Jeffco Policy JBB – Harassment of Students
- Jeffco Policy JI – Student Rights & Responsibilities
- Jeffco Policy JII – Student Concerns, Complaints & Grievances
- Jeffco Policy JRA/JRC – Student Records/Release of Information on Students
- Jeffco Policy JFBA-R – District Choice Enrollment
- Jeffco Policy KE-R – Public/Parent Concerns & Complaints

2.15.8 Colorado Fair Campaign Practices

Jeffco Public Schools Communications Services reminds all employees of the following guidelines related to activities

employees may not engage in during campaigns:

- Under the Fair Campaign Practices law, employees are forbidden to advocate for or against any issue or candidate during work time or while using school property such as telephone lines, e-mail accounts, computers, copiers, fax machines, etc..

2.16.9 Jeffco Social Media Policies

Free Horizon Montessori follows all Jeffco Public Schools policies:

- GBEE
- GBEB-R
- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#).
- (See ASM policy)

3.0 Work Policies

3.1 Business Hours / Work Day

The school building is open from 7:30a.m. to 5:30 p.m. p.m., Monday – Friday. Working hours for employees will generally fall between these hours. Office hours are 7:45 – 3:45. The normal workweek for full-time non-exempt employees consists of five (5) days per week, eight (8) hours paid per day, Monday through Friday with one-half (0.5) hour (30-minute) unpaid for a lunch break. Full-time teachers are required to be at school during their work hours as reflected on their Employment agreement, and are expected to attend all required meetings and events that may exceed scheduled working hours. As exempt employees, teachers and most administrative positions' work schedules are dictated by the requirements of their position and job descriptions. Non-exempt staff will work the days and hours assigned by their At-Will Agreement and job description, which may or may not align with standard school hours. Scheduled hours are dependent on the needs of the school, an employee will be notified of any changes as soon as possible.

Any departure outside of scheduled breaks, meetings at the district, trainings, or other verifiable business needs, requires prior approval and permission from the HR Specialist, and may be deducted from an employees' ELT balance. Timecard must be complete within 24 hours of return to work. Failure to complete timecard can put an employee at-risk of losing pay, ELT or other benefits. Failure to complete timecard may be considered fraudulent.

Non-exempt employees may not work more than their scheduled number of hours without express, written, pre-approval by the Principal and HR Specialist, or an emergency situation.

Employees must adhere to the school's attendance expectation based on the employee's contract days as outlined on the Days worked calendar. Absenteeism beyond earned leave time accrued that is not covered under FMLA or other approved leave is not permitted and considered unexcused. Exceeding any employee's given ELT within the employment period **will** result in disciplinary action.

3.2 Faculty Attendance

Daily and timely attendance by all staff members is expected. You are expected to arrive on time and be ready to begin your workday at the scheduled start time of your shift. Late arrivals or early departures are not acceptable and will result in use of Leave Time, as Leave Time can be recorded in 0.25 hour increments. If you are going to be late to your scheduled start time, you are expected to text the HR Specialist and your supervisor. Each employee is responsible for accurately documenting daily hours worked, use of Earned Leave Time, and the time and category for each absence on the District ESS system. Failure to record time correctly will result in disciplinary action.

Requests for Personal Earned Leave Time must be submitted to HR Specialist via the Earned Leave Time virtual Request Form as soon as known, but at least 5 days in advance, for approval for pre-planned absences. The more advance notice

you are able to provide, the better. Please discuss your potential leave with your supervisor (note that only one person per classroom may be gone on the same day unless there are extenuating circumstances) prior to submitting your Leave request. Coverage for your core responsibilities for pre-planned absences must be shared with the affected parties.

Total staff attendance of 92% is required each contact day, and requests are taken on a first-come, first-serve basis, based on anticipated leave accrual and balance. Efforts will be made to honor the Leave Time requests of employees, however submission of a request is not an automatic guarantee it will be approved. When Leave time is “non-approved,” and an employee takes leave, it may be subject to disciplinary action.

Certain days within the Employment Agreement are restricted ELT days or Blackout days, and planned Earned Leave Time will not be approved for these dates, based on needs of the school and negative impact to school operations and/or student instruction. Employees will have a minimum of 30 days notice for Blackout Days, recorded on the ELT calendar. Employees may not request planned Leave Time for these Blackout Dates. Emergency absences during a Blackout Day may require back-up documentation be provided to the HR Specialist. Restricted days may vary per job description and could include events, testing, enrollment periods and more. Restricted days are granted for leave time only if the leave does not have a negative effect on instruction and / or safety in the school. Blackout Days are unpaid when used for personal use, and not following guidelines HFWA.

Emergency or unplanned absences must be reported to the HR Specialist and your direct supervisor, as well as any lead teacher/superior who is dependent upon your attendance that day. All employees are asked to contact the HR Specialist by the preferred method of communication **no later than 6:00 am** the day of the absence, when possible.

Employees absent because of illness should advise the HR Specialist of their status daily. Lead Teachers and Specialists are responsible for creating a sub position in the Jeffco sub system in order to secure a substitute for their classroom as well as providing sub lesson plans.

Once employees have exhausted their annual Earned Leave Time, they will not be paid for any time absent; Satisfactory performance is evaluated, in part, by an employee meeting required minimal attendance. Employees are expected not to exceed maximum eligible Earned Leave Time during their contract year.

3.3 Attendance at School Functions

School functions include those both explicitly required by the terms of Job Description and those extra-curricular events that involve students and families of the school and/or the community.

Exempt full time employees are expected to participate in and/or be present in 5 extra-curricular events each school year, in addition to the required school functions. Failure to fulfill expected attendance at school functions may result in unsatisfactory performance and associated consequence.

3.4 Staff Meetings

There will be regularly scheduled staff meetings held at prescribed times for employees.

3.5 Earned Leave Time / [Personal/Sick Leave]

Earned Leave time (ELT) for personal days, sickness, and observation of religious services are described here with the following policies designed to equitably serve staff needs as well as maintain good educational practice, class coverage, and school operations.

ELT days accrue on a pro-rated basis throughout the term of employment. After all ELT has been exhausted, additional days will be deducted from pay as leave-without-pay, and may not be taken unless following other Leave policies, FMLA.

Free Horizon Montessori employees are held to a 95 to 93% attendance rate, failure to meet this attendance rate is subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to a verbal warning, a Letter of Concern and / or termination.

Accrual rates beginning July 2023 *(to be adjusted in the 2026-2027 school year)*

- 213 + day employees accrue 14 days of ELT
- 210+ day employees accrue 11 days of ELT
- 200-209 day employees accrue 9 days of ELT
- 185-199 days or less worked per school year accrue 8 days of ELT
- Under 185 days accrue 7 days of ELT

Requests for pre-arranged personal days or preplanned days such as doctor's appointments must be made in writing and submitted via the Google Doc to the HR Specialist for approval with at least 5 days' notice. Free Horizon Montessori understands circumstances can arise that 5 days' notice can be a hardship to the employee, in such circumstances, approval of time off will be granted / denied at the discretion of Free Horizon Montessori.

There is no promise of approval when a request is submitted as these are determined on a 1st come, 1st served basis and in accordance with the needs of the school. Any Lead Teacher requesting time off must also request a substitute for the day if one is needed.

Requesting an ELT day the day of the absence creates an undue hardship on the classroom environment, and as we understand emergencies please be aware you may be required to provide documentation for an "Emergency" absence, exceeding 2 days. Administration may also require proof of illness as well as proof of fitness to return to work.

Each exempt employee may take up to 12 hours of curriculum leave per year, by providing the training dates and times to the Human Resource Specialist with at least five days' notice. Curriculum Leave must be relevant to the position the employee currently holds at Free Horizon Montessori. CPR training, if a function of the employee's position at Free Horizon Montessori should be scheduled during off hours. If that is not possible two hours are available for the employee to use for CPR training.

Free Horizon Montessori also has "Blackout" days for ELT. These days may not be requested off. Emergency absences and Medical absences follow Colorado laws, and the Healthy Family Workplace act.

As ELT days are "earned" it is possible for an exempt employee to borrow up to one-third of their given ELT time before it is earned. Employee are responsible for tracking use of time off.

Employees may only use up to one-third of yearly accrued ELT consecutively for non-FMLA related ELT taken. (EX: an employee will accrue 9 days ELT, one third equals 3 days, only 3 days may be used consecutively.) Any requests for additional consecutive time must be in writing submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor and Principal with at least 14 days' notice. Approval of such days is not guaranteed, and will only occur in rare circumstances.

If an employee scheduled pre-arranged ELT during a day(s) FHM is unexpectedly closed due to inclement weather or an on-site emergency, ELT will be reverted back to a non-ELT day.

Any ELT used MUST be recorded in the employee time card no later than 24 hours after the employee returns to work. ELT will be recorded in 0.25 hour increments. Failure to record time correctly may be considered fraud and is subject to disciplinary action.

Substitute Required Leave Policy

If you need to take time off during a scheduled shift and a substitute is required to cover for you, hours will be deducted from your Earned Leave Time (ELT) balance based on the guidelines below.

Half day (4 hours)

Full day (8 hours)

Key Coverage Rules

- **In-House Coverage Exemption:** If your absence is less than 4 hours and you arrange for a fellow staff member (in-house) to cover your shift, no fixed substitute fee deduction applies.
- **Standard Substitute Deduction:** If a substitute is called in, a minimum of **4 hours** (or **8 hours** for a full day, based on the school's billing cost) will be deducted from your ELT balance, regardless of whether the sub works a full or partial shift.

Free Horizon Montessori encourages employees to utilize their Earned Leave Time (ELT) during the school year. However, to support unexpected health or personal needs and reward long-term service, FHM allows eligible employees to roll over a portion of unused ELT at the end of their agreement term.

1. Annual Carryover (Roll-Over) Rules

- **Maximum Annual Carryover:** Employees may request to roll over up to **one-third (33.33%)** of the ELT earned during that specific agreement year. *(Note: Annual carryover percentages are subject to annual review based on budget considerations).*
- **Maximum Bank Cap:** The cumulative carryover bank is capped at **one full annual allotment** (e.g., an employee who earns 72 hours of ELT per year may hold a maximum of 72 total banked hours). Once this cap is reached, additional carryover is paused until banked hours are used.
- **Usage of Banked Hours:** Banked carryover hours are available for extended leave, medical emergencies, or bridging gaps during FMLA leave.

Example (Based on a 9-day annual allotment):

- **Year 1:** Employee receives 9 days → uses 3 days → rolls over 3 unused days (33.33%), to a maximum of 9 days.

2. Payout Eligibility Upon Separation

Because staff attendance is critical to school operations, banked ELT hours may be cashed out upon separation of employment based on years of continuous service at FHM:

Continuous Years of Service	ELT Bank Payout Percentage
0 to 4 Years	0% (Banked hours are forfeited upon separation)
5 to 9 Years	50% of banked ELT hours paid out
10+ Years	100% of banked ELT hours paid out

Should an employee be terminated, ELT will be calculated based on number of days actually worked. In instances where an employee has used more Leave Time than they have accrued up to the final work date, adjustments will be made to the employee's final pay.

3.6 Substitute Policies

In the event of a staff absence requiring substitute coverage, employees are expected to take personal responsibility for arrangement of a sub. In addition to ensuring notification to HR Specialist and school

of planned or emergency absence, employee must utilize the Jeffco Sub system systems to secure coverage.

Each Lead Teacher is responsible for creating a binder of important information to guide substitutes at our school. The Instructional Coach may help build this binder. This binder must be kept in the classroom for substitutes.

If a substitute is not secured employee may be asked to reschedule a personal day off.

3.7 Employee Use of Before & Aftercare

Before Care: Before Care is available to all children of FHM staff at no cost. Staff must register their child(ren) with the Childcare Director.

Aftercare:

Elementary children of staff members are welcome to stay in the classroom or office with their parent if it is appropriate for them to do so and it does not detract from employee's ability to fulfill job requirements during that time. Children may not be shared working spaces. They must still follow all school rules while on school property and be under the direct supervision of an adult at all times. Children of staff members may not wander the halls or use playgrounds during times that school or Before/Aftercare is in session without direct supervision. Children of staff members may not be present during any confidential conversations, conferences with parents of other students, or staff meetings or training sessions. Children are not permitted in the school building on non-student contact days.

4.0 Communication Guidelines

4.1 Communication Expectations

Staff are expected to check email at least twice per day during the contracted school year. Ideally this should occur first thing upon arrival to school and again at the end of the work day. Response to emails should be provided within 48 hours. During school breaks, vacations, or other periods during which staff will not have access to email, an automatic Out of Office Message will be set up indicating date of return and resumption of regular email use.

Staff are expected to check voicemail messages daily, returning all phone calls within 48 hours when possible. Urgent messages will be delivered to the classroom or other staff location, however, every attempt is made not to disrupt instructional time.

Each classroom must prepare and distribute a monthly newsletter to parents using the School Messenger system. This newsletter must be prepared electronically and distributed to parents and guardians via the Jeffco School Messenger system. Administration should also be copied on all communications sent to parents and guardians.

4.7 Grievances

When conflicts do arise, we expect that the parties directly involved can resolve them to their satisfaction by working together and discussing the conflict with one another. However, when issues arise that an employee does not feel they have been able to resolve or are not comfortable approaching someone about, an employee must continue to follow the

steps as outlined with the FHM Board of Director's Conflict Resolution Policy, The current version of the Board Policy Manual should be referenced for full, detailed process.

4.9 Visitation of Classrooms

Open communication and transparent practices build a welcoming environment for all members of our school community. However, care must be taken to assure a quality and focused learning experience for our students that is not interrupted by external factors.

5.0 Other Policies

5.1 Building Security and Safety

Maintaining the security of Free Horizon Montessori's buildings and vehicles, and most importantly the precious people inside, is every employee's responsibility. Only authorized individuals may be on campus. All staff contribute to campus safety by keeping eyes and ears open and taking precautions to maintain physical security of the building and grounds.

Staff members are issued an electronic key card for the door lock system. This key card must not be shared with anyone, including other staff members, students, parents/guardians, or partner/spouses. If a key card is determined to be used by a non-authorized person, it will be deactivated immediately.

Keys for interior doors are checked out to employees by the Facilities Manager based on employee's need for interior room access and their position responsibilities. It is the personal responsibility of each employee to keep keys secure. The cost to replace lost or damaged keys are the employee's responsibility.

When staff depart the premises for the day, they should ensure that all entrances to both interior room(s) and main entrances are properly locked and secured.

No employee may allow entry to the building to anyone except through the secured space.

5.2 Housekeeping

Stewardship for our school environment begins and ends with the acts of each member of the Free Horizon community. All staff members and students are expected contribute to the up keep needs of school by proactively maintaining our classrooms, hallways, and outdoor areas and keeping work areas neat, clean and orderly at all times. This includes all common spaces including kitchen and bathrooms, staff lounge, work room, storage areas, playgrounds, etc.

5.3 Technology & Device Assignment

Free Horizon Montessori Lead Teachers and administrative staff are issued devices by the school to facilitate professional responsibilities. In most cases, this is a laptop computer and/or iPad. All devices are issued by the Technology Coordinator, who will orient staff to the device and use at that time. All devices must be returned back to the school, per the terms of the Device Check-Out Agreement, at the termination of an employee's relationship with Free Horizon Montessori. Cost of repair or replacement of devices due to loss or damage to devices may be the employee's responsibility, depending upon circumstance. These guidelines are established in the Device Check-Out Agreement. The Technology Coordinator is always available to address questions.

School devices are a professional tool are expected to be used for work-related needs, and may use their assigned device at home, on weekends, over breaks, etc. Employees are expected to treat technology hardware with respect and take personal responsibility for the duration of their employment at the school.

5.4 Personal Phone Calls, Texting, and Personal Computer/Internet Use

The school's landline telephones are for business purposes only. Personal calls, texts, and emails may be made during your break or lunchtime.

- Employees cell phones are to be kept out of sight and not on your body, and locked away inaccessible to students. **Use is limited to break and lunch times**, All phones should be set to silent or vibrate when on campus.
- Employees may use Free Horizon Montessori's "guest" wi-fi system for wireless access and is made accessible to visitors and staff at the discretion of the Technology Coordinator. If inappropriate use is determined, access may be revoked at the discretion of Administration. There are also times during the year when the guest wi-fi will be inactivated due to standardized testing,
- Personal cell phones and devices should not be used to take pictures or images of students or their families unless authorized to do so as a component of job responsibility
- Employees are discouraged from providing guardians with their personal phone numbers. If personal contact information is provided to one guardian, it must be provided to all and staff will have to institute standardized response times and processes so as not to offer any family or student special privileges. Similarly, students may not use staff member's personal phones.

FHM is a cell-phone free zone in all areas accessible to students. This is for all members of our community and includes classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, or common areas

5.5 Staff Work Room and Supplies

Materials and supplies in the office and supply areas are for school use only.

5.6 Photocopying & Printing

The copier is to be used only when necessary for school-related needs such as classroom materials, parent communications, etc.. Please be mindful of the expense and wastefulness of copier use. The school and each employee are charged for every single page. Each employee key fob is designed to utilize the copier and documents counts that the district then charges the school for each month. The front office copier is for front office use only.

5.7 Lactating Employees

Free Horizon Montessori complies with the federal **PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act** and the **Colorado Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act**. FHM supports lactating employees by providing reasonable break time and appropriate private accommodations to express breast milk.

1. Break Time & Frequency

- **Frequency & Duration:** FHM provides reasonable, unpaid break time to lactating employees **each time the employee has a need to express breast milk** for up to **two (2) years** following the birth of a child.
- **Flexible Scheduling:** Break duration and frequency will accommodate the individual needs of the employee. Employees may use standard paid rest breaks, off-duty meal periods, or additional unpaid time as needed.

2. Designated Lactation Space

- **Private Space:** FHM provides a private, sanitary space (other than a bathroom) that is shielded from view, free from intrusion by coworkers or the public, and secured with a door lock.
- **Wellness Room Access:** The designated FHM Wellness Room is equipped for lactation needs, including access to nearby running water, power outlets, and comfortable seating. Administration will work with lactating staff prior

to their return from leave to establish a flexible room schedule that ensures reliable, uninterrupted access when needed.

3. Non-Discrimination & Support

FHM strictly prohibits discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against any employee for exercising their right to lactation accommodations under federal or state law. Employees planning to utilize lactation accommodations are encouraged to notify Administration or HR prior to returning to work to ensure seamless scheduling and classroom coverage.

5.8 Remote Work Policy

Remote work is defined by the ability to do certain jobs at home during a time of emergency, crisis or by permission only for exempt employees. Any remote arrangement may be made on a trial basis and may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of either the employee or the organization.

Confidentiality Expectations for Remote Working

Consistent with the FHM expectations of confidentiality for employees working at the school, remote employees will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary information accessible from their remote space.

6.0 Health and Safety Issues

The following phone numbers should be posted near or on each telephone in each classroom:

- **DIAL 9 FOR AN OUTSIDE LINE!**
- **Poison Control:** 1-800-222-1222
- **Police:** 911
- **Fire department:** 911
- **Address and phone number of school:** Free Horizon Montessori School 15920 W 10th Ave., Golden, CO 80401 303-982-0275

6.2 General Student Safety & Security

Safety is primary and is of the utmost concern for all staff members. Upon recognition of a potentially hazardous situation, immediately report your assessment of the situation to Administration. The following rules must be followed:

- Students must be supervised AT ALL TIMES
- A hall pass system must be used for all students going to the restroom or doing work outside of the classroom. (i.e. in the hallway)
- All visitors must sign in at the front desk through the Raptor system.
- All visitors must be asked for picture identification through Raptor
- All potentially toxic substances or those labelled "Keep out of Reach of Children," must be kept and stored out of the reach and access of students.
- At no time shall a student be released to an unauthorized individual. The student's Emergency Contacts should be consulted when there is question. (Campus System)

6.3 Procedure for Releasing Students

- People listed on the student's Emergency contact may pick up child up at any time with or without notifying the school.

6.4 Building Security

- No key cards are ever to be shared with community or non-community members as staff members are responsible for the safety and security of all those on the school grounds.
- Entrance to the school is limited through the Security Vestibule
- Do not prop open exterior doors with rocks or door stops, if a classroom door is propped it could lead to disciplinary action.

To support security and personal interaction, hats, hoods, and sunglasses are not permitted to be worn inside school facilities.

- **Religious, Cultural & Medical Accommodations:** In accordance with state and federal non-discrimination laws headscarves, turbans, wraps, or other head coverings worn for religious observance, cultural significance, or documented medical reasons are fully permitted indoors at all times.
- **Medical Eyewear:** Tinted lenses or sunglasses required for documented medical conditions (e.g., light sensitivity or post-procedure care) are permitted indoors with prior notification to Administration or HR.(accommodations paperwork may be required)

At no time should any staff member or community member (students ,parents and/or guardians) open a door to allow entrance to a person outside of the building.

Playground doors must remain closed and locked at all times.

No student is allowed to be outside of the building without staff supervision.

6.5 School Closure/Blizzard

Generally, Free Horizon Montessori follows the Jefferson County School District policies for dealing with all emergencies and school closures.

6.6 Other Emergency & School Closure Policies:

Free Horizon Montessori Staff are expected to be familiar with and be able to implement any and all emergency procedures and evacuation plan of the school with the utmost of safety and concern for members of our community and following clear lines of command.

In the event of a true building emergency, all staff and students will congregate at the back corner of the FHM field (southeast. Emergency policies and procedures must be followed with staff staying with students and being released only with permission from administrative representative.

6.7 Tornado

In the event of a tornado warning, all children will be escorted to the specified central hallways where all will assume protective positioning while awaiting an all clear sign from the radio or police. Stay away from all windows. Administration will notify staff of the all-clear signal.

6.8 Inclement or Dangerous Weather

If it is raining, thundering or lightning, hotter than 100 degrees or colder than 20 degrees (wind chill considered) outside, the students must remain within the building and engage in various activities of active learning and play. Should you be outside, already and you notice lightning, you must gather the students quickly and come inside at once as well as notify the office using the walkie talkie. Never assume that lightning is far away.

6.9 Emergency Procedures (Lock-down, Lock-out, etc.)

Free Horizon Montessori follows JeffCo School District policies. Please refer to the [Standard Response Protocol \(SRP\)](#)

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6.10 Missing Child

Should a child become lost or leave the School without our knowledge or permission, either on school grounds or on a field trip the following steps will be taken:

1. A staff member(s) will stay with the group and one (1) staff member will search for the child.
2. Lead staff member will report to the Office and do an immediate search of all areas of the school. If on a field trip, one teacher will retrace the steps of the group while another adult is to stay with the class.
3. Phone the parent (guardian) or the emergency contacts (should we not be able to contact the parent/guardian) and alert them to the situation and circumstances surrounding the situation.
4. Phone the police if parent/guardian or emergency contacts cannot be reached.

6.12 Students Not Picked Up at the End of the Day

Children remaining after 5:30 p.m. will be supervised by a staff member who will contact the parents requesting that they pick up their child. If the parent has not contacted the school or picked up the child within one-half hour of closing, the county department of Human Services will be contacted and the child will be turned over to the authorities. Staff members will check the building at closing to verify that all students have been picked up before they lock the building and leave for the evening.

6.13 Reporting of Child Abuse

Any staff member of the Free Horizon Montessori who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which could reasonably result in abuse or neglect, shall immediately report to the County Department of Human Services or the local law enforcement agency. While you may choose to consult with the Administrator, the decision to report remains your professional obligation. In no circumstances may the report be made later than 24 hours, but the requirement is for immediate reporting. Jeffco Schools provided online training in the Vector System.

I affirm that I have received, read, and understand Free Horizon Montessori's current Employee Handbook, referenced by version date below. I further agree to adhere to the principles and guidelines contained therein. I understand that I must know and adhere to all applicable state and federal laws, Jeffco District Policies, and Free Horizon Montessori Policies and Procedures.

I also acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the following policies of Jeffco Public Schools and I am aware of where to find the remainder of Jeffco's and Free Horizon Montessori's policies online:

- AC – Unlawful Discrimination/Equal Opportunity
 - GBEB – Staff Conduct (and Responsibilities)
 - GBEC – Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Free Workplace
 - Weapons
 - Sexual Harassment
 - JBB – Harassment of Students
 - JI – Students Rights & Responsibilities
 - JII – Student Concerns, Complaints & Grievances
 - KE-R – Public/Parent Concerns & Complaints
 - GBEE – Staff Use of the Internet & Electronic Communications
 - Computing Facilities Usage Agreement
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