Texas Leadership Public Schools
2026-2027

Staff Handbook

Board Approved: August 27, 2026

Our Mission is...

To create an environment that develops people and instills quality education.

Our Vision is...

To see students become leaders in all areas of life.

Growth

Character

Commitment

Empowerment

Servant Leadership



INTRODUCTION

Quality staff is a treasure in today's society. As a primary force of influence on the lives of students and parents, each school staff member has a role to fill and should take his/her calling very seriously.

You should be familiar with the information contained in this handbook. Every employee is responsible for following these policies, procedures, and principles. And every supervisor is responsible for ensuring that these policies, procedures, and principles are being carried out in their area of responsibility

Texas Leadership Public School Culture

At Texas Leadership Public Schools, we empower all members: Administration, Faculty, Staff, Students, and Family/Guardians to live and encourage each other in our leadership mission. Our district fosters this mission by embodying the *Franklin Covey* model, "LeaderInMe®", across all of our campuses. Below you will find a guide of the seven *Leader in Me* habits. We encourage all team members to learn more about these habits, their principles, and practices

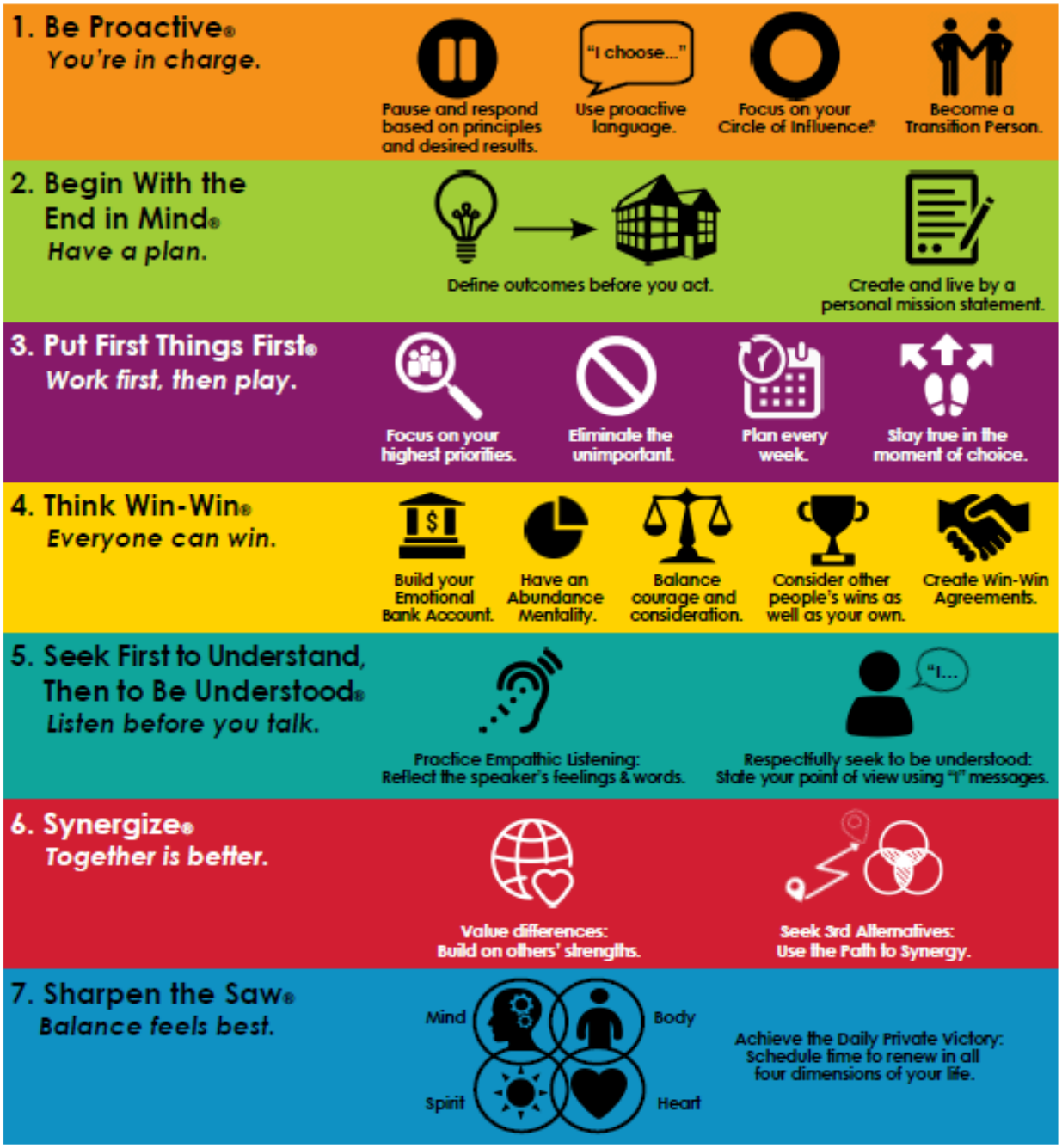


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Equal Opportunity Employment Practices

Texas Leadership Public Schools ("TLPS" or the "School") is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, military status, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law as required by Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Title I and Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended ("ADA"); the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended ("ADEA"); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act ("PWFA"); the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 ("GINA"); and any other legally-protected classification or status protected by federal, state, or local law. Additionally, TLPS does not discriminate against an employee or applicant who acts to oppose such discrimination or participates in the investigation of a complaint related to an alleged discriminatory employment practice. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each individual's job qualifications, experience, and abilities and in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

For purposes of TLPS policy, any provision referring to discrimination based on race includes discrimination because of or on the basis of an employee's hair texture or protective hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race. "Protective hairstyle" includes braids, locks, and twists.

Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Employees with questions or concerns relating to equal employment opportunity, including discrimination and disability accommodations, are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of a TLPS administrator, or one of the compliance coordinators designated below.

As required by Title IX, TLPS does not (and is required not to) discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. This non-discrimination requirement applies to admission to and employment with TLPS. Inquiries into issues related to Title IX may be referred to TLPS's Title IX Coordinator (identified below), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

TLPS has designated the following person as the Title IX Coordinator (adult complaints), who is responsible for receiving and overseeing investigations of alleged discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment: Curtis Milbourn, 3522 W. 306 Loop, San Angelo, TX 76904, (325) 653-3200. For complaints involving students, the Title IX Coordinator will be Mark Hennesy, 2001 Brown Blvd., Arlington, TX 76006, (817) 385-9338. The email for complaints is Title_IX@texasleadership.net.

TLPS has designated the following person as the ADA Coordinator, who is responsible for receiving and investigating complaints of alleged discrimination or harassment on the basis of and ADA disability: Stephanie Higgins, 2001 Brown Blvd, Arlington, TX 76006, (817) 385-9338, stephanie.higgins@texasleadership.net.

TLPS has designated the following person as the Section 504 Coordinators, who are responsible for receiving and investigating complaints of alleged discrimination or harassment on the basis of a 504 disability: Gretchen Reicheneker, 1165 Minter Lane, Abilene, TX 79603, (325) 653-3200, gretchen.reicheneker@texasleadership.net.

TLPS has designated the following person as the Title VII/ADEA Coordinator, who is responsible for receiving and investigating complaints of alleged discrimination or harassment on the basis race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, or age: Monica Goodroe, 3522 W. 306 Loop, San Angelo, TX 76904, (325) 653-3200, monica.goodroe@texasleadership.net.

All other complaints regarding equal employment opportunity may be directed to Monica Goodroe, 3522 W. 306 Loop, San Angelo, TX 76901, (325) 653-3200, monica.goodroe@texasleadership.net.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

TLPS prohibits discrimination, including harassment, of a co-worker based upon race, color, national origin, religion, sex or gender, disability, veteran status, age, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law. While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited discrimination or harassment of other persons including Board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents. Discrimination or harassment become unlawful where:

1. Enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment; or
2. The conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would

consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.

Petty slights, annoyances, and isolated incidents (unless extremely serious) will generally not rise to the level of prohibited discrimination or harassment. To be unlawful, the conduct must create a work environment that would be intimidating, hostile, or offensive to reasonable people.

Prohibited and offensive conduct can include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets, or name-calling; physical assaults or threats; intimidation; ridicule or mockery; insults or put-downs; offensive objects or pictures; and/or interference with work performance. Harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances, including but not limited to the following:

1. The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, an agent of the school, a co-worker, or a non-employee.
2. The victim does not have to be the person harassed, but can be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.
3. Unlawful harassment may occur without economic injury to, or discharge of, the victim.

Retaliation
TLPS strictly prohibits retaliation against a student, parent, or an employee who in good faith reports or complains about discrimination, harassment, or other prohibited conduct, or who serves as a witness or otherwise participates in an investigation. Employees who take part in any retaliatory action will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. Retaliation may include, but is not limited to: demotion, denial of promotion, poor performance appraisals, transfer, and assignment of demeaning tasks or taking any kind of adverse actions against a person who complains about discrimination or harassment.

An employee who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a TLPS investigation regarding harassment or discrimination is subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Reporting Procedures
****NOTE**** The following procedures apply to allegations of Prohibited Conduct other than allegations of harassment prohibited by Title IX. For allegations of sex-based harassment that, if proven, would meet the definition of a formal complaint of sexual harassment under Title IX, please see the procedures outlined in the "Sexual Harassment Prohibited" portion of this Handbook.

TLPS takes allegations of harassment and discrimination very seriously and intends to investigate all official complaints. TLPS will take appropriate actions for all substantiated allegations. Employees who believe they are being harassed or discriminated against are requested to take the following actions:

- In the event you feel you are a victim of harassment, you should contact your immediate supervisor and/or the designated Compliance Coordinator immediately. In the event your immediate supervisor is the alleged harasser, you should contact the next level of management immediately. Complaints against the designated compliance coordinator may be submitted to the Superintendent.
- Any employees who are uncomfortable with face-to-face interaction may write down their complaints in a memo, and submit the memo to their immediate supervisor and/or the designated Compliance Coordinator.
- Any TLPS employee who receives a report of suspected harassment or discrimination is expected to immediately contact the designated Compliance Coordinator.
- Complaints will be handled in a timely manner.

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

Any supervisor who receives a report of discrimination or harassment shall immediately notify the appropriate Compliance Coordinator, and take any other steps required by TLPS.

After receiving a report, the Compliance Coordinator shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited discrimination or harassment. If so, TLPS shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation. If appropriate, TLPS shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent prohibited conduct during the course of an investigation.

The School's investigation may be conducted by the Compliance Coordinator or designee, or by a third party designated by TLPS, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the Principal or supervisor shall be involved in or informed of the investigation.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.

After completing an investigation, the investigator shall prepare a written report summarizing the outcome of the investigation.

If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, TLPS shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct. TLPS may also take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the conduct did not rise to the level of prohibited or unlawful conduct.

To the greatest extent possible, TLPS shall respect the privacy of complainants, respondents, and witnesses. The purpose of this provision is to maintain impartiality and confidentiality to the extent possible. Both the reporting individual, victim and the accused have equal privacy rights under the law, and TLPS must respond accordingly. However, limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

An employee who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the "Process for General Employee Complaints and Grievances" process described in this Handbook.

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

In addition to using the School's complaint process, an employee may file a formal complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") or Texas Workforce Commission ("TWC"). Additional information may be found by visiting http://www.eeoc.gov/employees/charge.cfm.

Sexual Harassment Prohibited

TLPS prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, by an employee, volunteer, or student.

Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A school employee conditioning the provision of aid, benefit, or service of TLPS on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to TLPS's education program or activity; or
3. Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as those offenses are defined in the Clery Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f), and the Violence Against Women Act, 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)).

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

General Definitions

A "complainant" means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

A "respondent" means an individual who is reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

A "formal complaint" means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that TLPS investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

"Supportive measures" means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered, appropriate and without fee

or charge to the complainant or the respondent, before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to TLPS's educational program or activity without unreasonably burdening either party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or TLPS's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Examples of supportive measures include, but are not limited to, counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of class schedules, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, and other similar measures.

Reporting Sexual Harassment
Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator (above), or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Such a report may be made at any time, including during non-business hours, by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail to the office address listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

TLPS's response to a report of sexual harassment must treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures and by following a grievance process before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent.

After a report of sexual harassment has been made, the Title IX Coordinator must promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures, consider the complainant's requests with respect to supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

Notice of Allegations
Upon receipt of a formal complaint, TLPS must provide the following written notice to the parties who are known:

- Notice of TLPS's grievance process, including any informal resolution process.
- Notice of the allegations of sexual harassment, including, to the extent known, the identity of the parties, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident.
- Notice that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made known at the conclusion of the grievance process.
- Notice that the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney.
- Notice that the parties may inspect and review evidence related to the complaint.
- Notice that TLPS prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

If, during an investigation, TLPS decides to investigate allegations about the complaint or respondent that are not included in the initial notice of the complaint, TLPS must provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

Grievance Process
At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of TLPS.

The following guidelines apply when TLPS receives a formal complaint of sexual harassment. This process is designed to incorporate due process, treat all parties fairly, and to assist TLPS in reaching reliable responsibility determinations.

- TLPS will require an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence – including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence – and credibility determinations may not be based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
- Any individual designated by TLPS as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or to facilitate an informal resolution process must not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or responsible. TLPS will ensure that Title IX Coordinator, investigators, decision-makers, and anyone who facilitates an informal resolution process receive appropriate training related to the requirements of Title IX and TLPS's sexual harassment policy.
- TLPS recognizes a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the complaint process.
- TLPS shall attempt to complete an investigation of reported sexual harassment within 60 calendar days of

receiving a complaint. However, the investigation process may be delayed or extended for a limited time for good cause with written notice to the complainant and the respondent of the delay or extension. Good causes may include considerations such as absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.

- Students found to have engaged in sexual harassment are subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the School's Student Code of Conduct. Employees found to have engaged in sexual harassment are subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Staff Handbook.
- TLPS shall employ the preponderance of the evidence standard to determine responsibility when reviewing formal complaints.
- TLPS may not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions of evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure, of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

Consolidating Formal Complaints
TLPS may consolidate formal complaints as to allegations of sexual harassment against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances.

Dismissal of Formal Complaints
TLPS must investigate the allegations in a formal complaint.

TLPS ***must*** dismiss a formal complaint if the conduct alleged in the formal complaint:

- Would not constitute sexual harassment, even if proven; or
- Did not occur in TLPS's education program or activity; or
- Did not occur against a person in the United States.

TLPS ***may*** dismiss a formal complaint or any allegations therein if, at any time during the investigation:

- A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein; or
- The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by TLPS; or
- Specific circumstances prevent TLPS from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

Upon a dismissal, TLPS must promptly send simultaneous written notice to the parties of the dismissal and the reason(s) for the dismissal. Dismissal of a formal complaint does not preclude TLPS from taking appropriate action under the Student Code of Conduct, the Employee Handbook, and/or any other school policy that may apply to the alleged conduct.

Investigating Formal Complaints
The following guidelines apply during the investigation of a formal complaint and throughout the grievance process.

- TLPS will ensure the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on TLPS and not on the parties.
- TLPS cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional's or paraprofessional's capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless TLPS receives that party's voluntary, written consent to do so.
- TLPS will provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
- TLPS will not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence.
- TLPS will provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisory of their choice, and not limit the choice or presence of an advisor for either the complainant or respondent in any meeting or grievance proceeding. TLPS may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties.
- TLPS will provide to a party whose participation is invited or expected written notice of the date, time, location,

participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews or other meetings with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

- TLPS will provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which the recipient does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation.
- Prior to completing an investigative report, TLPS must send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least 10 calendar days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completing the investigative report.
- TLPS must create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and, at least 10 calendar days prior to a determination regarding responsibility, send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the investigative report in an electronic format or a hard copy, for review and written response.
- After sending the investigative report to the parties and before reaching a determination of responsibility, the decision-maker(s) must afford each party the opportunity to submit written relevant questions that a party wants asked of any witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. The decision-maker(s) must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

Determination Regarding Responsibility

The decision-maker(s) making a determination regarding responsibility cannot be the same person(s) as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator(s). The decision-maker(s) must review the investigation report and make a written determination, based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, regarding responsibility. The written determination must include:

- Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;
- A description of the procedural steps taken from receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, or methods used to gather other evidence;
- Findings of fact supporting the determination;
- Conclusions regarding application of TLPS's Code of Conduct, Employee Handbook, or other non-discrimination policies to the facts;
- A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to TLPS's education program or activities will be provided to the complainant; and
- TLPS's procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

TLPS must provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously. The determination becomes final either on the date TLPS provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies.

Appeals

TLPS will offer both parties an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, and from TLPS's dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein, on the following bases:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and
- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

As to appeals, TLPS will ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, or the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator. TLPS will provide both parties a reasonable equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome.

The decision-maker(s) for the appeal will issue a written decision, based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result, and provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties.

A party who is dissatisfied with the appeal decision may file an appeal to the Board of Directors through the process outlined in TLPS's grievance procedures.

Emergency Removals
TLPS is able to remove a respondent from TLPS's education program on an emergency basis, provided that TLPS undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. TLPS's ability to do so may not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Informal Resolution
At any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, TLPS may facilitate an informal resolution process, such as mediation, that does not involve a full investigation and adjudication. However, TLPS may not require as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continued employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to an investigation and adjudication of formal complaints. Additionally, TLPS may not require the parties to participate in an informal process and may not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed.

Prior to facilitating an informal resolution process, TLPS must:

- Provide to the parties a written notice disclosing the allegations and the requirements of the informal resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations. The notice must also inform that, at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint, as well as of any consequence resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.
- Obtain the parties' voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.

TLPS may not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

Retaliation Prohibited
Neither TLPS nor any other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation or proceeding under this policy.

Examples of retaliation may include, but are not limited to, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination.

Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the grievance procedure described above.

Confidentiality
TLPS must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by FERPA or as required by law, or for purposes related to the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising under the Title IX regulations.

Non-Sexual Harassment Sex Discrimination
The formal complaint investigation and resolution process outlined above applies only to formal complaints alleging sexual harassment as defined by Title IX, but not to complaints alleging sex discrimination that do not constitute sexual harassment. Complaints of non-sexual harassment sex discrimination may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator and will be handled under the process described in the "Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation" portion of the Employee Handbook.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

TLPS is committed to complying fully with the ADA, as amended, and ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities (which includes life-threatening illnesses and HIV and AIDS). All employment practices and activities are conducted on a non-discriminatory basis.

Hiring procedures have been reviewed and provide persons with disabilities meaningful employment opportunities. Pre-employment inquiries are made only regarding an applicant's ability to perform the duties of the position.

Reasonable accommodation is available to all qualifying disabled employees, where their disability affects the performance of job functions, in accordance with the ADA.

Qualified individuals with disabilities shall not be discriminated against on the basis of disability in regards to recruitment, advertising, job application procedures, hiring, upgrading, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, right of return from layoff, rehiring, rates of pay, or any other form of compensation and changes in compensation, benefits, job assignments, job classifications, organizational structures, position descriptions, lines of progression, seniority lists, leaves of absence, sick leave, any other leave, fringe benefits available by virtue of employment, selection and financial support for training, school-sponsored activities, including social and recreational programs, and any other term, condition, or privilege of employment.

TLPS does not discriminate against qualified employees or applicants because they are related to or associated with a person with a disability.

Federal and State Worksite Postings

Required state and federal postings are found at each TLPS facility. The following postings can be found in an area common to all employees at their facility: Employee Rights Under the Fair Labor Standards Act; Job Safety and Health: It's the Law; Employee Rights and Responsibilities Under the Family and Medical Leave Act; Equal Employment Opportunity is the Law; Your Rights Under USERRA; Employee Polygraph Protection Act Notice ("EPPA"); Texas Payday Law; Texas Whistleblower Act Notice ("TWA"); Unemployment & Payday Law; Notice to Employees Concerning Workers' Compensation in Texas; and the Texas Hazard Communication Act Notice ("THCA") to Employees. Postings are in both English and Spanish for all employees to read.

Immigration Law Compliance

TLPS is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin.

Employees with questions or seeking more information on immigration law issues are encouraged to contact Human Resources. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

Nondiscrimination Based on Religion

TLPS does not discriminate on the basis of any aspect of religious observance, practice, or belief unless the school demonstrates that it is unable to reasonably accommodate the religious observance or practice of an employee or applicant without undue hardship to the School's operations.

Nondiscrimination Based on Military Service

TLPS will not deny initial employment, reemployment, retention in employment promotion, or any benefits of employment on the basis of membership in a uniformed service, performance in a uniformed service, application for uniformed service, or obligation to a uniformed service.

TLPS will not take adverse employment action or discriminate against any person who takes action to enforce protections afforded by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 ("USERRA").

Nondiscrimination Based on Pregnancy

TLPS is fully committed to complying with the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act ("PWFA"), which allows qualified employees to receive reasonable accommodations to the known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on TLPS.

TLPS does not discriminate against qualified employees because they are pregnant.

Nondiscrimination Based on Genetic Information (GINA)

TLPS will not deny initial employment, reemployment, retention in employment promotion, or any benefits of employment on the basis of genetic information, including information about an individual's genetic tests and the genetic tests of an individual's family members, as well as information about the manifestation of a disease or disorder in an individual's family members.

Employment Practices

At-Will Employment

Employment with Texas Leadership Public Schools shall be at-will unless a term of employment is expressly stated in a written contract. **At-will employment means that an employee may be terminated with or without cause, with or without prior notice, at any time, for any reason or for no reason. Similarly, employment with Texas Leadership is voluntarily entered into, and employees may resign at any time, with or without cause or notice.**

Status as an at-will employee may not be changed except in writing signed and approved by the Board of Directors. Employment at-will is the sole and entire agreement between TLPS and the employee concerning the duration of the employee's employment, and the circumstances under which the employee's employment may be terminated.

Assignment and Reassignment

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the Superintendent or designee, and may also be directed to perform additional or supplemental duties from time to time. Unless specifically required by applicable law or approved by the Board of Directors and/or the Superintendent, no additional financial compensation is provided for additional or supplemental duties. TLPS' criteria for approval of reassignments will be consistent with school policy regarding equal opportunity employment.

Position Transfer Request (Employees-Internal)

Any current TLPS employee may request a transfer to a different work location or to a currently unfilled position in the charter system for which they are qualified to occupy. The employee shall request a transfer using the Transfer Request Form. The request shall be routed through the employee's current supervisor to Human Resources who shall send the request to the supervisor of the unfilled position. The supervisor with the unfilled position shall ensure that the requesting employee is interviewed for cultural fit and job qualification then render a decision. Such decision shall be final.

Employment Applications

TLPS relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other information presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in this information or data may result in exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination from employment.

Minimum Qualifications for Principals and Teachers

TLPS employs Principals, teachers and instructional staff members who are properly credentialed and qualified as required by state and federal law. Employment is contingent upon and subject to the employee submitting all required documentation in a timely and accurate manner and meeting all other employment requirements of TLPS.

Verification of Employment Eligibility

Prior to the start of employment, TLPS shall confirm the employment eligibility of all new hires by examination of documents establishing identity and employment authorization and completion of the Employment Eligibility Verification I-9 Form ("EEVF") required by the Department of Homeland Security. Each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the EEVF and present appropriate documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility.

Former employees who are rehired must also complete the EEVF if they have not completed an EEVF with TLPS within a timeframe established by Human Resources (generally three years after the date of hire or one year after employment is terminated, whichever is later), or if their previous EEVF is no longer retained or valid.

Certifications and Licenses

Employees whose positions require certification through the State Board for Educator Certification ("SBEC") or another professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. It is solely the employee's responsibility to maintain a valid certification or license. An employee's employment may be terminated if he or she falsely represents holding a valid certificate or license, or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a certificate or license. Employment may also be terminated if SBEC suspends or revokes an employee's certification.

Criminal History Records

TLPS will obtain criminal history records from a law enforcement or criminal justice agency for all prospective volunteers and applicants for employment, including substitutes, as required by Chapter 22 of the Texas Education Code prior to employment or the commencement of volunteer service. Additionally, as allowed by state law, criminal history checks of employees (or volunteers whose duties are performed where students are regularly present) may be obtained at any time during employment or volunteer services.

Criminal history records must also be obtained and reviewed prior to the employment of any driver for student transportation (bus drivers, bus monitors, and bus aides) either directly or through a commercial service.

Information collected on an individual to comply with the requirements listed above is confidential and may not be released except as authorized by law or with the consent of the person who is the subject of the information.

All employees and applicants must complete the Authorization for Criminal History Background Check form during the onboarding process.

Prohibition Against Employing Individuals Convicted of Certain Offenses

TLPS may not hire an individual who is prohibited from serving as an officer or employee of an open-enrollment charter school under Texas Education Code § 12.120(a). Additionally, TLPS shall discharge or refuse to hire an employee or applicant for employment if it obtains information through a criminal history review that:

1. The employee or applicant has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for an offense for which a defendant is required to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62, Code of Criminal Procedure; or:
2. The employee or applicant has been convicted of:
    a. A felony under Penal Code Title 5, if the victim of the offense was under 18 years of age at the time the offense was committed, or
    b. An offense under the laws of another state or federal law that is the equivalent to an offense under item 1 above (relating to registration as a sex offender).

However, while TLPS may not be required by law to discharge or refuse to hire an employee or applicant if the person committed an offense under Title 5, Penal Code, and:

1. The date of the offense is more than 30 years before:
    a. June 15, 2007 in the case of an employee's employment by TLPS as of that date; or
    b. The date the applicant's employment will begin, in the case of a person applying for employment with TLPS after June 15, 2007; and
2. The employee or applicant for employment satisfied all terms of the court order entered on conviction.

TLPS may make employment decisions in accordance with its policy regarding employment of personnel with criminal histories (or arrested or charged with a criminal offense). TLPS' policy regarding employment of personnel with criminal histories is as follows:

As allowed by Commissioner of Education rule, a person may not serve as a TLPS officer or employee if the person has been convicted of:

1. A misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or any felony;
2. An offense listed in Texas Education Code § 37.007(a); or

3. An offense listed in Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 62.001(5).

Additionally, TLPS shall discharge or refuse to hire a person listed on the registry of persons not eligible for employment in Texas schools, as maintained and made available by the Texas Education Agency ("TEA").

TLPS may discharge an employee if it obtains information of the employee's conviction of a felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude that the employee did not disclose to TLPS or the State Board of Educator Certification ("SBEC").

Except as required by state or federal law or as determined by TLPS to be in the best interest of student and employee safety (and in accordance with applicable law), TLPS does not automatically prohibit employment or refuse to consider an application for employment solely on the grounds that an applicant/employee has a prior criminal record. TLPS does not prohibit employment or refuse to consider an application for employment based solely on the grounds that the applicant/employee has been arrested. Instead, TLPS reviews these circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

TLPS reserves the right to annually (or more frequently) perform criminal history record checks on current employees.

Arrest & Conviction Occurring after Employment Begins

An employee must notify his or her Principal or immediate supervisor within three calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of any felony, and any of the other offenses listed below:

- Crimes involving school property or funds;
- Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator;
- Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity; or
- Crimes involving moral turpitude.

Moral turpitude includes, but is not limited to: (a) dishonesty; (b) fraud; (c) deceit; (d) theft; (e) misrepresentation; (f) deliberate violence; (g) base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor; (h) crimes involving any felony possession or conspiracy to possess, or any misdemeanor or felony transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance; (i) felonies including driving while intoxicated; and (j) acts constituting abuse or neglect under SBEC rules. If an educator is arrested or criminally charged, the Superintendent is also required to report the educator's criminal history to the Division of Investigations at TEA.

The requirement to report a criminal history after employment begins shall not apply to minor traffic offenses. However, a first offense of DWI or DUI must be reported if the employee drives or operates (or is authorized to do so) a TLPS vehicle or other mobile equipment. Failure to timely report may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Conviction may not be an automatic basis for termination, unless the conviction makes an employee ineligible for employment in a Texas public school. TLPS shall consider the following factors (or other appropriate considerations as deemed by TLPS) in determining what action, if any, should be taken against an employee who is convicted of a crime during employment:

- The nature of the offense;
- The date of the offense;
- The relationship between the offense and the position to which the employee is assigned; and
- The best interests of TLPS and its students.

Fair Credit Reporting Act

TLPS may utilize consumer reports – e.g., credit, criminal, employment references and Department of Public Safety reports to assist with making employment decisions. In addition, TLPS may conduct annual driving record checks to verify that the licenses and driving records of those employees required to drive school-owned vehicles are valid and acceptable to our insurance carrier.

Where required by applicable law, prior to running any of the above-mentioned checks/records, each employee will be provided any required notice form(s), and must sign an authorization form once the job offer has been accepted. Refusal to sign such authorization is grounds for disqualification from employment with TLPS. Continued employment is also expressly conditioned on satisfactory results from legally authorized or required record and background checks.

In the event TLPS relies on a "consumer report" for an "adverse action" as defined by the Fair Credit Reporting Act and regulation – i.e., denying a job application, reassigning or terminating an employee, or denying a promotion – TLPS will take the following action(s):

Step 1: Before taking adverse action, the employee will be provided a pre-adverse action disclosure that includes a copy of the individual's consumer report and a copy of "A Summary of Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act" – a document prescribed by the Federal Trade Commission.

Step 2: After taking an adverse action, the employee will be provided notice – either orally, in writing, or electronically – that the action has been taken. This notice will include:

- The name, address, and telephone number of the Credit Reporting Agency ("CRA") that supplied the report;
- A statement that the CRA supplying the report did not make the decision to take the adverse action, and cannot give specific reasons for it; and
- A notice of the individual's right to dispute the accuracy or completeness of any information the agency furnished, and his or her right to an additional free consumer report from the agency upon request within 60 days.

The employee will be given a reasonable time period to refute the information. However, it is ultimately the decision of TLPS as to what action is taken.

Pre- and Post-Offer Medical Testing

Employees may be required to submit to certain medical tests (including drug testing) before beginning employment with TLPS.

New Hire Reporting

Federal and state law requires TLPS to provide information about all new or rehired workers to the Employer New Hire Reporting Operations Center in the Texas Office of the Attorney General.

Professional Development

TLPS is committed to the professional development of all its employees. For educators, TLPS provides training before the start of the school year, on-site coaching and modeling throughout the school year, day-to-day instructional leadership, and access to external workshops. For non-instructional staff, TLPS provides technical training before the start of the school year and throughout the year.

In addition, all employees are encouraged to pursue external professional development opportunities in the form of workshops or additional certification. Employees should talk with their supervisors about additional development opportunities and specific career paths. Supervisors must approve professional development before it is taken if time off will be required to attend the session/course.

Limitations on Employee Training

Employees covered under Education Code § 28.002 may not be required to engage in training, orientation, or therapy that presents any form of race or sex stereotyping or blame on the basis of race or sex.

Personnel Records

TLPS maintains a personnel file on each employee. This file includes the employee's job application, résumé, records of training, documentation of performance appraisals and salary increases, and other employment records.

All information in an employee's personnel file will be made available to the employee or his or her representative in the same manner that public information is made available under the public information laws found in Texas Government Code Chapter 552.

An employee or his or her authorized representative has a special right of access, beyond the right of the general public, to information held by TLPS that relates to the employee, and that is protected from public disclosure by laws intended to protect the employee's privacy interests. TLPS may not deny the employee or his or her representative access to information relating to the employee on the grounds that the information is considered confidential by privacy principles under the Texas Public Information Act ("TPIA"). However, TLPS may assert, as grounds for denial of access, other provisions of the TPIA or other laws that are not intended to protect the employee's privacy interests.

If TLPS determines that information in an employee's records is exempt from disclosure under an exception of Texas Government Code Chapter 552, Subchapter C, other than an exception intended to protect the privacy interest of the employee or his or her authorized representative, it will, when required, submit a written request for a decision to the Attorney General of Texas before disclosing the information. TLPS will release the information to the employee requesting the information in accordance with applicable law.

Employees who wish to review their own personnel file should contact Human Resources.

Many personnel records may also be public information and must be released upon request in accordance with state law. Pursuant to a written Open Records Request under the TPIA, employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld from disclosure:

- Home Address,
- Phone number, including personal cell phone number,
- Information that reveals whether they have family members, and
- Emergency contacts.

Please complete and return to Human Resources the "Texas Government Code § 552.024 Public Access Option Form" included with this Handbook if you wish to opt-out and have the above-identified information "exempted" from disclosure under the TPIA. New or terminated employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request; otherwise, personal information will be released to the public in accordance with the TPIA. A request to deny public access to personal information is effective only for public information requests made after the date the employee submits to Human Resources the request to deny access. With respect to certain medical information protected by state and federal law and evaluation documents exempted from disclosure under state law, TLPS will seek to exempt and protect such documentation from disclosure to the extent permitted by law.

Service Records

Processing employee service records is part of the procedure that closes out the previous school year and is guided by a series of steps that ensures a smooth transition to the following school year. Requests for services records shall be made, in writing, to Human Resources and will be provided no later than the 30th day after the request is made or the 30th day after the date of the last day of the individual's employment, whichever is later.

Newly hired staff are responsible for furnishing TLPS with their previous original service records. Those previous original service records need to be received by Human Resources at least two weeks prior to your first pay day to ensure that pay is accurate.

Name and Address Changes

Employment records must be kept up to date. Employees must notify Human Resources if there are any changes or corrections to their name, address, telephone number, marital status, and emergency contact information. Name change notifications must also be submitted along with the employee's new social security card depicting the employee's new name.

This notification shall be done using the Employee Information Change Form in PowerSchool Records or the Employee Access Center.

Health Safety Training

Certain employees (i.e., physical education teachers and coaches) who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to Human Resources proof of current certification in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of an automated external defibrillator. TLPS will also train staff on certain health and safety matters discussed in Chapter 38 of the Texas Education Code. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, University Interscholastic League, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification to Human Resources at the start of each school year and each time the employee is re-certified.

Special Rules for Social Studies Courses

For any social studies course offered by TLPS, a teacher may not be compelled to discuss a particular current event or widely debated and currently controversial issue of public policy or social affairs. A teacher who chooses to discuss such a topic shall, to the best of the teacher's ability, strive to explore the topic from diverse and contending perspectives without

giving deference to any one perspective.

Textbook and Materials Acquisition

Any TLPS director, administrator, or teacher who receives any commission or rebate on any textbooks, electronic textbooks, instructional materials, or technological equipment used by TLPS may commit a Class B misdemeanor offense.

Any TLPS officer, administrator, or teacher who accepts a gift, favor, or service given to the person, or to TLPS that could not be lawfully purchased with funds from the state textbook fund, and that might reasonably tend to influence the person in the selection of a textbook, electronic textbook, instructional material, or technological equipment may commit a Class B misdemeanor offense.

Copyrighted Material

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of federal copyright law relating to the unauthorized use, reproduction, distribution, performance, or display of copyrighted materials (i.e., printed material, videos, computer data and programs, etc.). Electronic media, including motion pictures and other audiovisual works, are to be used in the classroom for instructional purposes only. Duplications are to be used in the classroom for educational purposes only. Duplication or backup of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

Employees acknowledge and understand that the entire right, title and interest of any and all writings, works and other creations that they may prepare, create, write, initiate or otherwise develop as part of their efforts while employed by TLPS shall be considered the property of TLPS. This includes, but is not limited to, the development of a curriculum. These works will be "works for hire" and shall be the sole and exclusive property of TLPS, including any copyright, patent or trademark or application thereof. Employees hereby assign and transfer to TLPS all right, title and interest in such works and creations, including without limitation, all patent, trademark and copyright rights that now exist or may exist in the future. Employees further agree that at any reasonable time upon request, and without further compensation or limitation, they will execute and deliver any and all papers, applications or instruments that in TLPS' opinion may be necessary or desirable to secure the TLPS' full enjoyment of all right, title interest and properties herein assigned. Employees agree not to charge the school for use of their copyrighted, trademarked and patented material.

Proprietary Information

Proprietary information includes all information relating in any manner to the business of TLPS and its schools, students, parents, consultants, customers, clients, and business associates obtained by TLPS employees during the course of their work. Occasionally, in the service of TLPS' mission, TLPS may choose to share otherwise proprietary information (e.g., best practices) with outside parties. Such documents will be prepared specifically for publication and dissemination. If an individual employee receives a request from an outside party for either paper or electronic copies of TLPS documents, that employee should direct the request to the Human Resources Director.

Performance Evaluations

Evaluation of an employee's job performance is a continuous process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor at least annually.

Evaluations will be completed on forms approved by TLPS. Reports, correspondence, and memoranda may also be used to document performance information.

Termination or Resignation

Employees are employed at will and can be dismissed without notice or warning.

All school-owned property in the employee's possession must be returned to his or her supervisor upon separation from employment. Failure to return school-owned property constitutes theft of public property and will be reported to law enforcement.

In the event an employee has been terminated or resigns, it is the employee's responsibility to provide a forwarding address and telephone number. This information must be provided to Human Resources no later than December 31 of that year for W-2 purposes, and no later than the last day of work in the event of termination or resignation. In the event the W-2 or final paycheck is returned to the TLPS, the school will hold the W-2 or the final check until claimed by the former employee or by an individual authorized in writing by the former employee to collect the check and/or the W-2.

Exit interviews will be scheduled for all employees leaving TLPS. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time.

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

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

Termination Grievances (General Complaints)
A terminated employee may request a review of the dismissal decision. Termination grievances (other than whistleblower complaints) must be submitted in writing to Human Resources within five calendar days of notice of termination. A Human Resources representative will schedule and hold a conference within five business days of the request and shall issue a written decision within five business days after the conference. A former employee wishing to appeal this decision may appeal through the General Employee Complaints and Grievances process described in this Handbook, beginning at Level Three. Termination decisions will not be deferred pending the outcome of an appeal.

General Employee Complaints and Grievances

Purpose
The purpose of the employee complaint process is to provide employees an orderly process for the prompt and equitable resolution of grievances. TLPS intends that, whenever feasible, grievances be resolved at the lowest possible administrative level.

In using and applying the employee complaint process, all participants are expected to remain courteous and to adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

Informal Process
TLPS encourages employees to discuss their concerns with their supervisor, principal, or other appropriate administrator who has authority to address the concerns. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Informal resolution is encouraged, but will not extend any deadlines in this grievance process, except by mutual written consent.

Formal Process
An employee may initiate the formal grievance process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

Even after initiating a formal complaint, employees are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. An employee whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

The grievance process described below shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or "mini trial" at any level.

Freedom from Retaliation
Neither TLPS nor any TLPS employee shall unlawfully retaliate against an employee for bringing a concern or complaint/grievance.

Guidelines for General Employee Complaint Process
Definitions
For purposes of understanding the General Employee Complaints and Grievances Process, terms are defined as follows:

The terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning and may pertain to the following situations:

1. Grievances concerning an employee's wages, hours, or conditions of work;

2. Specific allegations of unlawful discrimination in employment based on the employee's sex (including allegations of sexual harassment and/or wage discrimination on the basis of sex), race, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, or disability, following completion of an investigation by the designated compliance coordinator or designee set by policy; or
3. Specific allegations of unlawful discrimination or retaliation based on the employee's exercise of constitutional rights.

The term "day" shall be defined as a school business day, unless stated otherwise in this complaint process. In calculating timelines under these procedures, the day a document is filed is "day zero," and all deadlines shall be determined by counting the following school business day as "day one."

Filing
Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, by electronic communication (including e-mail and fax), or by U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filing shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filing shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

Scheduling Conferences
TLPS will make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually agreeable time. If the employee fails to appear at a scheduled conference, TLPS may hold the conference and issue a decision in the employee's absence.

Response
At Levels One and Two, "response" shall mean a written communication to the employee from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered, sent by electronic communication to the employee's e-mail address of record, or sent by U.S. Mail to the employee's mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.

If the administrator addressing the complaint determines that additional time is needed to complete a thorough investigation of the complaint and/or to issue a response, the administrator shall inform the grievant in writing of the necessity to extend the response time and a specific date by when the response will be issued.

A grievance official who fails to meet a time requirement, without providing written notice of an extended deadline, shall be considered to have denied the complaint as of the date of the missed deadline.

Representative
"Representative" means a person designated to represent him or her in the complaint process. An employee may designate a representative through written notice to TLPS at any level of the grievance process. The representative may participate in person or by telephone / video conference. If the employee designates a representative with fewer than three days' notice to TLPS before a scheduled conference or hearing, TLPS may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the school's counsel. TLPS may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

Consolidating Complaints
Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. Employees shall not file separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

When two or more complaints are sufficiently similar in nature and remedy sought to permit their resolution through one proceeding, TLPS may consolidate the complaints.

Untimely Filings
All time limits for an employee to file a complaint shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent. If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, upon written notice to the employee, at any point during the complaint process.

Costs Incurred
Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

Complaint and Appeal Forms
Complaints and appeals under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by TLPS.

Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the employee does not have copies of these documents, they may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the employee unless the employee did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

A complaint or appeal form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be re-filed with all the required information if the refiling is within the designated time for filing.

Formal Complaint Process
The formal complaint process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of administrative management. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted, employees can bring complaints to the Board of Directors, as outlined below.

Level One
An employee shall submit a formal grievance, in writing, to Human Resources within ten days from the time the employee knew or should have known of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint. The School reserves the right, upon review of the grievance, to require the grievant to begin the grievance process at Level Two.

If the grievance is to proceed at Level One, Human Resources will forward the grievance to the employee's immediate supervisor or other designee, who will consider the grievance and respond in writing to the employee within ten days of receipt of the grievance. The Hearing Official will send a copy of the response to Human Resources.

Level Two
If the grievance is to begin at Level Two, or if the grievance is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction at Level One, the employee may submit a written appeal to their Reporting Officer or his/her designee, via Human Resources, within ten days of the receipt of the Level One decision. (For the purpose of this policy, "Reporting Officer" is a TLPS officer such as the Chief Executive Officer or Chief Operations Officer, within the grieving employee's line of supervision.) The appeal must be specific, reference the law or policy alleged to have been violated or the dissatisfaction raised by the employee and, where possible, suggest a resolution. Within ten days of receipt of the appeal, the Level Two Hearing Official shall meet with the employee to consider the appeal and within ten days of the meeting shall supply a written response to the employee. The hearing official will send a copy of the response to Human Resources.

If the Reporting Officer is the subject of the complaint, the grievance may be submitted to the Chancellor or his/her designee.

Level Three
If the matter is still not resolved, the employee may submit a written appeal to the Board of Directors, via Human Resources, within ten days of receipt of the Level Two hearing official's response.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform the employee of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for consideration by the Board. The Board of Directors will consider the grievance and may, at its discretion, require the appearance of the employee and administration.

The Board of Directors will determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. Generally, complaints involving the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of the employee bringing the complaint may be heard by the Board of Directors in a closed meeting. Complaints involving a complaint or grievance against another TLPS employee, director, or officer shall be heard in a closed meeting unless an open meeting is requested in writing by the employee, director, or officer against whom the complaint or grievance is brought.

After considering the appeal, the Board of Directors may subsequently act or take no action. If the Board of Directors acts, it may make and communicate its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting. If the Board does not decide regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two. A decision by the Board of Directors, if any, is final and may not be appealed.

Whistleblower Complaints

The Texas Whistleblower Act ("TWA") protects employees who make good faith reports of violations of law by TLPS or another employee to an appropriate law enforcement authority. TLPS is prohibited from suspending, terminating the employment of, or taking other adverse personnel action against an employee who makes a report under the TWA.

An employee who alleges a violation of whistleblower protection must file a written complaint to Human Resource> no later than the 90th day after the date on which the alleged suspension, termination, or other adverse employment action occurred or was discovered by the employee through reasonable diligence.

Following receipt of a whistleblower complaint, the Superintendent or designee will conduct an investigation and issue a written response to the complaint. An employee who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may file an appeal to the Board of Directors through the General Employee Complaints and Grievances Process described in this Handbook, beginning at Level Three.

TLPS may shorten its general timelines for investigating employee complaints and concerns to allow the Board of Directors to make a final decision within 60 calendar days of the initiation of the complaint. If the Board of Directors does not render a final decision before the 61st day after a whistleblower complaint is filed, an employee may:

1. Exhaust the School's complaint procedure, in which case the employee must sue not later than the 30th day after the date those procedures are exhausted to obtain relief under the TWA; or
2. Terminate the School's complaint procedures and sue within the timelines established by the TWA.

Compensation and Payroll

Payroll

TLPS follows all Texas Payday Laws.

Pay Period

Texas Leadership pay periods for non-exempt staff whose salary is annualized will be from the 16th of the month to the 15th of the following month.

Texas Leadership pay periods for non-exempt staff whose salaries are not annualized will be from the 1st of the month to the 15th of the month and from the 16th of the month until the last day of the month.

The method of pay may be changed at any time, with or without advance notice. Employee pay will either be directly deposited into the employee's financial institution of choice, or delivered through other legal means. Pay will not be released to any person other than the employee to whom pay is due, without the employee's prior written authorization.

Pay Schedule

All employees whose salaries are annualized, except bus drivers, will be paid the 26th of the month unless pay day falls on a weekend or holiday, then pay day will be on the first business day prior to pay day.

Bus drivers and non-exempt staff whose salaries are not annualized will be paid two times per month—on the 15th of the month and the last day of the month unless those dates fall on a weekend or a holiday and then pay day would be the business day preceding the weekend or holiday.

If direct deposit has not been set up, a paper check will be mailed to the address on file in the Employee Access Center of PowerSchool.

Pay is available on the scheduled pay date and will not be given in advance.

Pay Statements

Payroll statements, deductions, and leave balance may be viewed in the Employee Access Center.

Payoff and Benefits and End of Work Year

Employees who separate before the end of the school year will receive their final paycheck in accordance with the Texas Payday Laws. All benefits shall also end at the end of the month the employee stops working.

Staff who plan to return for the following work year will not be eligible for a lump sum pay out.

First Pay Day for New Employees Hired After the Beginning of the School/Work Year
Any new employee 1) who is hired after the beginning of the school or fiscal year, and 2) whose date of hire is before the fifteenth of the month, shall receive a paycheck on the pay day of their month of hire. If an employee is hired after the fifteenth of the month, that employee shall receive their first paycheck on the pay day of the following month.

The Business Officer or his/her designee may grant exceptions to this item.

Non-exempt Employees Daily Rate of Pay
The daily rate for non-exempt employees is based on the number of work hours scheduled multiplied by the hourly rate of pay. A non-exempt employee's annualized salary is calculated based on the number of days the employee is scheduled to work multiplied by the daily rate and then divided by the number of months remaining in the work year.

In a given work week, if a non-exempt employee works:

- Less than the number of hours they are scheduled, their check will be docked accordingly.
- More than the number of hours scheduled the employee will receive regular pay rate or overtime (time and a half) for the hours worked over.
- These calculations are based on weekly timesheets which each employee and their supervisor approve.

Non-Standard/Additional Pay
Typically, the 15th day of the month is the cutoff date for turning in substitute logs and time sheets for extra-duty pay. The pay period for non-exempt employees begins on 16th of the prior month and ends on the 15th of the current month. Human Resources will circulate a list of due dates to designated personnel each school year. Receipt of appropriate paperwork by the due date ensures that payment will be administered in a timely fashion. Athletic stipends will be paid over 12 months from September through August.

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and a pay structure established for each position. Salaries and wages are reviewed periodically and adjusted according to the budgeted amounts approved by the Board of Directors. Employees should contact Human Resources for further information concerning their own salary.

- An additional $1,000.00 per year will be credited to an employee who holds a Master's Degree or $2,000 per year will be credited to an employee who holds a PhD and is in the primary job position of classroom teacher. To be eligible for the additional monies, Human Resources must receive an official college transcript that indicates the awarding of a Master's Degree. The amount, which may be prorated, will begin on the first workday of the month after the degree was awarded or the first workday of the month that Human Resources received the appropriate transcript, whichever date is later.

TLPS does not pay out staff for any State or Local Leave they have accrued during a work year with the exception being classroom teachers with remaining Local Leave.

TLPS does not pay staff who are retiring for any remaining State Leave they have accrued during their career.

Thirteen Paycheck Option

Anyone classified as a ten-month salaried employee new to TLPS and 1) who is hired at the beginning of the school year, and 2) whose work calendar begins over 30 days before their first scheduled pay day, may elect to participate in a 13-pay check option for their first year of employment only.

"New" as defined above, means any instructional employee that was not employed the previous year by an education agency that annualized its employee's salaries.

Raises

If the Board approves annual raises effective September 1 for employees who are not assigned to a salary pay scale, those raises will apply to all eligible employees. Employees hired on or after June 1 of the current calendar year are not eligible for the September 1 annual raise.

Wage and Tax Statements

All employees will receive a Wage and Tax Statement (W-2 Form) showing their annual earnings and the amounts deducted for Social Security, Medicare, and federal income taxes. Additional earnings and deductions that may be included, if applicable, are social security tips, allocated tips, advance earned income credit, and dependent care benefits. W-2 Forms will be prepared by Payroll and be distributed on or before January 31st of each year. For this reason, it is important to keep your mailing address updated with Human Resources.

Work Week

The official work week at TLPS is Sunday through Saturday.

Payroll Information

Please view your pay stub each pay period to verify your mailing address, social security number, and pay. If your mailing address or social security number appears to be incorrect, you may update it by sending an email to HR@texasleadership.net. If your pay appears to be incorrect, you should contact payroll@texasleadership.net. You may also view this information in the Employee Access Center.

Payroll Deductions

TLPS will deduct from an employee's paycheck only that which is allowable under state and federal law. Generally, optional deductions may only be made from pay as long as the resulting wage does not fall below the FLSA minimum wage.

All optional deductions from an employee's paycheck must be authorized by the employee in writing and approved by the Business Office.

Standard payroll deductions for full- and part-time employees are as follows:

- Federal Income Tax Withholding (based on IRS Form W-4 on file). It is important to note that if an employee selects to have an additional federal income tax withholding, that amount will come out of every paycheck. TLPS will not turn this withholding amount off and on depending upon the pay run.
- Medicare
- Court ordered withholdings including child support garnishments and delinquent federal education loan payments
- FICA for our temporary employees and part time employees that are not TRS eligible.
- Teacher Retirement System (TRS) - (Full-time only): Retirement (federal exempt): the employee's retirement account
- Insurance: active member contribution to retirees' health insurance program

Deductions from Pay for Absences

A. Non-Exempt Employees

1. An employee who has no State or Local Leave remaining and who does not fall under a Special Leave Type/Work Status shall have their pay docked either one-half day or one full day for each approved half or full day of leave that the employee takes.

   An employee who has no State or Local Leave remaining and who does not fall under a Special Leave Type/Work Status shall have their pay docked either one-half or one full day for each unapproved half or full day of leave that the employee takes in addition to any disciplinary action that may occur if the leave is not approved.

2. Time Sheets

   Administration may monitor time sheets of non-exempt employees during a pay period. If the employee is at least 4.0 hours short of their scheduled work week, the employee shall be charged leave time to replace the missing hours. If the employee has exhausted their leave time, they shall be docked pay to replace their missing hours. Employees shall be docked leave time/pay rounded down to the nearest half or full day.

   In addition to being docked hours and/or pay for failing to work their scheduled work week, employees may face disciplinary action.

B. Exempt Employees

An employee who has no State or Local Leave remaining and who does not fall under a Special Leave Type/Work Status, shall have their pay docked in a half day or one full day for each approved half or full day of leave that the employee takes.

An employee who has no State or Local Leave remaining and who does not fall under a Special Leave Type/Work Status shall have their pay docked one full day for each unapproved full day of leave that the employee takes in addition to any disciplinary action that may occur.

All pay deductions due to excessive absence shall be handled in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

If you have questions why deductions were made from your paycheck or how they were calculated, contact Human Resources or Payroll.

Administrative Pay Corrections
In the event of an error in payment, the employee should contact Payroll at payroll@texasleadership.net immediately.

Any changes that result in pay differential will be retroactive to the date of the change or the first day of the previous month prior to Human Resources being notified of the change, whichever date is more recent.

Overpayments
Employees must inform Human Resources or Payroll of known overpayments on any paychecks received. TLPS will attempt to work with employees to recoup funds within a reasonable period of time but will pursue all legal means necessary to recover overpayments.

Direct Deposit

All faculty and staff are strongly encouraged to take advantage of direct deposit because of the many advantages it offers. In addition to being efficient and convenient, direct deposit is the most reliable method of receiving pay. Every employee participating in the program must sign a Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement form and the form must be received by Administration no later than the 7th of the month. If the form is received in Administration after the 7th of the month, you may have a paper check mailed to you and direct deposit will begin the following month. Terminated employees with Direct Deposit will receive their final paycheck via Direct Deposit unless otherwise notified by Human Resources or Payroll.

If your direct deposit information changes, submit a new direct deposit form, via the Employee Access Center, no later than 14 calendar days prior to your next scheduled payday. If you submit a new direct deposit form less than 14 calendar days from your next scheduled payday, you will be mailed a paper paycheck. Direct deposit information not submitted via the Employee Access Center will not be accepted.

Lost/Stolen Paychecks

Lost or stolen paychecks should be reported to Payroll immediately. Payroll will issue a stop payment on the lost or stolen check after a 2 week waiting period from the date it was issued. Only after the financial institution has notified Payroll that payment of the check has been stopped and a new check be issued.

Unclaimed Payroll Checks

In the event an employee does not collect their paycheck within 90 days, Payroll will secure such pay and the wages will still be recorded. The employee will be required to present proper identification to Texas Leadership before pay will be re-issued. In the event that the unclaimed pay is not claimed for a period of one year from its date of issuance, the pay amount "escheats" to the State of Texas pursuant to the Texas Property Code. After such time, the employee will need to contact the Unclaimed Property Division of the Texas State Comptroller's Office for instructions on retrieving deposited wages.

Authorized Check Pick Up

TLPS will release a paycheck to a third party who is authorized in writing by the employee to receive the paycheck. Written authorization must be provided to Human Resources or Payroll prior to any paycheck being released.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

Employment Categories

It is the intent of TLPS to clarify the definitions of employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility. These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specified period of time. Accordingly, the right to terminate the employment relationship at-will at any time is retained by both the employee and TLPS.

Each employee is designated as either EXEMPT or NON-EXEMPT under federal and state wage and hour laws in accordance with applicable federal law. NON-EXEMPT employees are entitled to overtime pay under the specific provisions of federal law. EXEMPT employees are excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. An employee's EXEMPT or NON-EXEMPT classification may be changed only upon written notification by TLPS, and in accordance with applicable federal law.

Exempt status applies to the position and not the employee. Exempt simply means the position the employee fills is not entitled to overtime compensation. Exempt employees are paid on a salaried basis, and their salary is not reduced for absences of less than one full day. However, any full days of absence taken in excess of the employee's allotment/service record accumulation of sick or personal leave will result in an employee payroll deduction calculated on a pro-rated daily rate.

NON-EXEMPT positions are those positions that are not exempt from the FLSA. Non-exempt positions require TLPS to pay the employee overtime (time and a half) for all hours worked in excess of 40 during a work week. The key phrase here is "hours worked." An employee may work 32 hours in a week and have 16 hours of vacation time. This would reflect as 48 hours on a paycheck, but for overtime calculation, the employee actually worked 32 hours – so overtime would not be paid. All employees in positions that are classified as non-exempt will be required to maintain a timecard or record, and will be eligible for overtime pay in accordance with the appropriate Wage and Hour Laws.
TLPS' positions are reviewed and assigned an FLSA (exempt or non-exempt) status that is maintained on a master record by Human Resources. Employees may obtain this information from Human Resources.

Minimum Wage and Overtime

TLPS compensates overtime for non-exempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. Only non-exempt employees are entitled to overtime compensation. Depending on the School's work needs, employees may be requested to work overtime. Non-exempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor. An employee who works overtime without prior written approval is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Non-exempt employees shall not "volunteer" (work for free) at extracurricular activities associated with the school.

Under no circumstances shall a non-exempt employee work "off the clock" or outside of his/her approved work schedule.

Timekeeping

TLPS' work week is Sunday through Saturday. Pay will be processed for all hours worked, as well as absences taken, within each work week. Time missed in one work week shall not be made up in another work week.

It is the employee's responsibility to:

A. Clock in and out accurately. A failure to do so may result in a delayed payment of monies owed to you.
A. Make sure your time is correct and approved on a weekly basis.
B. Monitor your available leave time balances.

Federal and state laws require Texas Leadership to keep accurate records of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties. Employees are not to estimate future hours and include them on their timecard.

Non-exempt instructional employees should accurately record the time they begin and end their work. Non-exempt operations employees should accurately record the time they begin and end their work, as well as the beginning and ending time of each meal period. Non-exempt staff should also record the beginning and ending time of any split shift or departure from work for personal reasons. This work log should be recorded as it takes place – not several hours or days later. Overtime work must always be approved before it is performed.

Non-exempt employees should report to work no more than 15 minutes prior to their scheduled starting time nor stay more than 15 minutes after their scheduled stop time without expressed, prior authorization from their supervisor.

Non-exempt employees shall use the time and attendance system currently utilized by Texas Leadership to record their time worked. Non-exempt employees shall review and approve their hours worked during the pay period to certify the accuracy of all time recorded and their supervisors will review and approve the time entries for their assigned staff before submitting it for Payroll.

Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employee Types

Full-time Employees
Full-time employees are defined as:

- employees consistently working a minimum of 30 hours per week whether scheduled or not; or
- bus drivers consistently working a minimum of 25 hours per week whether scheduled or not.

Full-time employees are eligible for health insurance, State and Local Leave, and Section 125 benefits.

Part-time Employees/Part-time Bus Drivers
Part-time employees, except bus drivers, are limited to a maximum of 29 hours per week unless approved by their immediate supervisor. Part-time employees are not eligible for health insurance (unless covered under the Affordable Care Act) or Local Leave days though they are eligible for State Leave days.

Part-time bus drivers are limited to a maximum of 19 hours per week unless approved by their immediate supervisor. Part-time bus drivers are not eligible for health insurance (unless covered under the Affordable Care Act) or Local Leave days though they are eligible for State Leave days.

Temporary/Seasonal Employees
A temporary/seasonal employee is defined as an employee one who is hired with the understanding that he/she will be employed by TLPS for not more than four and one-half months during a work year. Employees classified as temporary/seasonal are not eligible for any benefits normally associated with full- or part-time employees (unless covered under the Affordable Care Act).

PRN Employees
Employees classified as PRN (pro re nata) will be used only as a special situation demands and are not eligible for benefits normally associated with full- or part-time employees (unless covered under the Affordable Care Act).

Employment Information
Employees shall notify Human Resources when there is a change in their:

Address
Phone number
Person to notify in case of emergency
Name - through marriage or otherwise
Change in designation of beneficiary
Exemptions from withholding taxes
Qualifying events for insurance
I-9/immigration status
Educational or professional degrees
Certifications

Benefits

The benefits information in this Handbook is only a summary of benefit plans offered by TLPS. This general explanation is not intended to and does not provide employees with all the details of these benefits. This Handbook does not change or

otherwise interpret the terms of the official plan documents. If there is any conflict or difference between the information in this Handbook and the plan documents, the plan documents will govern. TLPS reserves the right to change or end these benefits at any time and for any reason, consistent with all laws. Additionally, benefit eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification. If employees would like additional information related to any benefits offered by TLPS, please contact Human Resources.

Substitute teachers and temporary employees may be eligible for the benefits described in this section in accordance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and other applicable rules and regulations governing the School's benefit plans.

Benefit Offerings

Texas Leadership offers the following benefit programs to eligible employees in the manner prescribed by law:

- Health Insurance Coverage
- Dental
- Vision
- Life and AD&D
- Disability
- Accident
- Critical Illness
- Telemedicine
- FSA/HSA
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Teacher Retirement

Benefits eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification. Human Resources can identify the programs for which you are eligible. Some benefit programs require contributions from the employee; some are fully paid by TLPS.

From time to time, TLPS may offer its employees the option to additionally purchase and/or participate in various other benefits and insurance programs, subject to the terms and conditions of the various programs.

Benefits Continuation – COBRA

TLPS or its designee will notify employees of their potential rights under COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) upon separation from employment with the School.

Voluntary Benefits

Voluntary benefit plans are available through TLPS but purchase is not mandatory. Open enrollment for full-time employees occurs annually and is effective October 1st or, if you are a new employee, coverage is effective on the first of the month 30 days after your date of hire.

New full-time employees or full-time employees with qualifying events have 30 days from date of hire or from the event occurrence in which to elect or make changes to Section 125 (pre-tax) benefits such as medical, dental, vision, FSA, HSA.

An employee with TLPS group health insurance, dental, vision, FSA accounts and/or HSA accounts may change/cancel their coverage at any time (within the limit listed in the paragraph below) providing there is a qualifying event accompanying that cancellation, i.e. marriage, birth, divorce, loss of coverage from another carrier, etc. However, such change/cancellation must occur within 30 days of the qualifying event and the employee must provide Human Resources supporting documentation of the qualifying life event or the change cannot be made.

The School's medical coverage plan(s) is/are reviewed annually. The organization's annual contribution to the plan(s) is/are also reviewed on an annual basis. Detailed information and descriptions of coverage, premiums, and eligibility are available through Human Resources.

Teacher Retirement System ("TRS") Covered Employment

Personnel employed on a regular basis for at least four-and-a-half months are members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas ("TRS"). Substitutes not receiving TRS service retirement benefits who work at least 90 days a year are also eligible for TRS membership and to purchase a year of creditable service. To earn a year of TRS membership credit,

an employee must work in a TRS-eligible position or receive paid leave from a TRS-eligible position for at least 90 days during the school year. If an employee will not meet the 90-day requirement and has worked in excess of five days in a workweek, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure the additional day(s) have been reported. Members should carefully review years of service reported when TRS provides them with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

TLPS will make all required contributions for employees eligible for TRS benefits on a timely basis. Employees who are planning retirement and retirees who are considering employment after retirement should contact Human Resources for the current administrative procedures regarding the school's Retire/Rehire Policy.

Employees can contact TRS by calling 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the web at www.trs.state.tx.us.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance

Terminated employees may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act. At-will employees and employees provided with a notice of reasonable assurance of returning to service may not be eligible for unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or summer months. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact Human Resources or the Texas Workforce Commission at 1-800-628-5115.

Workers' Compensation Insurance Benefit

TLPS' designated Worker's Compensation carrier may provide workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or personal injury due to accidents arising out of their employment with the School.

Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits depend on coverage eligibility and requirements, and the circumstances of each case.

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury or illness will be notified of their rights and responsibilities with respect to workers' compensation benefits.

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

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

An employee who believes that his or her condition is a qualifying disability and that he or she is a qualified individual with a disability under the ADA may request and pursue accommodations under the ADA.

Additional information about the School's workers' compensation benefit offerings may be obtained from Human Resources.

Notice to New Employees

> You may elect to retain your common law right of action if, no later than five days after you begin employment or within five days after receiving written notice from your employer that the employer has obtained workers' compensation insurance coverage, you notify your employer in writing that you wish to retain your common law to recover damages for personal injury. If you elect to retain your common law right of action, you cannot obtain workers' compensation income medical benefits if you are injured.
>
> Usted puede optar por conservar su derecho comun de accion de ley (common law right of action, por su no,breen ingles) si, a no mas tardar de cinco dias despues que usted comienza su empleo o dentro de cinco dias despues de recibir aviso por escrito por parte del empleador donde se informa que el empleador has obtenido una cobertura de seguro de compnesacion para trabajadores, usted le notifica a

su empleador por escrito que desea conserver su derecho comun de accion de ley para recupararse de danos por lesiones personales. Si opta por conserver su derecho comun de accion de ley, usted no puede obtener beneficios medicos o de ingresos de compensacion para trabajadores si se ha lesionado.

Employee Attendance and Leave

Absence from Duty Procedures

Employees who are unable to report for work must give notification in the TimeClock Plus (TCP) timekeeping system. All absences must be reported and a brief reason given for the absence. In the event a substitute is needed, record your absence in the TCP timekeeping system as soon as possible so a replacement can be secured in a timely manner but, in any event, at least one hour before you are supposed to be at work. An employee who fails to report to work without notice to his/her supervisor may face disciplinary action.

TimeClock Plus (TCP) Information
TCP is a time and attendance system that provides real-time data to manage and record work hours and absences. TCP is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can be accessed by a computer or by downloading the phone app.

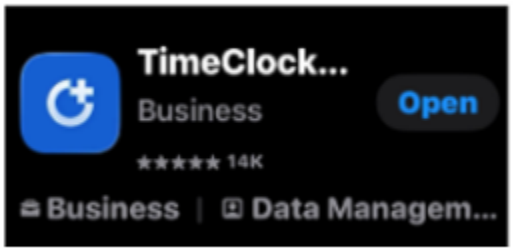
To gain access to the TCP:

- Visit https://270696.tcplusondemand.com/app/webclock/#/EmployeeLogOn/270696/1. Here you can clock in/out, enter absences, check leave balances, and select requested substitutes using the integrated substitute management system.
- You will need your **Employee ID number** to access TCP. You can locate your Employee ID number in the Employee Access Center of PowerSchool.

To download the TCP app on your phone:

- **From your device's App Store search for and locate TCP MobileClock**

  (The icon is a blue square with a white circle with a plus symbol)



- **Click "Download or Get"**
- **Enter Customer ID**: 270696
- **Enter ID Number:** (* Enter your employee ID number and confirm that your name appears)

Enter your absence in TCP no later than one hour before you are scheduled to be at work. If you are unable to enter your absence prior to that time, you must call your immediate supervisor.

Clocking In and Out
All employees, unless otherwise classified as exempt, shall clock in at the beginning of their workday and clock out at the end of their workday, using the TCP system. If the employee misses a punch they will immediately notify their supervisor in writing.

- Non-exempt instructional and administrative personnel shall clock in and clock out only at the beginning and end of their workday.

- Custodial and maintenance personnel shall clock out at the beginning of their meal break and clock in at the end of their meal break in addition to clocking in and clocking out at the beginning and end of their workday.
- Bus drivers shall clock in at the beginning for their workday and clock out after their morning route has been completed. They shall clock in at the beginning of their second route and clock out at the end of their workday.

In the event a non-exempt employee must leave work during their duty day the employee shall clock out. Should the non-exempt employee return to work that same day, the employee shall clock back in.

Non-exempt employees shall report to work no more than 15 minutes prior to their scheduled starting time nor stay more than 15 minutes after their scheduled stop time without prior authorization from their supervisor.

The TCP timekeeping system can be accessed using any computer or your smartphone by visiting the employee web clock at https://270696.tcplusondemand.com/app/webclock/#/EmployeeLogOn/270696/1. The employee web clock link has also been saved on at least one common area computer at each campus for easy access. If you are uncertain where this computer is located at your worksite, ask the campus administrative assistant. The ID number needed to clock in and out is your employee ID. If you do not know your employee ID, please contact Human Resources.

If an employee has issues with TCP while clocking in or out, it is the employee's responsibility to notify their immediate supervisor.

Denying Leave Requests
Supervisors should deny discretionary time off requests for employees who have no leave days available or when such leave would unduly interfere with the routine operations of the employee's area of responsibility.

An employee who fails to report to work without approval to be absent from his/her supervisor may face disciplinary action.

Excessive Absenteeism or Tardiness

Supervisors will monitor absenteeism. Excessive and/or inappropriate absences may be considered a disciplinary matter.

In cases of excessive absenteeism, suspicious articulable circumstances, tardiness, or the need to leave work early, an employee's supervisor may require the employee to produce a medical certification of reason(s) or other documentation for the absences, tardies, or need to leave work early.

Excessive absenteeism is defined as requesting more time off than an employee has available.

Notice of Unexpected Absence

When employees who have not given advance notice find that they cannot report for work, they are required to notify their supervisor as soon as possible but not later than the employee's scheduled start time the day of the unexpected absence.

Failure to Give Notice – Job Abandonment and Voluntary Resignation
Failure to provide notification of an absence to a supervisor for two consecutive workdays (unless prevented by circumstances beyond the employee's control) may be considered job abandonment and/or voluntary resignation on the last day worked, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, and TLPS will process the work separation as a voluntary resignation on the employee's part.

In the event of a voluntary resignation, all school-owned property (e.g., keys, uniforms, etc.) must be returned immediately to TLPS.

No payment shall be made for accrued and unused sick leave or any other type of leave upon voluntary resignation or job abandonment due to failure to provide notice of absence.

Discretionary Leave

Discretionary leave is leave that, generally, allows for advanced planning. Staff is directed to request no more than five consecutive days of discretionary leave unless prior approval is received from their immediate supervisor. Supervisors should not approve more than five consecutive days of discretionary leave unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Employees desiring discretionary leave shall create their request in the TCP timekeeping system at least five workdays in advance of the desired day(s) off. If you desire a discretionary day off within the five-day window mentioned above, you should meet with your supervisor prior to submitting your request in the TCP timekeeping system. Discretionary leave requests of five consecutive days or less should be granted unless the immediate supervisor notifies the employee to the contrary.

Employees may ask for discretionary time off in increments of 4.0 hours or 8.0 hours and approving officials should approve or deny discretionary leave requests at least 48 hours prior to the leave being effective.

If a discretionary personal leave request has not been approved by your supervisor 24-hours in advance of the requested leave day, you should contact your supervisor to verify that your time off has been approved. Do not assume that the time-off request has been approved.

Any written or practiced campus policy shall be in alignment with this policy.

Discretionary Leave Limitations

Discretionary time off for instructional personnel should not be allowed in the following circumstances unless scheduled at least two weeks in advance:

- The first week of school;
- Days scheduled for end-of-semester or end-of-year exams or state-mandated assessments or school achievement tests;
- Days scheduled for professional or staff development and/or in service training; and
- The day prior to or following a scheduled school holiday.

Administrative Leave

Administrative Leave is a temporary form of leave used when it is deemed in the best interest of the District that the employee not be at work. Such leave may be paid or unpaid and may include directives for the employee to follow. Administrative Leave must be initiated or approved by District Administration.

If the Administrative Leave is unpaid, the employee has the option to substitute any of his/her remaining accrued paid leave time—day for day—for any unpaid leave days. However, the employee must notify Human Resources, in writing, of this desire.

Bereavement Leave

Full- and part-time (not seasonal or temporary) employees may be absent without loss of pay in the event of the death of one of the following relatives of the employee or his/her spouse: husband, wife, child, father, mother, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, or grandchildren, provided the employee informs and receives approval from his or her supervisor. Such leave may begin with the day of the death of the deceased person, but no such paid leave shall exceed three days unless the deceased is a spouse or child of the employee, in which case five days of Bereavement Leave shall be granted. Exceptions to this practice must be approved by the Board of Directors, upon recommendation of District Administration.

Approval of Bereavement Leave may be requested by telephone, if necessary. Employees may, with their supervisors' approval, use any available paid leave for additional time off.

When placing Bereavement Leave absences into the time and attendance system, annotate the relationship of the deceased to the employee.

Bereavement Leave days shall not be accrued and must be used within two months of the deceased person's passing.

Court Leave

Employees who are summoned to court on behalf of Texas Leadership Public Schools or who, in the course of their professional duties, are summoned to court to testify to their actions, should request Court Leave. This leave should be coordinated with the employee's immediate supervisor and Human Resources.

Further, if an employee is summoned to court as a result of court orders, jury duty, or a subpoena, the employee should request Court Leave and supply their immediate supervisor and/or Human Resources with proper documentation.

Court Leave is paid leave that is not chargeable to the employee.

Absences for court appearances related to an employee's personal business do not qualify for Court Leave and will be deducted from personal leave balances.

Award Days

Award Days are days off given by District Administration to staff to recognize special circumstances. Staff will have one year from the date an Award Day is granted to use or it will no longer be available. These days were formerly known as Eagle or Tiger Days.

Jury Duty

Employees assigned to jury duty will be permitted to serve, but each employee must submit a copy of the jury summons to their immediate supervisor and/or Human Resources. Texas Leadership Public Schools will not discharge, discipline, reduce the salary of, or otherwise penalize or discriminate against an employee because of the employee's compliance with a summons to appear as a juror. For each regularly scheduled workday on which an employee serves in any phase of jury service, Texas Leadership shall pay the employee the employee's normal daily compensation. An employee's accumulated personal leave shall not be reduced because of the employee's service in compliance with a summons to appear as a juror.

These leave days shall not be accrued.

Local Leave

All fulltime employees shall be credited with all of their Local Leave days at the beginning of their work year. However, Local Leave days are accrued on a prorated basis and if the employee terminates employment prior to the end of their work year, they may owe TLPS for leave time that they used but did not actually earn.

Local Leave days shall not be accrued while on an unpaid leave nor from year-to-year.

If an employee works for an entire calendar year, the following schedule will be followed regarding Local Leave:

- On the first day of the 10-month work day calendar, all ten-month exempt employees and non-exempt employees (work less than 200 days) shall be credited with five Local Leave days.
- On September 1st, all eleven-month exempt employees and non-exempt employees (work more than 200 days but less than 220 days) shall be credited with six Local Leave days.
- On September 1st, all twelve-month exempt employees and non-exempt employees (work 220 days or more) shall be credited with ten Local Leave days.

Local Leave can be used for discretionary or unplanned time off work.

If an employee classified as a teacher has any Local Leave days remaining at the end of his/her work year, TLPS shall reimburse the employee fifty dollars ($50.00) for each remaining day and twenty-five dollars ($25.00) if there is a remaining half day—on their June paycheck.

State Leave

All full- and part-time employees shall be credited with all of their State Leave, up to a maximum of five days. State Leave days are accrued on a prorated basis and if the employee terminates employment prior to the end of their work year, the employee may owe TLPS for leave time that they used but did not actually earn.

State Leave days shall not be accrued while on an unpaid leave however, State Leave may be accrued from year-to-year with no cap as to a maximum number.

On September 1st, all employees will be credited with State Leave days. If your first day of work is after September 1st but before August 31st, you will be credited with State Leave days then.

State Leave can be used for planned and unplanned time off work.

Texas Leadership does recognize accrued State Leave from other organizations.

Personal Leave of Absence

If a full- or part-time employee is not eligible for leave under TLPS policy, the employee can submit a request, through his/her supervisor to Human Resources, for a Leave of Absence. The request must contain the reasons why, the date leave would begin, and an estimated date of when leave would end. It is the discretion of the supervisor and District Administration to approve or deny all/some/none of this request.

A Personal Leave of Absence may be requested for a maximum of ten work days and may begin only after all available accrued leave time is exhausted. Should circumstances change for the organization, District Administration may revoke a Personal Leave of Absence.

Voting Leave

Any employee who does not have two consecutive non-work hours while the polls are open on an election day will be given up to two hours off with pay in order to vote, unless more time is required by state law. The employee should notify their supervisor before Election Day if time off is needed, so that the timing of the employee's absence can be pre-arranged.

Military Leaves of Absence

TLPS is committed to protecting the rights of employees absent on military leave, and complying with all employment and reemployment rights granted under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 ("USERRA") and corresponding state military leave rights. Specifically, TLPS will not deny employment, reemployment, retention, promotion, or any benefit of employment based on an individual's membership, or application for membership, in the uniformed services. Furthermore, no person will be subjected to retaliation or adverse employment action because such person has exercised his or her rights under USERRA and corresponding state law. If any employee believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination in violation of this provision, the employee should immediately contact Human Resources.

Service members of the Texas military forces who are ordered to state active duty or to state training and other duty by the Governor, the Adjutant General, or another proper authority under Texas law are entitled to the same benefits and protections provided to persons performing service in the United States uniformed services.

Paid Time Off

Employees who are members of the United States uniformed services, including active duty, reserve, or National Guard, will have available up to fifteen days of Military Leave to use annually (September 1st to August 31st) for periods of training, active military service funeral honors duty, and time spent being examined to determine fitness to perform such service. The 15 days do not have to be consecutive.

Eligibility

Employees taking part in a variety of military duties are covered under this policy. This includes leaves of absence taken by members of the United States uniformed services, including active duty, reserve, or National Guard, for training, periods of active military service, funeral honors duty, and time spent being examined to determine fitness to perform such service. Subject to certain exceptions under the law, these benefits are generally limited to five years of leave of absence.

Procedures for Military Leaves of Absence

Employees must contact Human Resources to obtain a Military Leave of Absence form. Notice of the need for leave should be provided as far in advance as is reasonable under the circumstances, unless providing advance notice is prevented by military necessity or is otherwise impossible or unreasonable. Written notice is preferred, but not required under law.

The request needs to be accompanied by orders from the employee's military commander or unit citing the reason for the leave and enumerating the approximate number of days the employee will need Military Leave.

Human Resources will review the request for military leave of absence and issue written notice as to whether the request is approved.

Benefits
An employee on military leave is entitled to continuation of health insurance coverage as follows:

- Absences of 31 or more days: The employee may elect to continue coverage for up to 24 months or for the period of military service (including the time period allowed to reapply for reemployment), whichever is shorter. The employee may be required to contribute up to 102% of the overall (both employer and employee) premium. Upon reinstatement, the employee must be reinstated immediately into the health plan without any waiting periods or pre-existing condition exclusions.
- Absences of fewer than 31 days: The employee is entitled to coverage under the health benefits plan as if he or she were employed continuously. The employee must continue to pay his or her portion of the regular premium.
- If the employee is participating in TRS-ActiveCare, the employee must elect to continue participation in the plan. If the employee does not elect continuation, coverage will end on the last calendar day of the month in which the employee enters active, full-time military service.

Group term life insurance provided by TLPS will terminate the day the employee becomes active military. Group long-term disability insurance provided by TLPS will terminate the day the employee becomes active military. Voluntary supplemental insurance will terminate the day the employee becomes active military. Converting to an individual policy may continue voluntary dependent life insurance coverage.

With respect to any retirement plan sponsored by TLPS, employees who have taken military leave will be credited upon reemployment for purposes of vesting with the time spent in military service and will be treated as not having incurred a break in service. Upon reemployment, the employee may, at his or her election, make any or all employee contributions that the employee would have been eligible to make had employment not been interrupted by military service. Such contributions must be made within a period that begins with the individual's reemployment and that is not greater than three times the length of the employee's military service. Employees will also receive all TLPS matches for such contributions.

Please contact Human Resources for additional information on benefit continuation during a military leave of absence.

Employees on a military leave of absence may elect, at his or her option, to use paid leave available; the remainder of military leave will be unpaid. Employees will not accrue paid leave during periods of military leave.

Reemployment
To be entitled to reinstatement following military service, the following conditions must be satisfied:

- The employee provided TLPS notice of the need for military leave.
- The period of military service did not exceed five. Years. (Note: Some types of duty do not count against this five-year limit. Employees with disabilities have two years after their return dates—for purposes of recuperation and convalescence—to seek reemployment.)
- The employee was released under honorable conditions.
- The employee returned and reapplied for re-employment within the following time restrictions:
    - Leaves of fewer than 31 days: The employee must report to work on the first regularly scheduled work period following the completion of military service; no application is required.
    - Leaves of more than 31 but fewer than 180 days: The employee must apply for reinstatement within 14 days after completion of military service.
    - Leaves of more than 180 days: The employee must apply for reinstatement no more than 90 days after completion of military service.

When the employee returns from military service, he or she is entitled to return to the position the employee would have attained if he or she had not been called to uniformed service. In limited circumstances based on business necessities, reinstatement may not be possible.

A reemployment position includes the seniority, status, and rate of pay that an employee would ordinarily have attained in the position, given the employee's job history, if the employee had been continuously employed.

Protection from Discharge
Under USERRA, a reemployed employee may not be discharged without cause: (1) for one year after the date of reemployment if the person's period of military service was for 181 days or more; or (2) for 180 days after the date of reemployment if the person's period of military service was for 31 to 180 days. Persons who serve for 30 or fewer days of

military service are not protected from discharge without cause. Cause can be based on conduct or on job elimination. However, they are protected from discrimination because of military service or obligation.

General Benefits Upon Reemployment
Employees reemployed following military leave will receive seniority and other benefits determined by seniority that the employee had at the beginning of the military leave, plus any additional seniority and benefits the employee would have attained, with reasonable certainty, had the individual remained continuously employed. An employee's time spent on active military duty will be counted toward eligibility for FMLA leave.

Trade Days

Trade Days are designated by District Administration as days exchanged ("traded") only with non-exempt and exempt, instructional personnel for approved professional development training attended and successfully completed on unscheduled workdays.

Employees who work an 11-month or 12-month schedule are ineligible for Trade Days.

Catastrophic Illness/Injury-Donated State Leave Time

An employee who is suffering from a catastrophic injury or illness may be eligible to request that other employees donate a limited number of State Leave days to economically assist the injured/ill employee.

The following criteria must be met:

- As the result of an injury or illness, an employee must be unable to work for a minimum of 40 hours;
- That employee must have been employed by TLPS a minimum of six months at the time of injury/illness;
- The injured/ill employee must have exhausted all personal paid time off;
- The injured/ill employee or their supervisor may request of other TLPS employees a donation of accrued State Leave time.
- Employees interested in donating accrued State Leave time must have been employed by TLPS for one year at the time of donation.
- Employees will be allowed to donate no more than 1.0 accrued State Leave day per request.

For more information, contact Human Resources.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

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

NOTE: The following FMLA provisions and all references to FMLA in this Handbook and in school policy are applicable only to employees eligible for FMLA.

To be eligible for FMLA leave, an eligible employee must have been employed by TLPS:

- For at least 12 months (which need not be consecutive);
- For at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave; and
- Work at a location where the TLPS has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the employee's worksite.

Events that may Entitle Employees to FMLA Leave
An eligible employee shall be entitled to a total of 12 work weeks of leave during any 12-month period for one or more of the following:

- The birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- To bond with a child (leave must be taken within one year of the child's birth or placement);
- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a qualifying serious health condition;
- For the employee's own qualifying serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job; or

- For qualifying exigencies related to the deployment or military service of a family member who is the employee's spouse, child, or parent.

Service Member Family Leave
An employee may be eligible for up to 26 weeks of "Service Member Family Leave" if the employee's spouse, child, parent (not parents-in-law), or next of kin as defined by the Family Medical Leave Act, is a current member of the active duty Armed Forces (including National Guard or Reserves), or a member of the Armed Forces (including National Guard or Reserves) on the Temporary Disability Retired List, who is recovering from a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty, while on active duty for which he or she is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, therapy, in outpatient status, or otherwise on the Temporary Disability Retired List. (This does not include former members of the Armed Forces, former members of the National Guard and Reserves and members on the Permanent Disability Retirement List).

With respect to both Qualified Exigency and Service Member Family leave, employees may take the leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule. However, if an employee has accrued paid leave (vacation, sick, or personal leave), he or she must substitute any qualifying paid leave for unpaid leave first. "Qualifying paid leave" is leave that would otherwise be available to eligible employees for the purpose for which FMLA leave is taken. The remainder of the 26 workweeks of leave, if any, will be unpaid leave. Any paid leave used for an FMLA-qualifying reason will be charged against an employee's entitlement to FMLA leave. This includes leave for disability or workers' compensation injury/illness, provided that the leave meets FMLA requirements. The substitution of paid leave for unpaid leave does not extend the 26-workweek leave period.

Qualifying Exigency FMLA Leave
An employee may be entitled to Qualifying Exigency FMLA leave if the employee's spouse, child, or parent is in the National Guard, is a Reservist, or is retired military and is called to active duty, or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation as defined by federal law. The time spent in several specific activities, defined by law as "Qualifying Exigencies," may also be considered FMLA time. (This does not include those on the Permanent Disabled Retired List or Active-Duty Military).

Certification of Leave
The first time an employee requests Qualifying Exigency leave, TLPS will require the employee to provide a copy of the covered military member's active-duty orders or other documentation issued by the military that indicates that the covered military member is on active duty, or call to active-duty status in support of a contingency operation, and the dates of the covered military member's active-duty service.

In addition, each time an employee first requests leave for one of the Qualifying Exigencies, TLPS may require certification of the exigency necessitating leave. Certification supporting leave for a Qualifying Exigency includes: appropriate facts supporting the need for leave, including any available written documentation supporting the request; the date on which the Qualifying Exigency commenced or will commence, and the end date; where leave will be needed on an intermittent basis, the frequency and duration of the Qualifying Exigency; and appropriate contact information if the exigency involves meeting with a third-party.

Post-Deployment Activities
An employee may be entitled to take Qualifying Exigency leave for certain qualifying post-deployment exigencies, including reintegration activities, for a period of 90 days following the termination of the covered military member's active-duty status.

State calls to active duty are not covered unless under order of the President of the United States.

The Maximum Amount of FMLA Leave Within A 12-Month Period
Except as provided above, an employee is entitled up to 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during a 12-month period for any FMLA qualifying reason(s). The 12-month period is a rolling period measured backward from the last date the employee used any FMLA leave. An eligible employee who is eligible for Service Member Family Leave may take a maximum of only 26 weeks during a rolling 12-month period, even if the employee also qualifies for FMLA leave for a reason other than Service Member Family leave.

Limitations on FMLA Leave
Leave to care for a newborn, or for a newly placed adopted or foster child, must conclude within 12 months after the birth or placement of the child. When both spouses are employed by TLCA, they are entitled to a combined total of twelve 12 work weeks of FMLA leave within the designated 12-month period for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a

child, for aftercare of the newborn or newly placed child, and to care for a parent (but not in-law) with a serious health condition. Each spouse may be entitled to additional FMLA leave for other FMLA-qualifying reasons, but not more than a total of twelve 12 workweeks per person. For example, if each spouse took six weeks of leave to care for a newborn child, each could later use an additional six weeks due to his or her own serious health condition or to care for a parent or child with a serious health condition.

Intermittent or Reduced Work Schedule Leave
FMLA leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule under certain circumstances. "Intermittent leave" is FMLA leave taken in separate blocks of time due to a single qualifying reason. A "reduced leave schedule" is a leave schedule that reduces an employee's usual number of working hours per workweek, or hours per workday.

For leave taken because of the employee's own serious health condition, to care for a parent, son, or daughter with a serious health condition, or military caregiver leave, there must be a medical need for leave, and it must be that such medical need can be best accommodated through an intermittent or reduced leave schedule. Leave due to a Qualifying Exigency may also be taken on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis.

When leave is taken after the birth of a healthy child or placement of a healthy child for adoption or foster care, an eligible employee may take leave intermittently, or on a reduced leave schedule, only if the school agrees.

Transfer to an Alternative Position
If an employee requests intermittent or reduced schedule leave that is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, TLCA may require the employee to transfer temporarily to an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified, and which better accommodates recurring periods of leave than does the employee's regular position.

Calculating Leave Use
When an employee takes leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule, only the amount of leave actually taken may be counted toward the employee's leave entitlement. TLPS must account for intermittent or reduced schedule leave using an increment no greater than the shortest period of time that it uses to account for use of other forms of leave, provided the increment is not greater than one hour.

Request for FMLA Leave
Any absence of more than five workdays for an illness or medical condition may be designated FMLA leave and will require appropriate documentation. Employees should request FMLA leave by notifying their immediate supervisor or Human Resources, and must complete the Department of Labor's form WH-380-E or WH-380-F (as appropriate), available from the Department of Labor or Human Resources. Completed forms shall be returned to Human Resources.

Employees must provide 30 days' advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When such notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable, and generally must comply with the school's call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions; the family member is unable to perform daily activities; the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider; or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the Human Resources if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

Required Documentation for Birth, Adoption, or Health-Related FMLA Leave
When leave is taken to care for a family member, TLPS will require employees to provide documentation or a statement of a family relationship (birth certificate or court document). The employee may be required to submit medical certification from a health care provider to support a request for FMLA leave for his or her or a family member's serious health condition. Medical certification forms are available from the main office.

If TLPS deems the medical certification to be incomplete or insufficient, the school will specify, in writing, what information is lacking, and the employee will have seven calendar days to cure the deficiency. It is the employee's responsibility to provide a complete and sufficient certification. Such failure to provide complete and sufficient certification, despite the opportunity to cure any deficiency, may lead to denial of FMLA leave. TLPS may (a) have a designated health care provider or Human Resources (but in no case the employee's direct supervisor) contact the employee's health care provider in an effort to clarify or authenticate the initial certification if the school has reason to doubt an employee's initial certification; and/or (b) require the employee to obtain a second opinion by an independent

provider at TLCA's designation and expense. If the initial and second certifications differ, TLPS may, at its expense, require the employee to obtain a third, final and binding certification from a jointly selected health care provider.

During FMLA leave, TLPS may request that the employee provide recertification of a serious health condition, at intervals, in accordance with the FMLA. In addition, during FMLA leave, the employee must provide the school with periodic reports regarding his or her status and intent to return to work. If the employee's anticipated return to work date changes, and it becomes necessary for the employee to take more or less leave than originally anticipated, he or she must provide the school with reasonable notice (within two business days) of such changed circumstances and new return to work date. If the employee gives notice of such intent not to return to work, he or she will be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

Before an employee returns to work from FMLA leave for his or her own serious health condition, the employee will be required to submit a fitness-for-duty certification from his or her health care provider with respect to the condition for which the leave was taken, stating that the employee is able to perform the essential functions of his or her job. Where a reasonable job safety concern exists, TLPS may require a fitness-for-duty certification before an employee's return to work from intermittent leave.

FMLA leave or return to work may be delayed or denied if the appropriate documentation is not provided in a timely manner. Also, a failure to provide requested documentation of the reason for an absence from work may lead to termination of employment.

Use of Paid and Unpaid Leave
FMLA provides eligible employees with up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave, except as described above. However, if an employee has any accrued State Leave, Local Leave, or unused Award Days, s/he must use that accrued and unused time concurrently with FMLA Leave time. The order of use will be Local Leave, Award Days, then State Leave. The remainder of the FMLA leave will be unpaid. **However, should an eligible employee take a leave of absence for a pregnancy-related issue, birth, or adoption of a child, they may opt-out of using their accrued paid leave concurrently with their leave of absence and may save it for later use. This will need to be communicated to Human Resources upon request of the leave of absence.** Any paid leave used for an FMLA-qualifying reason will be charged against the employee's entitlement to FMLA leave. This includes leave for disability or workers' compensation injury/illness, provided that the leave meets FMLA requirements. The use of paid leave for unpaid leave does not extend the 12-workweek period. During the period that an employee takes an unpaid leave of absence, including FMLA, he or she is not eligible to accrue paid time off benefits. Accruals will resume upon the employee's return to work.

Designation of Leave
Human Resources will notify an employee that his or her leave has been designated as FMLA leave within five business days, absent extenuating circumstances, of the School's determination that leave is for an FMLA qualifying reason. If an employee has not notified the school of the reason for the leave, and desires that leave be counted as FMLA leave, he or she must notify Human Resources within two business days of returning to work that the leave was for an FMLA reason.

Special Rules for Instructional Employees
Special rules may apply to certain employees of charter schools. These special rules affect leave taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule, or taken near the end of an academic term (semester) by instructional employees.

"Instructional employees" are those whose primary job is to teach and instruct students in a class, a small group, or an individual setting. This term includes not only teachers, but also athletic coaches and special education assistants such as signers for the hearing impaired. It does not include teacher assistants or aides whose primary job is not actual teaching or instructing, nor does it include auxiliary personnel such as counselors, psychologists, or curriculum specialists. It also does not include food service workers, maintenance workers, custodial workers, or bus drivers.

Failure to Provide Notice of Foreseeable Leave
If an instructional employee does not give required notice of foreseeable leave to be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule, TLPS may require the employee to take leave of a particular duration or to transfer temporarily to an alternative position. Alternatively, TLPS may require the employee to delay the taking of leave until the notice provision is met.

Twenty Percent (20%) Rule
If an eligible instructional employee needs intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule to care for a family member with a serious health condition, to care for a covered service member, or for the employee's own serious health condition; the leave is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment; and the employee would be on leave for more

than 20% of the total number of working days over the period the leave would extend, the school may require the employee to choose:

- To take leave for a period or periods of a particular duration, not greater than the duration of the planned treatment; or
- To transfer temporarily to an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified, which has equivalent pay and benefits and which better accommodates recurring periods of leave than does the employee's regular position.

"Periods of a particular duration" means a block or blocks of time beginning no earlier than the first day for which leave is needed and ending no later than the last day on which leave is needed, and may include one uninterrupted period of leave. If an employee chooses to take leave for "periods of a particular duration" in the case of intermittent or reduced schedule leave, the entire period of leave taken will count as FMLA leave.

Leave at the End of a Semester
As a rule, TLCA may not require an employee to take more FMLA leave than the employee needs. The FMLA recognizes exceptions where instructional employees begin leave near the end of a semester. As set forth below, the school may, in certain cases, require the employee to take leave until the end of the semester.

The school semester, or "academic term," typically ends near the end of the calendar year and the end of spring each school year. In no case may a school have more than two academic terms or semesters each year for purposes of the FMLA.

If TLPS requires the employee to take leave until the end of the semester, only the period of leave until the employee is ready and able to return to work shall be charged against his or her FMLA leave entitlement. Any additional leave required by the school to the end of the semester is not counted as FMLA leave; however, TLCA shall maintain the employee's group health insurance and restore the employee to the same or equivalent job, including other benefits, at the end of the leave.

More Than Five Weeks Before the End of the Semester
TLPS may require an instructional employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester if:

- The employee begins leave more than five weeks before the end of the semester;
- The leave will last at least three weeks; and
- The employee would return to work during the three-week period before the end of the semester.

During Last Five Weeks of the Semester
TLPS may require an instructional employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester if:

- The employee begins leave during the last five weeks of the semester for any reason other than the employee's own serious health condition or a Qualifying Exigency;
- The leave will last more than two weeks; and
- The employee would return to work during the two-week period before the end of the semester.

During Last Three Weeks of the Semester
TLPS may require an instructional employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester if the employee begins leave during the three-week period before the end of the semester for any reason other than the employee's own serious health condition or a Qualifying Exigency.

Maintenance of Health Benefits
During FMLA leave, employees are entitled to continue group health plan coverage under the same conditions as if they had continued to work. To the extent that FMLA leave is paid, the employee's portion of health insurance premiums will be deducted from their salary. For the portion of FMLA leave that is unpaid, an employee's portion of health insurance premiums must be paid in accordance with the School's rules for leave without pay. If payment of health insurance premiums is more than 30 days late, TLPS may discontinue health insurance coverage upon notice to the employee.

Determining Accrued Leave Time
When an employee begins an approved unpaid leave of absence or terminates employment, Human Resources shall determine how much paid time off the employee has actually accrued. The employee must comply with the use of paid

and unpaid leave described above and once out of accrued leave, the employee's leave will be unpaid. In the case of a leave of absence, when the employee returns to work, leave time will be calculated in the same manner as an employee who is hired after the beginning of the work year.

Salary Action
The length of the leave will delay any planned, but not implemented, salary increase for a period equal to an employee's leave of absence, including FMLA.

Return from FMLA Leave
Upon return from FMLA leave, the employee will be placed in the same position he or she held before the leave, or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Limitations on Reinstatement
An employee is entitled to reinstatement only if he or she would have continued to be employed had FMLA leave not been taken. Thus, an employee is not entitled to reinstatement if, because of a layoff, reduction in force or other reason, he or she would not be employed at the time job restoration is sought.

TLPS reserves the right to deny reinstatement to salaried, FMLA eligible key employees, as that term is defined in law, if such denial is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the operations of the School.

Failure to Return to Work Following FMLA Leave
If an employee does not return to work following the conclusion of FMLA leave, he or she will be considered to have voluntarily resigned. TLPS may recover from the employee such portion of health insurance premiums that were paid on the employee's behalf during any unpaid FMLA leave. Recovery may be made through deductions from any outstanding sums due to the employee, except where prohibited by federal or state law, or through legal action against the employee.

For further information or clarification about FMLA leave, please contact Human Resources.

For information or to file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Labor (DOL) by contacting them at 1-866-487-9243 or by visiting www.wagehour.dol.gov.

Employee Conduct and Relationships

The successful operation and reputation of TLPS is built upon the principles of ethical conduct of our employees. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

TLPS will comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including its charter agreement with the State of Texas, and expects all employees to conduct their work in accordance with relevant law and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest or unethical conduct. Neither the Board of Directors nor any TLPS employee shall retaliate against a person who in good faith reports perceived illegal, dishonest or unethical conduct.

In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide you with respect to lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, discuss the matter with your immediate supervisor and, if necessary, Human Resources.

Every employee is responsible for complying with the School's policy of proper business ethics and personal conduct. Disregarding or failing to comply with these standards may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Standards of Conduct

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

- Engage in professional communications and behavior toward students, fellow employees, service providers, and other TLPS stakeholders.
- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels and the chain of command.

- Know and comply with department and school policies and procedures.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers, as required by applicable law.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Use TLPS time, funds, and property for authorized school business and activities only.

All employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, TLPS policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Additionally, TLPS will report educator and employee misconduct as required by applicable law.

Code of Ethics

TLPS expects all employees — whether certified educators or other staff — to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest professional standards. While the formal Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators applies to certified educators, TLPS incorporates these standards into this Employee Handbook to establish clear expectations for the conduct of all staff members in their interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and the community. Violation of these standards may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Ethical Conduct in General

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

Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices and Performance:

- Standard 1.1: An employee shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of TLPS, an educator preparation program, the TEA, or the SBEC and its certification process.
- Standard 1.2: An employee shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.
- Standard 1.3: An employee shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.
- Standard 1.4: An employee shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.
- Standard 1.5: An employee shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.
- Standard 1.6: An employee shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.
- Standard 1.7: An employee shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal laws.
- Standard 1.8: An employee shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.
- Standard 1.9: An employee shall not make threats of violence against school employees, members of the Board of Directors, students, or parents of students.
- Standard 1.10: An employee shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state, as applicable.
- Standard 1.11: An employee shall not intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.
- Standard 1.12: An employee shall refrain from the illegal use, abuse, or distribution of controlled substances, prescription drugs, and toxic inhalants.
- Standard 1.13: An employee shall not be under the influence of alcohol or consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.
- Standard 1.14: The educator shall comply with the prohibitions on diversity, equity, and inclusion duties in Texas Education Code (TEC) § 11.005. This standard applies to all TLPS employees. Charters are subject to TEC § 11.005.

- Standard 1.15: The educator shall comply with the prohibitions on assistance with social transitioning in TEC § 11.401.
- Standard 1.16: The educator shall comply with the restrictions on instruction regarding sexual orientation and gender identity in TEC § 28.0043. This standard applies to all TLPS employees. Charters are subject to TEC § 28.0043.
- Standard 1.17: The educator shall comply with the requirements to provide full information to a parent concerning a student in TEC § 26.008.
- Standard 1.18: The educator shall not promote, advocate, or encourage, in a manner that is reasonably accessible or visible to students, illegal conduct:
  (i) described by TEC § 22A.201(a); or
  (ii) directly related to student behavior or school property.

  This standard applies to all TLPS employees.

Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues

- Standard 2.1: An employee shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
- Standard 2.2: An employee shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.
- Standard 2.3: An employee shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.
- Standard 2.4: An employee shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.
- Standard 2.5: An employee shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.
- Standard 2.6: An employee shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.
- Standard 2.7: An employee shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation in accordance with applicable laws or regulations.
- Standard 2.8: An employee shall not intentionally or knowingly subject a colleague to sexual harassment.

Ethical Conduct Toward Students

- Standard 3.1: An employee shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
- Standard 3.2: An employee shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.
- Standard 3.3: An employee shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.
- Standard 3.4: An employee shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.
- Standard 3.5: An employee shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.
- Standard 3.6: An employee shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.
- Standard 3.7: An employee shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the employee is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the employee is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.
- **Standard 3.8: The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard. Factors that may be considered in context and on the totality of the circumstances in assessing whether appropriate boundaries were maintained include, but are not limited to:**
  (i) physical proximity or physical contact beyond the professional role or that the student has indicated is unwelcome, unless such contact is professionally required;
  (ii) contacting or meeting the student beyond the professional role or making efforts to gain access to or time alone with a student with no discernible professional purpose;
  (iii) transporting the student without permission from the student's legal guardian or in violation of school board policy, unless for an emergency;

(iv) taking or possessing a photo or video of the student beyond the professional role or in violation of school board policy; and
(v) showing favoritism or isolation through gifts, rewards, or privileges.

This standard applies to all TLPS employees.

- **Standard 3.9: The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in context and on the totality of the circumstances in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:**
  (i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
  (ii) the subject matter of the communication;
  (iii) whether the communication was made openly, or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
  (iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
  (v) whether the communication was sexually explicit;
  (vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student; and
  (vii) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as threatening the welfare and/or safety of the student.

  This standard applies to all TLPS employees.

Financial Ethics

TLPS prohibits fraud and financial impropriety in the actions of its directors, employees, vendors, contractors, consultants, volunteers, and others seeking or maintaining a business relationship with TLPS.

Fraud and financial impropriety shall include but not be limited to:

- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to TLPS, except as otherwise permitted by law or TLPS policy;
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by law or TLPS policy;
- Failure to provide financial records required by state or local entities;
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document;
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to TLPS;
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of TLPS's financial transactions;
- Inappropriately destroying, removing, or using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment;
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other school assets, including employee time;
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of school information or activities;
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties;
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by TLPS; or
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of TLPS.

Any person who suspects fraud or financial impropriety shall report the suspicions immediately to any supervisor, the Superintendent or designee, the Board President, or local law enforcement.

TLPS will respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation or to comply with applicable law. All employees involved in an investigation shall be advised to keep information about the investigation confidential to the extent necessary as to not interfere with the investigation process.

Neither the Board of Directors nor any TLPS employee shall unlawfully retaliate against a person who in good faith reports perceived fraud or financial impropriety.

If an employee is found to have committed fraud or financial impropriety, the Superintendent or designee or the Board of Directors shall take or recommend appropriate disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment and, when circumstances warrant, referral to appropriate law enforcement or regulatory authorities.

Mutual Respect

Each member of the TLPS community is expected to treat other community members with civility and respect. Demeaning, intimidating, threatening, bullying, or violent behaviors that affect the ability to learn or work in the school environment depart from the standard for civility and respect and have no place in the TLPS community.

Employees are expected to refrain from fighting, "horseplay," or other conduct that may be dangerous to others. Firearms, weapons, and other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances are at all times prohibited without proper authorization.

Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, student, or member of the public at any time, including off-duty periods, will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes all acts of harassment.

All threats of (or actual) violence, both direct and indirect, should be reported as soon as possible to your immediate supervisor or any other member of management. This includes threats by employees, students, vendors, solicitors, or other members of the public. When reporting a threat of violence, please be specific and as detailed as possible.

All suspicious individuals or activities should be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor. Do not attempt to interfere in a disturbance unless it is reasonably safe to do so.

TLPS will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports or threats of violence and suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as is practical. In order to maintain workplace safety, and the integrity of its investigation, the organization may place employees on paid or unpaid administrative leave, pending investigation. Anyone determined to be responsible for actual or threats of violence or other conduct that is in violation of these guidelines will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Conflicts of Interest

Employees have an obligation to conduct business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative as a result of Texas Leadership's business dealings and operations.

Contact Human Resources for questions about conflicts of interest.

All TLPS employees shall avoid employment, financial, business, social, or other relationships that might be opposed to the interests of TLPS or might create the appearance of impropriety, or might cause a conflict with the performance of their duties. Employees shall at all times conduct themselves in a manner that avoids even the appearance of conflict between their personal interests and those of TLPS.

Conflict of interest situations may arise in many ways. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Employment with a vendor/contractor, regardless of the nature of the employment, while employed by TLPS.
2. Contract award with a vendor in which an employee or his or her family have a substantial ownership or management interest.
3. Ownership of, or substantial interest in, a company that is a supplier of TLPS.
4. Acting independently as a consultant to a TLPS supplier.
5. Accepting expense-paid invitations to sports or entertainment events from a long-time friend who is also a TLPS vendor.
6. Socializing with vendors or persons interested in doing business with TLPS under circumstances that create the appearance of impropriety.

Any employee who may have a conflict situation, actual or potential, shall report all pertinent details in writing to his or her supervisor. If the proper resolution is not apparent to the supervisor, the supervisor shall refer the matter to the Superintendent of Schools or designee for resolution. If a conflict of interest develops accidentally or unexpectedly, the matter shall be reported to the supervisor immediately.

Nothing in this policy is meant to interfere with the School's desire to encourage staff members to take part in civic, church, and other public services where opportunities to exhibit good citizenship are present.

Employment of Relatives and Fraternization

TLPS is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to its employees. Intimate relationships have the potential to interfere with the District's ability to provide equal employment opportunities for its employees and, in some instances, may constitute sexual harassment or other unlawful discrimination. To minimize potential conflicts of interest, Texas Leadership strongly discourages its employees from entering into intimate relationships with other employees.

Unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent, if two employees marry, become relatives of each other or enter into an intimate relationship, they shall not remain in a professional supervisory relationship. Texas Leadership will, at its discretion, attempt to identify other available positions, and allow one or both employees to apply for reassignment, or the organization may reassign the employees at its discretion. If no alternate position is available, Texas Leadership may terminate either of the employees at its discretion.

While relatives of employees or the Board of Directors may be employed by Texas Leadership in accordance with applicable law, a familial relationship among employees can also create an actual, or at least a potential, conflict of interest in the employment setting, especially where one relative has professional supervisory responsibility over another relative. Additionally, the organization may not employ relatives of the Superintendent if the Superintendent has final hiring authority over the position sought, unless the relative of the Superintendent was hired prior to September 1, 2013.

Texas Leadership may refuse to hire or assign a relative in a position where the appearance of, or potential for, favoritism or conflict exists. Employees shall also refrain from making hiring, termination, or other decisions impacting the terms or conditions of employment of relatives. Where hardship exists, employees may appeal to Human Resources.

In cases where a conflict or the potential for conflict arises between employees, even if there is no professional supervisory responsibility involved, the parties may be separated by reassignment to another position or terminated from employment, at the discretion of Texas Leadership.

For the purposes of this section, a "relative" is any person who is related by blood or marriage or whose relationship with the employee is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

Nothing in this policy is meant to interfere with the organization's desire to encourage staff members to take part in civic, church, and other public services where opportunities to exhibit good citizenship are present.

Outside Employment
All employees must recognize that they owe a duty of loyalty to TLPS. At all times when on duty, without regard to time or place, employees should devote their full attention to the School's business and their duties. Additionally, employees should not be engaged in outside employment that provides or could give rise to a conflict of interest or directly interferes with the employee's performance at TLPS. For purposes of this prohibition, "employment" includes employment with another organization, consulting, or self-employment, whether on a voluntary basis or for pay.

Full-time and part-time employees who wish to engage in any form of outside employment that would create a potential or actual conflict of interest must have written permission from their immediate supervisor to engage in the outside employment.

TLPS prohibits the performance of non-school work while on the job or with TLPS equipment and/or supplies.

Non-Disclosure
The protection of confidential business information and trade secrets is vital to the interests and the success of TLPS. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Curriculum systems;
- Instructional programs;
- Curriculum solutions;
- Student course work;
- Compensation data;
- Computer processes;
- Computer programs and codes;
- New materials research;
- Pending projects and proposals;
- Proprietary production processes;
- Research and development strategies;
- Technological data; and
- Technological prototypes.

An employee who improperly uses or discloses trade secrets or confidential business information belonging to TLPS will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and legal action, even if the employee does

not actually benefit from the disclosed information. This does not include any disclosure of otherwise confidential business information or trade secrets in accordance with the TPIA, Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code, or other applicable federal or state law.

Fraud, Dishonesty and False Statements
No employee or applicant may ever falsify any application, medical history record, student paperwork, employee paperwork, time sheet, timecard, investigative questionnaires or any other document. Any employee found to have engaged in résumé fraud, or who made material misrepresentations or omissions on their employment application, will be subject to immediate termination of employment. Violations of this policy should be immediately reported to the appropriate supervisor.

Insubordination
All employees have duties to perform. It is against TLPS policy for an employee to refuse to follow the directions of a supervisor or other school official. Employees must cooperate fully with investigations into potential misconduct. Refusal to disclose information during the course of an investigation constitutes insubordination and is subject to possible disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

In the event a supervisor directs an employee to perform an illegal or immoral act/task, the employee should immediately notify the Principal or designee.

Personal Business
Conducting personal business, such as writing of personal letters, planning personal social affairs, selling, and soliciting for personal reasons, during regular business hours are discouraged.

Dress Code

The TLPS dress code policy is designed to assist with providing a consistent professional appearance to our colleagues, students, and community. Our appearance reflects on ourselves and the school. The goal is to be sure that we maintain a positive appearance when representing the organization.

Employees are expected to dress in an appropriate manner according to the role they fill within the organization. Unless exempted, all employees are expected to dress in casual business attire unless the day's task dictates otherwise. All attire must be free of holes, tears, inappropriate designs/stamps, and may not be too revealing. Clothing and grooming styles may be exempt as dictated by religion or ethnicity.

Tattoos: May be visible below the collar line (mid-neck) provided they are not offensive or vulgar in nature. Tattoos that contain offensive words, messages, slogans, pictures, including but not limited to those displaying nudity, sexual acts, alcohol, or may be perceived to be gang-related shall be covered and not visible while on duty or representing the school.

Piercings: Reasonably sized earrings may be worn in each ear. A single inconspicuous stud or ring may be displayed in one nostril. (The septum is not part of the nostril.) Objects, articles, jewelry (including earlobe expanders), or ornamentation of any kind shall not be inserted, attached to or through the skin if visible on the tongue, any part of the mouth, lips, cheek, or eyebrow. Any non-conforming piercing insert shall be removed, covered, or replaced with a clear insert.

The employee's supervisor/campus administrator will be responsible for determining whether a visible tattoo and piercing are within acceptable guidelines.

Jeans and/or t-shirts are not allowed except on days designated by District Administration. However, jeans and school-sponsored (spirit) t-shirts may be worn on days designated by Campus Administration.

No jogging suits should be worn in the classroom except for physical education class. The exception is that physical education staff members may choose to wear appropriate attire approved by Campus Administration during the physical education instructional period only.

Men's Attire:
Collared shirts are required. Ties, sport jackets, or suits are optional. Shirts shall be pressed, buttoned, and tucked in unless wearing a smart casual shirt. Smart casual shirts are designed to be worn untucked and the length should be halfway between the belt and the bottom of the zipper but, in any event, shall not fall below the zipper.

Men's facial hair should be neatly groomed.

Women's Attire:
No casual or cargo pants are allowed. Capris or slacks should be a modest length (not above the knee). Skirts may be no more than one inch above the knee. Stretchy pants, yoga pants, danskins, leotards, etc. are not allowed. Halter-tops, tank tops, spaghetti strapped shirts/dresses, bare midriff tops, open sleeved shirts, any blouses exposing cleavage are also not allowed. Sandals are permitted with the exception of flip flops.

Employees with inappropriate clothing may be asked to change clothing.

The employee's supervisor/campus administrator will be responsible for determining whether a member of staff is within dress code. Should an employee wish to appeal their supervisor/campus administrator's decision, they may appeal to District Administration through the Human Resources Director. The decision made by District Administration shall be final.

Texas Leadership staff attending training events off campus, such as training or conferences, shall dress in a professional manner.

Bottom line: If in question, do not wear it.

The TLPS dress and grooming policy does not discriminate on the basis of an employee's hair texture or protective hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race.

Staff Identification Card/Badges

Staff will display their school issued identification card/badge in an easy to see location on their person while they are on school property during normal business hours. The card/badge will also be displayed in an easy to see location on their person if accompanying students in an official capacity to a school sponsored function whether on or off school property. (The card/badge shall be visible to passers-by.)

Meal Breaks

Full-time non-exempt employees who work a minimum of six hours in one day may take a 30- or 60-minute unpaid meal break, depending on their assigned work schedule. Part-time non-exempt employees may take a 30-minute unpaid meal break if they are scheduled to work a minimum of six hours in one day. During their meal break, non-exempt employees will be relieved from all job duties.

Participation in Social Networking Sites

Employees have a right to participate in social networking sites, blogs, forums, wikis, etc. as individuals in the community; however, employees should not post anything (through written messages, images, or videos) that would violate student confidentiality or the professionalism and ethical conduct expected of Texas Leadership employees, or that would negatively impact the perception of the employee's ability to be effective in their employment capacity, or that uses images or intellectual property of TLPS. Postings that are considered inappropriate may be addressed by TLPS and could have an impact on an individual's employment status.

Employees are encouraged to adhere to the following guidelines when engaging in activity on social media:

1. Be respectful of the privacy and dignity of your co-workers, and do not post student photographs without appropriate authority.
2. Do not "friend" students on your personal social media page unless you have an appropriate out-of-school relationship with the student such as relatives, church, scouts, or other activity that would be appropriate for such informal communication.
3. Do not create a link from your blog, website, or other social networking site to a TLPS website without identifying yourself as a school employee.
4. Do not infringe on TLPS' logos, taglines, slogans, trademarks, or other symbols.
5. Harassing, obscene, defamatory, threatening, or other offensive content must be avoided.
6. Maintain the confidentiality of TLPS trade secrets and private or confidential information concerning school employees, students, and/or agents that is obtained from TLPS files or records in the course of employment. Do not post internal reports or other business-related confidential communications.
7. Respect all copyright and other intellectual property laws. For the School's protection, as well as your own, it is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright, fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, trademarks, and other intellectual property, including TLPS' own copyrights, trademarks, and brands.

8. The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using TLPS computers, network, or equipment.
9. The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, meal times, and before and after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct school business.

If an employee's use of social media violates state or federal law or TLPS policy, or interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties or adversely impacts TLPS and its service to students and parents (as solely determined by TLPS), the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Unacceptable Employee Conduct

Employees are expected to follow all laws, policies, regulations, terms and conditions of employment and directives of TLPS. The School expects its employees to act in a mature, professional and responsible manner. The following is a non-exclusive list of prohibited employee conduct. Employees who engage in any conduct listed below are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. This is not intended to be a complete list, and it does not alter the contractual or at-will employment relationship between employees and TLPS.

1. Abuse, including but not limited to sexual abuse, of a student.
2. Behaviors that interfere with a student's safety or cause an unsafe environment.
3. Corporal punishment (meaning the infliction of physical pain by hitting, paddling, spanking, slapping, or any other physical force used as a means of discipline) or verbal abuse of students, or the use of profanity or other language that is intended to belittle or degrade a student.
4. Creating, producing, distributing, sharing, or showing to others by electronic means a deep fake image or video that appears to depict a person (including but not limited to a TLPS student or employee) with the person's intimate parts exposed or engaged in sexual conduct.
5. Dishonest, immoral, or illegal conduct while on duty and/or on school property that would tend to bring discredit to TLPS.
6. Dishonesty, falsification or misrepresentation on an application for employment or other work records; falsifying reasons for leave of absence or other data requested by TLPS and/or alteration of TLPS records or documents.
7. Disrupting the work environment.
8. Engaging in an act of sabotage; willful or with negligence causing the destruction or damage of TLPS property, or the property of fellow employees, volunteers, contractors, or visitors, in any manner.
9. Engaging in discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in any form.
10. Engaging in inappropriate electronic communications with students, as described in this Handbook.
11. Engaging in malicious gossip, spreading rumors, or otherwise engaging in behavior designed to create discord and lack of harmony or otherwise interfere with the job performance of fellow employees or service providers.
12. Engaging in or soliciting a romantic, sexual, or otherwise inappropriate relationship with a student, regardless of whether the relationship is consensual.
13. Engaging in rudeness, disrespectful, or unprofessional behavior toward parents and school contractors or vendors.
14. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness.
15. Failure to report child abuse or neglect as required by Chapter 261 of the Texas Family Code.
16. Fighting or threatening violence toward anyone on TLPS property or when representing TLPS, including "horseplay" or provoking a fight between others.
17. Giving to other schools, organizations, or persons information made confidential by law and/or proprietary TLPS information that is obtained from TLPS files or records in the course of employment.
18. Giving to other schools, organizations, or persons information relating to TLPS employees and/or students that is obtained from TLPS files or records in the course of employment.
19. Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct (including refusal to follow the lawful directives of a supervisor or the Superintendent).
20. Negligence or any careless action that endangers the life or safety of another person, or damages or destroys property of TLPS.
21. Possession of firearms, weapons or explosives on TLPS property, while on duty or while representing TLPS.
22. Smoking and/or using tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, vaping devices, or similar devices on school property or in school vehicles. Prohibited items include any electronic cigarette or any other device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling from the device, as well as any and all vapors, inhalants, electronic cigarette devices or other devices or paraphernalia used with vapors, other inhalants or chemicals.
23. Theft of school-owned property or the property of fellow employees, students, contractors or visitors.

24. Threatening, intimidating or coercing fellow employees on or off TLPS property, at any time, for any reason.
25. Unauthorized possession or removal of any TLPS property, including documents, from the premises without prior permission from a supervisor;
26. Unauthorized use of TLPS equipment or property, including using such equipment for personal use or profit.
27. Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.
28. Use, possession, sale of, or being under the influence of a controlled substance, alcohol, or tobacco as further described in this Handbook, or abusing a prescription drug, while at work or otherwise representing TLPS.
29. Violation of the rules affecting the health and safety of students and the efforts of TLPS to operate efficiently and effectively.
30. Violations of TLPS expectations for employee conduct, including but not limited to those set out in this Handbook, or as otherwise distributed to employees by TLPS. Additionally, employees must adhere to the Professional Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators as set forth at 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 247.2.

School Investigations

When TLPS investigates a complaint of misconduct, including but not limited to complaints of student abuse or any type of discrimination or harassment, it expects and requires the cooperation of all employees including the complainant, witnesses, and the accused. During an investigation, TLPS may interview employees privately and take oral and/or written statements from them. Any employee who fails to cooperate with such an investigation or to provide complete and truthful information may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment.

Reporting an Educator's Misconduct

The Superintendent shall promptly notify the SBEC by filing a written report (within seven days of first learning about an alleged incident of misconduct) with the TEA upon obtaining knowledge or information indicating any of the following circumstances:

1. That an educator, applicant for, or holder of an educator's certificate has a reported criminal history, and TLPS learned of the criminal record by means other than the criminal history clearinghouse established by the TDPS.
2. That an educator or certificate holder was terminated and there is evidence that the educator:
    a. Abused or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor;
    b. Was involved in a romantic relationship or solicited or engaged in sexual conduct with a student or minor;
    c. Possessed, transferred, sold, or distributed a controlled substance;
    d. Illegally transferred, appropriated, or expended school property or funds;
    e. Attempted by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle the individual to be employed in a position requiring such a certificate or permit or to receive additional compensation associated with a position; or
    f. Committed a crime or any part of a crime while on school property or at a school-sponsored event.
3. That a certificate holder resigned and reasonable evidence supported a recommendation to terminate the individual because he or she committed one of the acts specified in paragraph 2 above.
4. That an educator engaged in conduct that violated the assessment instrument security procedures established by Education Code 39.0301.

Additionally, the Principal shall promptly notify the Superintendent within seven days of obtaining knowledge or information of (1) an educator's termination of employment or resignation following an alleged incident of misconduct described in items one, two, three, or four above; or (2) learning of an educator's criminal record by means other than a criminal history clearinghouse report.

In accordance with state law, the Superintendent must complete an investigation of an educator that involves evidence that the educator may have engaged in abuse or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor, or was involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor, despite the educator's resignation from employment before the completion of the investigation. If the educator is arrested and law enforcement requests that the school cease its investigation and the Superintendent is unable to complete the investigation, the Superintendent is still required to timely report to SBEC that the investigation was interrupted at the request of law enforcement.

Pursuant to Education Code § 21.006(c-2), the Superintendent may not be required to notify SBEC or file a report with SBEC if the Superintendent completes an investigation into the alleged incident of misconduct **before** the educator's termination or resignation (not after) and the Superintendent determines the educator did not engage in the alleged incident of misconduct. The Superintendent should seek legal counsel before making any such determination, and if there is any doubt or concern, err on the side of reporting to SBEC.

TLPS shall provide notice to the parent or guardian of a student with whom an educator is alleged to have engaged in misconduct in accordance with state law. The Superintendent or designee shall also notify the Board of Directors and the educator of the filing of the report.

Prior to the start of employment, applicants must complete the Pre-Employment Affidavit form, as published by the TEA, disclosing whether the applicant has been charged with, adjudicated for, or convicted of having an inappropriate relationship with a minor.

Reporting Employee Misconduct (Non-Educators)

In addition to any reporting requirements under Chapter 261 of the Texas Family Code, the Superintendent shall notify the Commissioner of Education, within seven business days, after knowing of an non-educator's termination or resignation if:

1. A non-educator's employment with TLPS was terminated and there is evidence that the employee:
    a. Abused or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor; or
    b. Was involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor; or
2. The employee resigned and there is evidence that the employee engaged in misconduct described above.

This reporting requirement applies to any person who is employed by TLPS and who does not hold a certification or permit issued under Subchapter B, Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code.

The Superintendent shall complete an investigation of an employee that involves evidence that the employee may have engaged in misconduct described above, despite the employee's resignation from employment before completion of the investigation.

Principals must notify the Superintendent within seven business days after the date of an employee's termination or resignation following an alleged incident of misconduct described above.

Growth Plan/Disciplinary Action

Employment with TLPS is based on mutual consent and both the employee and TLPS have the right to terminate employment at-will, with or without cause or advance notice. TLPS may use progressive discipline at its discretion.

Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

1. Verbal warning.
2. Conference with a supervisor and/or the Principal.
3. Written warning.
4. Imposition of an employee growth plan / performance improvement plan.
5. Suspension with or without pay.
6. Termination of employment.

The progression of these steps depends upon the severity of the problem and the number of occurrences. There may also be circumstances when one or more steps are bypassed.

Operations

Facility Requests

A calendar request form must be filled out and submitted for all events scheduled to occur on any TLPS campus. This includes events that are scheduled before a school day begins or ends. During a school day, employees must submit a request to use any portion of a facility (including fields), that is not his/her classroom, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Employees may not use any facility that is not his/her classroom for any reason unless he/she has received prior administrative approval. All calendar and facility requests must be submitted in writing at least two weeks in advance of the event or activity. Calendar Request forms can be obtained by contacting the campus administrator or his/her designee.

The procedure to reserve a facility for an event is as follows:

1. Complete an electronic request form at least two weeks prior to the event.
2. E-mail the completed form to the appropriate campus administrator or his/her designee for approval.
3. The campus administrator (or designee) will schedule events and reserve facilities based on the information contained in the request form.
4. Please allow 2-3 days for approval and processing.
5. You will receive an email notice of approval or denial.

All requests must be approved by the campus administrator or his/her designee. All athletic events must be submitted to the Athletic Director for approval prior to sending them to the campus administrator or his/her designee.

- Before advertising your event you must have an approved calendar request for your event.
- The calendar request must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event. This will allow room for any change of your event in case of conflict.
- Keep a copy of all calendar event forms for all events on file.
- If any part of the event changes (i.e. place, dates, or times) another calendar request must be submitted for approval or to revise the prior approved request.
- A calendar request form must also be submitted if you cancel your event.
- The calendar request form must be completed in its entirety. Do not leave room for doubt or your request will not be processed in a timely manner.
- A deposit may be requested and the reserved area must be left clean when you leave. Food shall not be left in the refrigerators.
- Non-school related functions will be required to furnish proof of general liability insurance coverage of at least $2,000,000 to use a Texas Leadership facility. A rental fee may also be charged. Rates and exemptions will be provided by the Facilities Manager or his/her designee.
- Even for employees, insurance may be required for non-school events.

Keys and Access Cards

Keys and/or access cards will be issued only upon the approval of the appropriate administrator. If an employee terminates employment, it shall be the employee's responsibility to turn in his/her key and access card to his/her supervisor or the Director of Human Resources before a final paycheck is issued. If the employee is reassigned to other duties that no longer require the key and/or access card, the employee must turn in the key and access card to his/her supervisor or the Director of Human Resources at the time of transfer.

At the end of the school year, employees must turn in their keys and/or access card to be cleared for the summer. A $25.00 fee will be charged for each lost key and/or access card and may be deducted from the employee's final paycheck if payment is not received prior to issuance of the final paycheck.

School Closures

TLPS may be closed because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of school facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late or to release students early, local media will be informed and every effort will be made to contact all staff and students through the School's emergency broadcast system.

School Property

All employees are responsible for taking proper care of school-owned property, including vehicles, buildings, furnishings, equipment, tools and supplies. School-owned property must remain on the premises at all times unless approved in advance by the Principal or other appropriate administrator.

Employees must return all school-owned property that is in their possession or control in the event of termination of employment, resignation or layoff immediately upon request.

Employees shall not use school's public property for any purpose not described in the School's open-enrollment charter, except that employees may use local telephone service, school-issued cellular phones, electronic mail, Internet connections, and similar property for incidental personal use, if, as determined by school administration, such does not:

- Result in any direct cost paid with state funds, or the charter holder is reimbursed by the employee within five (5) business days for any direct cost incurred; or
- Impede charter school functions as determined by the school administration.

Only incidental amounts of employee time, comparable to a five-to-seven-minute coffee break during each day, may be used for personal matters. This does not authorize incidental personal use of public property for private commercial purposes. Any such incidental use of public property is a privilege not a right, and the school administration may remove or rescind such privilege from time to time on a case-by-case basis for any employee, or all employees.

School Owned Vehicles

Employees shall operate all school owned vehicles in a safe and lawful manner that will not create an unacceptable liability situation nor open the charter school up to public criticism. The following guidelines also apply to the usage of any school-owned vehicle: (1) all doors must be locked when the vehicle is unattended, (2) no unauthorized passengers or merchandise are allowed to be transported, (3) no unauthorized merchandise, and (4) no unauthorized stops may be made.

If a school owned vehicle is damaged, the employee operating the vehicle shall immediately notify their supervisor of the damage and as soon as possible shall notify their supervisor, in writing, of the damage and the circumstances that led to the damage.

Prior to using a school owned vehicle, employees shall inspect the vehicle to determine whether the vehicle has sustained any unreported damage and is ready to be safely operated. If damage is noted and the operator is uncertain whether the damage has been reported, s/he shall report the damage, in writing, to their supervisor.

If a school owned vehicle is involved in a traffic crash with any vehicle or object that requires notification of a law enforcement official, the operator of the school owned vehicle shall cooperate completely with the law enforcement official during the investigation of the crash.

A. As soon as possible after the traffic crash, the school vehicle operator shall notify their supervisor of the traffic crash as well as whether any of the occupants of any of the involved vehicles or pedestrians were injured and whether those person(s) were taken to a medical care facility.
B. The operator shall also notify their supervisor of the circumstances surrounding the traffic crash and shall comply with any directives received from that supervisor.

During the workday, any employee operating a school owned vehicle shall perform only work-related tasks in that vehicle. Personal errands should not be conducted in a school owned vehicle. At the end of the workday, school owned vehicles shall be fueled, cleaned, and made ready to be safely operated during the following workday by the last employee to operate the vehicle.

During Non-Work Hours an employee who has control of a school owned vehicle is responsible for that vehicle. The vehicle shall not be used for any non-work-related activities during non-work hours. If a personal emergency situation occurs and the use of the school owned vehicle is needed by the employee in control of the vehicle, the employee shall notify their supervisor or his/her designee of the situation as soon as possible, preferably before using the vehicle. If the controlling employee has an appointment or the need to run an urgent errand just prior to beginning or ending their workday, they may use the school owned vehicle to go to the appointment or run the errand only if receiving permission from their supervisor before using the vehicle.

Electronic Devices and Drivers

Any TLPS staff member who is driving a school owned or leased vehicle is prohibited from using any handheld electronic device while the vehicle is in motion. Hands free devices must be approved in advance by the Chief Operations Officer or his/her designee.

GPS and other navigation devices are allowed if they can be operated in a hands-free manner. Any adjustments to the routes or navigation settings must be done only when the vehicle is parked.

Transportation Requests

Transportation requests must be submitted at least two full weeks in advance of the requested trip or the request may not be honored.

All requests must be submitted through Eduphoria to the campus administrator who will then submit it to the Transportation or Operations Manager for preparation and assignment.

Purchasing and Reimbursement Procedures

No reimbursements will be made without prior approval by administration in writing.

All requests for purchases must be submitted through the requisition system (ERP). Once the request has been approved by the principal or department head, it is entered into the organization's requisition system. It is then forwarded to the business office for final approval. Once the Purchase Order is approved, it is automatically sent back to the requestor so that they can place the order with the vendor. Upon receipt of the items, an invoice should be received from the vendor. It is the responsibility of the requestor/purchaser to send the invoice marked at "Ok to pay" and a copy of the purchase order to the Business Office. If sending by email, all documents should be emailed to finance@texasleadership.net.

No purchases, charges or commitments to buy goods or services for Texas Leadership can be made without a Purchase Order Number. Texas Leadership will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the Texas Leadership's business office. Texas Leadership is a Non-Profit Corporation and is tax-exempt therefore personal purchases are against the law.

If there are further questions regarding purchasing and the requisition system, please contact the business office for further explanation.

Cell Phone and/or Fuel Reimbursement

Administrators at the level of campus administrator and above may be eligible for a cell phone allowance and/or a fuel allowance to be disbursed through payroll. In addition, employees assigned to specific duties may be eligible for one of both of these stipends. Application for these allowances must be made to the Business Office.

Travel and Reimbursement

Staff must request travel funds at least two weeks in advance of the event. In order to request per diem funds and/or any related funds the staff member must fill out a Travel Request Reimbursement Form.

Staff travel, without accompanying students, will not receive per diem before travel, but will request reimbursement upon return.

Staff are required to provide receipts for meals for reimbursement, along with an event itinerary as well as provide receipts for lodging and fuel.

Reimbursement Deadline

To be reimbursed by Texas Leadership, all documentation must be submitted to the Business Office within 10 calendar days from the date of the incurred expense.

All staff reimbursements are paid on a monthly basis, at the end of each month.

Travel and Reimbursement

Prior to any travel expenses incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor and/or program director for the funds must give approval. In order to receive a per diem check prior to travel a "travel request" form needs to be submitted to the Business Office two weeks prior to travel. The form needs to be filled out completely, correctly, with authorized signatures and budget codes provided prior to sending it to the Business Office. If a hotel is needed for overnight stay, contact your immediate supervisor or his/her designee and they will help you to secure your reservation.

Reimbursement for a trip already taken – Reimbursement form needs to be submitted no later than 10 business days after a trip. Travel request/Reimbursement form needs to be filled out completely by the employee and submitted to the secretary and/or program director.

Mileage reimbursement – One of two methods must be used to document mileage: (1) report beginning and ending odometer readings or (2) provide a map illustrating starting point to ending point calculation using www.mapquest.com or another mileage calculator approved by the Business Office. Mileage reimbursements must also be turned into campus

within 10 business days of the event.

School Vehicle use – A fuel card is provided in every school vehicle. Instructions for using fuel cards are provided in the vehicle.

Should a school vehicle be available for use and an employee chooses to take their own vehicle, only fuel charge will be reimbursed and not mileage. Please submit receipts with a travel reimbursement form.

Cell Phone and/or Fuel Reimbursement
Administrators at the level of campus administrator and above may be eligible for a cell phone allowance and/or a fuel allowance to be disbursed through payroll. In addition, employees assigned to specific duties may be eligible for one or both of these stipends. Application for these allowances must be made to the Business Office.

Purchasing
All requests for purchases must be submitted to the campus secretary and approved by the principal and/or program director. Once the request has been approved the purchases will be submitted electronically into ERP and all appropriate electronic approvals will take place. Once approved, the requestor will be notified that the purchase order is ready. The purchase order will be faxed or mailed by the secretary on campus.

No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for TLPS can be made without a purchase order number. This number should be noted on the invoice from the vendor. TLPS will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for the purchase made without authorization. Under no circumstances are employees permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the School's business office or by their own submission. TLPS is a non-profit corporation and is tax-exempt; therefore, personal purchases are against the law.

No reimbursements will be made to any employee without prior approval by administration in writing.

Media Relations
The Chief Executive Officer / Superintendent has been designated as the official spokesperson for media questions and public relations. Any official statements from TLPS to the media are to be handled through the Chief Executive Officer / Superintendent or designee only.

Wednesday Homework
Teachers outside of the Math or ELA fields should not assign homework to students on Wednesdays. Math or ELA teachers should use discretion so as to not assign homework that would exceed thirty to forty minutes. Teachers outside of the Math or ELA fields that normally test on Thursdays do have the right to expect a reasonable amount of time spent by students in test preparation.

Any other exceptions that a teacher may deem necessary should be communicated to their respective principal for approval ahead of the expected date. This policy is applicable to all TLPS campuses.

Non-Exempt Staff Working During School Closures, Summer Breaks, or Other Situations
Work by non-exempt staff must be approved in advance by your immediate supervisor if any of the following circumstances apply:

1. The school was scheduled to be open but is closed for any reason (bad weather, pandemic, a facility issue, etc.), or
2. The school is not open as a result of a scheduled break (Spring Break, Summer Break, etc.), or
3. The school is open but you are not at work (summer break, pandemic, etc.).

Working Outside of Work Year Calendar
Staff, whether exempt or non-exempt, are not authorized to work outside of their work year calendar unless authorization has first been received from the Human Resources Director or his/her designee.

Student Issues
Non-Discrimination Statement
TLPS does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability academic, artistic, or athletic ability, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status or the district the child would otherwise attend under state law or in

providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational and career technology programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Discrimination and harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the Principal or other appropriate TLPS official. All allegations of prohibited harassment of a student by an employee or adult will be promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse or neglect must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law.

TLPS shall take appropriate disciplinary action against employees who have engaged in discrimination or harassment of students, up to and including termination of employment.

Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of TLPS policy and acts of retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Sexual Harassment of Students

Sexual harassment of students includes any unwelcome verbal or physical sexual advances, including but not limited to engaging in sexually oriented conversations; making comments about a student's potential sexual performance; requesting details of a student's sexual history; requesting a date, sexual contact, or any activity intended for the sexual gratification of the employee; engaging in conversations regarding the sexual problems, preferences, or fantasies of either party; inappropriate hugging, kissing, or excessive touching; suggestions that a romantic relationship is desired after the student graduates, including post-graduation plans for dating or marriage; telephoning or texting students at home or elsewhere to solicit unwelcome social relationships; physical contact that would reasonably be construed as sexual in nature; threatening or enticing students to engage in sexual behavior in exchange for grades or other school-related benefit; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from a program or activity; or conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile or offensive educational environment.

Sexual harassment of students by employees is always a violation of law and will result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment and referral to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

TLPS employees are generally encouraged to report an action or suspected action that is illegal or in violation of any adopted Board policy. Good faith reports may be made without fear of reprisal.

Any sexual or romantic relationship between a student and a TLPS employee is always prohibited, even if consensual.

Administration of Medication

Unless otherwise authorized or described below, school employees and volunteers are prohibited from administering medications to students, including vitamins and food supplements. Medication should be administered outside of school hours, if possible. If necessary, medication can be administered at school under the following circumstances:

- Nonprescription medication brought to school must be submitted by a parent along with a written request. The medication must also be in the original and properly labeled container.
- Prescription medications administered during school hours must be prescribed by a physician or advanced nurse practitioner ("ANP") and filled by a pharmacist licensed in the State of Texas. Prescriptions ordered or filled in Mexico will not be accepted.
- Prescription medications must be submitted in a labeled container showing the student's name, name of the medication, reason the medication is being given, proper dosage amounts, the time the medication must be taken, and the method used to administer the medication. Medications sent in plastic bags or unlabeled containers will NOT be administered.
- If the substance is herbal or a dietary supplement, it must be provided by the parent and will be administered only if required by the student's Individualized Education Program ("IEP") or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
- Only the amount of medication needed should be delivered to the school, i.e., enough medication to last one day, one week, etc. In cases of prolonged need, send in the amount for a clearly specified period. Extra medication will not be sent home with the student.

- In certain emergency situations, TLPS may administer a nonprescription medication to a student, but only in accordance with the guidelines developed by the school's medical advisor and when the parent has previously provided written consent for emergency treatment.

Psychotropic Drugs and Psychiatric Evaluations Or Examinations
No employee may:

- Recommend that a student use a psychotropic drug;
- Suggest any particular diagnosis; or
- Preclude a student from attending class or participating in a school-related activity if the parent refuses to consent to the administration of a psychotropic drug to a student or to a psychiatric evaluation or examination of a student.

"Psychotropic drug" means a substance that is used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication and intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior.

Parent and Student Complaints
In an effort to hear and resolve parent and student complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the Board of Directors has adopted orderly processes for handling such complaints. Parents or students may obtain information on this process from the main office or the Principal.

Student Conduct and Discipline
Students are expected to follow all classroom and campus rules, and the rules listed in the Student Code of Conduct. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management strategies that have been adopted by TLPS. Non-instructional employees with concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the student's classroom teacher or the Principal.

Student Welfare: Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting
All employees are considered professional reporters and are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect, as defined by Texas Family Code §261.001, to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services ("CPS"), or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering the facility) within 24 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Alleged abuse or neglect involving a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child (including a teacher) must be reported to CPS.

Employees are also required to make a report if they have reasonable cause to believe that an adult was a victim of abuse or neglect as a child and they determine in good faith that the disclosure of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of another child, elderly person, or person with a disability.

Reports to CPS can be made to local offices, online at https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx or to the Texas Abuse Hotline at (800) 252-5400. State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person or administrator to make the report.

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

An employee's failure to make the required report may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. The offense of failure to report by a professional may be a state jail felony if it is shown the individual intended to conceal the abuse or neglect. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics.

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the Principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. *Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agency*. In addition, employees must cooperate with investigators of child abuse and neglect.

Reporting the concern to the Principal or another administrator does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report it to the appropriate state agency. In addition, employees must cooperate with investigators of child abuse and

neglect. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited.

Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children
TLPS has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse, sex trafficking, and other maltreatment of children. As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused, trafficked, or otherwise maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Sex trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, into sexual abuse, assault, indecency, prostitution, or pornography. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect following the procedures described in "Student Welfare: Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting" above.

Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications
In schools receiving Title I funds, TLPS is required by the Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA") to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. ESSA also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements

State law requires that TLPS provide to the parent or guardian of each enrolled student written notice of the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers. TLPS will also provide this information upon request from a parent.

Employee Training
TLPS shall provide training for all new and existing employees on awareness of issues regarding child abuse and reporting, sexual abuse prevention, sex trafficking, bullying and David's law, and other maltreatment of children, including prevention techniques for and recognition of child abuse, sex trafficking, and other maltreatment of children.

Bullying
TLPS prohibits bullying of students, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process. Bullying means a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

1. has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property,
2. is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student,
3. materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or the school, or
4. infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

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

The School's anti-bullying policy applies to:

1. bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately-owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
3. cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying:
    a. interferes with a student's educational opportunities; or
    b. substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Any employee or student who believes that he or she may have experienced or witnessed bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to the Principal or designee.

The Principal or designee will notify the victim, the student alleged to have engaged in bullying, and any student witnesses of available counseling options.

The Principal or designee will also provide notice of the incident of alleged bullying to:

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

The Principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited discrimination or harassment, and if so, proceed with an investigation under the School's anti-discrimination and harassment policy instead. The Principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report, and shall take prompt interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

The Principal or designee shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including a determination of whether prohibited bullying occurred. If the results of an investigation indicated that bullying occurred, the school shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. TLPS may act based on the results of an investigation, even if the school concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying under this policy.

Discipline for a student who receives special education services for conduct meeting the definition of bullying or cyberbullying must comply with applicable requirements under federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Section 1400 et seq.). The School may not impose discipline on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying, based on that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying.

Student Attendance
Teachers and staff should be familiar with the School's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. Contact the Principal for additional information.

Student Transportation
Except in limited emergency situations, TLPS employees are not authorized to transport students in the employee's personal automobile.

Student Welfare: Computer Technician Reports of Child Pornography
Any computer technician employed by TLPS who, in the course and scope of employment or business with TLPS, views an image on a computer that is or appears to be child pornography must immediately report the discovery to a local or state law enforcement agency or the Cyber Tipline at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The report must include the name and address of the owner or person claiming a right to possession of the computer, if known, and as permitted by federal law.

Except in a case of willful or wanton misconduct, a computer technician may not be civilly liable for reporting or failing to report the discovery of an image. A computer technician who intentionally fails to report an image may be subject to criminal prosecution.

Employee Health and Safety

Safety Rules and Regulations
All employees shall adhere to school safety rules and regulations and shall report unsafe conditions or practices to the appropriate supervisor.

Accident Reporting
Employees shall report any on-the-job injury or accident immediately to their supervisor. Supervisors must notify Human Resources within 24 hours of notification of an occurrence. If an employee fails to report the accident within 30 days of

the incident, the claim may be denied by the Texas Department of Insurance – Division of Workers' Compensation. The employee's supervisor and/or the appropriate management personnel shall conduct a thorough investigation, involving the employee and any witnesses that observed the injury or accident. The employee's supervisor and/or appropriate management personnel will ensure corrective action is taken to avoid a recurrence of the accident.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention

TLPS is committed to maintaining an alcohol-and drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace or at school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property. Employees who possess, distribute, use, or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours or while representing TLPS may be dismissed. The School's policy regarding employee alcohol and/or drug use is as follows:

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE NOTICE

TLPS explicitly prohibits:

- The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of narcotics or other illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription medications without a prescription on TLPS premises or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity.
- Being impaired or under the influence of legal or illegal drugs or alcohol away from school property, if such impairment or influence adversely affects the employee's work performance, the safety of the employee or of others, or puts at risk the School's reputation.
- Possession, use, solicitation for, or sale of legal or illegal drugs or alcohol away from TLPS property, if such activity or involvement adversely affects the employee's work performance, the safety of the employee or of others, or puts at risk the School's reputation.
- The presence of any detectable amount of prohibited substances in the employee's system while at work, on TLPS property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity. "Prohibited substances" include illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs not taken in accordance with a prescription given to the employee.

Employees who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions, which may include:

- Referral to drug and alcohol counseling or rehabilitation programs;
- Referral to employee assistance programs;
- Termination from employment; and/or
- Referral to appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution.

As a condition of employment with TLPS, each employee shall abide by the terms of the requirements and prohibitions set out in this statement and shall notify TLPS of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after such conviction. Within 30 days of receiving such notice, TLPS shall either (1) take appropriate personnel action against the employee, up to and including termination; or (2) require the employee to participate satisfactorily in drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state, or local health agency, law enforcement agency, or other appropriate agency.

In addition, TLPS will conduct drug and/or alcohol testing under any of the following circumstances:

- *For-Cause Testing*: TLPS may ask an employee to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test at any time it has reason to suspect that the employee may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, including, but not limited to, the following circumstances: evidence of drugs or alcohol on or about the employee's person or in the employee's vicinity; unusual conduct on the employee's part that suggests impairment or influence of drugs or alcohol; negative performance patterns; or excessive and unexplained absenteeism or tardiness.
- *Post-Accident Testing*: Any employee involved in an on-the-job accident or injury under circumstances that suggest possible use or influence of drugs or alcohol in the accident or injury event may be asked to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test. This includes not only the employee who was or could have been injured, but also any employee who potentially contributed to the accident or injury event in any way.
- *Pre-Employment Testing:* TLPS may perform pre-employment drug or alcohol testing after an offer of employment is made and accepted.

All reports by TLPS regarding drug or alcohol testing results shall be kept strictly confidential but may be used as the basis for disciplinary action or other action regarding employment status.

If an employee is tested for drugs or alcohol outside of the employment context and the results indicate a violation of this policy, or if an employee refuses a request to submit to testing under this policy, the employee may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and possibly including termination. In such a case, the employee will be given an opportunity to explain the circumstances prior to any final employment action becoming effective.

Employees with Commercial Driver's License: Any employee whose duties require a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to drug and alcohol testing. This includes all drivers who operate a motor vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people, counting the driver; drivers of large vehicles; or drivers of vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials. Teachers, coaches, or other employees who primarily perform duties other than driving are subject to testing requirements when their duties include driving.

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted at random when reasonable suspicion exists, and as a follow-up measure. Testing will be conducted following accidents. Return-to-duty and follow-up testing will be conducted if an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs is allowed to return to duty.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact Human Resources.

Tobacco Products and E-Cigarettes

State law prohibits smoking, using tobacco products, or e-cigarettes on all school-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off school property. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for athletics and other activities. Drivers of school-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking, using tobacco products, or e-cigarettes while inside the vehicle. Notices stating that smoking is prohibited by law and punishable by a fine are displayed in prominent places in the school building. Any violation of this policy may result in immediate termination.

For purposes of this policy, "e-cigarette" means an electronic cigarette or any other device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling from the device. This also includes any and all vapors, inhalants, electronic cigarette devices or other devices or paraphernalia used with vapors, other inhalants or chemicals.

All personnel shall enforce this policy on TLPS property.

Pest Management Policy for Staff and Teachers

TLC Academy Pest Management Policy for Staff & Teachers

This District prohibits the possession, storing, or application of any kind of pesticide on school premises or as part of any of the District's activities by unauthorized personnel.

A pesticide is defined as a substance or mixture of substances intended for destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest (this includes items like glue boards, fly traps, and cans of household insecticides). A pest is any living thing that exists where it is not wanted (as defined by the School IPM Regulation).

Report any signs of pests through Eduphoria by following this path: Helpdesk > Create a New Request > Texas Leadership Charter Academy > Maintenance > Pest Control.

Please fill out all fields completely so the campus operations team can respond quickly and effectively.

Pest Control and Air Quality

Do not use chemical air fresheners in classrooms or offices. These fragrances, like many pest control chemicals, can trigger or worsen respiratory issues for sensitive individuals.

If you store food in your classroom or office, it must be kept in airtight containers to prevent attracting pests.

If you would like a copy of the district's IPM policy statement, this can be found with the district's IPM Coordinator, Rebecca Eldredge. Send requests to Rebecca.Eldredge@texasleadership.net

Employees who violate this prohibition shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions.

Prohibition of Weapons

Texas Penal Code, Section 46.03, prohibits firearms, illegal knives, clubs or any prohibited weapon on the physical premises of a school, any grounds or building on which an activity sponsored by a school is being conducted, or on school transportation vehicle. Any violation of this policy by a Texas Leadership employee may result in immediate termination. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of this prohibition should report it immediately to their supervisor.

Asbestos Management Plan

TLPS is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for school facilities. A copy of the School's management plan is available for inspection during normal business hours by contacting the North Texas Operations Director (Arlington or Cedar Hill) or the West Texas Operations Director (Abilene, Midland, or San Angelo).

Breastfeeding Accommodations in the Workplace

TLPS shall, subject to any undue hardship exceptions allowed under the law, provide:

1. A reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for such employee's nursing child for one year after the child's birth each time the employee has need to express the milk; and
2. A place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.

Communicable Diseases

The following information will provide simple and effective precautions against the transmission of a communicable disease for all students and school personnel who are potentially exposed to the bodily fluids of any person. No distinction is made between bodily fluids from persons with a known disease or those from persons without symptoms or with an undiagnosed disease.

The term "bodily fluids" includes: blood, semen, drainage from scrapes and cuts, feces, urine, vomitus, respiratory secretions and saliva. Contact with bodily fluids presents a risk of infection with a variety of germs. In general, however, the risk is very low and dependent on a variety of factors including the type of fluid with which contact is made and the type of contact made with it.

Transmission of communicable disease is more likely to occur from contact with infected bodily fluids of unrecognized carriers than from contact with fluids from diagnosed individuals, because simple precautions are not always carried out.

To avoid contact with bodily fluids, the following precautions should be observed:

- Avoid direct skin contact with bodily fluids. This also includes the mucous membranes (e.g., eyes, nose, and mouth);
- Wear disposable gloves when contact with bodily fluids is anticipated (e.g., when treating bloody noses; open cuts, abrasions and other lesions; handling contaminated clothing; and cleaning up body fluid spills);
- Always practice good personal hygiene through proper hand washing techniques;
- Request assistance from a custodian for proper cleaning of all bodily fluid spills.

HIV-AIDS and Other Life-Threatening Illnesses

Individuals infected with HIV and individuals with life-threatening illnesses have the same rights and opportunities as other individuals.

Employees are not required to reveal their HIV status to employers. All medical information that an HIV-infected employee provides to medical or management personnel is confidential and private. TLPS may not reveal this information without the employee's knowledge and written consent, except as provided by law. Those with access to protected health information ("PHI") must maintain strict confidentiality and privacy, separating the PHI from employees' personnel records. Individuals who fail to protect PHI commit a serious offense, which may be cause for litigation resulting in both civil and criminal penalties and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees who have concerns of a co-worker or student infected with HIV or a life-threatening illness should contact Human Resources for appropriate information and reference materials. Employees do not have the right to refuse to work with someone who has HIV or AIDS or any disability. An employee who refuses to work with co-workers or students who have a disability shall be subject to disciplinary or corrective action, up to and including termination.

Employees who desire assistance concerning a disability or a life-threatening illness should contact Human Resources.

Hazard Communication Act

TLPS is concerned about the safety of all employees, and therefore will perform the following duties in compliance with the THCA:

- Post and maintain the notice promulgated by the Texas Department of State Health Services ("TDSHS") in the workplace.
- Provide an education and training program for employees using or handling hazardous chemicals under normal operating conditions or foreseeable emergencies.
- Maintain the written hazard communication program and a record of each training session to employees, including the date, a roster of the employees who attend, the subjects covered in the training session, and the names of the instructors. Records will be maintained for at least five years.
- Compile and maintain a workplace chemical list that includes required information for each hazardous chemical normally present in the workplace or temporary workplace in excess of 55 gallons or 500 pounds, or as determined by the TDSHS for certain highly toxic or dangerous hazardous chemicals. The list will be readily available to employees and their representatives.
- Update the list as necessary, but at least by December 31 each year, and maintain the list as required by law. Each workplace chemical list shall be dated and signed by the person responsible for compiling the information.
- As required by law, label new or existing stocks of hazardous chemicals with the identity of the chemical and appropriate hazard warnings, if such stocks are not already appropriately labeled.
- Maintain a legible copy of the most current manufacturer's material safety data sheets ("MSDS") for each hazardous chemical; request such sheets from the manufacturer if not already provided or otherwise obtain a current MSDS; make such sheets readily available to employees or their representatives on request.
- Provide employees with appropriate personal protective equipment.

The Superintendent shall notify employees of any planned pest control treatment by both of the following methods:

- Posting the sign provided by the certified applicator or technician in an area of common access the employees are likely to check on a regular basis at least 48 hours before each planned treatment.
- Providing the official Structural Pest Control Service Consumer Information Sheet to any individual working in the building, on request.

Workplace Safety Statement

****NOTE**** TLPS is aware that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration ("OSHA") has issued findings that a Texas open-enrollment charter school network ***was not*** a covered employer under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (the "OSH Act"), meaning that OSHA ***did not*** have jurisdiction to review complaints of unsafe work practices under the OSH Act.

While recognizing that TLPS may not be subject to the OSH Act, we certainly prioritize employee health and safety. Information related to the School's workplace safety is as follows:

To assist in providing a safe and healthy work environment for employees, students, parents, and visitors, TLPS has established a workplace safety program. This program is a top priority of TLPS, and its success depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all.

TLPS provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as supervisor-employee meetings, bulletin board postings, memos, or other written communications.

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to their immediate supervisor. Employees who violate safety standards, cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or fail to report or, where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees should immediately notify their immediate supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance and workers' compensation benefits procedures.

TLPS strives to reduce dangers to health and safety by creating and maintaining improved working conditions, free from recognized hazards that might cause serious physical injury. TLPS maintains a log of all occupational injuries and illnesses, and asks that employees report such injuries and illnesses within 48 hours so that TLPS may report these occurrences within a lawful period of time to the appropriate authorities.

As TLPS employees:

- You have the right to notify TLPS or appropriate authorities about workplace hazards. You may ask for appropriate authorities to keep your name confidential.
- You have the right to request an inspection if you believe that there are unsafe and unhealthy conditions in your workplace. In circumstances required by law, you or your representative may participate in that inspection.
- You can file a complaint under applicable law of retaliation or discrimination by TLPS for making safety and health complaints, or for exercising your rights as an employee.
- You have a right to see workplace safety citations issued to TLPS. TLPS must post the citations at or near the place of the alleged violation.
- TLPS must correct workplace hazards by the date indicated on the citation, and must certify that these hazards have been reduced or eliminated.
- You have the right to copies of your medical records and records of your exposures to toxic and harmful substances or conditions.
- You must comply with all occupational safety and health standards issued under applicable law that apply to your own actions and conduct on the job.

As your employer:

- TLPS must furnish all employees a place of employment free from recognized hazards.
- TLPS must comply with the occupational safety and health standards issued under applicable law.

Reporting Serious Injuries
Within eight hours after the death of any employee from a work-related incident or the in-patient hospitalization of three or more employees as a result of a work-related accident, TLPS will orally report the fatality/multiple hospitalization by telephone or in person to the appropriate authority that is nearest to the site of the incident.

Reporting Procedures
TLPS will utilize the appropriate forms to document and log each recordable injury or illness. This information will be kept current, maintained accurately, and retained for a period of five years.

Searches

TLPS reserves the right to conduct searches to monitor compliance with rules concerning safety of employees, security of company and individual property, drugs and alcohol, and possession of other prohibited items. "Prohibited items" include illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, prescription drugs or medications not used or possessed in compliance with a current valid prescription, weapons, any items of an obscene, harassing, demeaning, or violent nature, and any property in the possession or control of an employee who does not have authorization from the owner of such property to possess or control the property. "Control" means knowing where a particular item is, having placed an item where it is currently located, or having any influence over its continued placement. In addition to the school's premises, TLPS may search employees, their work areas, lockers, personal vehicles (if driven or parked on school property), and other personal items such as bags, purses, briefcases, backpacks, lunch boxes, and other containers. In requesting a search, TLPS is by no means accusing anyone of theft, some other crime, or any other variety of improper conduct.

There is no general or specific expectation of privacy in the school workplace, either on school or elsewhere while on duty. In general, employees should assume that what they do while on duty or on school premises is not private. All employees and all of the areas listed above are subject to search at any time; if an employee uses a locker or other storage area at work, including a locking desk drawer or locking cabinet, TLPS will either furnish the lock and keep a copy of the key or combination, or else allow the employee to furnish a personal lock, but the employee must give the school a copy of the key or combination. The areas in question may be searched at any time, with or without the employee being present. As a general rule, with the exception of items relating to personal hygiene or health, no employee should ever

bring anything to work or store anything at work that he or she would not be prepared to show and possibly turn over to school officials and/or law enforcement authorities.

All TLPS employees are subject to this policy. However, any given search may be restricted to one or more specific individuals, depending upon the situation. Searches may be done on a random basis or based upon reasonable suspicion. "Reasonable suspicion" means circumstances suggesting to a reasonable person that there is a possibility that one or more individuals may be in possession of a prohibited item as defined above. Any search under this policy will be done in a manner protecting employee privacy, confidentiality, and personal dignity to the greatest extent possible. TLPS will respond severely to any unauthorized release of information concerning individual employees.

No employee will ever be physically forced to submit to a search. However, an employee who refuses to submit to a search request by the school will face disciplinary action, up to and possibly including immediate termination.

Visitors In The Workplace

All visitors are expected to enter any school facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the main office. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on TLPS premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge.

TLPS may establish an electronic database for the purpose of storing information concerning school visitors. Such databases may only be used for purposes of school security, and may not be sold or otherwise disseminated to a third party for any purpose. TLPS may also verify whether any visitor to a campus is a sex offender registered with the computerized central database maintained by the Department of Public Safety, or any other database accessible by TLPS.

Video Surveillance

Texas Leadership reserves the right to conduct surveillance in its facilities and offices when such surveillance is in the best interest of the school, its students, or its employees. Therefore, employees have no expectation of personal privacy while at work and all schools and school facilities are subject to surveillance, including parking lots.

Electronic Media, Communications Systems, and Technology Resources – Acceptable Use Guidelines

TLPS makes a variety of communications and information technologies available to students and employees. These technologies, when properly used, promote educational excellence in TLPS by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Illegal, unethical, or inappropriate use of these technologies can have dramatic consequences, harming TLPS, its students, and its employees.

These acceptable use guidelines are intended to minimize the likelihood of such harm by educating students and employees and setting standards which will serve to protect students and staff. Any attempt to violate the provisions of these guidelines may result in revocation of the user's access to the Network/Internet, regardless of the success or failure of the attempt. In addition, disciplinary action consistent with the School's employment policy and/or appropriate legal action, which may include restitution, may be taken. School administrators will make the final determination as to what constitutes inappropriate use. The Director of Technology or other administrator may deny, revoke, or suspend Network/Internet/resource access as necessary, pending the outcome of an investigation. The expectations of TLPS are that all network and technology resource users will comply with all policies, procedures, and guidelines outlined below.

Technology Resources

The School's technology and information resources, including its networks, computer systems, email accounts, devices connected to its networks, and all school-owned devices used on or off school property, are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes.

Limited personal use is permitted if the use:

- Imposes no tangible cost to TLPS;
- Does not unduly burden the School's technology resources;
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance; and
- Is not for commercial or political purposes.

Email transmissions and other use of the School's technology resources are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use.

TLPS may permit remote access to its network from the Internet on a limited basis for authorized staff. Users are expected to maintain the same security standards when operating TLPS computers or accessing the TLPS network remotely. Access procedures and passwords are not to be shared with anyone. All policies and rules regarding network use apply to remote access.

Employees who are authorized to use the School's technology and information resources are required to abide by the provisions of the School's acceptable use policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges, and may lead to disciplinary and legal action. Employees with questions about technology and information resources can contact the Director of Technology.

Internet Filter

TLPS uses a web filter to manage access to various inappropriate locations. However, even with a filter, there may still be sites accessible via the Internet that contain material that is illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or controversial. Although TLPS will attempt to limit access to objectionable material by using software, controlling all materials on the Internet is impossible. Employees are expected to monitor student Internet use and to report inappropriate Internet sites not filtered to administration.

Email

Email is a service provided by public funds. Email is for instructional and administrative use. Sending jokes, chain letters, etc. via email is considered an inappropriate use of TLPS equipment. Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by employees shall not be considered private. Email may be monitored at any time by designated school staff to ensure appropriate use. This monitoring may include activity logging, virus scanning, and content scanning.

Any memo or correspondence sent via email must follow the same TLPS guidelines as is used for other correspondence distribution.

Records retention guidelines apply to email correspondence and must be followed. Email is viewed as a public document. Care should be given to the tone of the email. Also, grammar and spelling should be checked before an email is sent. Be mindful of the unique forwarding properties associated with email.

Electronic Storage

TLPS has provided technology users with access to network storage locations for files. The storage area provides a place where school-related items can be stored from year to year.

To enforce acceptable use guidelines and to maintain the integrity of the School's technology resources, shared network space and any TLPS storage space will be monitored by school staff. Inappropriate files such as games, music, inappropriate images, movies, videos, and files that consume storage space will be deleted. External electronic storage devices are subject to monitoring if used or purchased with TLPS resources.

Network Behavior

Network/Internet users are responsible for their actions in accessing available resources. The following standards will apply to all users of the Network/Internet:

- The user in whose name a system account is issued will be responsible at all times for its proper use. Users may not use another person's account.
- The system may not be used for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or for any other activity prohibited by TLPS policy.
- Users may not redistribute copyrighted programs or data without the written permission of the copyright holder or designee. Such permission must be specified in the document or must be obtained directly from the copyright holder or designee in accordance with applicable copyright laws, TLPS policy, and administrative regulations.
- Computers are joined to either a student or employee domain for management and inventory. Computers should not be removed from these domains.

General Unacceptable Behavior

While utilizing any portion of the School's Network/Internet access, unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Abusing network resources, such as sending chain letters or "spamming." Emails sent to "all staff" are reserved for the Director of Technology and administration. The use of the "all staff" group for other purposes must be approved by the Director of Technology prior to sending.
- Attempting to access non-instructional systems, such as student information systems or business systems, without authorization.
- Attempting to circumvent web filtering through proxies or other means.
- Connecting any networkable device (either wired or wireless) to the School's network without authorization. The use of a computer or device brought from home accessing the network in any way not designated as "guest access."
- Displaying, accessing, or sending offensive messages or pictures.
- Engaging in activity that may be considered "cyberbullying," including but not limited to threats of violence, extortion, obscene or harassing messages, harassment, stalking, child pornography, and sexual exploitation.
- Engaging in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
- Gaining unlawful access to information or computer and communication resources.
- Generation, storage, transmission or other use of data or other matter, which is abusive, profane, pornographic, or offensive to a reasonable person.
- Illegal, fraudulent, or malicious activity or activity on behalf of organizations or individuals having no affiliation with TLPS.
- Installation of any programs or software not approved by TLPS.
- Intentional introduction of or experimentation with malicious code including but not limited to computer worms or viruses.
- Knowingly or recklessly posting false information about a person or organization.
- Personal use not related to the conduct of work on behalf of TLPS.
- Posting information that could cause damage or danger of disruption.
- The intentional sending of messages that is likely to harm the recipient's work or system and any other types of use which could cause congestion of the School's network or otherwise interfere with the work of others. Prohibited uses include, but are not limited to, peer-to-peer applications such as LimeWire, Bit Torrent, or any other file sharing applications, as well as large (>5MB) file transfers from Internet sites without prior permission.
- Transmission of material in violation of applicable copyright laws.
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal information regarding minors.
- Using criminal speech or speech in the course of committing a crime such as threats against others, instructions on breaking into computer networks, child pornography, drug dealing, purchase of alcohol, gang activities, etc.
- Using obscene, profane, lewd, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language in emails distributed through TLPS email.
- Using TLPS equipment, network, or credential to threaten other users, or cause a disruption to the educational program.
- Using TLPS equipment, network, or credentials to send or post electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.
- Using the School's electronic network for commercial purposes, or offering, providing, or purchasing products or services through the network.
- Using the School's electronic network for political lobbying.
- Using speech that is inappropriate in an educational setting or that violates the School's standards for employee conduct.

Employees who become aware of a user engaging in inappropriate use of the School's electronic network or who receive any email containing inappropriate content should report the matter immediately to the Director of Technology or designee.

No Expectation of Privacy

TLPS email accounts should be used primarily for school-related purposes. Personal use of TLPS email accounts is only permitted on a limited basis so long as such personal use does not impede school functions, does not result in any direct cost paid with state funds, is not for private commercial purposes, and does not involve more than incidental amounts of employee time (time periods comparable to reasonable coffee breaks during the day).

TLPS owns the rights to all data and files stored on any computer, network, or other information system used at school and to all data and files sent or received using any TLPS system, including email, to the extent that such rights are not superseded by applicable laws relating to intellectual property.

TLPS owns any communication sent via email or that is stored on TLPS equipment or its cloud accounts. Employees shall have no expectation of privacy in anything they store, send, or receive on the School's email system or computer equipment or cloud accounts. All communications sent via email or stored on school equipment may also be subject to the TPIA. TLPS reserves the right to access and/or monitor any material in an employee's email account at any time, without prior notice, as well as any computer equipment used to create, view, or access email. Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and could also lead to referrals to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

No employee may access another employee's computer, computer files, or email messages without prior authorization from the Director of Technology or designee to allow access to email accounts.

System Security

On occasion, TLPS may need to access its technology and information resources including computer files, electronic-mail messages, and voicemail messages. Employees should understand, therefore, that they have no right of privacy with respect to any messages or information created or maintained on the School's electronic network, including personal information or messages. TLPS may, at its discretion, inspect all files or messages on its electronic network at any time in order to determine compliance with its policies, for purposes of legal proceedings, to investigate allegations of misconduct, to locate information, or for any other business purpose.

Users are responsible for their individual accounts and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use them. Users must not provide their password(s) to another person. Users must immediately notify a systems administrator if they have identified a possible security problem. Users should not go looking for security problems, as doing so may be construed as an illegal attempt to gain access.

Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to any portion of the School's electronic network. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account or accessing another person's folders, work, or files.

Users will not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the School's electronic network or computer system, or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means.

Users will not attempt to access Web sites blocked by TLPS policy, including the use of proxy services, software, or Web sites. Users will not use "sniffing" or remote access technology to monitor the network or other user's activity.

Software and Files

Software is available to users to be used as an educational resource or to conduct school-related business. Users may not install, upload, or download software without permission from the Director of Technology or designee. A user's account may be limited or terminated if a user intentionally misuses software on any school-owned equipment.

Files stored on the network are treated in the same manner as other school storage areas. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the School's electronic network may lead to discovery that a user has violated this policy. Users should not expect that files stored on school servers are private.

When sharing or storing sensitive information, users must utilize approved network storage devices and applications.

Technology Hardware

Hardware and peripherals are provided as tools to users for educational purposes and for school-related business. Users are not permitted to relocate hardware (except for portable devices), install peripherals, or modify settings to equipment without permission from the Director of Technology or designee.

TLPS may permit the use of personally-owned computing devices on its network, at the discretion of TLPS. All "guest" users must comply with administrative regulations governing the use of the School's technology resources and agree to allow monitoring of their usage and to comply with the regulations. Non-compliance may result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and other disciplinary actions consistent with TLPS policy.

Vandalism

- Vandalism and mischief are prohibited. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, the Network/Internet, or any networks that are connected to the Network/Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the creation or propagation of computer viruses, spyware, and malware. Any interference with the work of other users, with or without malicious intent, is construed as mischief and is strictly prohibited.
- Deleting, examining, copying, or modifying files and/or data belonging to other users, without their permission, is prohibited.
- Forgery of electronic mail messages is prohibited. Reading, deleting, copying, or modifying the electronic mail of other users without their permission is prohibited, unless permitted by TLPS policy or authorized by the Superintendent or designee.
- Deliberate attempts to exceed, evade, or change resource quotas are prohibited. The deliberate causing of network congestion through mass consumption of system resources is prohibited.
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding students and employees are prohibited.

Transmitting/Storing/Accessing Confidential Information

Teachers, staff, and students may not redistribute or forward confidential information (i.e., educational records, directory information, personnel records, etc.) without proper authorization. Confidential information should never be accessed, transmitted, redistributed, or forwarded to outside individuals who are not expressly authorized to receive the information. Revealing such personal information as home addresses or phone numbers of users or others is prohibited. In order to reduce the loss of confidential information due to theft or misplacement, student/staff confidential information should not be stored on portable devices such as memory sticks or on hard drives or home machines. This information should be stored on the District's drive. Extreme caution should be used if data is stored on cloud storage (Google docs, drop box, etc.). Cloud based storage should not be used for any data that is considered confidential. This storage is not provided by the District and is subject to the acceptable use guidelines of the particular site being used.

Personal Use of Electronic Communications

Employees in a public school system are responsible for modeling and teaching high standards of decency and civic values. Employees must model the character they are expected to teach, both on and off the worksite. This applies to electronic communications.

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

As role models for the School's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as school employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic media as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic media interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

An employee who uses electronic media for personal purposes shall observe the following:

- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the School's computers, network, or equipment.
- The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, meal times, and before and after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct school business.
- The employee shall not use the School's logo or other copyrighted material of TLPS without express written consent.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:
    - Confidentiality of student information, including photos.

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

Use of Electronic Media and Electronic Communications with Students

Employees given approval by TLPS may communicate through electronic media with students who are currently enrolled in the school **for educational purposes only**. All other employees are prohibited from communicating with students who are enrolled in TLPS through electronic media.

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

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

An employee uses electronic media to communicate with students must comply with the following provisions:

- Designated employees may use electronic communication with enrolled students only about matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities. All other employees are prohibited from using electronic communication directly with students.
- All communication via electronic media by staff with parents and students will be professional and of the appropriate nature, purpose, timing, and amount.
- An employee shall have no expectation of privacy in electronic communications with students.
- An employee shall not use a personal electronic communication platform, application, or account to communicate with enrolled students.
- Employees are prohibited from using electronic communications in a manner that constitutes prohibited harassment or abuse of a student; adversely affects the student's learning, mental health, or safety; includes threats of violence against the student; reveals confidential information about the student; or constitutes an inappropriate communication with a student.
- Personal online social media may not be associated with professional online social media.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative guidelines, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, including compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, copyright laws, open records requests, etc.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communication with students and parents.
- Employees should avoid sending text messages to students. Exceptions may apply for a teacher or other employee who has an extracurricular duty, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility. An employee who communicates with a student using text messaging should attempt to include at least one of the student's parents or guardians as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and parent receive the same message. Additionally, for each text message addressed to one or more students, the employee must send a copy of the text message to the employee's TLPS email address.
- Employees shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 10:00pm and 6:00am, except when necessary to notify students about urgent scheduling or transportation issues. Employees may, however, make public posts to a school-related social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- **Employees shall refrain from inappropriate communications with students. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:**
  - The nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
  - The subject matter of the communication;
  - Whether the communication was made openly or the employee attempted to conceal the communication;

- Whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
- Whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
- Whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the employee or the student.

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

Upon written request from a parent or student, an employee shall discontinue communicating with a student by email, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one electronic communication.

Upon request from the School's administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more current-enrolled students.

Employees are not required to disclose their personal email address or personal phone number to students or parents.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Student Data

Employees, contractors, and volunteers **may not enter, upload, transmit, or otherwise use any student data** in artificial intelligence (AI) tools, platforms, or services **unless explicitly approved in writing by the District**.
Student data includes, but is not limited to:

- Personally identifiable information (PII)
- Student names, ID numbers, or contact information
- Academic records, grades, assessments, or IEP/504 information
- Behavioral, disciplinary, health, or counseling information
- Audio, video, images, or written work that could identify a student

This prohibition applies to **all AI tools**, including but not limited to:

- Generative AI (e.g., chatbots, text, image, or video generators)
- Transcription or meeting-recording tools
- Data analysis or summarization tools
- AI features embedded in websites, apps, browsers, or devices

Staff may use AI tools **only with de-identified, non-student data** and only in ways that comply with **FERPA, state privacy laws, and District data-governance policies**.
Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action and may constitute a breach of student data privacy.

Consequences

The guidelines for appropriate use are applicable to all use of school computers and refer to all information resources, whether individually controlled, shared, stand alone, or networked. Disciplinary action for students, staff, and other users shall be consistent with TLPS policy and administrative regulation. Violations may result in:

- Suspension of access to school computers and network resources;
- Revocation of access privileges or user accounts; or
- Other school disciplinary or legal action, up to and including termination, in accordance with school policies and applicable laws.

Specific disciplinary measures will be determined on a case-by-case basis.