

EXPLORER ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL

FACULTY - STAFF HANDBOOK

Welcome Letter

Welcome to the faculty of Explorer Elementary Charter School ("Explorer"). As a school, we are dedicated to being a community of learners and are invested in recruiting the finest educators who, themselves, have deep concern for life-long learning. To this end, we support professional development and continual progress in defining our school's standards of excellence.

We believe that a child's experience is dependent on the quality of the classroom constructed by the teacher. We know that the responsibility for the education of children is serious and complex. We are committed to giving teachers the respect and opportunity they need to be able to fulfill the obligations they have toward their students.

We also know that there is no such thing as a perfect school... An almost perfect school is one that continually challenges itself to develop and refine its programs. Explorer also includes a strong social curriculum which underlines all interactions between students and teachers.

We see education as a partnership between faculty, parents, our school's Board of Directors and the community. Together we provide the very best we can for our students. Similarly, we will provide you, our faculty, with the support that you need to maintain high standards of excellence and sensitivity in your classroom.

Once you have reviewed this Handbook, you are asked to sign the Employee Acknowledgment of Receipt Form and return it to the school office.

The Board and administration are available to you. Together, we can build a school that will meet the needs of individual students in a way that inspires and involves them in meaningful education.

Vision Statement

Explorer is committed to creating confident and caring learners in a community that is both intelligent and sensitive. It is central to our mission to teach children to be socially intelligent so that they will have the ability to become self aware and empathic in their interactions. In this way, our students learn to resolve differences, understand alternate perspectives, and use skills for positive solutions.

The faculty is dedicated to providing a program that honors the development of each unique child in order to maximize their potential. The safe and nurturing environment is carefully balanced with high expectations for learning. Whereas we believe that learning begins at the personal level, at Explorer Elementary this learning is extended into deep and complex cognitive growth. Strategies for higher learning are central to the curriculum in each classroom and teachers are continually challenging themselves to provide rich and scholarly studies for Explorer children.

Assessment and evaluation procedures focus on each child's progressive development. This is an integral part of the teaching/learning process. Formal assessments in writing, mathematics and reading are collected and data is provided to inform teaching practices at the school. Progress reports are given to families two times per year and informal conversations are ongoing. State mandated STAR testing occurs annually.

Another goal of the school is to share its best practices with other educational settings. As a community, we expect to be partners with other professionals, universities and Explorer parents in order to provide the very best for our children.

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I. EMPLOYMENT

- 1.1 EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

This general statement of policy applies to all employees of Explorer. If any conflict should exist between the Employment Handbook and a written Employee Agreement between the Employer and Employee, the Employment Agreement shall prevail.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Explorer is an equal opportunity employer. We strive for excellence in every area of the school. The school is committed to compliance with all applicable laws providing equal employment opportunities. This commitment applies to all persons involved in the operations of the school and prohibits unlawful discrimination by any employee of the school. **It is the policy of Explorer to afford equal employment and advancement opportunity to all qualified individuals without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, disability, marital status, medical condition, or any other classification that is protected under applicable local, state or federal law.**

- 1.2.1 AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT

Explorer expects the employee/employer relationship to be beneficial to both parties. At the same time, all employees should remember that the employment relationship exists by mutual agreement. Either party can terminate the employment relationship "at will", at any time, with or without notice, with or without cause. This handbook, therefore, does not constitute an agreement for continued employment or any employment of any length. The only exception to this would be an employment relationship stated in a written contract signed by both the employee and the Explorer Principal.

1.2.2 RESIGNATION

Should an employee find it necessary for an employee to terminate his/her employment with Explorer, Explorer requests the courtesy of the employee's notice of the intent to terminate employment at least two weeks prior to termination whenever possible.

EXIT INTERVIEW

If an employee voluntarily leaves Explorer, you may be asked to participate in an exit interview. During the exit interview, you can express yourself freely. We hope this will provide insight to both parties. All information will be kept confidential and will not affect any reference information we provide to another employer.

1.3 PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

Employee files and benefit records are considered confidential. Keeping your file up to date can be important to you with regard to pay, deductions, benefits and other matters.

1.3.1 YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

You are responsible for providing the following information required for your personnel file. You must promptly notify Explorer of any changes:

Full correct name, home address, telephone number, and social security number. Copies of all academic records, credentials, degrees.

- c. Annual forms and certifications as required, including fingerprinting and police clearance.
- d. Applications for benefits with accurate information.
- e. Tuberculosis Tests. Employees must be tested every four years by x-ray or skin test. Current TB test results must be on file in the office.
- f. Proof of U.S. citizenship. Federal regulations require that 1) before becoming employed, all applicants must complete and sign Federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form; and 2) all applicants who are hired need to present document of identity and eligibility to work in the U.S.
- g. Other forms as may be necessary and required by law.

1.3.2 INSPECTION OF YOUR FILE AND/OR BENEFIT RECORDS

You may inspect your own personnel file by making an appointment

with the Principal. Files will be inspected in the presence of one of the employees of the office. Benefit information, such as sick leave records, personal days used, or hours worked may also be reviewed. You may request and receive copies of all documents you have signed.

1.4 EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

At the time you are hired, you are classified as full-time, part-time or temporary and are also told whether you qualify for overtime pay. Unless otherwise stated, benefits described in this manual apply only to full-time employees. All other policies apply to all employees.

1.4.1 FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

Full-time employees are those scheduled for 40 hours per week or more during the school year.

1.4.2 PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

An employee who is scheduled to work less than a 40 hour week is considered a part-time employee. If you are a part-time employee, please understand that to be eligible for benefits, you must work at least 50% and benefits will be pro-rated.

1.4.3 CONSULTANTS

Explorer may hire persons for completion of a specific project. These persons may be hired as consultants and the job assignment; work schedule and duration of the position will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

EXEMPT AND NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

At the time of hiring, all employees are classified as either "exempt" or "non-exempt". By law, employees in certain types of jobs are entitled to overtime pay for hours worked in excess of eight hours per day or forty hours per work week. These employees are referred to as "non-exempt". Non-exempt employees must keep track of their daily work hours on time-sheets noting the time they begin work, take breaks and meal periods and the time they complete work for the day. These time sheets must be turned into the front office on specified dates so that payroll can be processed.

In general, exempt employees may include teachers, administrators, professional staff, technical staff and others whose duties and responsibilities allow them to be classified as "exempt" from the laws governing over-time pay.

1.5 EMPLOYEE EVALUATION

Job description and specific criteria for each position should be clearly communicated to each employee. Performance feedback is an important part of each person's growth. Feedback will be given on an ongoing basis. New employees and employees who have a change in responsibilities may be reviewed more often. Employees who believe they do not have clear job descriptions and specific position criteria must communicate this to Explorer well before scheduled evaluation.

1.6 WORK SCHEDULES

The normal workweek is a five-day period, Monday through Friday. Explorer's regular hours of operation are from 7:45 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. In general, employees are informed of their working hours/schedule at the inception of their employment relationship. Working hours and schedules vary depending upon the job classification and the school's needs. In addition, Explorer reserves the right to alter schedules as it may require.

1.7 PAY PRACTICES

Payroll dates and times are scheduled according to Explorer policy. Employees receive (24) twenty four checks annually, on the 15th day and last day of each month.

If your employment with Explorer is terminated, by either your decision or Explorer's, such that you do not complete the minimum number of workdays specified in your contract, the pay that you will earn for that period of work will be pro-rated based upon a daily rate multiplied by the number of contract work days completed. This calculation will also apply to a start date after the beginning of the standard contract work year or whenever an extended leave is taken that results in unpaid days of absence.

1.8 BENEFITS

1.8.1 HEALTH INSURANCE

Forms of Health Coverage Offered at Explorer:

Explorer offers insurance plans that include medical, dental, and vision insurance benefits. We also offer life insurance, long term disability insurance and Employee Assistance Programs. Available benefit plans may vary and may change from time to time at Explorer's sole discretion. Affected employees will be advised of any such changes as required by applicable law.

Employees who meet the eligibility criteria (noted below) for these plans may participate in the same.

Medical and Dental: Employees who meet the eligibility requirements noted below are provided individual medical and dental insurance at up to a cap of \$358 per month. This cap may change. In general this cap is at a level that covers individual HMO medical and dental insurance premiums for the employee. If employees select a more expensive form of insurance, or elect coverage for dependents, they must pay the additional cost of coverage through a payroll deduction.

Vision: Vision insurance is available on an individual basis. Explorer does not pay for this coverage. Rather, employees who sign up for vision insurance must pay for the coverage through a payroll deduction.

Eligibility for Insurance Coverage

The following are the eligibility requirements to participate in Explorer's benefits plans:

Any salaried employee who is contracted at 50% of fulltime or more.

Any hourly employee who works at least 32 hours per week on a regular, ongoing basis.

Benefits allowance for part-time employees will be pro-rated according to their percentage of full-time hours worked provided such part-time employees regularly work the required number of hours to be eligible for such benefits.

An employee's spouse or registered domestic partner

A non-registered domestic partner where specific eligibility requirements are met and documented (see the Business office for further information).

An employee's child, by birth or adoption, who is under the age of 19.

Dependents who are enrolled in college on a full time basis may continue to be covered on the medical plan until their 25th birthday by submitting regular documentation of college enrollment to the insurer.

Cessation of Benefits upon Termination: Regular insurance benefits cease on

the last day of the month in which employment is terminated. Insurance benefits will be in effect during the summer months for returning employees.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE

If you are injured on the job, your medical and hospital expenses and a portion of lost salary may be payable under Worker's Compensation Insurance.

Reporting an injury: You are responsible for reporting any job related injury to the Office immediately.

You will be asked to complete a simple form "Employer's First Report of Injury". The office will provide you with information so you can seek medical attention as necessary under the Worker's Compensation Plan.

You will receive a pamphlet "Facts for Injured Workers" which will give you additional information about your rights under Workers' Compensation Insurance.

You should report any injury in a timely fashion, even minor ones not requiring immediate medical attention, so that appropriate records can be kept. Should a minor injury develop into a more severe problem you and the school may be in a better position to make a claim.

RETIREMENT

All teaching faculty who meet the State Teacher's Retirement System (STRS) criteria for automatic enrollment will be required to contribute to the retirement system through pre-tax payroll deductions. Some teaching faculty who do not meet the criteria for automatic enrollment may be offered STRS membership on a voluntary basis, subject to terms and conditions determined by STRS. Social Security contributions shall be made as required by law for all employees who do not qualify to participate in the State Teachers' Retirement System (STRS).

403(b) Plans offer pre-tax retirement savings through payroll deductions. 403(b) Plans are available to all employees. Explorer does not endorse any particular product or provider. For a copy of the current list of 403(b) providers, contact the HTH Business Office at 619-243-5004. 403(b) contributions are subject to IRS regulations. 457 (b) plans are also available, contact HTH Business Office.

LEAVE POLICIES

1.9.1 PAID LEAVE BENEFITS

Circumstances sometimes arise that do not allow you to complete the minimum number of annual workdays specified in your contract. For these circumstances, Explorer provides limited paid leave benefits as described below:

Paid sick leave - Effective September 1, 2008, all contracted employees will receive an annual paid sick leave accrual equal to 10 days. The full annual accrual will be available on the first day of the contract for returning employees. Newly employed staff will receive the annual accrual after 30 days of contract employment. Unused sick leave accrual will carry forward to the following year.

Employees who are on an unpaid leave when the contract year begins will receive their annual accrual upon return to work.

The sick leave benefit may be used to cover absences due to personal illness or injury, disability due to pregnancy, or to care for an immediate family member who is ill. The school may, at its discretion, request documentation for the absence in the form of a doctor's note. Up to two days annually may be used for personal reasons other than those previously listed.

Jury duty - Explorer will compensate you for the first five work days that you are absent due to jury service. To minimize any loss of pay resulting from jury duty, you may ask the court to have your jury service rescheduled to a time period that you are normally not working. Also, you may advise the court that service beyond five days will affect your pay and they may consider this when assigning you to a trial.

If you are dismissed from jury service prior to 12:30 p.m. on any day, you are asked to return to complete the remainder of your work day.

When serving on jury duty, provide Explorer with evidence of your service in the form of the jury attendance certification provided by the court. You may accept the stipend provided by the court for your service as well as any transportation support offered.

Bereavement - If you should experience the loss of life of your spouse, child, domestic partner or another immediate family member, Explorer will provide five days of paid leave. In addition, up to two days of any unused sick leave may be used in addition to the bereavement benefit.

If the previously described allowances for paid leave do not apply, or if you have fully used the available paid leave benefits, additional absences will result

in deductions from your normal salary. The deduction for a day of absence will be equal to your daily rate (defined as your annual salary divided by your minimum annual days of work).

Notification to School of Absence

You must advise the principal as soon as possible of the need to take sick leave or other absence and provide an indication of the date upon which you believe that you will return to work. If you have an extended absence, it is important that you periodically check in with the school with an update as to your situation so that coverage of your responsibilities can be planned.

Donation of Sick Leave to Other Staff

You may elect at any time to contribute unused sick leave from your bank to another staff member so long as you retain no less than four days of sick leave for your personal use. At no time should you feel that you are compelled or obligated to make a donation.

Transfer of Sick Leave Benefits from Previous School Employment

If you worked for another public school in California within the past twelve months and have unused sick leave benefits, please contact the school office regarding custodial transfer of those benefits.

No Cash Redemption for Unused Sick Leave

Sick leave benefits are intended to assist eligible employees who must miss work due to an illness or injury. Accordingly, no sick leave benefits are cashed out or paid upon retirement or termination of employment. For STRS participants, unused sick leave may result in additional service credit at the time of retirement.

1.9.2 BENEFITS AVAILABLE DURING UNPAID LEAVE

If your absence results in a period of unpaid leave, the following benefits associated with your employment at Explorer may apply. The following section describes three important benefit programs that assist employees by replacing a significant portion of their normal pay during a period of absence.

State Disability Insurance (SDI) - through payroll deductions, you contribute to the state disability insurance program. Should you become seriously ill or

injured and your absence exceeds the paid sick leave benefits available to you, you may apply to the Employment Development Department (EDD) for SDI benefits. For information on how to apply for SDI benefits, consult the EDD website at <http://www.edd.ca.gov>. Eligibility for SDI benefits and the benefit amount earned is determined by EDD, not Explorer. SDI benefits are exempt from federal and state taxes.

In addition to the SDI benefit program, EDD also administers the Paid Family Leave (PFL) program. PFL benefits are available to employees who must take extended unpaid leave to care for a parent, child, spouse or registered domestic partner or to bond with a new minor child. Benefits are available for a maximum of six weeks in a 12 month period. For information on how to apply for PFL benefits, consult the EDD website at [HYPERLINK "http://www.edd.ca.gov"](http://www.edd.ca.gov) <http://www.edd.ca.gov>. Eligibility for PFL benefits and the benefit amount earned is determined by EDD, not Explorer. PFL benefits are exempt from state taxes, but are subject to federal taxes.

Long term disability insurance is purchased by Explorer on your behalf. Currently, the coverage is provided by Aetna. If you are unable to work for more than 60 calendar days for reasons of personal illness, injury, or as a result of pregnancy related disability, you can apply for the long term disability benefits. The benefits are designed to continue 60% of your current salary. While you are eligible to receive SDI benefits, the policy makes up the difference, if any, between your SDI benefit and 60% of your current salary. After SDI benefits end, the long term disability policy pays the full 60%.

1.9.3 UNPAID LEAVE

At the time that your paid leave benefits are exhausted, you are encouraged to apply in writing for an unpaid Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) if you meet the following eligibility requirements:

You must have been employed by Explorer for at least 12 months, and
In the past twelve months, you were working for Explorer no less than 50% of fulltime, or the equivalent thereof, and

The reason for your absence from work meets one of the following conditions:
for the birth and care of the newborn child of the employee;

for placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care;

to care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition; **or**

to take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition

Your written application for FMLA under either of the last two reasons must be accompanied by a doctor's certification of your disability (or your family member's serious illness where that applies).

FMLA is available for a maximum of 12 weeks in a 12 month period. FMLA permits you to take leave to receive "continuing treatment by a health care provider," which can include recurring absences for therapy treatments such as those ordered by a doctor for physical therapy after a hospital stay or for treatment of severe arthritis.

During an FMLA absence, you will not accrue new paid sick leave benefits, however upon return to work, you will be provided the annual accrual if you qualify and have not already received the contract year accrual.

The FMLA leave that you request from Explorer will run concurrently with any benefits that you may receive from EDD or long term disability as well as any other leave program for which you may also be eligible, including, but not limited to leave due to a work related injury during which workers compensation benefits may be received.

1.9.4 CONTINUATION OF HEALTH BENEFITS

During the period that you are on paid leave or on an approved Family and Medical Leave, Explorer will continue to pay its share of the medical and dental benefits that you were enrolled into prior to your leave. If you were paying the portion of your health benefit cost in excess of the cap prior to your leave, you will be required to continue making those payments to continue the coverage.

In a very limited number of situations for which FMLA is not applicable, continuation of health benefits may be mandated by federal or state law. If you believe that you qualify for one of these exceptional situations, notify the principal in writing of the law under which you are requesting benefit continuation.

Whether or not you request FMLA, you are eligible for continuation of your health benefits should you lose your company-paid health benefits due to a change in your employment status. An application for COBRA will be mailed to you upon termination of your health insurance. Continued coverage on COBRA, should you elect that coverage, is at your expense.

1.9.5 EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

Certain federal and state laws protect your employment rights when you take leave from your employment. For example, while on FMLA, you have rights to return to your previous position so long as your leave does not exceed the 12 weeks in a 12 month period. The California Family Rights Act (CFRA) extends this employment protection to 16 weeks in the case of a pregnancy related disability.

While FMLA and CFRA are the most common leaves that are addressed by state or federal law, there are others that may apply to your particular situation. An example is the law governing the rights of employees returning from active military duty. This handbook does not attempt to define all of these laws. In all cases, where employment rights are protected by state or federal law, Explorer will comply with the requirements of the law. If you believe that you are eligible for a leave of absence under any federal or state law, you must advise Explorer in your written request for a leave of absence of the law under which you are claiming reemployment rights.

1.9.6 OTHER LEAVES

The principal may approve unpaid leaves for reasons other than those addressed in this handbook or under federal or state law. These leaves will be considered discretionary leaves. Each request will be considered by the principal on its own merits and the principal may consider such factors as length of employment with Explorer in making a determination whether a leave of absence will be approved. If a leave of absence is denied, the employee will be asked to resign if they want to take the time off.

Reinstatement following a discretionary leave will generally be accepted so long as a vacancy exists for which the employee is qualified. No legal right to reemployment following a discretionary leave is implied or intended. An employee who is denied a requested leave and subsequently resigns may re-apply for employment at a later date but is not assured of re-employment.

Education Code

Please note that as a charter school, leaves described in the California Education Code are not applicable to Explorer.

1.9.7 PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Permission to attend conferences or other professional growth activities must be worked out with the Principal, in accordance with budget allocations for such activities and school schedules and needs.

II. FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR AND COMMUNICATION

Professional behavior with regard to confidentiality includes the following:

Conversations about student behavior or academic work are to be shared only with that student's parents, the Principal, or another teacher or staff member who is working with that student.

Information in a student's cumulative folders and records is available to the child's parents and administrators only. These folders are not to be removed from the office.

Communication problems between faculty members, parents, board members and staff should be resolved directly with the persons involved and as soon as they occur. When issues occur that appear to be irresolvable, an appointment should be scheduled with the Principal.

2.2 THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The role of the teacher is to provide for children a high quality education, in an environment that is not only safe, but also in an atmosphere that promotes opportunities to expand their educational horizons and develop understanding and acceptance of other members of the school community.

It is the obligation of the teacher to work in concert with Explorer and to follow the guidelines and policies as set down by the charter.

The teacher will report directly to the Principal. The Principal will be responsible for the ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the classroom teaching.

Explorer strives to meet the needs of all children regardless of their physical or developmental challenges. Under federal law, all children are entitled to "a free and appropriate education" regardless of special needs or disabilities. If a teacher feels it is necessary, s/he should inform the principal and a Student Study Team will be called together as needed (teacher, resource teacher, principal) based on each child's special circumstances.

In the event a learning or physical challenge is hindering a student's progress significantly and is documented through appropriate observation and testing, a student may qualify for participation in a formal Individualized Education Plan

(IEP). This process designates a clearly identified group of professionals who along with the parents implement a specifically designed education program complete with formal methods, time frames, and documentation procedures.

Students may enter the school with an active IEP. In these cases, the teacher and principal together will determine the best way to provide continuity of service.

2.2.1 TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES: CURRICULUM

To work with the Principal and staff to develop and implement curriculum and projects that meet State standards, reflect the school philosophy and address the educational needs of the students.

To evaluate the individual needs of the students, develop classroom practices that address those needs and reflect the curriculum.

To develop classroom curriculum using strategies for higher learning based on CAG theories and practice.

To provide for classroom learning opportunities that are child-centered; age appropriate, and challenging for each student.

To create a classroom environment that reflects enthusiasm for learning and the creativity of the teacher.

To understand and teach social curriculum as designed by Explorer.

To research and utilize the community resources available to the school and plan and organize field trips that are curriculum appropriate and expand the learning opportunities of children.

To assure that students are prepared for Standardized Testing.

To report data from student assessments each year so that the entire faculty can reflect upon and improve its practice.

2.2.2 TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES: COMMUNICATION

To maintain regular communication with all parents. This communication may take the form of newsletters, e-mails, phone calls, and special notes home.

To regularly schedule parent conferences held at least two times during the school year.

To communicate to students and parents the classroom expectations regarding academic performance, conduct, and classroom interaction with other students and the teacher.

To work with the parents in the development of short and long term goals for students.

To communicate with fellow teachers, respect differences, and learn from one another.

To communicate professionally and regularly with the Principal, addressing any concerns directly to him/her.

2.2.3 TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES: CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL

To create a classroom environment that establishes clear, consistent expectations for students.

To create opportunities for students to learn proper classroom decorum through modeling, affirmation, language and role-playing.

To treat all students with respect, dignity and to, by example, show the students how individuals learn to get along with others.

To allow students the opportunity to learn how to solve their problems independently with appropriate level of interaction from the teacher.

To maintain the same expectations out of the classroom as in the classroom.

To be active in the supervision of students, both in the classroom and throughout the school.

2.2.4 TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES: ADDITIONAL

To work with the Principal in the preparation and execution of safety procedures: fire, earthquake, and other potential disaster situations.

To work with staff in the maintenance of a clean, healthy environment.

To encourage parent participation in the classroom, volunteering, sharing particular talents, and sharing learning opportunities outside the classroom.

To attend all scheduled faculty meetings and in-services.

To develop, in consultation with the Principal, goals and objectives for each school year.

To meet regularly with the Principal to review and evaluate these goals and objectives.

To receive evaluations from the Principal.

To maintain an open classroom, understanding that the school has many visitors and that classrooms reflect who we are and what we do.

To participate in general parent meetings and special evening presentations sponsored by the school.

To exemplify the best ideals of the teaching profession.

To work to improve the academic achievement of each and every student.

2.2.5 MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

All Explorer employees are considered mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect under the California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, which is contained within the California Penal Code at sections 11164 - 11174.3, and can be accessed via the internet site titled California Law at: [HYPERLINK "http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html" \t "_blank" http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html)

Legal obligations of a mandated reporter in California if child abuse is known or suspected:

The Mandated Reporter must report to the Principal and then call a "Child

Protective Agency" as soon as possible to make verbal report of "Reasonable Suspicion."

Then, the Mandated Reporter must file a written report on Department of Justice Suspected Child Abuse Report Form SS 8572 within 36 hours of their verbal report.

Mandated Reporters are required to give their name.

CPS contact numbers and reporting forms are available in the office.

What is "Reasonable Suspicion" ?

"Reasonable Suspicion" occurs when "it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain such a suspicion, when based upon the facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing when appropriate on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse." (California Penal Code 11166[a])

III. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

3.1 A.M./ P.M. PROCEDURE

A.M. Procedure: Teachers should be available to meet students in the classroom at 8:00 a.m.

P.M. Procedure: At the end of the school day, children remaining at school at 3:15 p.m. will be escorted by their teacher to extended care.

3.2 ATTENDANCE

Each teacher is responsible for taking attendance by 9:30 a.m. each morning and reporting attendance in the manner and system specified by the school.

3.3 CARE OF CHILDREN IN CASE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

First Aid supplies are kept in the school office, and minor first aid may be administered by the teacher. Depending on the nature of the illness/injury, a child should be accompanied to the office by a teacher or another adult or child for additional care as necessary.

3.4 EMPLOYEE DRESS CODE

Please dress comfortably in order to be engaged with the children. Dress is designated "casual".

3.5 EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

To be reimbursed for all authorized expenses, you must submit an expense report/voucher accompanied by original receipts and approved by the Principal. Please submit your expense report as you incur authorized reimbursable expenses. There is usually a two-week waiting period from submission of check

request to receipt of the reimbursement check.

Faculty members will be issued a WAMU bank card each school year. This card will have a balance and should be used for purchases needed for the classroom. Receipts for all purchases need to be attached to an expense report and submitted for approval. A monthly balance will be issued to each faculty member. Once the balance gets close to zero, the teacher will be notified and no further purchases can be made.

3.6 FACULTY MEETINGS

Full faculty meetings are held on Wednesday afternoons or after school, as needed. The purpose of these meetings is communication, curriculum discussion, training and sharing information. It is the responsibility of all faculty members to attend these meetings.

3.7 FIELD TRIPS

Classroom teachers are responsible for making their own field trip arrangements. Public transportation or parent volunteer drivers may be utilized. Field trips are encouraged as part of the school curriculum. All out-of-class activities, however, must be directly related to curriculum being studied. They must be recorded in the school office and hot lunch cancelled. Teachers should notify the office as soon as a field trip is planned, by completing a designated field trip schedule.

Copies of parental consents, notifications, and emergency treatment signed by parents must be on file in the office for every student on the trip.

3.7.1 DRIVERS FOR FIELD TRIPS

Teachers must check that current insurance policy information and driver's licenses from parents who will be driving students on field trips are on file in the office. Insurance information should be updated and current for each school year. Teachers must ensure that drivers have seat belts for all children in the car and that no child under 12 rides in an airbag seat.

3.8 FIRE DRILLS / DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Fire drills will be held regularly. Disaster Preparedness drill will be held at least once a year. Maps and specific evacuation directions will be given to all employees.

3.9 FUND RAISING

No request for funds should go to parents or to other members of the community unless first cleared through the Principal. Any funds or gifts-in-kind which come into the school, should be reported to the Principal, and/or business

manager. As a common courtesy, any contributor of money, gifts-in-kind, or special gifts to teachers should receive a thank-you note from both the school and the teacher.

3.10 HOMEWORK

At Explorer, homework is introduced at the Kindergarten level and continues as part of the school curriculum for the remaining years. These assignments are designed to promote self-discipline, practice/reinforce classroom work, and develop good study habits. Homework should be authentic and meaningful, developmentally appropriate, and tied directly to the unit of study. The amount and length of homework will increase as a student progresses through the grades as developmentally appropriate.

3.11 PERSONAL PHONE CALLS

Our telephones are a vital tool in communicating with parents, community resources, and to conduct official Explorer business. Please keep your personal phone calls to a minimum—they must not interfere with your work or prevent access to your classroom.

3.12 PERSONAL USE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

To use Explorer equipment for personal benefit, during or after work hours, you must have written authorization from the Principal. As an employee of Explorer, you accept full responsibility for any and all liabilities for injuries or losses which might occur. You are responsible for returning the equipment in good condition and agree that you will pay for any damages that occur while using the equipment for personal projects. Employees must have written authorization from the Principal before removing equipment from the school premises.

3.13 SAFETY RULES

Safety is everybody's business. Safety is of prime importance in protecting you and our children. Please report all injuries to the office immediately, even if minor. Below are some general safety rules:

Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many machines.

Use flammable items, such as cleaning fluids, with caution.

Ask for assistance when lifting heavy objects or moving heavy furniture.

Keep cabinet doors and file and desk drawers closed when not in use.

Keep your work area clean and orderly, and aisles clear.

Stack materials only to safe heights.

Watch out for the safety of other employees and students.

3.14 SECURITY

Maintaining the security of Explorer is every employee's responsibility. Develop

habits that ensure security. Below are general measures you should follow:

Always keep cash properly secured.

Know the location of all alarms and fire extinguishers, and familiarize yourself with the proper procedure for using them, should the need arise.

When you leave the Explorer premises, make sure that all entrances are properly locked and secured, and alarmed, if necessary.

3.15 SPECIAL EDUCATION

Federal and State laws require all public school districts to provide a "free and appropriate education for all children with disabilities". Both federal and state legislation mandate timelines for referral, assessment, eligibility and the provision of appropriate services to all student's with exceptional needs.

If a member of the faculty or administration suspects that a student may have a disability that may require additional attention, the student's parents should be contacted and involved in an intervention plan with the collaborative assistance of Explorer's special education teacher. If the student does not respond appropriately to these interventions he/she should be referred for a comprehensive evaluation through the special education teacher. If the student is determined eligible for special education through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process the special education teacher will develop an IEP with appropriate supports, services, goals and accommodations sufficient to address the student's educational needs. This plan will be presented to an IEP team that shall include, at a minimum, the parents, school administrator, appropriate assessment personnel, at least one general education teacher and the special education teacher.

3.16 SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

If it is necessary to have a substitute, arrangements should be made through the office. Whenever possible, advance notice is very helpful. It is expected that teachers have available in their classrooms a substitute folder with detailed lesson plans, schedule and emergency procedures.

IV. HARASSMENT POLICY

4.1 POLICY AGAINST HARASSMENT

Explorer is committed to providing a workplace that is free of unlawful discrimination. In keeping with this commitment, Explorer maintains a strict policy against unlawful harassment of any form including, sexual harassment and harassment based on race, ancestry, color, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable state or federal law. This policy applies to all Explorer employees, including supervisory and non-supervisory employees. Moreover, this policy

prohibits unlawful harassment in any form, including verbal, written, physical, and visual harassment. Retaliation of any kind against individuals who file valid complaints or who assist in an employer investigation is also prohibited. All such unlawful harassment will not be tolerated. Employees who violate this policy are subject to discipline up to and including the possibility of immediate termination of employment.

4.2 COMPLAINT FILING AND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

Any employee who believes that he or she has been harassed should promptly report the facts of the incident(s), the name(s) of the individual(s) involved, and the names of witnesses, to the Principal. The report should include reference to direct quotations when language is relevant, and any documentary evidence (notes, pictures, cartoons, e-mails, etc.) It is the responsibility of each employee to immediately report any violation or suspected violation of this policy.

Explorer will investigate all claims of harassment. Explorer will make efforts to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all concerned parties to the extent possible and consistent with the process of a thorough investigation.

Explorer will not retaliate against any employee for using this complaint procedure or for filing, testifying, assisting, or participating in any manner in any investigation, proceeding, or hearing conducted by a governmental enforcement agency. If an employee believes that he or she has been retaliated against for making a complaint of harassment, he or she should contact the Principal.

If Explorer determines that prohibited harassment has occurred, Explorer will take appropriate remedial action, including the possibility of disciplinary action. Any employee who is found to have engaged in prohibited harassment or retaliation is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including the possibility of immediate termination of employment.

4.3 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to the conduct is made an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment; or (2) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. This definition includes many forms of offensive behavior. The following is a partial list:

Unwanted sexual advances;

Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors;
Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances;
Visual conduct such as leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons, or posters;
Verbal conduct such as making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, sexually explicit jokes, unwanted sexual advances or propositions, invitations or comments about any employee's body or dress;
Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentary about an individual's body, sexually degrading words to describe an individual,
Letters, notes, electronic mail, instant messaging, Internet usage or other forms of correspondence or media containing sexually explicit, pornographic, or sexually-suggestive subject matter; and,
Physical conduct such as touching, assault, or impeding or blocking movements.

It is unlawful for males to sexually harass females or other males, and for females to sexually harass males or other females. Sexual harassment on the job also is unlawful when it involves vendors, contractors, or any other person with access to Explorer premises.

4.4 OTHER FORMS OF PROHIBITED HARASSMENT

Harassment on the basis of race, ancestry, color, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable state or federal law also is prohibited. Prohibited conduct includes many forms of offensive behavior. The following is a partial list:
Visual conduct such as derogatory posters, photographs, cartoons, drawings, or gestures;
Verbal conduct such as threats, epithets, derogatory comments, or slurs;
Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, or blocking normal movement; and,
Letters, notes, electronic mail, instant messaging, Internet usage or other forms of correspondence or media containing threats, epithets, or derogatory subject matter.

V. RECORDS

5.1 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Explorer employees are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information obtained during the course of their employment with Explorer ("Explorer Information"). Explorer Information includes: personnel files and information; student files and information; family files and information; computer records; financial data; procedure descriptions;. No employee may

use or disclose any Explorer Information.

Information may not be shared with any third party unless the disclosure is either a regular reporting requirement of the employee's job position or unless the disclosure is approved. Moreover, in the case of student and family information, parent/guardian consent may also be required prior to disclosure. This obligation to maintain the confidence of such Explorer Information survives the employment relationship. Accordingly, employees who depart from Explorer may not reveal confidential Explorer Information after their departure.

Employees who have any questions regarding this policy in the course of their work should ask the Principal for clarification.

All student records are kept in the school office. Procedures for parents who wish to access records are detailed in Explorer's Parent Guide. Teachers or staff should refer all requests relating to records or student information to the Principal or Office staff.

EXPLORER ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL

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Jean: What benefits will you offer a part-time employee? Up above you state that unless otherwise noted, only full-time people get benefits so it is important to specify which, if any, apply to qualifying part-timers.

Jean and Kay: Is PERS available to Explorer staff?

Jean and Kay: I thought only a certain section of the staff (i.e., Jill, could participate in the 457 plan? Is that true?)

Jean and Kay: Is this accurate? Or would you rather have the 10 days

accrued evenly over the 12 month contract period?

Jean: I'd like to have Bob Parker take a quick look at this paragraph. I'll forward the language to him too.