



**Pearson Virtual Schools (PVS)**  
**Customer Support: Service Delivery**  
**Employee Handbook**

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# Introduction

## Organizational Overview

### Connections Education

Connections Education®, doing business as (dba) Pearson Virtual Schools K-12 USA, is a leading accredited provider of high-quality, highly accountable virtual and blended education solutions for students in grades K–12. Founded in October 2001, Connections is now part of the global learning company Pearson. Connections is committed to expanding quality education through technology and helping students achieve both academic and personal success through its Connections Academy® and Pearson Virtual Schools (PVS) Student Academic Services divisions.

### Connections Academy

Connections Academy virtual schools deliver individualized learning plans, outstanding curriculum, superb teachers, and a powerful online learning platform- all supported by Connections Education. Through the virtual public charter schools and one international private online academy, the Connections Academy network serves students in grades K-12.

### Pearson Virtual Schools (PVS)

PVS delivers a full range of targeted digital learning solutions to the K–12 education community, helping hundreds of districts and schools across the nation – and around the world - to bring high-quality virtual and blended education to their students. PVS partners can choose from a full catalog of online courses coupled with expert online teaching and platform options tailored to their specific programmatic needs.

## Core Mission and Values

**The mission of the organization is to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program.**

Incorporated in this mission are the organization's core values. Every member of the organization is expected to be:

- **ACCOUNTABLE:** Take pride in your work. Take ownership when you've made a mistake. We believe in empowering our people, but with empowerment comes personal accountability. You should hold yourself to the highest standards for your projects and service.
- **BRAVE:** As an organization, we occasionally need to take risks and make bold moves and we expect our people to embrace and support these decisions. You should speak up when you have a valuable opinion, or when you disagree with a decision or someone's actions. As we are in an ever-changing industry, you also need to be willing and eager to accept change.
- **COLLABORATIVE:** We believe in building relationships with colleagues and customers. We seek input from all stakeholders, sharing honest feedback and valuing their opinions.
- **CURIOUS:** Become a subject matter expert in your area. We believe in questioning the status quo, when necessary to expand knowledge. You should take the initiative to learn new things and new tasks.
- **CUSTOMER-CENTRIC:** We take time to think through the needs of our customers by engaging multiple stakeholders and strategizing with them on behalf of the customer to present solutions. We believe in recommending solutions that are for the betterment of the schools and/or students.
- **DECENT:** We demand respect and professionalism of our people. Your interactions with others, whether within the organization or externally, should be engaging and genuine. Our people should display the highest integrity and ethics – particularly when it comes to working with children. Recognize and reward others you work with for their successes.
- **IMAGINATIVE:** We need our people to think outside the box by presenting innovative solutions. We admire creativity and ingenuity. When you have an idea, share it. Be forward-thinking in your role so that we can all anticipate outcomes.

PVS carries these values over to its employees by striving to provide a work environment built upon the following cultural pillars:

- Accountability: We believe in holding our employees accountable for their own work product and quality service.
- Anticipate Outcomes: We believe in challenging our employees to explore all possible outcomes of any given situation and to plan accordingly to proactively overcome any negative impacts.
- Empowerment: We believe in giving our employees the autonomy to make decisions and providing them with the tools and resources necessary to feel empowered to make those decisions.
- Reward Success: We believe in celebrating the success of our employees and recognizing their contributions.
- Rapid Response: We believe in responding to feedback quickly with incremental changes.

## Purpose of the Handbook

These policies apply to Customer Support: Service Delivery departments including, ICS Services, Substitute Services, Tutoring Services, and Speech Services.

This handbook does not create any expressed or implied contract concerning your employment nor does it guarantee your employment for any term. It is intended to assist employees in acquainting themselves with our organization, and to serve as a reference manual for information about employment policies and procedures.

The organization reserves the right to add to, suspend, delete, or modify any part of the handbook, at any time and without notice. However, employees will be kept apprised of important changes in our policies, procedures, and practices, although you may not always be notified in advance of a change or the reason for the change. Furthermore, the organization reserves the right to respond to each situation in the manner we determine will best serve the interests of fairness and responsible business management.

If you have specific questions about the interpretation or application of a particular provision, please consult your manager or Human Resources.

The most current version of this handbook is always available online in the Virtual Library. Federal, state, or local laws prevail in the event there is a conflict with the content of this handbook.

To be effective, any agreement altering the terms and provisions of this handbook must be in writing and signed by the Vice President of Human Resources. If you sign additional agreements related to your employment, you will be required to comply with their provisions even if they are different than the information that is contained in the employee handbook.

Any individual who violates any policy in this handbook will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. After reading this handbook, you will be asked to acknowledge that you have read and understand the contents.

## At-Will Employment

No policy or provision in this handbook is intended to create a contract binding you or the employer to an agreement of employment for a specified period of time. Employment can be terminated by either the employee or the employer at any time, for any reason, with or without notice. No representative or agent of the employer, other than the Vice President of Human Resources, can authorize or sign an employment agreement contrary to the above terms and otherwise make any binding offer of employment for a specific term.



## Job Responsibilities

Each employee is required to perform the job duties applicable to their position in a satisfactory manner. At any time, he/she may be asked to perform duties outside of the job description consistent with the culture of collaboration and teamwork within our organization. Employees are expected to perform additional duties in the same manner as listed in their job description.

## Manager Responsibilities

### Reporting Obligations

Any employee whose title is manager or higher AND/OR who supervises other employees, for purposes of this section referred to as "Management", must follow the policies set forth within this handbook. Management MUST immediately (within twenty-four (24) hours) report complaints of harassment, requests for accommodations, workplace injuries, complaints of retaliation, and any suspected or known policy violations of any sort to Human Resources.

### Manager Employee Relations

Management is expected to maintain appropriate and professional relationships with all employees. Managers should remain objective in all interactions with employees and should never show any preference or favoritism.

### Disclosure of Confidential Information

Management is prohibited from disclosing employee information to internal or external parties, without prior approval from Human Resources. State law may mandate disclosure of select confidential information.

In addition, management is not permitted to provide reference checks and all inquiries of this type should be forwarded to Human Resources. If an employee asks management for a letter of recommendation, the letter must be routed to Human Resources for approval prior to release. Lastly, management is strictly prohibited from requesting medical documentation or a doctor's note these requests must come from Human Resources.

### Hiring Practices

Any level of management charged with hiring must comply with the Equal Employment Opportunity policy. Management must also comply with the recruiting and hiring practices of the Human Resources Department. Please refer to the myLearning portal for further information.

Additionally, a manager who has a personal or professional relationship with an applicant for employment must disclose this relationship to Human Resources in writing at the outset of the hiring process. In order to maintain objectivity in hiring decisions, it may be necessary for the manager to be excused from the interview process. Specifically, if a manager is making any decisions related to the background check of an applicant which they have a personal or professional relationship with, it is imperative that Human Resources is involved in discussions with the applicant.

## Outside Employment

Outside employment is additional employment for which compensation is paid by an external source. This employment must not interfere with job performance or interfere with an assigned work schedule and therefore must not occur during a staff member's standard schoolwork hours. Outside employment should be consistent with generally accepted activities for an educational institution and may not be conducted on our property nor use our property or resources.

## Required Employee Training Programs

We value our employees and strive to prepare them for a long and successful career by offering a well-rounded training program. As a result, there are several optional and mandatory trainings available. All mandatory trainings must be completed in the timeframe established. Employees who need an extension should work with their manager in conjunction with Human Resources to have the request for extension approved.

Staff should expect to take training including, but not limited to, workplace harassment prevention, suicide prevention, child abuse, and cyberbullying as mandated by state laws

## Termination of Employment

- **Notice and Severance:** We request that employees who plan to resign notify their manager in writing at least two (2) working weeks prior to their last day. For those in a supervisory capacity, three (3) weeks of notice is requested. Vacation and other forms of leave are not to be used during the notice period. The purpose for advance notice is to provide for an orderly transition of duties in a professional manner. The right to work through the end of a notice period is at our discretion.
- **Last Pay and Payout of Earned Leave:** Employees who resign or are terminated will be paid through the last day worked, including any overtime worked. Employees will be paid for unused vacation leave according to the terms of the Vacation policy. Employment is considered terminated as of the last day worked, for all pay and benefits purposes. Medical, dental, and vision benefits end on the last day of the month in which the employee has terminated employment.
- **Return of Property and Equipment:** As provided in the Property and Equipment policy, an employee must return any of these items in their possession no later than the last regular day of employment. If an employee fails to return the organization's property, he/she may be billed for the value of any property and equipment issued and not returned in working condition equivalent to when it was received, excluding normal wear and depreciation.
- **Continuation of Benefits.** The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) allows eligible employees to extend health insurance for up to eighteen (18) months (at their own expense) following termination of employment. Additional information about COBRA is provided in the Employee Benefits Guides.
- **Exit Interviews:** In instances where an employee voluntarily leaves, we would like to discuss the reasons for leaving and any other feedback. All information will be kept confidential to the extent possible.

# Pre-Employment, Hiring, and Transfer Policies

## Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

The principles of equal employment opportunity are vital to success. These principles extend to all aspects of employment including recruitment, hiring, assignment, training, compensation, benefits, terminations, educational assistance, social and recreational programs, promotions, and transfers. We are committed to creating and fostering a work environment free from unlawful discrimination and harassment and one in which decisions and terms of employment are not based in any way on race, creed, color, religion or religious affiliation, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, marital status, disability, genetic information, or veteran status, or other category protected by state or federal law.

### Responsibilities

Human Resources is ultimately responsible for developing, communicating, and enforcing the principles set forth in this policy.

Continued success in equal employment opportunity depends not only on the commitment and involvement of those directly responsible for the implementation but also on the dedication of all employees. Assuring equal employment opportunity is a fundamental and direct responsibility of all levels of management. All managers and supervisory staff are responsible for implementing the principles of this policy and ensuring that all supervisory actions are carried out in a nondiscriminatory manner.

This policy applies to all employees or managers at any level. Any manager or supervisor who becomes aware of allegations of unlawful discrimination or harassment must bring the allegations to the attention of their manager or Human Resources.

### Unlawful Harassment

We are committed to providing an atmosphere free of unlawful harassment. Unlawful harassment is unwelcome or unwanted conduct, whether verbal, nonverbal, or physical, which:

- demeans, degrades, or shows hostility toward another person because of that person's race, color, religion or religious affiliation, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, marital status, disability, genetic information, or veteran status, and
- (2) the conduct substantially interferes with an individual's employment by creating a hostile work environment.

We will not tolerate any form of harassment based on race, color, religion or religious affiliation, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, marital status, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. This policy applies in the workplace or in any work-related settings, such as business trips, conferences, or business-related social events. We expect employees to conduct themselves in a professional manner in the workplace and at any other time they are representing us. Such conduct is essential to promote quality work, and to ensure an environment free of discrimination.

### Internal Complaint Procedures

If an employee believes he/she has been unlawfully discriminated against or harassed, he/she should immediately inform their manager. If the employee believes that their manager is the source of the problem, or they are uncomfortable with this approach for any reason whatsoever, they should contact Human Resources.

Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent reasonable and possible under the circumstances, and will be investigated and handled promptly, impartially, and appropriately.

If a staff member perceives someone to be acting in a way inconsistent with the Code of Conduct, including complaints about the violation of this policy, do not hesitate to report it to the Human Resources Department.

Retaliation for bringing a discrimination complaint forward or for participating in an investigation will not be tolerated.

## Required Documentation

Any required documentation or forms, either paper or electronic must be completed and returned to Human Resources within three (3) business days of the first date of employment. Required documentation may vary depending on the position, or the state in which the employee works or lives.

## Proof of U.S. Citizenship and/or Right to Work

Federal regulations require that within three (3) business days of the first date of employment, all employees must complete and sign Federal Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Form and must present original documents of identity and eligibility to work in the United States. Additionally, in some states may require E-verification.

## Background Check Policy (Reference checks, Credit checks, Certification Verification and Criminal History Reports)

Offers of employment are contingent upon satisfactory reference and background checks as well as receipt of valid certification documents and fingerprint clearances as required, or any other approvals as listed in the offer letter. We reserve the right to conduct additional background checks periodically during employment. Employment may be denied or terminated if we believe the result of any of the background checks performed would affect an individual's ability to do their job and/or the safety of the workplace or our customers. Background checks and other clearances or verifications as required by state law are conducted at the time of hire and thereafter as required by state law.

The following standard checks may be conducted:

- County and/or statewide criminal checks for addresses in the previous seven (7) years
- Social security number verification
- Sex offender check or U.S. criminal indicator search

Additionally, we have the right to verify educational credentials and conduct a credit check for individuals assuming a significant degree of financial responsibility.

If it is found after employment begins that any information provided on the application was false or misleading, or that information that could be detrimental to the organization was withheld during the interview and/or hiring process, employment may be terminated.

## Arrests or Convictions During Employment

Employees who are arrested for or convicted of a felony or misdemeanor offense that could directly impact their ability to perform their job, have a negative impact on the organization, or must be reported as required by law, must immediately, within one (1) business day of returning to work after the arrest or conviction, notify their manager and Human Resources. Employees that have been arrested for or convicted of a felony or misdemeanor during employment that impacts their ability to perform their job, or has a negative impact on the organization, may receive disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

In accordance with state law we may be required to report to the appropriate agency(ies) any arrests or convictions of licensed staff.

## **Expiration of Educational Credentials**

Some employees, as a condition of employment, must maintain valid credentials. It is the employee's responsibility to be aware of the expiration date(s) associated with such credentials and to take steps to renew credentials as needed. Compliance Services will monitor the expiration of such credentials and provide employees with any notice required by federal or state law or regulation of such expiration.

Failure to maintain and/or renew required credentials may result in disciplinary action, up to and including unpaid leave, suspension, or termination. School staff should reach out to their manager or the Compliance Services team with any questions on required credentials.

Noncompliance with this policy could result in unpaid suspension beginning the day after the expiration date of your credential(s). If after thirty (30) days of unpaid suspension you have not submitted the required credentials, your employment could be terminated.

## **Internal Applications, Promotions and Transfers**

### **Internal Applications**

We are committed to posting job opportunities as they become available. Internal and external recruitment may occur simultaneously or separately.

As with external hiring, equal consideration for internal transfer or promotion is given to all who apply in accordance with the Equal Opportunity policy.

### **Eligibility**

Generally, employees should be in their current position for at least one (1) full school year before applying for another internal position. In addition to the time in their current position, an employee must satisfy all the minimum requirements listed on the job posting and must meet current performance expectations. Additionally, employees must not have had disciplinary action against them within the current school year.

### **Timing**

In order for schools to adequately serve student needs, an employee is generally prevented from transferring positions at any time during the school year.

It is important to maintain continuity in service to our students. Management has discretion in these decisions as they are empowered with determining what best suits student needs.

Effective dates for transfers or promotions must occur at the beginning of a pay period. A transfer or promotion should occur within four (4) to six (6) weeks after the acceptance of a new position. The current manager will have the ability to indicate if the standard transition time will not be sufficient.

## **Exceptions to the Eligibility Requirements**

The minimum service requirement is waived for transfers and promotions occurring within the same department. Employees transferring from a part-time to full-time position may also be waived from the minimum service requirement based on the organization's need.

If an employee is a unique fit for an internal transfer based on skills, expertise, and performance, as determined by management in coordination with Human Resources, or there is a specific need/urgency, an exception may be made.

## **Familial and Personal Relationships Between Employees**

Any employee involved in a non-work-related personal or romantic relationship with another employee may not be the manager or have perceived influence or authority over the career advancement, compensation, or performance appraisal of the other. A non-work-related relationship is defined as a family relationship including a spouse, former spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, cousin, in-law (brother, sister, father, mother, son, daughter), domestic partner, shared custodial responsibilities, or a romantic relationship, an external business relationship, or any other relationship that could create the potential for a conflict of interest in the workplace.

Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Vice President of Human Resources. If there is a question concerning if a relationship constitutes a conflict of interest, please contact Human Resources.

## **Employees with Children Enrolled in a Connections Affiliated School or Program**

### **Communication Tools**

Employees who have children enrolled in a Connections affiliated school or program may not use employee instant message systems or other forms of communication that are not available to other families when communicating with their children's instructors. Employees should communicate with their children's instructors through the methods available to all Learning Coaches as indicated in the School Handbook Supplement.

Keeping the methods of communication separate for the Learning Coach role ensures proper tracking of parent and instructor communications to maintain a clear process for parent and student feedback, questions and for school staff to best address parent concerns.

### **Confidential Information**

Access granted in Connexus is to be used solely for the purposes of performing tasks related to the employee's position and should not be used to access data related to their child(ren) or for any purpose outside of their job duties.

# Compensation and Benefits Policies

## Categories of Employment

- **Regular Full-Time:** A regular full-time employee is an employee who is regularly scheduled to work at least thirty (30) hours per week. Teachers are considered full-time employees even if they are not scheduled to work during the summer.
  - **School Non-Administrative Employee:** A school non-administrative employee is a regular full-time employee (e.g., teacher or SLP) who works on a ten (10) month school year calendar.
  - **Regular Part-Time:** A regular part-time employee is an employee who is regularly scheduled to work fewer than thirty (30) hours per week.
  - **Part-time Employees (PT SLPs Part-Time Substitute Teachers, Tutors, Tutor PRNs, employees working less than twenty (20) hours a week and Adjunct Teachers):** Are not eligible for paid time off or benefits, unless required by state law.
  - Employees with a work week of less than twenty (20) hours are not considered regular part-time employees for purposes of regular part-time sick, vacation and personal paid time off policies.
- **Temporary:** A temporary employee is on the payroll but is expected to be employed for a specific period of time. Temporary employees are not eligible for employee benefits, unless required by state law.

## Employee Classification as Established by the Fair Labor Standards Act

- **Exempt:** Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay, as defined under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). These employees are typically paid on a salaried basis for carrying out their position responsibilities regardless of the hours worked.
- **Non-Exempt:** Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime pay, as defined under the FLSA. Unless otherwise required by law, non-exempt employees are paid at a rate of time and one-half for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in one week. Employees are compensated only for hours worked.

## Paydays/Paychecks

For payroll calculation purposes, the standard work week runs from Sunday morning through the following Saturday evening. Employees are paid semi-monthly on the fifteenth (15th) and the final day of each month. If the pay date falls on a Saturday or Sunday, staff will be paid the Friday before the fifteenth (15th) or final day of each month. Advances in pay are not permitted. Employees will have their compensation payments spread over twenty-four (24) pays, except where state statutes or regulations require otherwise.

In accordance with the law, all mandatory federal, state, local, and other deductions will be taken from the semi-monthly pay.

Payroll information must be submitted by the established due date for timely processing. These due dates are listed on the Payroll Calendar which is available on the Virtual Library. If changes to payroll information are received after the established due date, they will be processed on the next scheduled pay period.

## Non-Exempt/Hourly Employees



Hourly employees are paid for hours worked in the pay period following the period in which the hours were recorded (i.e. hours worked from the 1st through the 15th of the month are paid on the final business day of the month).

Hourly employees are required to record start/end time and lunch breaks on a daily basis on a timesheet. Hourly employees are also responsible for reporting accurate hours on their timesheets. Falsification of timesheet hours is strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary action. Employees must submit their timesheet to their immediate manager for approval of hours worked.

## School Non-Administrative Employee Pay Structures

### Exempt School Non-Administrative Employee Pay Structure

Unless a state statute or regulation requires otherwise, exempt School Non-Administrative employee annual salaries will be paid over a twelve-month period, to include pay during the summer months.

If an exempt School Non-Administrative employee does not work the entire school year their pay will be prorated to reflect the percentage of scheduled workdays actually worked. Normal deductions for taxes and benefits will reduce this gross amount.

### Non-Exempt School Non-Administrative Employee Pay Structure

Non-exempt School Non-Administrative employees are paid based on hours worked. Therefore, they receive pay only during the ten (10)-month period in which they perform work.

### Merit Increases

For eligible employees, merit increases are calculated using a budgeted merit increase percentage specific to each department. The actual merit increase received is based on your overall performance rating for the school year.

For all exempt and non-exempt School Non-Administrative employees eligible for merit increases, the merit increase eligibility amount in the first year of employment is prorated based on the time of year in which the employee is hired.

Hired July 1 – September 30: eligible for 100% of the merit increase pool

Hired October 1 – December 31: eligible for 75% of the merit increase pool

Hired January 1 – March 31: eligible for 50% of the merit increase pool

Hired April 1 or after: Not eligible for a merit increase in the year in which hired

## Credential Requirements

### Obtaining and Maintaining Certifications and Clearances

Credentials (clearances and/or certifications) are mandatory for all applicable employees. Employees will be made aware of all required credentials and required steps to complete the credential process per their Required Certification Tracking IA. Employees should not use provided resources to obtain certifications or clearances that are not required for job performance, as completion of non-required credentials is not eligible for reimbursement. While employees may be assisted in tracking expiration dates and professional



development requirements associated with required credentials, it is the employee's sole responsibility to be aware of expiration date(s) associated with such credentials and to take steps to successfully renew credentials as needed. As such, the following requirements must be met:

- Employees must submit all certification applications for initial state certifications and clearances by the initial date assigned in the Certification Tracking IA or indicated in the employment offer letter supplement.
- All renewal requirements must be acknowledged by the employee within the Certification Tracking IA.
- Employees must submit all applications for certification renewals at least two (2) months prior to the expiration date.
- It is the responsibility of the employee to apply for all endorsements/areas of certification that are listed within the Certification Tracking IA. Employees must refer to the Toolkits provided by the Credential Compliance team, or contact their manager regarding the process to obtain or renew the certificate(s).
- It is the sole responsibility of the employee to maintain their original certification. Associated costs for the original certification are not eligible for reimbursement. For teachers, the original certification is the certification assigned after completing a teaching or comparable preparation program. For Speech-Language Pathologists, the original certification is the certification in the state where you currently reside.

\*If there are extenuating circumstances preventing an application from being submitted on time or preventing a certification from being processed, an extension may be granted by the employee's department leader. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may be taken against any employee whose credentials expire, fails to renew by their expiration date, or fails to apply for initial certifications by the due date. Further action may also be taken in accordance with state regulations.

### **Certification Test Requirements**

Other than an employee's original certification, PVS will cover the cost of obtaining and renewing a state certificate if the certificate is required for employment during the school year in which it expires.

Some state certifications may require the successful completion of certain tests. We are committed to assisting employees with the successful completion of required tests; however, failing to pass a required certification test after three (3) attempts may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Failure to obtain required certification places the organization and the employee out of compliance with state regulations.

Employees are required to notify their manager and update the Certification Tracking IA if they are unable to pass a required certification test after the first attempt. The Compliance team and the employee's manager will discuss an action plan. If the employee fails to pass a required certification test after two (2) attempts and the failing score is preventing the employee from obtaining the required state certification, the employee will be placed on a Performance Improvement Plan through the next testing date. Failure to pass a required certification test after three (3) attempts may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Testing Dates and Scheduling**

Employees are responsible for scheduling their own testing dates when exams are necessary for certification. In the event that a test must be rescheduled, it is the employee's responsibility to update the Certification Tracking IA immediately in order to notify the Compliance Services team as well as their manager.

If an employee needs to reschedule a test date, any associated fees are the responsibility of the employee. When rescheduling pushes the employee past an approved deadline from PVS to complete the test, disciplinary action may be taken until the test requirement is met.

## Testing Fees and Preparation Materials

Employees who require successful completion of tests as part of obtaining a required certification will be reimbursed for fees associated with testing for up to two (2) attempts. Any further attempts will be at the employee's expense.

Any materials purchased for test preparation are at the expense of the employee and will not be reimbursed.

## Certification Tracking IA

The Certification Tracking IA will serve as the primary method of communication between employees, managers, the Compliance team, and department leadership. Employees are required to update their Certification Tracking IA for the following reasons:

- An application for each required certificate has been submitted.
- **Substantive, detailed, biweekly status updates** regarding the application and/or renewal process on all credentials that have yet to be obtained or renewed, should be included in the Certification Tracking IA.
- If an employee receives verification from a Department of Education that an application and/or renewal is being processed, the employee must upload that information into the IA so that it can be documented.
- Once the employee receives a certificate, a copy must be submitted to the Compliance Services Team by uploading a copy of the certificate or a screenshot of the validity information provided by the Department of Education to the IA.
- Certification FAQs for each department can be found in the Virtual Library.

## Reimbursement of Certification Costs

Employees will be reimbursed for the total expenses associated with each state's application process **excluding** the original certificate. For teachers the original certificate is defined as the certification that you received upon completion of your teacher preparation program. The original certification is often required by the Department of Education in order to obtain out of state certifications. All SLPs are required to maintain the annual ASHA certificate and an original certification (SLP, DOE or both) from the state in which they reside.

We will designate your original certification in UltiPro for our records.

Employees must be employed with PVS for 60 days in order to be eligible for reimbursement. Eligible reimbursement expenses include:

- Application fees
- Ordering transcripts
- Ordering Praxis scores
- Exam registration
- Fingerprinting fees
- Postage and shipping costs in excess of \$5.

Expense reports must be submitted through Concur to obtain reimbursement within **sixty (60)** days of the transaction or payment as reflected on the transaction receipt.

## Incentive Compensation: FCA

Florida-certified teachers and counselors who are notified of the requirement to complete the FCA in-person fingerprinting process may be eligible for an incentive compensation payment. In order to be eligible for

payment, employees must complete the in-person fingerprinting process at the Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) Instructional Service Center Fingerprint Office in Tampa, Florida AND must submit all related receipts to their Required Cert Tracking IA as described below.

- Employees must submit all fingerprint documentation (e.g., signed green form) in their Required Certification Tracking IA in order to initiate the incentive compensation payment. Upon receipt of all required documentation, the payment will be processed, and eligible employees will receive the incentive compensation payment in a separate check during the summer, or in the next available paycheck in accordance with the payroll processing schedule.
- Mileage and cost of fingerprinting will be reimbursed through Concur in accordance with the standard licensing reimbursement policy.

### **Certification Completion Incentive: Teachers Only**

The Initial Certification Completion Incentive will be paid on or after October 31, if all required applications for initial credentials have been submitted by the deadline stated in your Required Certification Tracking IA or the new hire due date AND those credentials have been received by the Credential Compliance Team. If there are extenuating circumstances that will delay your credential, they must be noted in your Required Certification Tracking IA prior to the noted deadline.

The Initial Certification Completion Incentive is:

- 1 initial certification = \$200
- 2 initial certifications = \$350

### **Completion Incentive (FCA Teachers Only)**

Upon completion of the fingerprinting process, employees will be eligible for an incentive compensation payment as outlined below. Eligible employees will receive no more than one (1) completion incentive during each school year.

Incentive Compensation Rates:

- Employees required to travel 0-50 miles from their home location to the HCPS Instructional Service Center Fingerprint Office will receive \$100.
- Employees required to travel 51-100 miles from their home location to the HCPS Instructional Service Center Fingerprint Office will receive \$200.
- Employees required to travel 101+ miles from their home location to the HCPS Instructional Services Center Fingerprint Office will receive \$300.

### **ICS Teacher: National Board Certification Renewal Reimbursement Policy**

Employees who wish to renew their National Board Certification (NBCT) while actively employed in a full or part-time role may be eligible for reimbursement of the application renewal fee up to a maximum of \$1,250. The exact amount available for reimbursement will be determined by the availability of funding at the reimbursement request submission date. Employees are not eligible for reimbursement of costs associated with obtaining a NBCT and may only be eligible for reimbursement on renewal of a previously obtained certification.

In order to be eligible for reimbursement, ICS Services employees must:

- Have an active NBCT designation and be eligible for renewal

- Meet all NBCT requirements for renewal and submit a completed application by the NBCT renewal deadline
- Provide proof of renewal application submission including the submission date
- Be actively employed with Teaching Services
- Remain employed with the organization for at least six (6) months after the submission of the application
- Submit the reimbursement request through an expense report within Concur

\*Postage and other associated costs are not eligible for reimbursement under this policy.

## Speech Services Reimbursement Policies

### ASHA Dues

Full-time SLPs who have been employed with the Speech Services department for two years as of December 1st, may be eligible for reimbursement of annual ASHA certified membership dues up to \$225. The annual ASHA Continuing Education (CE) Registry fee is not eligible for reimbursement.

To be reimbursed for ASHA dues, Full-time SLPs must apply between November 1st – 30th, and submit an expense report in Concur that includes the payment as reflected on the transaction receipt before November 30th. Information about Concur can be found in the Virtual Library through the following pathway:

[Home>Employee Resources>Travel and Expense>Concur Training Tutorials](#). Once you create your expense report, you will need to enter it under Expense Type: **Dues and Subscriptions**. Expense reports for the ASHA dues must be submitted through Concur during the reimbursement window in order to obtain reimbursement.

### Speech Therapy Student Resource Reimbursement

SLPs who purchase resources, apps, memberships or licenses for materials that will be used with their Connections Academy students during individual or group therapy sessions, are eligible for a reimbursement for out-of-pocket costs per the amounts listed below if the resources are purchased prior to December 15<sup>th</sup> of the academic year:

- Full-time SLPs are eligible for up to \$125 reimbursement
- Part-time SLPs are eligible for up to \$75 reimbursement

To be reimbursed for student speech therapy resources, SLPs must submit an expense report in Concur within 60 days of the transaction that includes the payment as reflected on the transaction receipt. **Requests for reimbursement submitted after December 15<sup>th</sup> will not be approved.**

## Substitute Services

### Substitute Services Assignment Policy

The Substitute Services program relies on a pool of qualified substitute teachers and counselors who are able to work when offered an assignment. When a substitute is offered an assignment by their manager, they will be provided with the following information: school name, school time zone, courses to cover (including grade level), and start and end dates (tentative). Substitutes should expect that all assignments will have phone calls (CBA and homeroom, at a minimum), grading and LiveLesson requirements, course placement and child welfare responsibilities in the case of a counseling assignment, and case management responsibilities in the case of a special education assignment. Once

the substitute teacher/counselor accepts the assignment, they will receive specific information regarding the assignment, including call and LiveLesson schedules.

Substitute Services understands that substitute teachers/counselors may not be available for every assignment offered. However, in order to maintain the efficiency of the program if a substitute teacher/counselor is unavailable for three (3) assignments in a row or in a semester, OR cancels three (3) assignments in a row or in a semester, we reserve the right to pursue disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

In addition, if a substitute teacher/counselor will not be available for placement for an extended period of time (examples include but are not limited to: medical leave, placement in a brick and mortar school long-term position, family obligations, maternity leave, care of a dependent, etc.), they are required to notify their manager in writing in advance. An extended period of time for this purpose is defined as more than one (1) calendar week. If the absence will extend beyond two (2) pay periods but not more than four (4) pay periods, for the time period that the substitute is unavailable, they will not receive a monthly stipend and this request must be submitted via the [Unpaid Leave Request Form](#). No requests of five (5) or more pay periods will be approved. If a leave request for five (5) or more pay periods is required, the substitute teacher will be asked to resign from Substitute Services and reapply when their availability opens up again. Rehire will be based on staffing availability at the time of re-application

## **Substitute Employee Performance**

Substitute teachers and counselors are expected to meet a high standard of performance expectations during each substitute assignment. Assigned school personnel will provide an evaluation of the substitute teachers or counselor's performance at the completion of each substitute assignment. If a substitute receives an Ineffective or Needs Improvement rating after ANY assignment, the substitute will receive coaching, additional training, and may be placed on a performance improvement plan in order to monitor performance. If after additional assignments the employee's rating does not improve, the Substitute Services Leadership Team may pursue disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

\*A Lead Substitute who receives an Ineffective or Needs Improvement rating on any assignment may be removed from the Lead position.

## **Part-Time Substitute Employee Pay Structure**

Part-time substitute employees providing teaching or counseling support will be paid a daily rate of \$125 for full eight (8) hour days and a daily rate of \$62.50 for half four (4) hour days while on an active substitute teaching assignment.

Part-time substitute employees providing grading support will be paid a daily rate of \$100 for full eight (8) hour days and a daily rate of \$50 for half four (4) hour days while on an active substitute teaching assignment.

Base compensation will be paid in addition to the daily rate based on years of service. When not on assignment, substitutes are required to complete up to 5 hours of department-related or professional development activities each month, recording the dates and time spent in each session in their Individual Communication IA with their supervisor, in order to receive their base compensation. Payments will be made semi-monthly over a 12-month period. In order to receive any service-based compensation, a substitute teacher must receive a previous performance rating of "effective" or better.

A full time or Adjunct teacher who converts to a Substitute teacher will receive credit for consecutive prior years of service at a Connections Academy school. For the purposes of determining base compensation, if an employee was hired prior to April 1st of the prior school year, they will receive credit for a year of service.

A substitute teacher who leaves the employer and is rehired into a substitute teacher position within one year of their termination date will receive service credit based on their original hire date.

Base compensation will be paid according to the chart below.

<b>Service Requirement</b>	<b>Base Compensation Per Month</b>
Less than 1 year of service	\$75
1 year of service	\$100
2 years of service	\$125
3 years of service	\$150
4 years of service	\$175
5 years of service	\$200
6 years of service	\$225
7+ years of service	\$250

### **Lead Substitute Stipend**

In addition to the base compensation structure for substitutes, lead substitute teachers are paid a lead substitute stipend in the amount of \$5200. This stipend is divided evenly to be paid semi-monthly over a twelve (12)-month period.

### **Part-Time Substitute Employee Pay Structure- California Residents**

Part-time substitute teachers who reside in California providing teaching support will be paid an hourly rate of \$15.63 per hour while on an active substitute teaching or counseling assignment.

Part-time substitute teachers who reside in California providing grading support will be paid an hourly rate of \$12.50 per hour while on an active substitute assignment.

Part-time substitute teachers who reside in California will be paid an hourly rate of \$20 per hour for attending required meetings and trainings outside of any active substitute teaching assignment. Substitute teachers are expected to work a minimum of five (5) hours per month, in addition to active substitute teaching assignments. This time will be capped at up to ten (10) hours per month, depending upon years of service. The monthly cap on non-assignment work hours will be applied according to the chart below:

<b>Service Requirement</b>	<b>Monthly Cap on Non-Assignment Hours</b>
Less than 2 years of service	5 hours maximum per month
2 years of service	6.25 hours maximum per month



3 years of service	7.50 hours maximum per month
4 years of service	8.75 hours maximum per month
5 years of service	10 hours maximum per month

A full time or Adjunct teacher who converts to a Substitute teacher will receive credit for consecutive prior years of service at a Connections Academy school. A substitute teacher who leaves the organization and is rehired into a substitute position within one year of their termination date will receive service credit based on their original hire date.

California state law dictates that employees be paid one and one-half (1.5) times their regular hourly rate for hours worked in excess of eight (8) hours per workday. Substitute teachers are required to obtain approval from their manager prior to the use of overtime. If the need for overtime arises in order to complete daily work, the substitute teacher must notify their manager in advance and obtain approval prior to working hours that extend beyond their normal schedule.

If the substitute teacher relocates out of California but remains employed as a substitute teacher with Pearson Virtual Schools, he/she will be paid according to the Substitute Teacher Pay Structure listed in the above section. The new pay structure will begin effective the first pay period after the relocation date.

### Stipend for Retirement Benefits- (SLP Employees)

Minnesota SLP employees are required to be a Minnesota Teacher Retirement Association (TRA) member. This requirement applies to full and part-time SLP employees who work to support students in Minnesota. The requirement to make payroll deductions for Minnesota TRA contributions is applicable for any period of time during which an SLP is working or in support of Minnesota-based students. The SLP does not need to reside in Minnesota for the TRA deduction to apply.

A stipend is given to offset the mandatory payroll deduction for the Minnesota TRA retirement benefits. The stipend given is 8.25% of the employee's regular earnings per pay period and will be applied to each paycheck while the SLP is working to support Minnesota students. This stipend will be removed from the SLP's paycheck when their work to support Minnesota students ends.

### Expense Reimbursement

You may be reimbursed for certain travel related expenses. Manager's authorization is required prior to incurring the expense. To be reimbursed for authorized expenses purchased on a company credit card, submit an approved expense report along with appropriate supporting documentation to Concur within thirty (30) days of incurring the expense. Please review related materials on the Virtual Library.

### Non-Exempt Employee Travel Policy

Some non-exempt positions require occasional travel within the United States. Employees in positions classified as non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act are eligible for compensation for the time they spend traveling. The compensation an employee receives depends upon the kind of travel and whether the travel time takes place within normal work hours or outside of normal work hours.

### Travel Time Within Normal Work Hours

Any portion of authorized travel time that takes place within normal work hours (as defined by the employee's normal work schedule) on any workday of the week is treated as work hours. Travel time within normal work hours will be paid at the employee's regular hourly rate and will be factored into overtime calculations.

### **Travel Time in Addition to Normal Work Hours**

Any portion of authorized travel time (except for driving time equal to the normal commute to the employee's assigned office) that takes place in addition to normal work hours is considered to be outside travel hours. When a non-exempt employee is required to travel outside of normal work hours, they will be compensated at *one-half* their regular hourly rate for that portion of travel time. If one half of the hourly rate is below the state minimum wage, the employee will be compensated at the minimum wage rate.

### **Tracking and Reporting Travel Time**

Employees are responsible for accurately tracking, calculating, and reporting travel time in accordance with this policy.

Meal breaks should be deducted from all travel time. Travel time should be calculated by rounding up to the nearest quarter hour.

If an employee requests a specific travel itinerary or mode of transportation that is different from the one authorized, only the estimated travel time associated with the schedule, route and mode of transportation authorized should be reported.

### **Statewide Transit Tax- Oregon Based Residents Only (SLP Employees)**

Oregon's statewide transit tax will appear on the paystub for Oregon SLP employees starting July 1, 2018. The tax must be withheld from the wages of Oregon residents as well as nonresidents who perform services in Oregon. This tax will be automatically withheld, and there is no withholding exemption for this tax.

### **Conference Presentation Policy**

This policy sets forth eligibility requirements and request guidelines for employees who wish to present at a professional conference as a representative of the organization.

#### **Eligibility Requirements**

An employee is eligible to present at a professional conference to represent the organization as an expert in the field after gaining proper approval at least two (2) weeks prior to the conference. The requesting employee:

- Must be in good standing, have no documented performance or attendance issues within the current school year, and cannot be on a performance improvement plan at the time of the request or during the conference dates, and
- Teachers must not have any ungraded students' assignments that are five (5) days past the submission due date during the five (5) business days prior to the conference.
- Speech-Language Pathologists must not have more than 300 minutes documented as owed to students on their caseload during the five (5) days prior to the conference. In addition, the SLP may not have overdue screenings or evaluations assigned at the time of the request or the time of departure.



The requested conference must be relevant to the employee's current content area, job responsibilities **or** documented short-term professional goals. Time out of the office to attend and present at an eligible conference must not exceed three (3) business days.

## **Presenter Request Guidelines**

To attend a conference as a presenter, employees must submit the following to their manager at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled conference:

- Written request to attend including a brief description of the relevance of the conference to the employee's role
- A copy of the official conference proposal, and
- Final presentation materials

If approved, employees are not required to use paid time off during time out of the office for the conference. Instead, employees would submit a request for "conference time" via their Communication Log IA. The cost of travel and accommodations for conferences may be reimbursed and is determined by available funds and Director approval.

Prior to attending a conference, the employee must create an IA that includes their supervisor and preparations documented including:

- Teachers must have ungraded assignments down to twenty-five (25) total, the day before the employee is due to be out of the office (Run a TAR report)
- Ensure all LiveLesson recordings are posted in advance, or coordinate with another employee to host synchronous sessions at the regularly scheduled time
- Update all Message Boards and Landing Pages
- SLPs must communicate with families to reschedule therapy sessions scheduled during their absence and confirm the make-up schedule.
- Secure substitute coverage for LiveTutor
- Create an out of office WebMail message and announcement to notify students and their families of time out of office and expected date of return, and
- Create an out of office message to notify colleagues of time out of office and expected date of return

## **Conference Attendance Policy**

### **Conference Requirements**

In order for an employee to receive approval to attend a conference, the conference must be relevant to the employee's current content area, job responsibilities **or** documented short-term professional goals. Time out of the office for an eligible conference must not exceed three (3) business days. The cost of travel and accommodations for the conference is not eligible for reimbursement.

### **Request Guidelines**

If approved, employees are not required to use paid time off during time out of the office. Instead, employees would submit a request for "conference time" via their Communication Log IA.

### **Substitute, LiveTutor, and Teaching Services Responsibilities**

Prior to attending the conference, employees must create an IA with their supervisor with preparations documented including:

- Have ungraded assignments down to twenty-five (25) total, the day before they are due to be out of the office
- Ensure that all LiveLesson recordings are posted in advance, or coordinate with another employee to host synchronous sessions at the regularly scheduled time
- Update all Message Boards and Landing Pages
- Secure substitute coverage for LiveTutor
- Create an out of office WebMail message and announcement to notify students and their families of time out of office and expected date of return, and
- Create an out of office message to notify colleagues of time out of office and expected date of return

## Speech Services Employee Responsibilities

Prior to attending the conference, employees must:

- Have 95% of Initial Conferences completed, no overdue screenings or evaluations, and fewer than five hundred (500) minutes owed (SLP managers must approve any exceptions)
- Send families a WebMail to notify them of your absence in advance and to request any rescheduled sessions as appropriate
- Have a confirmed plan in place for rescheduled Speech Sessions
- Create an out-of-office Webmail message, Gmail message, and voicemail message to notify colleagues and families of time out of the office and expected date of return
- Post a message in their caseload IA(s) notifying school employees of time out of the office.

## Social Security

You may be required by law to contribute a set amount of your wages to Social Security and Medicare. The organization matches your contribution as required by law. Some staff members may be exempt from contributing to Social Security because of their participation in a state retirement system.

## Unemployment Compensation

You may be eligible for unemployment compensation, under certain conditions, for a limited period. Teachers continuing employment, from one school year to the next, are generally not eligible for unemployment compensation during the summer holiday period.

## Worker's Compensation

Consistent with federal and state law, workers' compensation insurance coverage is provided for all employees who become injured or ill during their regular work assignments.

## Reporting a Workplace Injury

- **Report Your Injury Immediately:** Notify your manager of any work-related injury or illness. It is your manager's responsibility to notify Human Resources. A written report on the injury or illness must be provided to Human Resources within twenty-four (**24**) hours after the event. We will notify the workers' compensation insurance carrier. Human Resources will be responsible for submitting all paperwork to the workers' compensation insurance carrier.

- **Medical Care:** If the injury requires first-aid treatment, you should go to the first-aid kit located in each office. If the injury is serious, or you wish to seek further medical treatment, paramedic services may be called, or you can go to an urgent care facility. If you feel that immediate medical treatment is not necessary and prefer to see your private physician, you may do so at your discretion.
- **Disability Income:** If your doctor states that you are unable to return to work for a certain length of time, you may be entitled to receive disability compensation. In those serious cases requiring extended absence(s) from work, it is your obligation to keep Human Resources informed of your status.

## Employee Health Benefits

All available employee benefits are described in the Employee Benefits Guide. The most up to date version of the Employee Benefits Guide is located in the Virtual Library.

# Attendance and Leave Policies

## Work Hours

Each location and department is responsible for defining their employees' work hours. An employee's hours depend on his or her position and location. Changes to work schedules will be announced as far in advance as practicable.

School-based employees work a ten (10) or eleven (11)-month work cycle. The standard work hours are defined as the hours in which teachers, SLPs, and non-exempt School Non-Administrative employees are expected to be available to students and families.

Unless otherwise noted in the offer letter, both exempt and non-exempt full-time employees are expected to work a minimum of forty (40) hours per week and must be available during core hours (10 am - 4pm EST). A 30-minute lunch break each day must be included in your daily schedule. If an employee obtains approval to leave work early or to come in late, the time should be made up within the same work week as the approved time away from work.

## Flexible Work Hours Schedule

Employees may request a flexible work hours schedule; however, flexibility is dependent upon the nature of the work being performed and the needs of each location or department. Under no circumstances will employees with flexible hours work fewer hours than employees in comparable positions following the normal work schedule. At their discretion, managers may approve or deny a request for a flexible work hours schedule.

As professional, exempt employees, teachers and administrators should expect that their actual working hours will be determined by the amount of time that is required in order to complete the job.

## Adjunct Teachers

Adjunct teachers are part-time employees who work at home or at an alternative location. Adjunct teachers are required to consult with their managers to schedule their "core hours," which will consist of a minimum of three (3) office hours per week (e.g., Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am – 10:00 am, Thursdays from 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm, etc.).

## Substitute Teachers/Counselors

Substitutes are part-time employees who work at home. When not on assignment, Substitute teachers/counselors do not need to maintain "core hours," but must be available for monthly supervisor touch bases and any other scheduled Teaching Services meetings. They are expected to check their email at least twice weekly, return phone calls within twenty-four (24) hours, and must maintain a record of five (5) hours of professional development activities for any full month in which they are not on assignment. When on assignment, Substitute teachers/counselors are expected to maintain the hours of the school in which they are working and be fully available to the school during normal school operating hours (e.g., 8:00 am to 4:00 pm in the school's time zone).

## Part-Time SLPs

Part-time SLPs do not need to maintain "core hours," but must be available for biweekly supervisory touch base meetings and other required meetings, such as IEP meetings. Part-time SLPs are expected to check their

WebMail, voicemail, and email daily. PT SLPs are asked to work a minimum number of hours upon hire. Changes to PT SLP availability may lead to a loss of students on the assigned caseload based on business need.

## PART-TIME TUTORS, SPECIALISTS AND TUTOR PRNS

Part-time tutors, specialists, and tutor PRNS are required to give their semester schedule availability to their direct supervisor and to request changes to their availability through the supervisors. Changes to availability may lead to a loss of overall hours as based on business need. Tutors, specialists, and tutor PRNs can request time off by talking with their direct supervisor in order to ensure coverage of their time off request. Tutors, Specialists and Tutor PRNS are expected to be fully available during their assigned shifts.

## Attendance

Each employee has a primary work location and work schedule for the purposes of this policy.

An employee is responsible for being on time every day that they are scheduled to work as defined by their manager. The organization requires employees to complete a leave request for any absence. All leave requests must be made in increments of two (2) hours.

Employees are required to call their manager each day they will be absent or late. Employees must obtain manager approval to leave work early. Notifying a fellow employee is not sufficient. If you are unable to make the contact yourself because of illness, emergency, or for some other reason, you must have someone make the contact on your behalf. This is only appropriate if you are completely unable to make the contact yourself.

## Absence

If you are absent because of illness for five (5) or more successive days, you must submit written documentation from your doctor or be required to convert the days absent to other forms of paid leave. If no paid leave is available, the employee must convert the days absent into unpaid leave. These absences may be designated as family/medical leave depending on the circumstances. If you are absent five (5) or more successive days because of illness, you will be required to provide written documentation from your doctor that you are able to resume normal work duties before you will be allowed to return to work.

Absence from work for three (3) successive days without notifying your manager or Human Resources will be considered a voluntary resignation. In general, five (5) unexcused absences in a ninety (90) day period, or a consistent pattern of absence, will be considered excessive, and the reasons for the absences may come under question.

\*\*Information about absences related to COVID-19 can be found in the Virtual Library under the Benefits section.

## Punctuality

Tardiness or leaving early without permission from your manager can be detrimental to the organization as an absence. Three (3) such incidents in a ninety (90) day period will be considered a "tardiness pattern" and will carry the same weight as an unexcused absence. Other factors, like the degree of lateness, may be considered.

## Office Closure

The safety of employees is our top priority when considering whether to close an office due to inclement weather. However, we do not generally close the office just because area businesses or schools have made the decision to close. We consider the conditions of major roads and highways and employees' ability to commute to the office safely. In the event that there is inclement weather in the state of Maryland, employees reporting to a Maryland office should call the Office Closure Hotline at the number below after 6:00 am on any workday to find out if the Maryland offices will be open.

Office Closure Hotline: 1-855-330-4636, dial 1 at the prompt and then enter extension 5050.

## Full Office Closure

In circumstances where we determine that it is not safe to require employees to commute to our offices, we will issue a full office closure, which means that no employees are expected to report to an office.

### Employees with Work-at-Home Privileges

If you are an employee who currently has permission to work at home as a home-based employee or on a regular or occasional basis, you will be expected to work a full day at home when the office is closed. Any employee with such permission is expected to work at full capacity to the best of their ability. We understand that depending on the situation, you may not be able to work at home at your usual capacity for reasons specific to the situation (i.e. having children home from school). If you are unable to work at home, you will be required to use paid time off.

### Employees without Work-at-Home Privileges

During a full office closure, employees without work at home privileges are not expected to work and would not be required to use paid time off. Employees without work at home privileges will be compensated for a full regular workday when the office is closed. If an employee without work at home privileges had previously requested a day off from work and the office is closed that day, the request will be cancelled, and the employee will be compensated for a full workday.

During a partial-day office closure, employees without work at home privileges are not expected to work during the time period of the closure and would not be required to use paid time off for that time. Employees without work at home privileges will be compensated for the duration of the partial closure. If an employee without work at home privileges had previously requested time off during the day of the partial closure, the request will be cancelled, and the employee will be compensated for the hours that the office was closed.

In some circumstances, the employee's manager may request that the employee work at home temporarily due to business needs. If this temporary approval is granted, non-exempt employees without work at home privileges who work at home at the request of their manager will receive pay at the rate of time and a half for the hours worked, and exempt employees without work at home privileges who work at home at the request of their manager will receive one (1) compensatory day.

### Essential Employees without Work-at-Home Privileges

Certain employees without work at home privileges have been designated as “essential” and are expected to work at home temporarily during an office closure. Each department manager is responsible for communicating to employees which individuals or positions are designated as essential. Any employee designated as essential is expected to work at full capacity to the best of their ability. We understand that depending on the situation, you may not be able to work at home at your usual capacity for reasons specific to the situation (i.e. having children home from school). Non-exempt essential employees without work at home privileges will receive pay at the rate of time and a half for the full day when they work at home, and exempt employees without work at home privileges who work at home at the request of their manager will receive one compensatory day. If an essential employee without work at home privileges is not able to work during a full office closure, the employee will be compensated for a full regular work day (at the standard rate of pay), and disciplinary action may be taken according to the department’s policies.

## Liberal Leave

In circumstances where we determine that it is best to leave the decision whether to commute to the office to the employee’s discretion due to varying conditions in the surrounding areas, we will implement liberal leave.

### Employee with Work-at-Home Privileges

If you are an employee who currently has permission to work at home as a home-based employee or on a regular or occasional basis, you can make the decision about whether to work a full day at home or a full day in the office when liberal leave is in effect, but you are required to work a full day regardless. Any employee with such permission is expected to work at full capacity to the best of their ability. We understand that depending on the situation, you may not be able to work at home at your usual capacity for reasons specific to the situation (i.e. having children home from school). If you are unable to work either at home or in the office, you will be required to use paid time off.

### Employees without Work-at-Home Privileges

If you are an employee without work at home privileges and there is a liberal leave office closure, you have several options:

1. You may commute to the office and work a full day.
2. You may request paid time off. No disciplinary action will be taken for submitting a late paid time off request when this policy is in effect.
3. You may request unpaid leave if you have exhausted all paid time off. No disciplinary action will be taken for taking unpaid leave when this policy is in effect, but you will not be paid for the day.

### Essential Employees without Work-at-Home Privileges

Certain employees without work at home privileges have been designated as “essential” and are expected to work during liberal leave.

If you are an employee without work at home privileges who is designated as essential and there is a liberal leave office closure, you have several options:

1. You may commute to the office OR work at home and work a full day.
2. You may request paid time off. No disciplinary action will be taken for submitting a late paid time off request when this Policy is in effect.

3. You may request unpaid leave if you have exhausted all paid time off.

## Holidays

### School Non-Administrative Employees

School Non-Administrative employees work on a school year schedule and should follow the holidays established in their department's calendar.

### Regular Full-Time Non-Exempt School Non-Administrative Employees

We provide certain paid holidays each year to regular full-time School Non-Administrative non-exempt employees.

A schedule is issued by Human Resources annually and is located on the Virtual Library at **Home > Employee Resources > HR Resources (handbooks, benefits, payroll) > Attendance (Leave, Holidays, Weather)**.

### Procedures

If business requirements dictate, a manager has the right to require an employee to work on a scheduled holiday and substitute an alternate day in its place. In order to be eligible for paid holidays, an employee must work the last scheduled workday before and the first scheduled workday after the holiday, unless the employee submitted a request for paid time off and received approval in advance of the holiday. Exceptions may be made if an employee provides Human Resources with documentation for an illness or other emergency.

If due to the nature of the business, it is necessary for some employees to work on a scheduled holiday, the following guidelines apply:

- Where possible, exempt employees are to be given a substitute holiday, the date and time to be determined mutually between the employee and their manager.
- Non-exempt employees are to receive time and a half for hours actually worked on the holiday (in addition to holiday pay)

### Holidays and Overtime

Paid holidays count as time worked for the calculation of overtime. Holiday hours and normally scheduled hours will be used in the determination of hours worked in the workweek towards overtime for non-exempt employees.

### Holidays and Vacation, Short Term Disability (STD), Sick Leave and FMLA Leave

Whenever a recognized Company holiday falls within an employee's scheduled vacation period, they will receive holiday pay for that day, and it will not be charged to vacation time.

If a holiday falls during a period of STD, the employee does not receive holiday pay-the time is charged to STD and is paid at the usual 66 2/3% or 100% rate.



If a paid holiday occurs while an employee is on paid sick leave, they will be paid for that holiday, and the day will not be charged to sick leave.

An employee on unpaid Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) during the occurrence of a company recognized holiday will not receive holiday pay.

If a holiday falls during an employee's intermittent Family and Medical Leave (FMLA), the employee will receive holiday pay only if he/she is scheduled to work on the holiday.

### **Termination on Day Prior to Holiday**

An employee, who is terminated, voluntarily or by Company action, on the day preceding a holiday, is not eligible for holiday pay.

### **Paid Time Off-Vacation**

#### **Vacation Schedule-Regular Full-Time Exempt & Non-Exempt School Administrative Employees**

<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>Maximum Number of Vacation Hours per Year</b>
<b>Newly hired employees receive vacation according to their month of hire</b>	
July – September	80
October – December	60
January – March	40
April – June	0

**After the first school year, vacation hours are allocated as follows:**

<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>Maximum Number of Vacation Hours Per Year</b>
Start of 2 <sup>nd</sup> School Year	112
Start of 3 <sup>rd</sup> School Year	144
Start of 7 <sup>th</sup> School Year	160
Start of 10 <sup>th</sup> School Year	184
Start of 15 <sup>th</sup> School Year	200 (maximum)

For the purpose of taking vacation time, full vacation time is allotted on July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. However, for payment of accrued vacation time upon termination of employment, see “Termination of Employment” section below.

## **Vacation Schedule- Regular Part-Time Exempt & Non-Exempt School Administrative Employees**

**Years of Service** **Maximum Number of Vacation Hours per Year**

**In the first year, employees receive vacation according to their month of hire**

July – September	40
October – December	30
January – March	20
April-June	0

**After the first school year, vacation hours are allocated as follows:**

Start of 2 <sup>nd</sup> school year	86
Start of 3 <sup>rd</sup> school year through year of the 6 <sup>th</sup> anniversary	72
Start of 7 <sup>th</sup> school year through year of the 9 <sup>th</sup> anniversary	80
Start of 10 <sup>th</sup> school year	92
Start of 15 <sup>th</sup> school year	100 (maximum)

Vacation time is allotted on July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. However, for payment of accrued vacation time upon termination of employment see “Termination of Employment” section below.

### **Requesting Vacation**

We will try to accommodate vacation requests. All vacation must be requested in advance and must be approved by your manager. The manager has the right to decline an employee’s request if the vacation schedule interferes with business needs.

If a paid holiday falls within a vacation period, it will be paid as a holiday.

While on vacation, if an employee is hospitalized or experiences an illness or injury that results in a STD claim, the applicable days will be charged to STD. No other use of time while on vacation is permitted.

## **Payment in Lieu of Time Off**

No active employee will receive payment for vacation in lieu of taking the time off.

Additionally, employees must take their vacation in the same school year in which the vacation is credited, and will not be able to carry over accrued, unused vacation into the next school year, except as described in the next paragraph and as described in the “Certain State Law Requirements section.”

No vacation time may be carried over to the following school year unless it is at the written request of the Employer and approved by Human Resources. Under those circumstances, a maximum of forty (40) hours may be carried over, and the carry over time must be used by the end of the first quarter in the school year. Further, employees may carry such vacation time for use only: Under no circumstances will any employee be paid for unused carry-over vacation time, except where:

- Required by State law (as discussed in the next section below); or
- Where the employee is terminated due to Company layoff before the end of the first quarter in the school year, in which case they will receive any vacation carried over from the previous year as described in the preceding sentence.

## **Certain State Law Requirements**

In cases where state law requires carry over vacation from year to year, the maximum vacation accrual that any employee may retain shall equal one and one-half times that employee’s annual vacation allotment at their current annual vacation accrual rate. If an employee’s earned but unused vacation reaches this maximum, the employee will not accrue any additional vacation. If the employee later uses enough vacation to fall below the maximum, he or she will resume earning vacation pay from that date forward. In such case, no vacation will accrue for the period in which the vacation accrual was at the maximum.

## **Termination of Employment**

Employees who leave the organization will be paid for prorated unused vacation for that year only based on the number of full calendar months the employee worked that year. If vacation has already been used, then no vacation payment will be made. Payment of vacation does not extend the employment period beyond the date of termination.

Employees who terminate employment due to death or disability (i.e. are eligible to receive LTD or Social Security disability benefits), or who voluntarily resign or are involuntarily terminated as a result of job elimination or reduction in force after twenty (20) years of service and have worked at least one (1) day of the school year, will be paid for their full year’s unused vacation allotment without proration.

Upon termination of employment for any reason, voluntary or involuntary, no vacation pay from prior school years will be paid, except where required by State law and as discussed in the “Payment in Lieu of Time Off” section.

## **Vacation and Leaves of Absence**

Employees who are eligible for the following types of leave will receive their full vacation accrual for the school year:

- FMLA
- STD
- Workers Compensation
- Military

However, employees who go on an unpaid leave of absence will receive prorated vacation time based on the amount of time worked.

Employees on Long Term Disability (LTD) or Active Duty Military leave continue to be allocated vacation while on leave. After an employee has been on LTD leave for three (3) months, they may request to be paid for the unused vacation allotment for the year in which the disability began. Employees on active military duty can request that they be paid for the year's unused allotment of vacation at the start of the Military Leave. However, in both instances, the employee's vacation time for that year will not be restored when they return to work and it is a one-time only request. If the employee prefers not to receive such payments and returns to work, the employee will receive their full, unused vacation allotment for the year in which they return to work.

Employees who go out on a leave of absence for any reason and do not use their entire vacation allotment for the year of their leave of absence will not roll the time over into the next year, and will not be paid out for the unused time, except in the limited circumstances described in the above "Payment in Lieu of Time Off" section.

If an employee has a military obligation that requires a two (2)-week tour of duty, the two (2) weeks will not be charged to vacation and will be paid according to the Military Leave policy.

## **Overtime for Non-Exempt Employees**

Vacation leave is included in the hours calculated to determine overtime eligibility for non-exempt employees.

## **Paid Time Off-Sick**

Employees are advanced sick leave annually for use when they are sick, or a close family member is sick. Sick leave is prorated depending upon date of hire and the employee's scheduled work hours per week. This does not apply for part-time substitutes.

Employees who work or reside in California and Oregon are subject to different sick day provisions and should see Human Resources for more information.

Sick leave is included in the hours calculated to determine overtime eligibility for non-exempt employees. If a paid holiday occurs while an employee is on paid sick leave, they will be paid for that holiday, and the day will not be charged to sick leave.

Sick leave may not be borrowed from future accumulation and is not paid out upon termination of employment. In the event an employee has used his or her sick time for the year, alternative paid time off days may be used.

## **Regular Full-Time School Non-Administrative Employees**

Regular full-time School Non-Administrative employees earn up to thirty-two (32) hours of sick leave per year at the beginning of the school year. Sick leave can be rolled over from school year to school year with a maximum of sixty-four (64) accumulated hours.

Newly hired employees, during their first year of employment, will receive sick time based on their date of hire:

July – December	32 hours
January – April	16 hours
May – June	8 hours

### **Regular Part-Time Non-Exempt School Non-Administrative Employees**

Regular part-time non-exempt School Non-Administrative employees receive prorated sick time based on a twenty (20) hour work week. Regular part-time non-exempt School Non-Administrative employees earn up to sixteen (16) hours of sick leave per year at the beginning of the school year. Sick leave is prorated depending upon date of hire. Sick leave can be rolled over from school year to school year with a maximum of thirty-two (32) accumulated hours.

July – December	16 hours
January – April	8 hours
May – June	4 hours

### **Staff Previously Ineligible for Sick Time**

Staff working or living in Oregon not classified under the above sections of this policy, or who were not previously eligible for sick leave will be advanced up to forty (40) hours of sick leave per year at the beginning of the school year for use when they are sick, or a close family member is sick. Sick leave is prorated depending upon date of hire and job status. Paid sick leave under this section cannot be rolled over from school year to school year but a new allocation will be granted at the start of each school year.

Staff members who fill out a timesheet will have their time allocated in UltiPro Time Management (UTM), which can be accessed through the UltiPro employee portal. Staff that do not fill out a timesheet will have an Issue Aware ticket set up with their supervisor at the start of each school year or upon hire, which will be used to track paid sick leave annually.

### **Specific Provisions for California Residents**

Staff residing in the state of California who do not receive paid sick leave under the above sections will receive twenty-four (24) hours of paid sick leave at the beginning of the school year or on their date of hire in accordance with the Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act of 2014. This paid sick leave cannot be rolled over from school year to school year, but a new allocation will be granted at the start of each school year.

Staff who fill out a timesheet will have their time allocated in UltiPro Time Management (UTM), which can be accessed through the UltiPro employee portal. Staff that do not fill out a timesheet will receive their PTO in MyCal.

Staff in California with guardianship responsibilities over a child may also use sick or personal time to find, enroll, or re-enroll a child in a school or licensed child care provider, participate in activities of the school or child care provider, or to address a child care provider or school emergency. The Staff, in accordance with the procedure for use of sick leave, should give as much advance notice as possible.

### **Procedure for Use of Sick Leave**

Prior to or on the day of an expected absence from work due to illness, the employee must contact their manager directly. The employee should contact their manager each day to report an absence or must inform the manager in advance of the nature and expected length of absence due to a medical reason that will exceed one day. (Note: information given to the manager regarding the “nature” of the absence should be limited to a basic statement of the reason for absence; for example, that the employee is ill. The employee should not provide medical details to the manager). Once an employee exhausts all paid time off, remaining days must be taken as unpaid time off.

Human Resources reserves the right to request medical documentation to support any sick day use, in accordance with applicable law.

## **Extended Illness**

For absences due to illness which extend beyond three (3) consecutive working days, please contact Human Resources. (In such case, employees must still notify their manager of their absence, as described in the above “Procedures” section). After five (5) consecutive working days, the time off may transition to STD. Sick days will not be reinstated and will be considered exhausted, unless required by state law.

## **Paid Time Off-Personal**

### **Regular Full-Time Non-Exempt School Non-Administrative Employees**

Regular full-time non-exempt school non-administrative employees hired in the current school year will earn sixteen (16) personal hours if hired by December 31<sup>st</sup> and eight (8) personal hours if hired between January 1<sup>st</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>. If a school non-exempt non-administrative employee is hired on or after May 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year, they will not receive personal days for the current school year.

Non-exempt school non-administrative employees returning after their initial year of employment will be granted personal days according to years of service outlined below:

Start of 2 <sup>nd</sup> school year	48 hours
Start of 3 <sup>rd</sup> school year	64 hours
Start of 7 <sup>th</sup> school year	80 hours
Start of 10 <sup>th</sup> school year	96 hours

Non-exempt school Non-Administrative employees who are rehired into a benefit eligible position within one (1) school year of their termination date will receive service credit for personal days based on their original hire date.

Unused, earned personal days may not be carried over from year to year. All personal days must be requested in advance and must be approved by the employee’s manager.

If employment is terminated prior to the end of the school year, the employee is eligible for pay out of personal days if they have worked at least ninety (90) days of that school year.

### **Regular Part-Time Non-Exempt School Non-Administrative Employees**

Regular part-time non-exempt school non-administrative employees receive prorated personal time based on a twenty (20) hour work week. Regular part-time non-exempt school non-administrative employees hired in the current school year will earn eight (8) hours of personal time if hired by December 31<sup>st</sup> and four (4) hours of personal time if hired between January 1<sup>st</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>. If a regular part-time non-exempt school non-

administrative employee is hired on or after May 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year, they will not receive personal time for the current school year.

Regular part-time non-exempt school non-administrative employees returning after their initial year of employment will be granted personal time according to years of service outlined below:

Upon completion of 1 year of service	24 hours
Upon completion of 3 years of service	32 hours
Upon completion of 7 years of service	40 hours
Upon completion of 10 years of service	48 hours

School Non-Administrative staff who are rehired into a benefit eligible position within one (1) school year of their termination date will receive service credit for personal time based on their original hire date.

Unused, earned personal time may not be carried over from year to year. All personal time must be requested in advance and must be approved by the employee's manager.

### **Overtime for Non-Exempt Employees**

Personal time is included in the hours calculated to determine overtime eligibility for non-exempt employees.

### **Transfers Between Employment Statuses**

Employees who transfer from temporary or part-time to a regular School Non-Administrative position will be eligible for vacation and sick time based upon their transition date according to the "New Hire Allocation" for their first year only. Thereafter, beginning the first teacher workday of the next school year, employees will be allocated personal and sick days based on the number of school years worked.

Employees who transfer from a regular full-time School Non-Administrative position to a temporary or part-time status will be paid for their unused personal time as long as they have worked at least ninety (90) days of the current school year.

Employees who transfer positions and who have an original hire date as well as a rehire date(s) will only receive service credit for their original hire date if they are rehired into a benefits eligible position within one (1) year of their termination date. If an employee is not rehired within one (1) year into a benefits eligible position, they will receive service credit based upon their rehire date. For example, an employee who leaves the organization and is re-hired after two (2) years will receive service credit based upon their rehire date, if the employee transfers positions.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Bereavement leave is available to all regular full-time employees regardless of their tenure with the employer.

For the death of a spouse, domestic partner, child or step-child, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, parent/guardian, stepparent, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, parent-in-law, or other resident of the household, regular full-time employees are provided with up to five (5) days of paid bereavement leave. If the funeral or arrangements are out of town and require extensive travel, or if there are other extenuating circumstances, consult Human Resources for determining the appropriate time off for the employee. Human Resources may require the employee to provide proof of death (i.e. copy of obituary listing employee as a family member or notice from a funeral home stating relationship to employee).

Employees may request time off to attend funerals or arrangements for individuals other than immediate family members but will need to use personal or vacation time to cover the absence. If an employee does not have any personal or vacation time to use, they may request unpaid time off.

## Effect of Bereavement Pay on Overtime Calculations

Paid bereavement leave counts as time worked for the calculation of overtime. Bereavement hours and the hours of normally scheduled work time will be used to determine hours worked in the workweek towards overtime for non-exempt employees.

## Jury Duty Leave

We recognize an employee's civic responsibility to serve on a jury if summoned and selected. Full-time employees will be paid their full salary for up to four (4) weeks for jury duty leave. For non-exempt employees, jury duty leave that falls during the hours of regularly scheduled work time will be used in the determination of hours worked during the workweek for the purpose of calculating overtime. Unless otherwise required by law, all employees may take unpaid leave as needed to perform jury duty.

To be eligible for paid leave under this policy, an employee must submit a copy of their jury certificate of attendance to Human Resources upon receipt and inform their manager on a daily basis when they are required to be in court. The employee is also required to report to work on partial or full days when the court does not require the employee's presence. Upon being excused from jury duty, staff members are required to submit either the stamped jury duty summons or a certificate of attendance to Human Resources.

## Leave for Employment Related Legal Proceeding

An employee will be granted paid leave if they are summoned to appear in court or to appear for a judicial proceeding by subpoena or court order for a proceeding that is directly related to their employment. The employee may be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred at the standard rates.

To be eligible for paid leave under this policy, the subpoena or court order must be related to the individual's employment with Connections Education or an affiliated school or program. The employee is required to present proof of the court order or subpoena to their manager. Additionally, the employee must submit a copy of their subpoena or court order to Human Resources upon receipt. The employee is required to report to work on partial or full days when the court does not require the employee's presence or testimony.

To be eligible for paid leave, the hours that the employee is required to appear in court or provide testimony must be between their regular work hours. For non-exempt employees, leave for employment related legal proceedings that fall during the hours of regularly scheduled work time will be included in the total workweek hours when calculating overtime.

All subpoenas, court orders, or any other legal communications or documents involving Connections Education, or an affiliated school or program should be directed to the Legal Department through an Issue Aware ticket.

A staff member will not be eligible for paid leave under this policy if they are the complainant, or the party filing the action against Connections Education, their Connections Academy school, or an affiliated school or program, or attending a legal proceeding in any capacity not mandated by court order.

## Military Leave



Employees will be granted a military leave of absence for active service or training in the U.S. military to the extent required by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). To the extent required by USERRA, eligible employees will continue to earn service credit. In addition, eligible employees who return from such military leave are guaranteed a job to the extent required by law if they comply with reinstatement requirements. Employees must provide proof of military leave obligations (e.g., military orders) upon receipt. For further information on USERRA please refer to the USERRA poster posted on the Virtual Library.

## **Military Leave and Benefits**

Regular full-time employees are eligible for paid benefits under this policy. Reservists and Members of the National Guard will be paid their regular base salary for the first ten (10) working days of required military training each year. Employees who are called to or volunteer for active duty will be paid their regular base pay for the first thirty (30) days. All time taken beyond the thirty (30) days will be unpaid.

Employees on active duty military leave will still receive their full vacation, sick and personal day accrual for the year. However, while on active duty military leave, carry over of unused leave time is not permitted. An employee can request to be paid for unused vacation and personal days at the start of their active duty military leave.

An employee on active duty military leave has the right to remain on the organization's benefit plans for two (2) years following the first month of service. The Employer will continue to pay premiums during any period of the leave that is unpaid. Health insurance benefits are also available under the Military Health Care Program, TRICARE, required by USERRA based on the length of the leave and subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans for which the employee is otherwise eligible. For information regarding your 401 (k) plan treatment during active duty military leave please refer to the Summary of Plan Provisions. Upon return from active duty military leave, an employee has the right to reinstatement in benefits plans.

Under the current law, employees on an active duty military leave of absence are guaranteed the same or a suitable job if they are released from military service under conditions other than "undesirable" or "dishonorable," provided they apply for reinstatement to Human Resources within the required legal time frames. A suitable job is a position the employee qualifies for through skills, performance, education, and training.

An employee must notify their manager (if possible) at least one (1) month prior to beginning active service military leave. Additionally, an employee must also produce a copy of their military orders as soon as practicable. An employee is required to report back to work or submit a timely application for reemployment upon completing a period of service as required by law.

## **Compensatory Time**

Exempt teachers/SLPs are not eligible to earn overtime. However, we occasionally ask teachers/SLPs to participate in activities that may take place outside of normal office hours such as information/marketing sessions, weekend field trips, or administration of state testing. Compensatory time is paid time-off that may be taken during the school year and applied to normal schoolwork hours.

## **Eligibility**

Regular, full-time teachers/SLPs who participate in school-sponsored activities outside of the normal work hours are eligible for compensatory time. To the extent an activity is not sponsored by the school, or an employee's presence at a school-sponsored activity is not required by us, an employee is not eligible to earn compensatory time.

### **Earning Compensatory Time Off**

Teachers/SLPs must work a minimum of four (4) consecutive hours per eligible activity to earn compensatory time. Any time worked over a four (4) hour period will be earned in two (2) hour increments. Employees are limited to a maximum of forty (40) hours of compensatory time per school year. School events authorized for compensatory time must be approved by the School Leader.

### **Requesting to Use Compensatory Time Off**

Teachers/SLPs requesting to use their earned compensatory time should submit a request through myCAL. Compensatory time off must be used in increments of two (2) hours. Compensatory time must be used within the school year that it is earned.

The department's Director may deny requests for compensatory time if they deem, within their sole discretion, that taking the time off as requested might adversely impact operations. Compensatory time is not transferable to other employees and will not be paid out to employees in the form of compensation at any time.

### **Tracking of Compensatory Time Off**

Compensatory time will be tracked through myCAL. Employees should submit a request and approval for a balance addition via myCAL. Requests to use compensatory time will follow the same request and approval process as all other forms of paid time off.

## **Leave Under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

Generally, eligible employees are entitled to up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave per rolling twelve (12) month period for birth, adoption, or foster care of a child; to care for a child, spouse or parent; or for their serious health condition.

Part-time employees are required to notify their manager and Human Resources of any health-related leave of absences.

Additionally, the FMLA permits a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin to take up to twenty-six (26) workweeks of leave to care for a member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard, Reserves or a veteran under certain circumstances, who:

- is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy
- is otherwise in outpatient status
- is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list

for a serious injury or illness and was a member of the Armed Forces at any time during the five-year period before he or she began the treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

An employee is also permitted to take FMLA leave for any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation.

If a School Non-Administrative employee requests leave under this policy scheduled to begin on or after January 1, they are required to exhaust all their paid time off allocated for that school year.

If a School Non-Administrative employee requests leave under this policy scheduled to begin prior to January 1, they are required to exhaust fifty percent (50%) of all their paid time off allocated for that school year.

The use of paid time off during FMLA leave does not extend the length of FMLA leave, and paid time off will run concurrently with the employee's FMLA entitlement. Available sick leave may be used for personal illness or injury or that of their child.

An employee may receive STD compensation resulting from a disability if they are eligible during FMLA. In the event an employee is determined eligible to receive STD benefits, the first five (5) workdays will be charged to sick leave. Sick leave is not reinstated unless mandated by state law. If no sick leave is available, the first five (5) workdays are unpaid unless the employee selects to use personal or vacation leave. After the sick days are paid, STD benefits may continue for up to twenty-five (25) additional weeks.

An employee may use available unused personal and vacation leave, but only after all other available compensation has been exhausted.

To take leave to care for a child after birth or placement of adoption or foster care must be taken within twelve (12) months of the child's birth or placement. If staff members are married and both employed by the organization, they may only take a *combined* leave of twelve (12) weeks per year for the birth/adoption of a child.

To take leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition, medical certification of the serious health condition, and the medical necessity to assist with the care of the family member must be provided.

All time used for STD or worker's compensation will be counted toward the twelve (12)-week allotment. Certain eligibility rules and requirements may apply under different state laws. Those affected will be provided with additional information if applicable.

Eligible employees may take leave intermittently when medically necessary and with proper medical certification as required by law. Intermittent leave may be used in full day or partial day increments. For partial day increments, the timesheet should reflect the actual amount of time spent away from the workplace.

Compensation and paid time-off benefits may be prorated depending on the duration of intermittent or reduced leave. If an employee wishes to be compensated for time off work, the time must be taken in accordance with the paid time off policy. Employees taking intermittent FMLA leave must make a reasonable effort to schedule their leave to avoid a disruption in company operations. Under certain circumstances, the employee may be temporarily transferred to an alternative position, with equivalent pay and benefits that better accommodates a reduced schedule or intermittent leave.

## **Eligibility and Provisions**

Employees assigned to an office with more than fifty (50) employees within a seventy-five (75) mile radius, who have been employed at least twelve (12) months and who have worked at least 1,250 hours in the last twelve (12) months are eligible for FMLA.

FMLA is not paid leave. Upon returning to work, employees will be placed in their original or an equivalent position to the one they held prior to FMLA leave. In some instances, and regardless of planned FMLA leave, the employee's position may be eliminated to meet business needs; please contact Human Resources for additional information.

Health coverage will be maintained during the leave period, provided the employee continues to pay their portion of the premium in a timely manner. The employee is responsible for making arrangements with Human Resources to pay their employee premium. If an employee receives compensation from the organization during the leave, employee contributions to pay for benefits will be deducted.

Time spent on leave will count for vesting service towards the 401-(k) plan. During unpaid leave, 401-(k) deductions will be suspended. Employees with 401-(k) loans must submit monthly loan repayments by check during unpaid leaves.

An employee will accrue vacation and/or sick leave for the period of leave. An employee on unpaid leave during the occurrence of a company recognized holiday will not receive holiday pay. Holidays have no effect on the pay of employees on approved paid STD leaves, except that holidays falling within the employee's elimination period will be counted as a holiday, and not as a sick day. Employees on intermittent FMLA leave will receive holiday pay only if they were scheduled to work on the holiday.

Participation in flexible spending accounts will continue while an employee is on leave. However, the contributions cease when an employee is on an unpaid leave, and employees who are on unpaid leave may not make contributions to their accounts through personal checks or otherwise. A participating employee may submit claims during the leave period. If an employee is on unpaid leave, once they return to work and deductions resume from the paychecks, the remaining amount of the annual contribution will be recalculated to reflect the new appropriate deductions for the remainder of the calendar year.

Employees must submit FMLA requests in writing to Human Resources at least thirty (30) days in advance when the leave is foreseeable, or as soon as practicable, thereafter. If leave is due to the personal illness of the employee, or to care for a family member with a serious health condition, medical certification is required within fifteen (15) days from commencement of the leave request, unless it is not practicable to do so despite good faith efforts. In cases where an employee requests FMLA leave in conjunction with short-term disability, the short-term disability application will serve as notice of medical certification.

We will notify employees if their submitted medical certifications are incomplete or insufficient and will provide employees at least seven days to cure deficiencies.

Depending on the circumstances and duration of the FMLA leave, we may require employees to provide recertification of their serious health condition. A new medical certification will be required annually for serious health conditions lasting beyond one (1) year. We also reserve the right to request a second or third medical opinion pertaining to the employee's disability at our expense.

We may retroactively designate leave as FMLA leave with appropriate written notice to employees, as long as the organization's failure to designate the leave as FMLA-qualifying earlier did not cause harm to the employee.

While on leave, employees must maintain regular contact with their manager or supervisor and Human Resources update their status and intention to return to work at the end of the FMLA leave period.

Prior to returning to work, an employee who takes leave due to their own serious health condition is required to submit certification from a healthcare provider that they can resume work. Upon return from leave, any benefit coverage that had been suspended will be reinstated. Use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefits accrued prior to the start of the FMLA leave.

If a staff member gives notice of their intent not to return to work, maintenance of health and other benefits will cease. Failure to return to work at the expiration of an approved FMLA leave, it will be deemed a voluntary termination.

## Parental and Serious Illness in the Family (PSIL)

The Parental and Serious Illness in the Family Leave (PSIL) policy provides FMLA eligible (employed for one (1) year and worked at least 1,250 hours over the twelve (12) months preceding the requested leave) regular full-time employees with up to four (4) weeks of paid time off in the following circumstances:

- Parental leave to care for a child after birth to be used in one (1) week increments.
- Serious illness in the family leave to care for or make arrangements relative to that care for a seriously ill spouse, domestic partner, child, parent, or parent-in-law, or to make arrangements relative to that care, which may be used in single day increments.

A “child” under this policy is typically considered a dependent child under the age of eighteen (18). However, in certain situations, at our sole discretion, we may approve leave for employees needing to care for adult children over the age of eighteen (18) if circumstances warrant. Any request for leave to care for children over the age of eighteen (18) under this policy must be approved by Human Resources.

All time used for (PSIL) will be counted toward the twelve (12) week FMLA maximum and must be utilized before unpaid leave begins. Parental Leave must be used within six (6) months of the date of birth, the placement for adoption or foster care or another qualifying event.

In certain instances, state leave laws may differ from federal law. Please check with Human Resources to confirm specific benefit information.

Paid time off used under this policy will not count as time worked for the calculation of overtime.

## Notice Requirements

When leave is foreseeable, at least thirty (30) days advance notice to Human Resources is required. Failure to give reasonable notice may result in delay or ineligibility to use PSIL leave. Employees must contact their manager when they intend to be absent.

## Certification and Reporting Requirements

Employees requesting leave under PSIL should review the “Leave of Absence Request Process” document, located on the Virtual Library. For leave under PSIL, employees must provide medical certification by a physician or practitioner.

In cases where parental leave is used to care for a child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care, documentation, such as birth certificate or adoption decree, is required.

## Maternity Leave

Full-time employees who deliver a baby are eligible for paid Maternity Leave in addition to Short-Term Disability, for a total of ten (10) weeks of paid leave. The duration of Maternity Leave used is determined by the length of Short-Term Disability-

All time off for Maternity Leave will run concurrently with FMLA leave and must be used immediately following Short-Term Disability. Please reach out to Human Resources if you have any questions.

## Financial Aid for Adoption

Full-time employees are eligible to receive financial assistance up to \$10,000 to offset expenses associated with adoption and surrogacy. Please see the [Financial Aid for Adoption Policy](#) for additional information.

## Unpaid Leave of Absence

We expect all employees to plan the use of their annual paid time off allotment in a responsible manner ensuring they have time available for unforeseen circumstances throughout the year. Employees who need extended time off from work for personal or other reasons, which do not qualify as FMLA, may be approved to take an unpaid leave of absence at the sole discretion of Human Resources.

Upon the first instance of taking an unpaid leave day without approval, the employee will receive a written warning and may be placed on probation. The second occurrence will be grounds for termination.

An approved unpaid leave of absence does not guarantee the right to return to work or return to the same position. Though not obligated, the school will attempt to place the staff member into a position upon their return. Failure to accept an offered position will be considered a voluntary resignation without notice. Employees with less than six (6) months of continuous service are generally not eligible for an unpaid leave of absence except for military leave or when required by state law.

If an employee wishes to take an unpaid leave of absence for a non-medical reason, they must have exhausted all paid time off **except** sick leave. Sick leave can never be used for non-medical leave.

If an employee wishes to take an unpaid leave of absence for a medical reason, they must have exhausted all paid time off including sick leave.

Unpaid leave requests must be submitted to Human Resources by the employee, and requests must be approved by Human Resources and in some cases the department manager. Paid leave does not accrue during a leave of absence.

# Performance and Disciplinary Action Policies

## Employee Performance Management

Performance refers to work performance, attendance and punctuality, conduct, and compliance with policies and procedures. Employee performance is the key to achieving business results and organizational productivity. Informal and formal performance feedback tools are utilized to assist employees in developing high levels of performance.

Employees receive a performance review in advance of their salary review date, which is a common date. Performance reviews are conducted annually at the end of the school year as well as mid-year in December or January. Employees also receive periodic feedback both formally and informally from their manager. This feedback may be written or verbal.

Based on those reviews and other factors (e.g., position level, general market condition, internal equity, the school's overall performance and merit increase pool, etc.), an employee may be eligible for a merit increase and/or incentive compensation. All salary increases and incentive compensation must be reviewed and approved by two (2) levels up in the organization and by Human Resources.

Given that salary reviews are performed on a "common review date," an employee's first merit increase is prorated based on their start date. A performance review does not guarantee an increase in salary.

Increases are prorated to reflect the amount of time the employee was away from work, including leaves of absence. Merit increases for School Non-Administrative employees are prorated based on date of hire in the first year of employment. Please refer to the School Non-Administrative Employee Pay Structure policy for proration calculations.

## Disciplinary Process

Employees are expected to meet certain standards of work performance and conduct. These include, but are not limited to, those outlined in this handbook as well as in the job description. Employees who do not meet the standards and expectations may be given the opportunity to improve performance and/or conduct through the disciplinary process.

The nature of the discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment, will depend upon the conduct of the employee and the relevant circumstances. It is not a guarantee of continued employment to be placed on an improvement plan as part of the disciplinary process. Employees are expected to meet their performance obligations daily. Certain cases involving serious policy violations warrant a written warning with probationary status. This type of disciplinary action carries a contingency stating any further violations of policy or unacceptable performance or behavior will be grounds for termination.



# Workplace Conduct Policies

## Standards of Conduct

To provide our employees with comfortable and safe working conditions, we maintain standards of professional behavior that must be followed. Although it is impossible to identify every possible example of prohibited conduct, the following is a **partial** list of infractions that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

- Perpetrating fraud against the school, and/or Connections, affiliated entities, or persons
- Theft, misappropriation, unauthorized possession, use/ removal of school or Connections property
- Carrying weapons or explosives, or violating any criminal law while on the organization's property or on company business
- Fighting or otherwise threatening, intimidating, coercing, or interfering with managers, co-workers, or guests
- Using profane, obscene, or abusive language while on the organization's property or on company business
- Sleeping during working hours
- Gambling or other immoral or disorderly conduct while on the organization's property or on company business
- A pattern of chronic or excessive absenteeism, tardiness, leaving work early, or any other violation of the Attendance policy
- Failure to properly notify an absence
- Failure to satisfactorily perform job duties, including insubordination or refusal to comply with instructions
- Hiring a third party to perform an employee's assigned job duties
- Intentional abuse, negligence, or destruction of the organization's property
- Violation of any safety rule, policy, practice, or procedure
- Causing injury to a person or damaging property, machinery, equipment, supplies, or negatively impacting the reputation of the business
- False, fraudulent, misleading, or harmful statements or omissions concerning another employee or students, parents, colleagues, teachers, and vendors; or any statement that is harmful or disloyal to the organization
- Insubordination or refusal to comply with instructions, or failure to perform reasonable duties
- Dishonesty or providing false information to your manager or other employees
- Misuse of private Information and data created in the course of organizational operations concerning employees, students, or their families
- Conduct, in our sole opinion, that reflects adversely on you or the organization
- Failure to properly follow any rule or procedure, or violating any policy in this handbook
- Other acts, in the opinion of management and/or Human Resources, that warrant disciplinary action

## Respect for Others



We expect our employees to treat each other, students, teachers, vendors, regulators, legislators, or any third party during the course of their job duties with respect and consideration. Lack of respect can be shown through words, conduct, acts, or demeanor. Some examples of lack of respect include snide remarks, inappropriate jokes, direct comments, and avoidance of particular individuals. The above examples by no means describe all types of disrespectful behavior. As a rule, behaviors that affect another employee's ability to work depart from our standard for respect.

## Language in the Workplace

The use of obscenity, profanity, sexual innuendos, coarse language, or language that could be perceived as offensive in the workplace is highly unprofessional and unacceptable. Persistent use can create a hostile workplace environment and may amount to a form of harassment. All employees are cautioned to avoid such language. Persons improperly subjected to offensive language should report the incident using the procedure outlined in the Preventing Workplace Harassment policy.

## Professional Ethical Standards

Employees must maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct and behavior in all interactions and communications.

Employees are required to use sound professional judgment when communicating with students and parents while handling situations requiring sensitivity. All organizational policies and protocols must be followed regarding FERPA and other dealings with students, parents, learning coaches and any agencies which may be associated with a Connections family.

Employees must display the highest integrity and the best judgment and ethics and use professional skills to the best interests of all. Employees must use only legal and ethical means when seeking to influence governmental legislation or regulations. Lastly, employees must aid in the professional development of those who enter the educational services profession by assisting them to understand the functions, duties, and responsibilities of the profession; and, always endeavor to improve our organization.

## Reporting Unethical Behavior

The organization's ongoing success depends on maintaining high ethical standards of conduct. To reinforce the commitment to the highest standards of ethics, we have made available the Ethics Hotline. The Ethics Hotline is a phone and web-based communications tool that offers employees a confidential way to raise a concern or report suspected unethical, unprofessional, illegal, or fraudulent activity by others associated with the organization. The hotline number is 833-710-0718 and the confidential web address is <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/pearson>.

### Who should use the Ethics Hotline?

Any employee who has information about possible criminal activities, ethical violations, or other work-related incidents should use the Ethics Hotline. **An employee's first option is to report suspicions to a member of management or Human Resources**, but if they are uncomfortable with the direct approach, the Ethics Hotline may be utilized.

### What types of incidents should be reported?

Employees are encouraged to report situations or events that could potentially harm students, the school(s), colleagues, or the organization. Examples include violations related to:

- Compliance with regulations
- Conflicts of interest
- Accounting & auditing practices
- Gifts & bribes
- Disclosure of confidential information
- Privacy of student records
- Theft
- Copyright laws and software piracy
- Misuse of resources or funds
- Intellectual property infringement
- Falsification of information
- Threats and physical violence
- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Retaliation

### **How it works**

Concerns reported to the Ethics Hotline are received by an independent third-party communication specialist who will then report the information anonymously to Human Resources. At no point will the identity of the individual reporting the concern be revealed without their consent. Raising a concern or reporting misconduct in good faith is the right thing and such action will not be subject to discipline or retaliation. If the investigation of a concern reported through the Ethics Hotline reveals the initial report was done with malice or ill intent, it will be deemed the reporter will waive their right to anonymity and be subject to disciplinary action.

### **You are the key to an ethical workplace**

While the Ethics Hotline is an ongoing program for concerned employees; we encourage direct communication with colleagues, managers, and/or members of school management. For employees who prefer to remain anonymous, the Ethics Hotline is available anytime, twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Employees are prohibited from engaging or appearing to engage in any activities that conflict with the organization's interests. A conflict of interest, or the appearance thereof, may occur when an interest in, association with, and/or employment by another educational management organization, suppliers of goods or services, etc., is such that the ability to act in the best interests of the organization may be called into question. Please discuss any questions or concerns regarding conflicts of interests with your manager and/or Human Resources.

Conduct that may constitute a conflict of interest includes, but is not limited to:

- Directly or indirectly borrowing from, lending to, investing in or engaging in any substantial financial transaction with an existing or potential customer/student, supplier, etc.
- Performing outside work for another entity while working for the organization or a Connections Academy school.
- Transmitting confidential information to a student/parent/caretaker, vendor, competitor, or other individual who is not an employee and who does not have authorization to receive it; and
- Using organizational facilities, equipment, labor, or supplies to conduct outside activities
- Having an intimate relationship with any student, parent/caretaker of a student, employee under direct supervision except when such individual, is a member of your family or when you have no work responsibilities associated with the individual and the relationship is not prohibited by law or regulation, such as a relationship with an under-age student

## **Gifts**

Employees are to avoid any conduct that gives rise to a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. Specifically, employees must comply with laws that preclude giving gifts to government employees even when the gift is given without any intention of influencing the recipient. For purposes of this policy, a gift is

defined as anything of value given or reimbursed by the organization for which goods or services are not provided in return as part of an ordinary business transaction. This may include tangible items, meals, and/or travel expenses. Accordingly, employees must have all gifts reviewed by the Legal Department by creating an Issue Aware ticket.

Employees may not give, solicit, or accept gifts to or from any person or entity that has sought or seeks a business relationship with the organization unless approved through the Issue Aware process. Giving gifts to vendors, students, and government officials is prohibited.

**In no event should any gift of cash, including gift cards, be accepted, or made.**

If an employee receives an unsolicited gift, they must promptly notify their manager, in writing, and take the following action:

- Return the gift with a letter to the donor explaining the organization's Gift policy.
- When a gift cannot be returned because it is perishable and may become damaged or spoiled, send the donor a letter noting this fact explaining the organization's Gift policy.
- When it is necessary to write a letter as prescribed above, the recipient should provide a copy of the letter to their manager and should submit it to the Legal Department.

## Authorizations and Approvals

Under no circumstances is an employee, other than those who have purchasing responsibility authorized in writing, to commit to any purchase or agreement that financially obligates the organization. If an employee is required to procure goods and services, the appropriate authorizations from the employee's manager must be obtained in accordance with the organization's fiscal policies. Failure to obtain the proper authorizations/approvals will result in disciplinary action and/or a requirement the individual accept personal responsibility for an obligation wrongfully made in the organization's name.

## Solicitation and Distribution

Employees are prohibited from soliciting and/or distributing non-business material in work areas and during work hours. Bulletin boards, internal directories, interoffice mail, email, and other organizational resources are to be used only for business purposes unless designated otherwise.

Employees may not solicit or distribute ANY information in work areas on behalf of a business, club, school, society, religious group, nonprofit organization, or political party during work time or during the work time of the employee(s) to whom such activity is directed.

If the activity is not disruptive, employees may distribute information about nonprofit fundraising efforts or distribute small items, such as cookies or candy for sale, if the proceeds will be received by a nonprofit organization. Permitted activities will be determined by the manager for the employee's location. Requests to conduct fundraising activities must be approved by the location manager in advance.

The organization reserves the right to sponsor certain nonprofit fundraising events. However, participation will not be required.

## Appearance and Dress

The organization strives to provide a work environment that is both professional and comfortable. Employee's dress, grooming, and personal hygiene should be appropriate to the workplace environment in accordance with guidelines set forth by the department. Employees are expected to dress and present themselves in a manner that is acceptable in a business setting.

When meeting with families, students, and/or external parties, whether in person or virtually (e.g., LiveLessons, video conference calls, etc.), or when visitors are in the workplace, employees should dress appropriately and professionally. Employees who are dressed inappropriately may be asked to change into more suitable attire. Any questions concerning the dress code, should be directed to an immediate manager or Human Resources.

## Animals in the Workplace

Pets are not permitted at a school office or at school related events unless they are the staff member's registered service animal. If you have questions regarding registered service animals, please contact Human Resources for additional information and requirements

## Employee Conduct While Driving

Employees are considered completely responsible for any accidents, fines, or traffic violations incurred while operating personal vehicles. While driving a personal vehicle, or a rental vehicle for organizational business, the employee's personal automobile insurance will be considered primary and any organizational-provided coverage secondary.

Employees who are driving while on business are expected to conduct themselves in a safe and legal manner, obeying posted speed limits and avoiding distractions while driving.

## Social Media Policy

The organization believes in utilizing social media sites to foster online collaboration and share what the organization does, but employees are expected to do so responsibly. As online communication platforms continue to evolve, so will organizational policies. Employees should speak freely, but also responsibly. This policy is focused on social media activities in or outside of work that could affect work performance, the performance of other employees, our business interests, or the school's interests. The policy provides standards for employees who choose to contribute or participate in blogs, wikis, social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.), virtual worlds, user-generated audio, and video (YouTube), or other social media. The standards of conduct apply to online activities, and any information or comments posted publicly may be escalated to Human Resources for review.

Employees are discouraged from participating in one-on-one communication or sharing personal information with students through social media sites. It is not appropriate for teachers or other employees to deviate from their professional role with students at any time. If teachers or other employees choose to interact with students through social media sites, the interaction should be logged and use filters or other mechanisms to preserve the professional nature of the student-teacher relationship. While such precautions might limit a student's access to an employee's personal information, employees may still have access to the personal information of a student. In such a case, information learned about students through these networking and social media sites may trigger a duty under applicable law to report suspected abuse, neglect, or other conduct to the authorities.

This Policy shall not be construed or applied to interfere with Section Seven (7) of the National Labor Relations Act.

## Participation in Social Media Sites

1. Write about what you know. Ensure that statements you make are accurate and factual. Be exciting and creative when talking about the organization I, but do not exaggerate or guess. If someone asks you a question you do not know the answer to, forward it to an expert within the organization.
2. Present yourself well. Take into consideration that anything you post is made public and could be misconstrued by readers. Assume that your colleagues, manager, school's students, and their parents will read it. Keep that in mind as you post and present yourself in a way that you would in the organization. Be sure the image you portray is consistent with the work you do. Social media sites tend to blur the lines between personal and professional lives, and public and private information. Be aware of that line and communicate accordingly.
3. Restrict access if appropriate. Because boundaries can be blurred, everyone potentially has access to your information. Many social sites have privacy settings. Think about using them.
4. Present the organization well. Just by identifying yourself as an employee, you are creating perceptions about the organization. Make sure that content associated with the organization is consistent with the organization's values and standards of conduct.
5. Respect your audience. It is fine to have a healthy debate, but do not disparage others. Carry the customer service model through to your social media content. Outside parties CAN pursue legal action against you personally for content you post.
6. Correct mistakes. If you made a mistake, correct it. Just make sure you indicate that you have done so before modifying postings.
7. Identify yourself appropriately. Do not misrepresent who you are – if you are commenting about the organization, let others know your role and status. Make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the organization. Only employees officially designated by the organization have the authority to speak on behalf of the organization.

## Prohibited Activities on Social Media Sites

1. Do not violate your confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement. Follow the official policies protecting the organization's proprietary and confidential information. Things you absolutely cannot disclose on social media sites include company financial information, trade secrets, customer information and confidential or personally identifiable information about students. View the Confidential Records-Access, Retention, and Disclosure Policies and your non-disclosure agreement, if applicable, for more details.
2. Do not violate copyright or fair use laws. It is extremely important that you respect the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by the organization or others, for our protection as well as your own.
3. Never conduct the organization's business on a social media site. Our internal Education Management System (EMS) and other provided communication tools are the appropriate venues for work-related activities. **All contacts with students or parents should occur on and be tracked using the organization's communication tools, not social media sites.**
4. Do not disrupt the learning environment. Teachers and school administrators should maintain a supervisory, professional, and respectful relationship with students.
5. Do not publish information about students.
6. Do not publish personally identifiable information, including photos, about your colleagues without their consent.
7. Do not let social media interfere with your work performance.

8. Know your obligations. It is your responsibility to understand and be familiar with the reporting requirements for example child abuse and neglect, consistent with the laws of the state in which you work and our policy.

## Substance Abuse

The organization is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and efficient working environment, therefore requiring a drug-free workplace. Employees are strictly prohibited from misusing controlled substances, intoxicants, inhalants, alcohol, and prescription drugs, or purchasing, selling, manufacturing, distributing, possessing, or working under the influence of illegal substances. Employees are also prohibited from consuming alcohol in the presence of any students or families enrolled in an organization-affiliated school or attending an organizational function.

Employees who take over the counter or prescription medication are responsible for being aware of any adverse effect(s) the medication may have on work performance. Please promptly report to your manager if the use of medication might impair your ability to perform the job safely and/or effectively. Depending on the circumstances, employees may be reassigned, forbidden to perform certain tasks, or prohibited from working if they are deemed unable to perform the job safely and/or properly while taking such medication. It is a violation of this policy to take over the counter or prescribed medication contrary to its proper use.

Use of property and equipment, a company vehicle, or a personal or rented vehicle in the performance of their job responsibilities while under the influence of illegal drugs, intoxicants, inhalants, or quantities of alcohol above legal limits is prohibited.

Employees should contact their manager if they are aware of illegal activity at the workplace. Full cooperation with Human Resources is required if they are involved in substance abuse investigations. Employees referred for treatment that do not remain drug/alcohol free, and/or perform unsatisfactorily on the job, may be subject to termination.

### Definition of “Controlled Dangerous Substance”

“Controlled dangerous substance,” as used in this policy, has the same meaning as the term “controlled substance” in the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. § 802), and includes (1) any substance that has not been legally prescribed by a properly licensed physician, and (2) any substance that is legally obtainable, but has not been legally obtained or is not being used in the prescribed dosage for prescribed purposes. This policy **does not** prohibit employees from taking prescribed medication under the direction of a physician, provided that the prescribed medication does not impair performance or threaten safety, security and/or property, or that of the organization and/or co-workers. The use of prescribed medication in a manner that is inconsistent with the directions of a physician is not exempt from general prohibitions on substance abuse.

### Searches

The organization reserves the right to carry out searches of employees and their property, including desks, work areas, files, lockers, bags, or other personal belongings (including vehicles), while at any of our workplaces or work-related areas, if there is a valid reason for such a search.

### Drug and Alcohol Testing

Under this Drug and Alcohol policy, the organization requires pre-employment testing, reasonable cause testing, post-accident testing, unannounced random testing, and follow-up testing.



- **Pre-Employment Testing:** The organization may require all candidates for employment to submit to drug testing as a condition of any offer of employment. Positive test results for any controlled substance as defined in this policy will be considered in making final employment decisions.
- **Reasonable Suspicion Testing:** The organization may require a drug and/or alcohol test whenever abuse is reasonably believed from the facts and circumstances, such as appearance, conduct, speech or body odors; appearing to be under the influence of a controlled substance or alcohol; or otherwise violating any aspect of this policy, federal, state or local law/ regulations.
- **Post-Accident Testing:** The organization may require a drug and/or alcohol test whenever staff are involved in or contributed to a work-related incident that resulted or could have resulted in injury to any person or damage to property. Tests will be performed within two (2) hours of the accident or as soon as practicable following the accident. An employee who is seriously injured and cannot provide a specimen at the time of the accident shall provide the necessary authorization for obtaining hospital reports and/or other documents that would indicate if any controlled substances or alcohol was present in their system.
- **Unannounced Random Testing:** The organization may perform unannounced randomly selected drug testing. Once notified, the employee must report to the testing site immediately. The random selection process will be such that every covered employee has a substantially equal chance of being selected for testing each time, regardless of whether they were previously subject to testing. Human Resources may limit the random selection pool to employees in certain positions.
- **Follow-up Screening:** If the employee, in the course of employment, enters an employee assistance program for drug or alcohol-related problems or a drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, the organization may require follow-up testing.

If an employee is required to submit to a drug test, they will have the opportunity to disclose the use of any medication that may result in a positive test result by providing a doctor's note.

## Employee Assistance and Rehabilitation

The organization encourages any employee with a drug or alcohol abuse problem to seek treatment voluntarily. In the case of a positive drug or alcohol test result or a violation of this policy, Human Resources reserves the right to determine whether to allow the employee an opportunity to be placed in or enter into a rehabilitation program agreement as an alternative to termination.

No employee will be subject to disciplinary action solely for acknowledging a drug or alcohol problem and seeking treatment for the problem. However, to take advantage of that protection, employees must come forward and seek treatment before they are asked to take a drug or alcohol test or are suspected of violating any aspect of this policy.

Under the rehabilitation program and agreement, the employee will, among other things, be required to successfully complete an alcohol/drug treatment program before returning to work. They must apprise Human Resources of their condition while undergoing rehabilitation, as well as provide written verification of attendance at treatment sessions. Upon returning to work, the employee's performance must remain at an acceptable level, including attendance and punctuality.

## Confidentiality

The results of any drug or alcohol test conducted pursuant to this policy shall be kept confidential to the extent possible. Test results shall not be disclosed, except to persons to whom disclosure is necessary, to defend against any legal action brought by the tested employee or candidate for employment against the organization, or to any government contractor or as otherwise required by law or regulation.

## Employees Who Work with Children

It is the organization's policy to ensure the safety and well-being of all children participating in activities to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect consistent with the requirements of applicable law. An employee will not knowingly be placed in a position that has direct contact with children if they are/were accused and/or convicted of crimes against children, child abuse, or child neglect. Individuals who have direct contact with children must pass appropriate background screening measures.

### Awareness of Possible Abuse/Neglect

All individuals participating in organizational activities where children are present are responsible for being alert to possible abuse or neglect. We provide training to employees who interact with children, which includes guidelines for identifying and procedures for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect. All employees must comply with the procedures established in the training(s).

### Non-Fraternization Policy

School employees are strictly prohibited from engaging or appearing to engage in personal relationships with students that are outside the scope of a professional adult/student relationship. If conduct is believed to constitute a crime under state or federal law, violators of this policy will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authority. In addition, the parents/guardians/Caretakers of the student affected will be notified of the student's involvement and the actions taken.

### Interaction with Students

Any staff member who interacts with students should be familiar with and comply with the policies contained within the School Handbook Supplement as it pertains to harassment or treatment of students. Harassment or treatment of a student that is prohibited by the School Handbook Supplement is not tolerated. Any staff member who violates the policies in the School Handbook Supplement may receive disciplinary action.

### Transportation of Students by Employees and Student Home Visits

Employees are strictly prohibited from providing transportation to students for any purpose.

An employee may be permitted to visit the home of a student if the student's parent or guardian is present. Prior to such a visit the employee must gain approval from the School Leader or School Leader designee. Further, an employee visiting a student's home is strongly encouraged to do so with at least one other employee

### Actions in the Presence of Children and Families

The following are prohibited actions in the presence of students or families:

- Smoking or using tobacco products
- Consuming alcohol or drugs
- Using profanity, inappropriate language, or language that could be perceived as offensive

### Inappropriate Physical Contact with Children



Employees may not engage in physical contact with a child that is harmful, sexual, offensive, unwelcome, or inappropriate, or physical contact that is perceived as harmful, sexual, offensive, unwelcome, or inappropriate by Connections Education, its employees, or its customers.

Additionally, employees must adhere to the requirements set forth in the code of educator ethics for their state, if applicable, as well as state criminal statutes regarding assault.

## Preventing Workplace Harassment

The harassment or intimidation of employees based on age, race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, gender identity, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, protected genetic information, or any other class protected by federal, state, or local law is strictly prohibited. The organization does not tolerate harassment or hostile actions in the workplace by any person. Prompt action will be rendered to correct any harassment, up to and including disciplinary action or termination.

Harassment is a form of discrimination that occurs when someone engages in unwelcome and reasonably offensive conduct based on a protected characteristic, and that conduct adversely affects an individual's working conditions. This policy applies to harassment of any employee by another employee, a manager, or any other individual with whom an employee interacts in the course of their employment, including but not limited to parents/caretakers' vendors, suppliers, contractors, or other similar individuals.

### Definition

Harassment can result from a broad range of actions, including, but not limited to:

- **Verbal conduct:** comments that that could be considered harassing if they are likely to offend a reasonable person
- **Visual conduct:** visual materials that contribute to a hostile work environment by their sexually explicit or derogatory nature
- **Physical conduct:** touching that a reasonable person would find offensive
- **Sexual Harassment:** any unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, where:
  - It is expressed or implied that an employee's submission to or refusal of the conduct will have any effect on their employment, job assignment, wages, evaluation, promotion, training, future job opportunities, or other terms or condition of employment, or where such submission or refusal is used as a factor in decisions relating to the person's employment; or
  - The conduct is so severe and pervasive it creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Some examples of sexually harassing conduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Unwanted sexual advances, or requests or demands for sexual favors or sexual acts;
- Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is not welcomed by another person, such as repeated sexual flirtation, advances, innuendo, propositions, gestures, jokes, or mockery;
- The display or distribution of sexually oriented objects, pictures, or literature, including illustrations, drawings, or cartoons, including materials downloaded from computer systems via the internet, electronic mail, or other sources; or
- Any uninvited and unwelcome physical contact.

### Sexual Harassment

All staff have the right to work in an environment free of sexual harassment. The school prohibits sexual harassment in all its forms. This Policy applies to all staff members by any other individual regardless of their position with the school and extends to individuals the staff member may come into contact with during the course of their professional work day; including new hire applicants, contractors, and vendors. Some examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Offensive remarks about a person's sex
- Unwanted sexual advances, or requests or demands for sexual favors or sexual acts;
- Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is not welcomed by another person, such as repeated sexual flirtation, advances, innuendo, propositions, gestures, jokes, or mockery;
- The public display or distribution of sexually oriented objects, pictures, literature, illustrations, drawings, or cartoons, including materials downloaded from computer systems via the internet, electronic mail, or other sources; or
- Any uninvited and unwelcome physical contact.

Whether in the workplace and in any other work-related settings, such as organization sponsored trips; conventions, or conferences; or organization-sponsored social events, this policy applies to all workplaces and workspaces utilized during the scope of employment. Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner in the workplace and at any other time when representing the organization. Exemplary professional conduct is essential to promote quality work, and to ensure a work environment free of discrimination. Physical conduct of a sexual nature, even if welcomed by another employee, is prohibited in the workplace, or in any work-related setting.

Please refer to the harassment training provided at the start of employment for more detailed information on all forms of harassment and organizational policies on harassment.

## **Complaint Procedure**

Employees are encouraged, if possible, to inform their sexual harassment offender that their behavior is unwelcome and request the sexual harassment behavior to stop. Any manager who becomes aware of allegations of harassment must bring the allegations to the attention of Human Resources. Employees who believe that they are being harassed or have been harassed, are encouraged to report the conduct to Human Resources for immediate review.

Complaints will remain confidential to the extent reasonable and practicable while under investigation and as their unique circumstances warrant. Complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and impartially. If an investigation substantiates allegations of harassment, immediate and appropriate corrective action that is designed to address, stop, and remedy the harassment, will be taken, and the organization will ensure that the harassment does not recur.

## **Investigation Procedure**

During the investigation, Human Resources will instruct and provide guidance to participants of the investigation regarding confidentiality, and employees are expected to fully comply with these instructions in order to maintain the integrity of the investigation.

Any employees who are questioned as part of an investigation must be forthcoming and candid in answering all questions and must not withhold information pertinent to the investigation.

Withholding information or providing false information during an investigation is a serious violation of this policy and will subject an individual to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## Protection Against Retaliation and Sanctions

Any form of retaliation against an individual who makes a bona fide complaint of harassment, for assisting in a complaint investigation, for providing information in a complaint investigation, or for making any determination necessary under this policy is prohibited. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy, and any individual found to have retaliated against another person in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Any staff member that violates this policy or makes a false or malicious complaint of sexual harassment, regardless of position at the school, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

## Authority and Responsibility

If a manager learns that an employee is suffering potentially harassing behavior, the manager must act expediently to ensure that the harassing behavior is investigated, and if necessary, promptly stopped. All managers are responsible for preventing employees from being subjected to harassment, and for reporting any complaint or incident of harassment to Human Resources immediately and at the very least within twenty-four (24) hours using the above outlined procedures. If an incident is not reported, but a manager is aware of potential harassment, this must also be reported immediately and at the very least within twenty-four (24) hours to Human Resources.

Managers must immediately report any allegations of harassment, even if the allegations are against the individual required to report the allegations. Managers have a legal duty to report harassing behavior, even if the complaining employee requests that the matter be kept confidential. The matter will be kept as private as possible and the employee will be protected from retaliation.

Managers should follow up with the employee periodically during the investigative process, as well as after the investigation has been completed, to ensure that he or she is not experiencing retaliation or further harassment.

## Whistleblower Policy

A whistleblower is defined as an employee who reports an activity that they consider to be illegal or dishonest. Examples of illegal or dishonest activities are violations of federal, state, or local laws, and fraudulent financial reporting.

If an employee has knowledge or concern of illegal or fraudulent activity, they must contact their manager and Human Resources. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

The confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained to a reasonable extent. In some instances, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law, and to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defense.

## Non-Retaliation

No employee will endure retaliation for reporting in good faith potential violations of any policy, or for filing, testifying, assisting, or participating in any investigation, proceeding, or hearing conducted by the organization,

or by a federal or state enforcement agency. Prohibited retaliation includes, but is not limited to, demotion, suspension, failure to receive equal consideration in employment decisions, failure to make employment recommendations impartially, adversely affecting working conditions, or otherwise denying an employment benefit.

Any individual who retaliates or attempts to retaliate will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. All reports of retaliation should be submitted to Human Resources.

Frivolous complaints that have no merit upon investigation or which are made in clear and direct response to disciplinary actions against an employee with documented performance issues or policy violations will not protect the employee against further disciplinary action up to and including termination. However, such actions must clearly be directly related to the employee's own documented performance issues or policy violations.

## Issue Resolution Process

The organization encourages open and direct lines of communication between employees at all levels of the organization. It benefits everyone when employees feel free to bring questions, suggestions and concerns directly to their managers. Examples of issues handled through this resolution process include: concerns about the application of the organization's policies and procedures within the school to school employees, parents and students; concerns about employee decisions directly involving an individual or decisions affecting other individuals at the school; work conditions; questions about the competence and overall fitness of a colleague or a manager; and regulatory compliance.

The resolution process is detailed below. Employees should always contact Human Resources immediately to deal with issues of discrimination or harassment as described in the Preventing Workplace Harassment policy of this handbook.

### Steps in the Process

1. If the issue does not involve a violation of the organization's policy or an ethical or regulatory requirement, meet with at least two (2) levels of management. An employee must, in good faith, make every attempt to resolve the issue with their immediate manager and, if that is not successful, then with their next level manager. Fear of retaliation is not a legitimate reason to skip this step. If the issue does involve a violation of the organization's policy or an ethical or regulatory requirement, the employee should proceed directly to step 2.
2. If the immediate manager or the next level manager cannot resolve the issue, or if the issue involves a violation of the organization's policy or an ethical or regulatory requirement, it is important to describe the issue, the desired result, and your proposed solution to the issue. This step should occur as soon as possible after the occurrence of the problem.
3. If the issue relates to a personnel matter or work condition, contact Human Resources. After a full description of the issue, Human Resources will help the staff member and their manager consider how policies, procedures, and practices relate to the issue. Often, the policies in this handbook will dictate a resolution to the issue. If the issue involves an organizational policy or an ethical or regulatory requirement, contact a member of the management team. Human Resources can provide you with the name of the appropriate contact or you can ask Human Resources to contact the appropriate individual on your behalf.
4. If the issue is not resolved by either Human Resources or School Services, employees can request the matter be presented to the school's Board of Directors (if applicable) for final consideration, or employees can contact the Board directly. The contact information for the school's Board of Directors is located on the school's web site.

# Confidential Records- Access, Retention, and Disclosure Policies

## Handling Confidential Information

### Personally, Identifiable Information

All employees must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in the handling of student data (see discussion below). Personally, identifiable information must be protected, especially social security and financial account numbers, under state and federal privacy laws. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in legal liability to the organization and/or school. Furthermore, the confidence of regulators and students and their families depends upon fully exhibiting these responsibilities.

The hard drives on all issued laptops will have encryption, and there will be a process implemented for users to swap existing laptops for ones with encrypted hard drives.

As a user of Connexus or other organizational information or systems, employees must comply with the following:

- NEVER store personally identifiable information that includes social security or financial account numbers locally on a laptop or other removable media such as USB and flash drives unless the data is encrypted, and password protected. Note that viewing a Data View export in Connexus creates a file which is automatically saved in the local temporary folder on the download machine. Employees should only view Data View export files when connected to the network. Use must be temporary and be followed by prompt deletion, as specified in the next bullet.
- To the extent student information does not include a social security or a financial account number must, for legitimate reasons, be temporarily saved on a computer that does not have an encrypted hard drive, this information must be permanently deleted – by deleting the file(s) and then emptying the Recycle Bin (or your system's equivalent) from the computer immediately after use.
- NEVER send emails that contain personally identifiable information that includes social security or financial account numbers. If it is required by any regulatory authority or vendor to transmit a file that contains this kind of information, contact the MIS helpdesk and request assistance to appropriately encrypt or otherwise store the file.
- Laptops and other electronic devices such as smartphones that receive organizational/school emails must be password protected in case the device is lost or stolen. If it is necessary to temporarily leave a portable electronic device in a vehicle, lock it in the trunk.
- Failure to comply with the above requirements will be considered a serious breach of responsibility and may be grounds for termination of employment or other action(s) as provided by school rules and policies, including discontinuing access to Connexus or the organization's network.

### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

All employees are subject to the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The current policy is located on the Virtual Library (Home > Employee Resources > Legal Resources (FERPA, consultants, IP) > Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act **(FERPA)**).

Employees are responsible for reviewing the requirements and only disclosing student information if specifically required by regulation and when such disclosure is permitted by FERPA. Employees are never permitted to remove any FERPA-protected information from school property in print or electronic form except for legally permitted purposes and when specifically authorized by a manager.

## Confidential and Proprietary Information

Employees are responsible for limiting disclosures of confidential and proprietary information to those individuals who require this knowledge to perform their job responsibilities for the benefit of the organization. Confidential information may not be disclosed to anyone except pursuant to a Non-Disclosure Agreement approved by the Legal Department.

Employees must conspicuously label confidential information with the applicable classification notice (e.g., “Connections Academy Confidential”). In addition, all confidential information must be safeguarded and kept secure and disposed of in a secure manner (subject to records retention requirements).

Employees should not accept information or other materials from a contractor, vendor or other non-employee that may be trade secret information obtained or provided without the owner’s consent. Unauthorized use of third-party confidential information can contaminate the organization’s work. Any authorized use of third-party confidential information must be compliant with the applicable Non-Disclosure Agreement.

## Intellectual Property Policy

Intellectual Property is defined as an intangible creation of the human mind, expressed or translated into tangible form that is assigned certain rights of property such as inventions (patents), literary and artistic works (copyrighted works), and symbols, names, images, and designs used in commerce (trademarks). The organization is committed to the enforcement and protection of intellectual property rights as both a legal and an ethical imperative. All employees are expected to adhere to the United States (“U.S.”) copyright and trademark laws and to be mindful of the limited rights conferred by licenses and permissions granted by third parties. All employees are expected to take appropriate steps to protect the rights of the organization in its trademarks and works of authorship developed for or on behalf of the organization and to timely notify of any potentially patentable inventions.

## Using Copyrighted and Trademarked Materials

Employees must assure that work product is original and does not include material owned by third parties unless covered by a license agreement approved by the Legal Department. Employees must assure they do not use trademarks owned by third parties for commercial purposes without the consent of the owner of the trademark. To learn more about what is acceptable, refer to the Copyright and Trademark Compliance policy and Guidelines, which is located on the Virtual Library (**Home>Employee Resources>Legal Resources (FERPA, consultants, IP)>Copyright and Trademark Compliance policy**). Contact the Legal Department if there are any questions regarding usage of third party copyrighted material and trademarks.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism occurs when an employee claims or implies original authorship or incorporates material from someone else’s written or creative work, in whole or in part, regardless of copyright notice, into their work product without adequate acknowledgement. Plagiarism is strictly prohibited and may represent a violation of law, exposing the employee to criminal and/or civil prosecution.

**False Information:** We expect employees to exercise honesty and integrity in all aspects of employment. Employees are prohibited from providing false information to other employees, students, or parents/caretakers. Employees are also required to immediately report to Human Resources if they suspect that another employee has provided false information to other employees, students, or families. Employees are strictly prohibited from falsifying data in Connexus or any other system used for reporting to an authorizer, regulatory body, or external agency. Falsification of such data may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. If an employee is aware of another employee falsifying



data and fails to report the infraction, they may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

**Ownership and Rights to Materials Developed by Employees:** Work product and ideas developed by employees as part of their work for the organization are owned by the organization.

Teachers and SLPs are encouraged to contribute materials they have developed during their employment for use by the larger organization. Employees are encouraged to collaborate with one another and share instructional resources to enhance professional practice and ultimately improve the academic success of the students. Materials that could be shared by the broader organization include, but are not limited to lesson plans, worksheets, problem sets, newsletters, presentations such as PowerPoints, recorded LiveLesson® or Zoom presentations and resources. By providing these through the EMS or other provided online applications or templates (e.g., software for LiveLesson® presentations and LiveLesson® templates) or communications tools (e.g., WebMail or email), teachers agree that the organization has a non-exclusive license to use and modify these materials and such modified materials are organizational owned derivative works. Any such materials contributed may be edited and formatted by the organization and used in any way deemed appropriate. In addition, where a teacher places any approved content in the EMS, any such modifications and/or content will also be organizational owned derivative works. The organization will have the right to use such materials, modifications and/or content in any way deemed appropriate. Employees are free to retain a copy of their original (unedited) materials when they terminate employment, but any templates or third-party materials used or incorporated under an organizational license with permission from a third party must be removed.

## External Inquiries

Any employee who receives an external inquiry or request for documents from a regulatory or legal authority, from the press; or who receives an inquiry concerning information not routinely provided during the employee's normal course of work, should refer such inquiries as follows.

- Refer all media inquiries to the Marketing Department.
- Refer all inquiries from lawyers or government agencies to the Legal Department.
- Refer all employment references requested to Human Resources. We do not respond to oral requests for references. All requests must be in writing accompanied by a signed authorization.
- Do not under any circumstances respond to requests for information regarding another employee. If you receive a request for a reference, you should forward the request to Human Resources

## Records Retention

The organization maintains a variety of records, including student and employee records. Record retention requirements and policies have been established for maintaining records. Employees must never destroy any record except in accordance with these policies. Records are not to be kept longer than the policy duration in any form unless they have received direct authorization from the department manager, Human Resources or if they are subject to a hold notice received from the Legal Department.

The current records policies are located on the Virtual Library (**Home > Employee Resources >Records Management Program**).

## Personnel Files

A personnel file consists of physical documentation as well as electronic information stored on the Human Resources Information System. The original information in a personnel file will be kept by Human Resources. Additional copies of certain documents in a personnel file may also be kept in the school office.

An employee may request a copy of their personnel file. The request must be made in writing to Human Resources and the file will be made available upon requesting employee within a reasonable amount of time.

## Access to Employee Exposure Records and Employee Medical Records

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (“OSHA”), employees have the right to examine and copy relevant “employee exposure records” and “employee medical records,” as those terms are defined under the statute. Human Resources is responsible for maintaining these records. If you wish to access your records, please contact Human Resources.

Employee Exposure Records: Employee exposure records are retained for thirty (30) years. In the event workplace monitoring is conducted, data may be retained (e.g., lab reports, worksheets, etc.) for only one (1) year. In some cases, the sampling results and sampling plan, analytical and mathematical methods used, and a summary of relevant background data will be retained for at least thirty (30) years.

Employee Medical Records: Generally speaking, employee medical records are retained for the duration of employment plus thirty (30) years. However, this does not apply to:

- Health insurance claims records that are maintained separately from the organization’s medical program and its records, or data
- First aid records (not including medical histories) of one-time treatment and subsequent observation of minor injuries (e.g., scratches, cuts, burns, splinters, etc.) that (1) do not involve medical treatment, loss of consciousness, restriction of work or motion, or transfer to another job; (2) are made on-site by a non-physician; and (3) are maintained separately from the organization’s medical program and its records.

If you work for the organization for less than one (1) year, the organization may elect to provide you with these records upon the termination of your employment rather than retaining them. The OSHA regulation entitled “Access to Employee Exposure and Medical Records” is available for review. If you would like a copy of the regulation and/or its appendices, please contact Human Resources.



## **Work Arrangement Policies**

### **Residency Policy**

#### **Employee Relocation**

#### **Teaching and Substitute Services**

If a Pearson Virtual Schools Teaching or Substitute Services employee requires relocation outside of the state in which they resided at the time of hire and/or currently reside, they must notify their supervisor 30 days prior to the relocation; they must also alert Human Resources as soon as possible but no later than 10 days of establishing their relocation residency. Relocations must be made within the United States unless an exception is granted by the employee's supervisor and Human Resources.

Service needs will be taken into consideration upon relocation notification, and the employee may still be responsible for maintaining certification in the original state of residency; employees will be responsible for any new credentialing requirements and associated costs as a result of the relocation.

#### **Speech Language Services**

If a Pearson Virtual Schools SLP employee requires relocation outside of the state in which they resided at the time of hire and/or currently reside, they must notify their supervisor 30 days prior to the relocation; they must also alert Human Resources as soon as possible but no later than 10 days of establishing their relocation residency. Relocations must be made within the United States unless an exception is granted by the employee's supervisor and Human Resources.

Service needs will be taken into consideration upon relocation notification, and the employee may still be responsible for maintaining certification in the original state of residency which will be referred to as a "Required Certification/License." Employees may be responsible for any new credentialing requirements and associated costs as a result of the relocation. The state to which the employee relocates will be classified as the state of "Original Certification/License" for credential purposes. SLPs must be licensed in the state in which they are physically located as well as the state in which the student receiving speech services is located. SLPs must maintain all required certification as indicated in their Certification Tracking IA.

### **Accommodation of Disabilities**

The organization adheres to the requirements and regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and all applicable federal, state, and local laws including modifications made by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. Qualified individuals with disabilities may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation in the workplace

We are committed to providing an accessible workplace for all staff. We will make reasonable accommodations on behalf of individuals which qualify under ADA. An accommodation must improve the staff member's ability to perform their essential job functions. If an exact accommodation cannot be met, an alternative that is as effective in removing the workplace barrier will be offered. Written requests for accommodation should be directed to your manager and/or Human Resources. All requests will be reviewed and approved on a case by case basis.

Any information regarding a disability will be kept confidential to the extent possible.

## Work at Home Policy

Under certain circumstances, employees who would normally work out of the organization's office may be eligible to work at home on a full-time, part-time, or occasional basis. Specific information regarding the work-at-home arrangements offered is provided below. The decision whether to allow an employee to work at home is within the sole discretion of (1) the organization, and (2) any school that has contracted with the organization to act as its human resources agent. Categories of work at home arrangements are defined in the Work at Home Classifications policy. A manager can require an employee with work-at-home privileges to come into the office at any time. If requested to come into the office and fails to do so, disciplinary action may be taken.

This policy does not apply to employees who request to work at home as an accommodation for a disability under the ADA. For information regarding such requests, please refer to the Accommodation of Disabilities policy in this handbook.

## Work at Home Guidelines

1. **Work Environment:** Employees are required to establish an appropriate work environment within their homes, in accordance with the requirements described in this policy. Generally, residences must be located in the same state as their assigned work location. Unless a specific business need permits and is approved by Human Resources, employees will not be permitted to work outside of the United States. Exceptions must be approved in advance by Human Resources.
2. **Work Hours:** With the exception of adjunct teachers and PT SLPs, employees who work at home full-time are required to work the same "core hours" (e.g., 8:00 am – 5:00 pm), the same number of hours (40 hours per week), and the same calendar days (195 teacher work days) as other employees at their assigned office location. Exceptions to core hours can be approved by the department leader or made based on business needs and time zone considerations.
3. **Contact Information:** Employees who work at home must provide Human Resources with their best contact phone number(s) and mailing address. Any changes in contact information must be immediately reported to Human Resources by updating UltiPro. Employees who work from home must display their instant message status daily with their contact information.
4. **Communication:** Employees who work at home are required to communicate with their managers in a manner and frequency consistent with other employees at their assigned office location. Employees should consult with their managers to discuss their respective expectations, as well as logistical issues that may arise.
5. **Accessibility:** Employees who work at home must be accessible by phone and internet within a reasonable time during the agreed upon work schedule ("core hours"). If an employee will not be

available for a period of time greater than one (1) hour during their core hours, the employee must notify their manager, and an appropriate away message must be placed on the employee's IM.

6. Responding to Voice Mails

- a. Requirement: Employees who work at home are required to check their work voice mailboxes at least three (3) times per day and return calls from their managers within three (3) hours during normal work hours.
- b. Exception: Adjunct teachers and part-time SLPs are required to check their work voice mailboxes at least once per day and return calls from their managers within twenty-four (24) hours.

7. Responding to Instant Messages: Employees who work at home are required to respond to Instant Messages within (20) minutes during normal work hours.

8. Off-Site Responsibilities: Employees who work at home will be given an "assigned office/hub location." This location may be an actual office, or an office location zip code or city where the employee will be expected to meet with their manager. These meetings may be scheduled on a regular and/or ad hoc basis. In addition, employees must be available to conduct home visits, attend field trips and other school-related events, act as proctors for state testing, and perform other duties as assigned.

9. Evaluation: Evaluation of an employee's performance while working at home may include daily interaction by phone and email. Evaluations will be similar in content and frequency to the evaluations received by employees at the assigned office location, but with additional focus on work output and the completion of objectives, and less focus on time-based performance.

10. Confidentiality: Employees who work at home must take steps to prevent proprietary and/or confidential information regarding the organization, its employees, and its clients from being stolen or otherwise accessed. Employees should use locked file cabinets and desks; practice regular password maintenance; and take other steps, as appropriate. Portable Media such as flash drives, CDRs, etc. should not be used to store or transport confidential data under any circumstances without authorization from the MIS Department (MIS). Employees must still abide by our Information System Policies. It is recommended that no confidential data be printed from the employee's residence. If confidential data is printed, it must either be 1) returned to office; or 2) shredded.

11. Contact with Students and Other Individuals

- a. Work Telephone Numbers: All work numbers should be answered professionally and by the employee only. All work numbers should have a professional voicemail message that indicates the employee's name and school/department. Families who need to contact an employee may also request a phone call via WebMail, leave a message in the employee's work voice mailbox, or, if the request is urgent, call the employer's toll-free number and speak with a support representative. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure the safety and security of that phone line.
- b. Home Office: Employees who work at home are prohibited from granting access to their work from home location to students, potential students, their families, or caregivers.

12. Child / Dependent Care: Working at home should not be used as a means of providing and/or replacing child / dependent care. \* The purpose of the work-at-home arrangement is to facilitate job performance and meet the organization's needs. Employee's working at home should not act as primary caregivers for dependents. Dependents may be present at home; however, the dependents must not require the employee's attention during normal work hours. Employees considering a work-at-home arrangement are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to entering such an arrangement.

\*Adjuncts and part-time employees are exempt from this provision.

13. Expenses

- a. Mail: Employees who work at home may request reimbursement of costs incurred in mailing materials to their students. A receipt from the post office is required for reimbursement.

- b. Travel: Travel expenses are only reimbursable if the location where the employee is traveling is farther away (in miles) than the employee's assigned office location. Expenses associated with traveling to the "assigned work location" for a meeting with their manager are not reimbursable.
- c. Home Office: Employees are responsible for all costs and expenses associated with the setup of a home office / workspace (e.g., remodeling, furniture, lighting, repairs, modifications, etc.). Repair, upgrade and/or replacement costs and liability for employee-owned equipment and furniture used during the work-at-home arrangement is the responsibility of the employee.
- d. Terminating a Work-at-Home Arrangement: We reserve the right to discontinue a work-at-home arrangement at any time, with or without notice, at our sole discretion. Generally, we will attempt to provide thirty (30) days' notice before making such a change.

## Technology

### 1. Computers

- a. Home-Based Employees (FT): Generally, home-based employees will be provided with a laptop computer and related equipment. Equipment supplied by us is for business purposes only. Employees must take appropriate steps to protect all equipment owned by the organization from damage and theft. We will maintain an inventory of all equipment and/or materials that are provided to employees working at home. Such equipment will remain property of the school. Upon termination of employment, return of all organization owned equipment and property is required, unless other arrangements have been made.
  - b. Other Work-at-Home Employees: Employees who work at home (1) on a short-term or occasional basis, or (2) as Home-Based Part-time Employee (Adjunct teachers, Part-time Speech Language Pathologists, and Substitute Teachers/Counselors) are responsible for providing their own computers and related equipment. Part-time SLPs will receive a headset and webcam. We are not responsible for loss, damage, or repairs of any employee-owned equipment. Employee-owned equipment must meet certain minimum requirements as determined by our MIS Department. We reserve the right to modify equipment requirements with or without notice, at our sole discretion.
2. Broadband Service: All employees who work at home are required to maintain broadband access to the Internet, as well as a dedicated phone line that is available during working hours.

## Regulatory Compliance/Risk Management

1. Site Inspection Checklist: Managers will generally complete at least one on-site inspection per school year and complete the site inspection checklist in the EMS. If the guidelines for the site inspection are not met, the employee's work-at-home arrangement may be terminated. Subsequent inspections may be required on an as-needed basis.
2. On-Site Inspection: Employees who work at home are required to permit an on-site review of their home office /workspace upon request, whether it is a scheduled or unscheduled visit, as long as it is during the employee's core work hours
3. Equipment and Workspace Design: Equipment and workspace design must meet all applicable standards and requirements. Upon request, we will assist in setting up a workstation.
4. Reporting Injuries: Injuries sustained by an employee while working at home may be covered by our Workers' Compensation policy. If you are injured while working at home, you must contact your manager and Human Resources immediately, in accordance with company procedures.
5. Injuries to Visitors: We are not responsible or liable for injuries sustained by visitors to an employee's home office or assigned office location.

6. **Tax Considerations:** Employees are responsible for all federal, state, and local tax obligations associated with their particular work-at-home arrangements.

## Work at Home Classifications

### Home Based Employee (Full-Time)

1. **Definition:** “Home-based employees (FT)” are full-time employees who work at home five (5) days per week. For recordkeeping, training, meeting and administrative purposes, home-based employees are assigned to a specific office or hub (“assigned office location”).
2. **Eligibility**
  - a. **Applicants:** In certain circumstances, an individual applying for a position may be offered the option of working as a home-based employee. Generally, such offers are extended to assist us in filling specific operational needs (e.g., securing an applicant who (1) is particularly well-qualified, (2) possesses experience or expertise in a subject area that is difficult to fill, (3) there is not sufficient space for the employee in the office, etc.).
  - b. **Current Employees**
    - i. **Requirements:** Generally, employees must work on a full-time basis for at least one year, with no breaks in employment, to be eligible for home-based employment. In addition, individuals requesting a home-based arrangement must have at least a satisfactory rating under the performance appraisal process and demonstrate expertise regarding our program and Education Management System (EMS).
    - ii. **Exceptions:** Exceptions to these requirements may be made under certain circumstances, (e.g., to retain employees who are particularly well-qualified, possess experience or expertise in a subject area that is difficult to fill, etc.). Exceptions must be approved by Human Resources.
3. **Procedure**
  - a. **Applicants:** When an applicant is hired as a home-based employee, the work location (home-based) will be noted in the offer letter.
  - b. **Current Employees:** Requests for home-based arrangements should be directed to the employee’s manager, who will consult with Human Resources to evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement. Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, business needs, as well as the employee’s job duties and responsibilities; prior performance; work habits; and ability to work with minimal supervision. In addition, certain grade levels, subjects, and positions may be better suited to a home-based arrangement than others.
4. **Duration:** Requests for home-based arrangements are reviewed on a school year by school year basis. Home-based employees who wish to work at home the following school year should inform their manager. The manager will review the requirements and approve or deny the continued home-based assignment.

### Short-Term Work at Home Arrangements

1. **Definition:** For the purposes of this policy, the phrase “short-term work-at-home arrangement” refers to situations in which (1) an employee is permitted to work at home for a defined period of time due to a personal need or a return from short-term disability, and (2) the duration of the work-at-home arrangement is less than one full school year.
2. **Eligibility:** For employees returning from a leave of absence due to a short-term disability (i.e., maternity leave), the following eligibility requirements apply:
  - a. Employees who have been on a leave of absence due to a short-term disability may be permitted to work-at-home for up to three (3) months after the date the disability began IF the employee’s performance meets the criteria.

- b. Employee must submit an authorization to return to work from a physician to Human Resources before work-at-home arrangement will be approved.
3. Procedure: Employees who wish to work at home on a short-term basis should contact Human Resources.
4. Duration: Employees should provide Human Resources with information regarding the expected duration of their work-at-home arrangement.
5. Terminating a Work-at-Home Arrangement: We reserve the right to discontinue a work-at-home arrangement at any time, with or without notice, at our sole discretion. Generally, we will attempt to provide thirty (30) days' notice before making such a change.

## Occasional Work at Home Days

1. Definition: For the purposes of this policy, the phrase "occasional work-at-home days" refers to situations in which an employee is permitted to work at home on an occasional or periodic basis, or an employee has a "cube-sharing" arrangement where they share a workspace in an office with another employee, and alternate working from the office and working from home.
2. Eligibility: Some employees can earn work-at-home days based on their performance from the previous year. Eligibility requirements are determined at the school level.
3. Number of Work-at-Home Days: Generally, the number of work-at-home days available to an employee is determined by and dependent upon their performance during the prior school year. Employees may only use the number of work-at-home days allotted to them. We reserve the right to increase or decrease an employee's work-at-home days, with or without notice, at our sole discretion.
4. Procedure: Employees who wish to use a work-at-home day must obtain approval in advance from their manager or have a regular work-at-home schedule or cube-share arrangement that has been approved by the manager. We may, at our sole discretion, deny a request to work at home on a particular day.

## Home Based Employees (Part-Time)

1. Definition: Home-based employees (PT) are part-time employees who work at home or at an alternative location. These employees include Adjunct teachers, Part-time Speech Language Pathologists and Substitute teachers. Adjunct teachers are required to consult with their managers to schedule their "core hours," which will consist of a minimum of three (3) office hours per week between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm (e.g., Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am – 10:00 am, Thursdays from 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm, etc.).
2. Eligibility: All adjunct teachers, Part-time SLPs, and Substitute teachers/counselors enter into a work-at-home arrangement when they are hired.
3. Procedure: When a part-time employee is hired as a home-based employee, the work location (home-based) will be noted in the offer letter.
4. Duration: Adjunct teachers, Part-time SLPs, and Substitute teachers are hired with the expectation that they will work at home while employed. However, we reserve the right to discontinue the arrangement at any time, with or without notice, at our sole discretion.



# Workplace Safety and Security Policies

## Workplace Safety

All employees must practice safety awareness by anticipating unsafe situations and reporting such conditions immediately. If a crisis or near-crisis situation arises at any work location, employees should not attempt to handle it on their own. Immediately consult a manager and/or Human Resources and Compliance. If there is a medical emergency, call 911

Practice safety around the office by not, adjusting, or repairing machines and equipment, unless authorized and qualified to do so. Be alert for tripping or slipping hazards. Keep walking areas clear of carts, boxes, and other obstacles. Know the locations, contents and use of first-aid kits. Be familiar with the organization's emergency action plans and report all injuries, illnesses, and accidents that are sustained while performing work related to the organization or while on the organization's property immediately, no matter how minor. If in a position necessitating the operation of machinery or equipment that requires specific training or certification, the appropriate certification and/or training must be completed prior to use.

## Security

The organization is not liable for the loss, theft, or damage of any personal property brought onto the organization's premises, or for fire, theft, damage, or personal injury involving personal automobiles, their contents, or occupants. The organization reserves the right to inspect and search all areas of the organization's premises at any time without notice and to question individuals on the organization's premises concerning safety and/or security matters. Furthermore, in order to promote the safety of employees and visitors of the organization, as well as the security of the organization's facilities, video surveillance may be conducted of any portion of the premises at any time, the only exception being private areas such as restrooms.

Security inspections, searches and investigations can include, without limitation, examining offices, computers, CDs, disks, files, file cabinets, desks, closets, storage areas, restrooms, and all other areas of the facilities and premises as well as the person, vehicles, purses, packages, parcels, and other containers of individuals entering, leaving, or located on the organization's property. The organization may conduct these investigations, inspections, and searches to detect illegal or unauthorized drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, weapons, removal of the organization's property, or for other reasons at the organization's discretion. For these reasons, duplicates of all keys issued to employees are kept.

The organization reserves the right to access and inspect any personal computer or related device if such equipment is used to conduct organizational business. This right is limited to the work-related information that may be contained on these devices. Please note, in no case should work-related electronic content be stored on personal computers at home except when an employee is specifically assigned to work at home and to use personal equipment.

Employee assistance with efforts to provide for security—including authorization to conduct security inspections or cooperation with the organization's security inspections—is expected as a condition of continued employment and is greatly appreciated. The organization reserves the right to occasionally review "swipe" records at buildings where key cards are used for access as well as question employees about office entry at abnormal hours.

## Workplace Violence Prevention

The organization does not tolerate acts of workplace violence committed by or against employees, associates, or families. We prohibit employees from making threats or engaging in violent acts.

## Prohibited Conduct

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Injuring another person physically.
- Engaging in behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury in another person.
- Engaging in behavior that subjects an individual to extreme emotional distress.
- Possessing, brandishing, or using a weapon while on our premises or engaged in organizational business.
- Damaging property intentionally; and
- Threatening to injure an individual or damage property

The organization will seek the prosecution of all those who engage in violence on the organization's premises or against our employees while they are engaged in organizational business.

## Employee Guidelines and Procedures

### General Security Practices

- Never hesitate to call 911 if confronted with a potentially violent situation. It is better to have called 911 unnecessarily than not to have the police available when a threatening situation turns violent.
- Never attempt to physically restrain or physically remove a threatening or violent individual. Doing so puts you in danger and leaves you and the organization vulnerable to possible lawsuits.
- Always report violent, threatening, or harassing behavior to your manager and Human Resources. Alert your manager or HR to the presence of or any suspicious packages in your work area.

## Outside Threats

If an employee is the recipient of a threat against the organization, they are required to report the incident immediately. Please use the following guidelines for dealing with threats.

### Threat Over the Phone

If a threatening call is received, send an instant message to your manager or Human Resources immediately, noting a caller is on the phone and a threat is being made. Note the caller's phone number from the caller ID.

### Threatening E-Mail

If a threatening email is received, immediately forward the email to your manager and Human Resources.

### Mail Threat



If a threat is received through the mail, notify your manager and Human Resources immediately. Save the letter and the envelope. If possible, do not handle, open, smell, or taste the suspicious mail or packages. If a suspicious item is found (package, box, briefcase, etc.) that does not belong in the work area, immediately notify Human Resources. If you suspect the package contains a bomb, radiological, biological, or chemical threat; isolate the area immediately, call 911, and wash your hands with soap and water.

### **In-Person Threat**

Please call 911 immediately.

# Property, Equipment, and Information Systems Policies

## Property and Equipment

Organizational property or equipment and/or the property and equipment of the school (the “property or equipment”) is not for personal use and may not be removed from the premises without permission. The organization reserves the right to access and search all equipment. Computer systems, telephone systems, email, WebMail, and voicemail are to be used for organizational purposes only and will be monitored as appropriate. The organization reserves the right to bill an employee for the cost of unreturned property or equipment upon separation, and/or the amount of personal telephone calls, if any, charged to a work phone account.

Office based employees must follow the procedures set forth by building management and the employer regarding owned or leased facilities. Specifically, the non-smoking policy, which prohibits smoking of any kind, including but not limited to tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, marijuana, and cigars. Smoking in the presence of students or families enrolled in the school or attending an organizational function is strictly prohibited.

## Parking Options

Parking options are made available to all employees. The organization is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged property while parking in one of these areas. Employees are responsible for locking their car and ensuring that valuables are stored out of sight.

## Cell Phone/Mobile Device Use

To maintain productivity, the organization will reimburse certain employees in key positions for the use of a cellular phone or mobile device. Any employee receiving reimbursement must have their cellular phone or mobile device listed in the organization’s HRIS system.

Employees are encouraged to remember safety when using their cellular phones or mobile devices for business purposes while driving. We encourage employees to safely pull off of the road when engaging in all cell phone conversations or using mobile devices for other purposes (emailing, texting, etc.). Employees should be aware of and follow the appropriate state and local laws regarding use of cellular phones and mobile devices while driving.

Employees who are not provided phones will not be reimbursed for use of their personal phones and are expected to make business calls from their office via provided technology.

## Software/Hardware Policy

### Acceptable Use

This section defines the boundaries for the “acceptable use” of the organization’s electronic resources, including software, hardware devices, and network systems. By using these hardware, software, and network systems, employees assume personal responsibility for their appropriate use and agree to comply with this policy and other applicable organizational policies, as well as local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

## Software

All software acquired for or developed by employees or contract personnel on behalf of the organization shall be deemed organizational property. All such software must be used in compliance with applicable licenses, notices, contracts, and agreements.

Under no circumstances should any user install or download any software onto the organization's computers without specific permission from MIS.

## Purchasing

All purchasing of company software shall be centralized with the MIS Department to ensure all applications conform to software standards and are purchased at the best possible price. All requests for software must be submitted to the employee's manager for approval. The approved request is forwarded to the MIS Department to determine and purchase the software that best accommodates the desired request.

## Licensing

The organization are responsible for enforcing all applicable licenses, notices, contracts, and agreements for software that is used on the organization's computers. Unless otherwise provided in the applicable license, notice, contract, or agreement, any duplication of copyrighted software, except for backup and archival purposes, may be a violation of federal and state law. License compliance is strictly enforced. Any violation by a user may cause the organization to be liable for the consequences of such violation.

## Hardware

All hardware devices acquired for or developed by employees or contract personnel on behalf of the organization shall be deemed the organizational property. All such hardware devices must be used in compliance with applicable licenses, notices, contracts, and agreements.

## Purchasing

All purchasing of computer hardware devices shall be centralized with MIS to ensure all equipment conforms to hardware standards and is purchased at the best possible price using volume discounts or national accounts. All requests for computing hardware devices must be submitted to the manager for approval. The approval request is forwarded to MIS to determine hardware that best accommodates the desired request.

## Outside Equipment

No outside equipment or hardware may be plugged into the organization's network without specific permission from MIS (including USB peripherals and Flash Drives).

## Electronic Communications, Telephone Communications, and Access to Control Security Policy

## Organization Property

As a productivity enhancement tool, the organization encourages the use of electronic communications (including phone, voicemail, e-mail, webmail, message boards, instant message, and fax). Electronic communications systems and all messages generated on or handled by electronic communications systems, including back-up copies, are considered the property of the organization, and are not the property of users of the electronic communications services.

Employees are required to set up and use the phone number linked to their email address for any telecommunication with students, families, or work-related tasks.

## Student and Family Communications

All educational and/or school related communications with students and families are required to be conducted via the organization's provided and approved tools and platforms. School employees are required to adhere to professional standards of conduct and must exercise good judgment and maintain professional boundaries when interacting with students and families. All communications must be appropriate and related to matters within the scope of their professional responsibilities. A list of approved communication platforms and tools, and more information on communication methods may be found on the Virtual Library: [Home](#)> [Employee Resources](#)> [Legal Resources \(FERPA, consultants, IP\)](#)> [Guidelines for Appropriate Use of Provided Communication Technologies](#).

## Authorized Usage

The organization's electronic communications and telecommunications systems are used predominantly for organizational activities. Incidental personal use is permissible so long as:

1. It does not preempt any business activity.
2. The manager is aware of the intended non-business usage.
3. It does not consume more than a trivial amount of time and/or resources.
4. It does not interfere with productivity.

Users are prohibited from using the organization's electronic communications and telecommunications systems for charitable endeavors, private business activities, or amusement/entertainment purposes unless expressly approved by the VP of Human Resources. Users are reminded that the use of organization resources, including electronic communications and telecommunications systems, should never create either the appearance or the reality of inappropriate use.

## Specific Communication Systems Requirements

### Message Boards

Postings by employees, teachers, or other individuals who are not the learning coaches for currently enrolled students will be limited to comments relating to the program or other organizational activities. Further, such postings should be limited to those necessary to answer posted questions, to assist with identified problems, or to gather parent input on proposed program changes or other school topics.

### Webmail

WebMail can be used for communication on personal matters (such as hobbies, books, mutual interests etc.) so long as care is used in making statements that are an expression of personal opinion and could not be viewed as being detrimental to the organization. Statements regarding the organization's policy such as comments that are political (except for any specific legislative activity related to the operation of the

organization) or religious in nature are discouraged. A good common-sense test is to ensure anything written in a WebMail message could be printed in a public newspaper and not be viewed as controversial or inappropriate.

## **Email**

Another important reminder concerns the use of the organization's email. Any emails that are sent using the organization's email system are the property of the organization and may be viewed by members of management or others with administrative rights to the system. Furthermore, MIS is instructed to forward to management any emails that violate the Internet Usage policy or represent activities that could be detrimental to the organization's operations. It is essential that all email correspondence be able to pass the same common-sense test as described for webmail. Confirm there would be no embarrassment to the sender, recipient, or the organization if printed publicly.

## **Telephones**

Phones provided for organizational purposes may be monitored or recorded to ensure quality service. Depending on the nature of work being performed, business phones may not be used for personal calls. In certain employment settings, personal cell phones may only be used in break areas during scheduled breaks and lunches.

## **General Electronic Communications Provisions**

### **Default Privileges**

User privileges on electronic communications systems must be assigned so that only those capabilities necessary to perform a job are granted. This approach is widely known as the concept of "least privilege." Except for emergencies and regular system maintenance notices, broadcast facilities (including the "All-Employees" distribution list) must only be used after the permission of your manager has been obtained.

### **User Accountability**

Regardless of the circumstances, individual user account passwords must never be shared or revealed to anyone. This includes logging into an organizational resource as yourself to allow another user to access those resources. If another user does not have access to a resource and asks you to log in for them, deny the request and notify MIS immediately.

If users need to share computer resident data, they should utilize public directories on local area network servers, SharePoint, or the Virtual Library in the EMS. Users should also refrain from sending attachments to internal users for review and comment if the resource is available in the public folder or SharePoint on the organization's network.

### **Access Control**

To prevent unauthorized parties from obtaining access to electronic communications, users must choose passwords that are difficult to guess (not a dictionary word, not a personal detail, and not a reflection of work activities). The password policy requires users to choose a password that is at least eight (8) characters long and a combination of letters, numbers and/or symbols. Employees will be required to change their password every ninety (90) days and are not permitted to re-use the previous five (5) passwords.

### **No guaranteed message privacy**

The organization cannot guarantee electronic and telephone communications will be private. Employees should be aware that electronic and telephone communications could, depending on the technology, be forwarded, intercepted, printed, and stored by others. Furthermore, others may require access to electronic and telephone communications in accordance with this policy.

### **Regular message monitoring**

It is not the organization's policy to regularly monitor the content of electronic communications. However, the content of electronic communications may be monitored, and the usage of electronic communications systems will be monitored to support operational, maintenance, auditing, security, and investigative activities. Users should structure their electronic communications with the knowledge management may examine the content of electronic communications.

### **Statistical data**

Consistent with generally accepted practices, the organization collects statistical data about electronic communications. As an example, call-detail-reporting information collected by telephone switching systems indicates the numbers dialed, the duration of calls, the time of day when calls are placed, etc. Using such information, MIS employees monitor the use of electronic communications to ensure the ongoing availability and reliability of these systems.

### **Incidental disclosure**

It may be necessary for MIS employees to review the content of an individual employee's communications during problem resolution. MIS employees may not review the content of an individual's communications out of personal curiosity or at the behest of individuals who have not gone through proper approval channels.

### **Message forwarding**

Recognizing that some information is intended for specific individuals and may not be appropriate for general distribution, electronic communications users should exercise caution when forwarding messages. Sensitive information must not be forwarded to any external party without the prior approval of the manager. Blanket message forwarding to parties outside of the organization is prohibited unless/s prior permission of the VP of Human Resources has been obtained.

### **Purging electronic messages**

Sent and received emails should also regularly be purged from personal electronic message storage areas. As the organization is responsible for public education, employees are subject to public records requests from members of the press or others. Once such a request has been made, it is a criminal offense to delete content that could be covered by the request, even if the person who deleted the content genuinely believes that the deleted content was not relevant. The best way to prevent this problem is to regularly delete emails that are not essential. Deleting unneeded messages is also necessary to keeping email servers from being overloaded. Each email account has a storage limitation that will notify the user when the maximum space in the account has been reached. At that point, users are required to archive or delete non-essential email.

## **Internet Security & Usage Policy**

### **Specific Policy**

All information traversing the organization's computer networks that has not been specifically identified as the property of other parties will be treated as an organizational asset. It is the organization's policy to prohibit unauthorized access, disclosure, duplication, modification, diversion, destruction, loss, misuse, or theft of this information.

In addition, it is the organization's policy to protect information belonging to third parties that has been entrusted in confidence as well as in accordance with applicable non-disclosure agreements, contracts, and industry standards.

## Authorized Usage

Generally, the computer network must be used for business activities only. Incidental personal use of internet on the organization's network should be limited to break times.

Some departments may explicitly prohibit personal internet usage on the organization's network. This will be outlined in a department specific policy.

## Information Movement

At no time should an employee download anything from the Internet without direct permission from MIS. All approved software downloaded from non-Connections sources via the Internet must be screened with virus detection software prior to being opened or run. Whenever the provider of the software is not trusted, downloaded software should be tested on a stand-alone (not connected to the network) non-production machine. If this software contains a virus, worm, or Trojan horse, then the damage will be restricted to the involved machine.

Information from the Internet should be considered suspect until confirmed separately from another source. There is no quality control process on the Internet, and a considerable amount of its information is outdated or inaccurate.

Unless tools like privacy enhanced mail (PEM) are used, it is relatively easy to spoof another user on the Internet. Likewise, contacts made over the Internet should not be trusted with organizational information unless a due diligence process has first been performed. This due diligence process applies to the release of any internal information (see the following section).

Employees must not place the organization's material on any publicly accessible Internet computer that supports anonymous file transfer protocol (FTP) or similar services unless MIS and the employee's manager has first approved the posting of these materials.

In more general terms, internal information should not be placed in any location, on machines connected to internal networks, or on the Internet, unless the persons who have access to that location have a legitimate need-to-know.

All publicly writable (common/public) directories on internal Internet-connected computers will be reviewed and cleared periodically. This process is necessary to prevent the anonymous exchange of information inconsistent with our business. Users are prohibited from being involved in any way with the exchange of the material described in this policy.

## Information Protection

The organization's confidential, proprietary, or private information must not be sent over the Internet unless it has first been encrypted by approved methods. Unless specifically known to be in the public domain, source code must always be encrypted before being sent over the Internet.

Credit card numbers, telephone calling card numbers, login passwords, and other parameters that can be used to gain access to goods or services must not be sent over the Internet in readable form. Unless an encryption algorithm like PGP (pretty good privacy), or another algorithm approved by MIS is used to protect these parameters, employees should never put this information into an email, or instant message. This policy does not apply when logging into the machine that provides Internet services.

In keeping with the confidentiality agreements signed by all employees, organizational software, documentation, and all other types of internal information must not be sold or otherwise transferred to any third party for purposes other than business purposes expressly authorized by management.

Exchanges of software and/or data between an employee and any third party may not proceed unless a non-disclosure agreement has first been signed. Such an agreement must specify the terms of the exchange, as well as the ways in which the software and/or data is to be handled and protected. Regular business practices, such as shipment of software in response to a customer purchase order, need not involve such a specific agreement since the terms are implied.

Likewise, off-hours participation in pirate software bulletin boards and similar activities represent a conflict of interest with the organization's mission and are therefore prohibited. Similarly, reproduction of words posted or otherwise available over the Internet must be done only with the permission of the author/owner.

## **Copyright and Licensing Restrictions**

Computer software protected by copyright is not to be copied from, into, or by using organizational computing facilities, except as permitted by law or by contract with the owner of the copyright. This means that such computer and microcomputer software may only be copied to make back-up copies, if permitted by the copyright owner.

The number of copies and distribution of copies may not be done in such a way that the number of simultaneous users in a department exceeds the number of original copies purchased by that department.

The organization strongly supports strict adherence to software vendors' license agreements. The organization abides by all applicable federal and state statutes and regulations pertaining to the use of computer hardware and software including, but not limited to, federal copyright laws. Unauthorized copying, altering, modifying, merging, transferring, de-compiling, or reverse assembly of licensed software is strictly prohibited. State laws may further govern the use of any computer resource (including software).

Most copyright licenses for software contain single CPU usage restrictions. These restrictions must be honored. In some instances, the software copyright owner may grant a variance from these restrictions to the organization's environments. However, without explicit written variance, single usage restrictions in the license apply to all users.

## **Expectation of Privacy**

Employees accessing organizational information systems and/or the Internet should realize that communications are not automatically protected from viewing by third parties. Unless encryption is used, employees should not send private information over the Internet.

The organization may and expressly reserves the right to monitor Internet use from all computers and devices connected to any organization-provided network.



At any time and without prior notice, the organization reserves the right to examine email, personal file directories, and other information stored on the organization's computers. This examination assures compliance with internal policies, supports the performance of internal investigations, and assists with the management of information systems.

## Access Control

All users wishing to establish a connection with organizational computers via the Internet must authenticate themselves at a firewall before gaining access to the internal network. This authentication process must be done via a dynamic password system approved by MIS.

Employees are prohibited from establishing wireless access points, electronic data interchange (EDI) arrangements, FTP sites, web servers, peer-to-peer networks or any other external network connections that could allow external users to gain access to our systems and information.

## Reporting Security Problems

If sensitive organizational information is lost, disclosed to unauthorized parties, or suspected of being lost or disclosed to unauthorized parties, MIS must be notified immediately.

If any unauthorized use of our information systems has taken place, or is suspected of taking place, MIS must be notified immediately. Similarly, whenever passwords or other system access control mechanisms are lost, stolen, or disclosed, or are suspected of being lost, stolen, or disclosed, MIS must be notified immediately.

Because it may indicate a computer virus infection or similar security problem, all unusual systems behavior, such as missing files, frequent system crashes, misrouted messages, and the like must also be immediately reported. The specifics of security problems should not be discussed widely but should instead be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Users must not probe security mechanisms "test the doors" at either Connections website or other Internet sites unless they have first obtained permission from MIS. If users probe security mechanisms, alarms may be triggered, and resources will needlessly be spent tracking the activity.

## Remote Access Policy

Remote access is a generic term used to describe the accessing of the computer network by individuals not located at the primary office. The organization provides several options for access to school resources. This remote access may be required for traveling employees, employees who regularly work from home, or employees who work both from the office and from home. In many cases, both the organization and the employee will benefit from the increased flexibility provided by a remote access program. Each user's need to access organizational resources remotely will be reviewed and approved by the employee's manager and MIS on a case-by-case basis.

Participation as a remote access user may not be possible for everyone. Remote access is meant to be an alternative method of meeting organizational needs. The organization may refuse to extend remote access privileges to any employee or terminate a remote access arrangement at any time.

## Equipment and Tools

The organization may provide tools and equipment for remotely accessing the computer network. This may include computer hardware, software, phone lines, email, voicemail, connectivity to host applications, and other applicable equipment as deemed necessary.

The use of equipment and software provided for remotely accessing the computer network is limited to authorized persons and for purposes relating to the organization's business. The organization will provide for repairs to organizational equipment. When the employee uses her/his own equipment, they are responsible for maintenance and repair of equipment.

## Use of Personal Computer and Equipment

The MIS Department may only be able to provide limited support for equipment and software that is not purchased or owned by the organization.

The organization will bear *no* responsibility if the installation or use of any necessary software causes system lockups, crashes, or complete or partial data loss. The employee is solely responsible for backing up data on their personal machine before beginning any organizational work. At its discretion, the organization will disallow remote access for any employee using a personal home computer that proves incapable, *for any reason*, of working correctly with the -provided software, or being used in a production environment. There are several key requirements that an employee must meet before gaining remote-access privileges to organizational resources.

## High-Speed Internet Connection

Only users with acceptable broadband connections will be approved to work remotely. No users with dial-up connectivity will be granted the ability to work remotely. If users have a high-speed connection to access the Internet from home on their own computer or during travel, they are required to have a personal firewall and active virus protection software installed on the computer to prevent unauthorized access to the computer. MIS must inspect and confirm the settings of any software-based firewall. If MIS cannot confirm the settings and the computer cannot be brought into the office for inspection, the ability to work remotely may be revoked.

If employees have an existing high-speed Internet connection at home and use a stand-alone firewall or router appliance to protect their entire home network, they may not be required to run personal firewall software. The home router or firewall device must be configured to mask the computers behind it by using Network Address Translation (NAT) or a proxy, and it must not allow unsecured external access to any resources on the home network.

## Anti-Virus Software

All computers accessing the organization's resources are required to have active anti-virus software installed and configured to automatically update each time the computer is connected to the Internet. Employees will need to coordinate with MIS to install the required software. If another anti-virus package is installed, the employee must verify that they are paying for an active subscription to pattern updates or they will be required to uninstall that application and install the organization's anti-virus application. No trial software will be accepted as proper protection.

MIS reserves the right to routinely inspect and verify that the proper safeguards are in place on an employee's home network and computer, and to revoke VPN access to the network at any time that MIS finds or suspects that employees maintaining the computer or network in an unsecured environment.

# Acknowledgement

## Employee Acknowledgement of Policies

I acknowledge that:

1. I have been advised that the organization has an employee handbook which sets forth various policies regarding my employment by Connections Education, dba Pearson Virtual Schools K-12 USA.
2. I understand that I have access to and can obtain a copy of the employee handbook for review at any time online in the Virtual Library or by contacting Human Resources or my manager.
3. I understand and agree that I am responsible for knowing and understanding the contents and abiding by the policies set forth in this employee handbook.
4. I understand that the handbook does not create a contract of employment, either express or implied, or a guarantee of any benefit, and that the handbook contains only a summary of benefits and an overview of policies and procedures.
5. I understand that all employment policies, practices, wages, and benefits, whether they are in the handbook or not, may be unilaterally changed, amended, modified, reduced, or discontinued at any time in the organization's sole judgment and discretion.
6. I understand that any amendment of the handbook will always govern and supersede any prior versions.
7. I understand, in accordance with the handbook policies, that if I should have questions or concerns regarding my terms of employment or working conditions, I should contact Human Resources or my manager.
8. I have read and understand the policies contained in this handbook and I agree to abide by all policies as well as immediately report any perceived violations of policies to my manager and/or Human Resources.
9. I understand that the organization has the right to use disciplinary action for any violation of policy or perceived violation of policy contained in this handbook.
10. I understand that the details of any benefits available to me as an employee are contained in the Benefits Guide.
11. Finally, I agree that my employment continues to be at-will and for no definite duration, that I can terminate my employment at any time, with or without cause or notice, and that the employer reserves the right to do the same.

You will be directed to acknowledge the policies and Core Values contained within this handbook via electronic signature upon beginning employment and annually thereafter.