



PERSONNEL HANDBOOK

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NORTHSIDE CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL'S ("NCHS" OR THE "SCHOOL") VISION, MISSION & IDEA STATEMENTS

Vision

To be a college preparatory organization for all students where postsecondary education attainment is the expectation and reality.

Mission

To provide an enriching and innovative learning environment where students achieve postsecondary readiness.

NCHS's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism (IDEA) Statement

Northside Charter High School is committed to building diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environments. Northside Charter High school is committed to dismantling racist barriers within school structures and systems. We embrace and protect our community members' multiple identities, as they are essential assets through which we structure policies and manage resources that build access and opportunity for our students, as well as calibrate our strategic approach to achieve our mission.

NCHS's Core Values

Commitment, Accountability, Respect, and Integrity are NCHS's core values. These values represent the fundamental beliefs of the school and are principles by which we govern ourselves. These values help guide how the school makes decisions, views changes in our programming, and sets expectations of members within our community. We expect all members of our community to understand and abide by our values. This includes staff, students, caregivers, consultants/vendors, higher education partners, or any individual or organization that enters our community.

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

You are now part of the NCHS Family, welcome! We want your time here to be rewarding and fulfilling. If there are any questions, comments, or concerns, just let us know.

Welcome to Northside Charter High School

The information in this Personnel Handbook ("Handbook") is important to all staff at NCHS ("the School"). This Handbook is a tool to help promote a cooperative and healthy working environment. It sets forth policies regarding hours, wages and conditions of employment. However, possession of this Handbook does not make employees eligible for the various benefits described herein. Employees must satisfy certain eligibility requirements before obtaining coverage. In some instances, state or federal laws may impose certain requirements in addition to those stated as School or service provider policy. In any situation where insurance or other benefit plans are concerned, the official plan document(s) and insurance contract(s) prevail over statements contained in this Handbook.

This document is informational only: it is not an attempt to provide a complete reference to applicable law, employee rights, or regulations of the State Education Department, or other relevant authorities. Any specific questions should be directed to the appropriate administrative staff.

This Employee Handbook is intended to provide general information regarding the policies, procedures, and expectations of the School. Nothing in this Handbook is intended to create, nor should it be construed as creating, a contract of employment or a guarantee of continued employment. The policies and provisions set forth herein do not alter the at-will nature of employment at the School. Unless otherwise expressly agreed to in a written employment agreement signed by both the employee and an authorized representative of the School, employment with the School is at-will, meaning that either the employee or the School may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice.

Charter schools are bound by the same New York State health and safety, civil rights, and student assessment requirements as other public schools. The School is subject to federal laws, laws of the State of New York, including the New York State Charter Schools Act, the requirements of the compulsory education law, and student performance standards adopted by the Board of Regents.

In 1998, New York State adopted the Charter Schools Act, which established charter schools within the State of New York with the following criteria in mind: “Charter schools put children before bureaucracy and innovation ahead of regulation. They strengthen public education, by creating alternatives to the existing system, giving caregivers real choices and creating a competitive atmosphere so all children can improve.”

In New York State (as in other states), charter schools are often viewed as having four distinguishing characteristics that provide guidance regarding the objectives of this School:

- I. They are public schools, funded with public dollars, and fully accountable to public oversight. Schools that fail to meet their stated goals for academic achievement and fiscal responsibility can be closed.
- II. They are created by caregivers, educators, or civic or community groups who meet qualifications and agree to reach specified pupil achievement goals.
- III. They operate free from bureaucracy that frequently stifles innovation and cripples learning. They invite innovation while demanding results.
- IV. They foster competition, which will improve education for all children.

The School reserves the right to modify, rescind, delete, or supplement provisions of this Handbook, or add provisions to this Handbook without notice. Additionally, policies may be created by the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the School. Employees are bound by the policies contained herein, as well as by any and all other policies created by the School and/or Board of Trustees. Every effort will be made to keep employees informed of all relevant and significant changes to law, regulation, and policy. A member of the senior management team (“SMT”, includes the chief executive officer, chief academic officer, chief student services officer, and chief finance and operations officer) will attempt to provide employees with notification of changes as they occur.

We hope you enjoy the challenging and rewarding experience of working at the School, and we wish you great success in your future here.

Disclaimer: This Handbook should not be construed as, and does not constitute, a contract of employment, either express or implied, or for any specific duration. Employment with the School is at-will and can be terminated at any time, with or without reason, with or without cause, and with or without notice by either the employee or the School. Any oral or written statement to the contrary by any employee or agent of the School is invalid and should not be relied upon.

Administrative Discretion

The School recognizes that employment matters, workplace concerns, personnel decisions, and operational issues may arise under a wide variety of circumstances that cannot be fully anticipated or addressed by written policy. Accordingly, the School reserves the right to interpret, apply, administer, and enforce the provisions of this Handbook in a manner it determines to be appropriate based upon the particular facts and circumstances presented.

The policies, procedures, and guidelines set forth in this Handbook are intended to provide general guidance and do not create contractual rights, guarantees of employment, or mandatory procedures that must be followed in every situation. Except where required by applicable law, the School reserves the right to deviate from, modify, omit, supplement, or depart from any policy, practice, procedure, or guideline contained in this Handbook when it determines that doing so is in the best interests of the School, its students, employees, operations, safety, legal obligations, or educational mission.

In exercising its discretion, the School may consider factors including, but not limited to, the nature and severity of the conduct or issue involved, employee work history, student welfare, operational needs, safety concerns, legal requirements, prior incidents, mitigating or aggravating circumstances, and any other relevant considerations. Nothing in this Handbook shall be interpreted to limit the School's authority to make employment, disciplinary, investigatory, safety, operational, or management decisions consistent with applicable law.

EMPLOYMENT

Employee Professional Conduct

- The mission of Northside Charter High School (NCHS) requires employees to develop relationships characterized by collegiality and professionalism. Employees must maintain a high degree of mutual respect, both professionally and personally, and provide robust support to one another.
- NCHS values the following principles:
 - **Active Participation:** Teachers, staff, and the School Management Team are encouraged to actively participate in discussions about decisions that affect them. This includes, but it is not limited to, attending structured staff meetings, feedback opportunities through surveys, feedback forms, staff committees, and open communication with school leadership
 - **Diversity of Perspectives:** Embracing diverse perspectives leads to a deeper understanding of the organization's reality and enriches the knowledge base for decision-making.
 - **Healthy Conflict Resolution:** Employees should resolve conflicts in a healthy manner, which leads to stronger solutions for complex issues.
 - **Reflective Thinking:** Employees are encouraged to reflect on their own and others'

thinking to achieve better organizational decisions.

At-Will Employment

All employees of Northside Charter High School (NCHS) are considered “at-will” employees. This means that either the School or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without reason, with or without cause, and with or without notice. This Handbook does not constitute a contract for employment between the School and any employee. Employees should refer to their agreement letter for all terms pertaining to their employment with NCHS.

Equal Opportunity Employer

The School is committed to equal employment opportunity.

The School does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, age, marital status, veteran’s status, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Employment decisions will be made in a non-discriminatory manner and are based solely on qualifications and merit. This policy governs all aspects of employment at this School including hiring, assignments, training, promotion, demotion, transfer, lay-off and termination, compensation, employee benefits, discipline and other terms and conditions of employment.

Any questions or concerns about any type of discrimination must be brought to the attention of the employee’s supervisor at the School or any member of the SMT. In most cases, employees are expected to report to their direct supervisor. If the concern involves the employee’s direct supervisor, or if the employee is not comfortable reporting to that individual for any reason, the employee must report the concern to another member of the SMT. Employees may also escalate concerns to any other SMT member if the issue is not resolved at the initial reporting level or if circumstances warrant further review.

If the School is involved in the reported conduct, or the employee feels uncomfortable about making a report to the School, the employee shall report the incident directly to the Board of Trustees of the School (board@northsidechs.org).

The School shall comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, and shall not knowingly discriminate against individuals on the basis of gender.

The School’s Title IX Coordinator’s contact information is as follows: Chief Finance and Operations Officer (“CFOO”), 424 Leonard Street, 4th Fl, Brooklyn, NY 11222, cfo@northsidechs.org.

The Title IX Coordinator may be used for all discrimination complaints. In the event a complaint concerns the Title IX Coordinator, the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) of the School should be contacted at ceo@northsidechs.org.

Anyone found to be engaging in any type of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

No Harassment Policy

The School is committed to providing an environment that is free from harassment and coercion, where all employees can work together comfortably and productively.

Harassment is illegal and is prohibited at the School and at School-related functions.

The School prohibits all types of harassment, including, but not limited to: verbal harassment, based on an employee's sex, gender, race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, age, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other basis prohibited by federal, state, or local law.

This prohibition applies in relationships with all other employees, students, caregivers/guardians, visitors, and guests. Likewise, the School will not tolerate retaliation or reprisals of any type against any employee who complains of harassment or provides information in connection with any such complaint.

Sexual Harassment

As sexual harassment raises issues about human interaction that are to some extent unique, the subject of sexual harassment is treated separately here.

The School is committed to maintaining a workplace free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of workplace discrimination. All employees are required to work in a manner that prevents sexual harassment in the workplace. This Policy is one component of the School's commitment to a discrimination-free work environment. Sexual harassment is against the law and all employees have a legal right to a workplace free from sexual harassment and employees are urged to report sexual harassment by filing a complaint internally with any member of the SMT. In most cases, employees are expected to report to their direct supervisor. If the concern involves the employee's direct supervisor, or if the employee is not comfortable reporting to that individual for any reason, the employee must report the concern to another member of the SMT. Employees may also escalate concerns to any other SMT member if the issue is not resolved at the initial reporting level or if circumstances warrant further review. Employees can also file a complaint with a government agency or in court under federal, state or local anti-discrimination laws.

1. Policy

- a. This Sexual Harassment Policy applies to all employees, applicants for employment, interns, whether paid or unpaid, contractors and persons conducting business, regardless of immigration status, with the School.
- b. In the remainder of this Sexual Harassment Policy, the term "employees" refers to this collective group.
- c. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Any employee or individual covered by this Sexual Harassment Policy who engages in sexual harassment or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- d. Retaliation Prohibition: No person covered by this Sexual Harassment Policy shall be subject to adverse action because the employee reports an incident of sexual harassment, provides information, or otherwise assists in any investigation of a sexual harassment complaint. The School will not tolerate such retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, reports or provides information about suspected sexual harassment. Any employee, paid or unpaid interns, or non-employees working in the workplace who believe they have been subject to

such retaliation should inform any member of the SMT. In most cases, employees are expected to report to their direct supervisor. If the concern involves the employee's direct supervisor, or if the employee is not comfortable reporting to that individual for any reason, the employee must report the concern to another member of the SMT. Employees may also escalate concerns to any other SMT member if the issue is not resolved at the initial reporting level or if circumstances warrant further review. All employees, paid or unpaid interns or non-employees who believe they have been a target of such retaliation may also seek relief in other available forums, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.

- e. Harassers may also be individually subject to liability. Employees of every level who engage in sexual harassment, including supervisors who engage in sexual harassment or who allow such behavior to continue, will be penalized for such misconduct.
- f. The School will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation that ensures due process for all parties, whenever a member of the SMT receives a complaint about sexual harassment, or otherwise knows of possible sexual harassment occurring. The School will keep the investigation confidential to the extent possible. Effective corrective action will be taken whenever sexual harassment is found to have occurred. All employees, including supervisors, are required to cooperate with any internal investigation of sexual harassment.
- g. All employees are encouraged to report any harassment or behaviors that violate this policy. The School will provide all employees a complaint form for employees who report harassment and file complaints.
- h. Supervisors are required to report any complaint that they receive, or any harassment that they observe or become aware of, to any member of the SMT. If the concern involves the supervisor's direct SMT, or if the supervisor is not comfortable reporting to that individual for any reason, the supervisor must report the concern to another member of the SMT. Supervisors may also escalate concerns to any other SMT member if the issue is not resolved at the initial reporting level or if circumstances warrant further review. This Sexual Harassment Policy applies to all employees, paid or unpaid interns, and non-employees and all must follow and uphold this policy. This policy must be provided to all employees and should be posted prominently in all work locations to the extent practicable and be provided to employees upon hiring.

2. What is "Sexual Harassment"?

- a. Sexual Harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is unlawful under federal, state, and local law. Sexual harassment includes harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, self-identified or perceived sex, gender expression, gender identity and the status of being transgender.
- b. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct which is either of a sexual nature, or which is directed at an individual because of that individual's sex when:
 - i. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, even if the reporting individual is not the intended target of the sexual harassment;
 - ii. Such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; or
 - iii. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting an individual's employment.
- c. A sexually harassing hostile work environment includes, but is not limited to, words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation or physical violence which are of a sexual nature, or which are directed at an individual because of that individual's

sex. Sexual harassment also consists of any unwanted verbal or physical advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminatory remarks made by someone which are offensive or objectionable to the recipient, which cause the recipient discomfort or humiliation, which interfere with the recipient's job performance.

- d. Sexual harassment also occurs when a person of authority tries to trade job benefits for sexual favors. This can include hiring, promotion, continued employment or any other terms, conditions, or privileges of employment. This is also called "quid pro quo" harassment.
- e. Any employee who feels harassed should report so that any violation of this policy can be corrected promptly. Any harassing conduct, even a single incident, can be addressed under this policy.
- f. **Examples of sexual harassment:** The following describes some of the types of acts that may be unlawful sexual harassment and that are strictly prohibited at NCHS:
 - i. Physical acts of sexual nature, such as: Touching, pinching, patting, kissing, hugging, grabbing, brushing against another's body or poking another's body;
 - ii. Rape, sexual battery, molestation or attempts to commit these assaults.
 - iii. Unwanted sexual advances or propositions, such as:
 1. Requests for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning the target's job performance evaluation, a promotion or other job benefits or detriments;
 2. Subtle or obvious pressure for unwelcome sexual activities.
 - iv. Sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks or jokes, or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience, which create a hostile environment.
 - v. Sex stereotyping occurs when conduct or personality traits are considered inappropriate simply because they may not conform to other people's ideas or perceptions about how individuals of a particular sex should act or look.
 - vi. Sexual discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the workplace, such as:
 1. Displaying pictures, posters, calendars, graffiti, objects, promotional material, reading materials or other materials that are sexually demeaning or pornographic. This includes such sexual displays on workplace computers or cell phones and sharing such displays while in the workplace.
 - vii. Hostile actions taken against an individual because of that individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and the status of being transgender, such as:
 1. Interfering with, destroying or damaging a person's workstation, tools or equipment, or otherwise interfering with the individual's ability to perform the job;
 2. Sabotaging an individual's work;
 3. Bullying, yelling, name-calling.
3. **Who can be a target of sexual harassment?** Sexual harassment can occur between any individuals, regardless of their sex or gender. New York Law protects employees, paid or unpaid interns, and non-employees, including independent contractors, and those employed by companies contracting to provide services in the workplace. Harassers can be a superior, a subordinate, a coworker or anyone in the workplace including an independent contractor, contract worker, vendor, client, customer or visitor.
4. **Where can sexual harassment occur?** Unlawful sexual harassment is not limited to

the physical workplace itself. It can occur while employees are traveling for business or at employer sponsored events or parties. Calls, texts, emails, and social media usage by employees can constitute unlawful workplace harassment, even if they occur away from the workplace premises, on personal devices or during non-work hours.

5. **Retaliation:** Unlawful retaliation can be any action that could discourage a worker from coming forward to make or support a sexual harassment claim. Adverse action need not be job-related or occur in the workplace to constitute unlawful retaliation (e.g., threats of physical violence outside of work hours). Such retaliation is unlawful under federal, state, and local law.
 - a. The New York State Human Rights Law protects any individual who has engaged in "protected activity." Protected activity occurs when a person has:
 - i. made a complaint of sexual harassment, either internally or with any anti-discrimination agency;
 - ii. testified or assisted in a proceeding involving sexual harassment under the Human Rights Law or other anti-discrimination law;
 - iii. opposed sexual harassment by making a verbal or informal complaint to supervisors, or by simply informing a supervisor of harassment;
 - iv. reported that another employee has been sexually harassed; or
 - v. encouraged a fellow employee to report harassment.
 - b. Even if the alleged harassment does not turn out to rise to the level of a violation of law, the individual is protected from retaliation if the person had a good faith belief that the practices were unlawful. However, the retaliation provision is not intended to protect persons making intentionally false charges of harassment.

Preventing sexual harassment is everyone's responsibility. The School cannot prevent or remedy sexual harassment unless it is reported. Any employee, paid or unpaid intern, or non-employee who has been subjected to behavior that may constitute sexual harassment is encouraged to report such behavior to a supervisor, a member of the SMT, or ADP. In most cases, employees are expected to report to their direct supervisor. If the concern involves the employee's direct supervisor, or if the employee is not comfortable reporting to that individual for any reason, the employee must report the concern to another member of the SMT. Employees may also escalate concerns to any other SMT member if the issue is not resolved at the initial reporting level or if circumstances warrant further review.

6. **Reporting Responsibilities:**

- Members of management and supervisors who are aware of any sexual harassment must inform any member of the SMT immediately. In most cases, employees are expected to report to their direct supervisor. If the concern involves the employee's direct supervisor, or if the employee is not comfortable reporting to that individual for any reason, the employee must report the concern to another member of the SMT. Employees may also escalate concerns to any other SMT member if the issue is not resolved at the initial reporting level or if circumstances warrant further review.
- Anyone who knowingly allows or tolerates sexual harassment or retaliation and does not report it will be in direct violation of this policy.

How to Report:

- Reports of sexual harassment may be made verbally or in writing. A complaint form is provided under the Complaint Policy section in this document (Personnel Handbook), and all employees are encouraged to use this form.

- Employees reporting sexual harassment on behalf of other employees should use the complaint form and indicate that the report is on another employee's behalf.
 - Employees, paid or unpaid interns, or non-employees who believe they have been a target of sexual harassment may also seek assistance in other available forums, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.
 - The School is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all reports of sexual harassment to the extent possible and permitted by law. While the School cannot guarantee complete confidentiality in all circumstances, information related to a report will be shared only with those individuals who need to know in order to investigate and respond appropriately. The School will take all reasonable steps to protect the privacy of all individuals involved, consistent with its legal obligations and the need to ensure a thorough and fair investigation.
7. **Legal Protections:** Employees who believe they have been a target of sexual harassment may seek assistance from various legal forums. Detailed information on these legal protections and the process for seeking assistance will be provided in the Legal Protections section of this handbook.
8. **Supervisory Responsibilities**
- a. All supervisors who receive a complaint or information about suspected sexual harassment, observe what may be sexually harassing behavior or for any reason suspect that sexual harassment is occurring, are required to report such suspected sexual harassment to a member of SMT or directly to the HR department (hr@northsidechs.org). If the concern involves the supervisor's direct SMT, or if the supervisor is not comfortable reporting to that individual for any reason, the supervisor must report the concern to another member of the SMT. Supervisors may also escalate concerns to any other SMT member if the issue is not resolved at the initial reporting level or if circumstances warrant further review.
 - b. In addition to being subject to discipline if they engaged in sexually harassing conduct themselves, supervisors and managers will be subject to discipline for failing to report suspected sexual harassment or otherwise knowingly allowing sexual harassment to continue.
 - c. Supervisors will also be subject to discipline for engaging in any retaliation, up to and including termination.
9. **Complaint and Investigation of Sexual Harassment**
- a. All complaints or information about sexual harassment will be investigated, whether that information was reported in verbal or written form. Investigations will be conducted in a timely manner and will be confidential to the extent that it does not interfere with the integrity of the investigation.
 - b. An investigation of any complaint, information or knowledge of suspected sexual harassment will be prompt and thorough, commenced immediately and completed as soon as possible. The investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible. All persons involved, including complainants, witnesses and alleged harassers will be accorded due process, as outlined below, to protect their rights to a fair and impartial investigation.
 - c. Any employee may be required to cooperate as needed in an investigation of suspected sexual harassment. The School will not tolerate retaliation against employees who file complaints, support another's complaint or participate in an investigation regarding a violation of this policy.
 - d.

- e. Upon receipt of a complaint, a member of the SMT will conduct an immediate review of the allegations, and take any interim actions (e.g., instructing the respondent to refrain from communications with the complainant), as appropriate. If the complaint is verbal, the complainant will be encouraged to complete the "Complaint Form" in writing. If they refuse, a member of the SMT is to prepare a Complaint Form based on the verbal reporting.
 - f. If documents, emails or phone records are relevant to the investigation, a member of the SMT will take steps to obtain and preserve them.
 - g. Request and review all relevant documents, including all electronic communications.
 - h. Interview all parties involved, including any relevant witnesses.
 - i. Create a written documentation of the investigation (such as a letter, memo or email), which contains the following:
 - i. A list of all documents reviewed, along with a detailed summary of relevant documents;
 - ii. A list of names of those interviewed, along with a detailed summary of their statements;
 - iii. A timeline of events;
 - iv. A summary of prior relevant incidents, report or unreported; and
 - v. The basis of the decision and final resolution of the complaint, together with any corrective actions(s).
 - j. Keep the written documentation and associated documents in a secure and confidential location.
 - k. Promptly notify the individual who reported and the individual(s) about whom the complaint was made of the final determination and implement any corrective actions identified in the written document.
 - l. Inform the individual who reported the right to file a complaint or charge externally as outlined in the next section.
 - m. The School is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of the investigation process and the outcome to the fullest extent possible. All investigations will be conducted in a discreet and respectful manner, and information will be shared only with individuals who have a legitimate need to know in order to carry out their responsibilities. This includes maintaining the privacy of the individuals involved and protecting the integrity of the process. The School will take all reasonable measures to safeguard the confidentiality of both the investigation and its results, consistent with applicable laws and the need to ensure a thorough and fair resolution.
- 10. Legal Protections and External Remedies**
- a. Sexual harassment is not only prohibited by the School but is also prohibited by state, federal and local law.
 - b. Aside from the internal process at the School, employees may also choose to pursue legal remedies with the following governmental entities. While a private attorney is not required to file a complaint with a governmental agency, employees may seek the legal advice of an attorney.
 - c. In addition to those outlined below, employees' industries may have additional legal protections.

New York City Human Rights Law ("NYC HRL")

The New York City Human Rights Law, codified as N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 8-101 et seq., protects all individuals against discrimination based on gender, which includes sexual harassment in the workplace. A complaint alleging violation of the NYC HRL may be filed either with the New York City Commission on Human Rights ("CHR") or in any court of competent jurisdiction.

Complaints with CHR may be filed within three years of the harassment. If an individual did not file at CHR, they can sue directly in state court under the NYC HRL within three years of the alleged sexual harassment. An individual may not file with CHR if they have already filed a discrimination complaint based on the same facts with any other court or agency.

Individuals do not need an attorney to file a complaint with CHR, and there is no cost to file with CHR.

CHR will investigate complaints and determine whether there is probable cause to believe that sexual harassment has occurred. If CHR finds probable cause for discrimination, individuals will receive a notice and your case will be referred to the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (“OATH”), for a hearing before an administrative law judge (“ALJ”). After the trial, the ALJ issues a Report and Recommendation, which may include findings of fact, decisions of law, and recommendations on damages and civil penalties. CHR’s Office of General Counsel gathers the Report and Recommendation, along with any post-trial comments or objections submitted by the parties and provides the information to the Office of the Chair for a final Decision and Order. The Office of the Chair then issues its Decision and Order, adopting or rejecting— in whole or in part – the ALJ’s Report and Recommendation. Either party may appeal to the New York Supreme Court within thirty days of service of the Decision and Order.

CHR has offices in every borough of New York City. Individuals can contact their main office at the Law Enforcement Bureau of the NYC Commission on Human Rights, 40 Rector Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY; call 311 or (212) 306-7450. Employees can report sexual harassment to CHR by calling 718-722-3131 or visit NYC.gov/HumanRights to learn how to file a complaint or report discrimination. Employees can file a complaint anonymously.

New York State Human Rights Law (“NYS HRL”)

The New York State Human Rights Law, codified as N.Y. Executive Law, art. 15 § 290 et seq., applies to all employers in New York State with regard to sexual harassment, and protects employees, paid or unpaid interns and non-employees, regardless of immigration status. A complaint alleging violation of the NYS HRL may be filed either with the Division of Human Rights (“DHR”) or in New York State Supreme Court.

Complaints with DHR may be filed at any time within three years of the harassment. If an individual did not file at DHR, they can sue directly in state court under the NYS HRL, within three years of the alleged sexual harassment. An individual may not file with the DHR if they have already filed a NYS HRL complaint in state court.

Complaining internally to the School does not extend the time to file with DHR or in court. The three years is counted from the date of the most recent incident of harassment.

Individuals do not need an attorney to file a complaint with DHR, and there is no cost to file with DHR.

DHR will investigate the complaint and determine whether there is probable cause to believe that sexual harassment has occurred. Probable cause cases are forwarded to a public hearing before an administrative law judge. If sexual harassment is found after a hearing, DHR has the power to award relief, which varies but may include requiring your employer to take action to stop the harassment, or redress the damage caused, including paying of monetary damages, attorney’s fees and civil fines.

DHR’s main office contact information is: NYS Division of Human Rights, One Fordham Plaza,

Fourth Floor, Bronx, New York 10458. Individuals may call (718) 741-8400 or visit: www.dhr.ny.gov.

Contact DHR at (888) 392-3644 or visit dhr.ny.gov/complaint for more information about filing a complaint. The website has a complaint form that can be downloaded, filled out, notarized and mailed to DHR. The website also contains contact information for DHR's regional offices across New York State.

Civil Rights Act of 1964

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces federal anti-discrimination laws, including Title VII of the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act (codified as 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq.). An individual can file a complaint with the EEOC anytime within 300 days from the harassment. There is no cost to file a complaint with the EEOC. The EEOC will investigate the complaint and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred, at which point the EEOC will issue a Right to Sue letter permitting the individual to file a complaint in federal court.

The EEOC does not hold hearings or award relief but may take other action including pursuing cases in federal court on behalf of complaining parties. Federal courts may award remedies if discrimination is found to have occurred. In general, private employers must have at least 15 employees to come within the jurisdiction of the EEOC.

An employee alleging discrimination at work can file a "Charge of Discrimination." The EEOC has district, area, and field offices where complaints can be filed. Contact the EEOC by calling 1-800-669-4000 (TTY: 1-800-669-6820), visiting their website at www.eeoc.gov or via email at info@eeoc.gov.

If an individual filed an administrative complaint with DHR, DHR will file the complaint with the EEOC to preserve the right to proceed in federal court.

Contact the Local Police Department

If the harassment involves unwanted physical touching, coerced physical confinement or coerced sex acts, the conduct may constitute a crime. Contact the local police department.

Annual Anti-Sexual Harassment Training

Pursuant to New York State law, every employer in New York State is required to provide their employees with sexual harassment prevention training. The training must:

- Be interactive
- Include an explanation of sexual harassment consistent with guidance issued by the Department of Labor in consultation with the Division of Human Rights
- Include examples of conduct that would constitute unlawful sexual harassment
- Include information concerning the federal and state statutory provisions concerning sexual harassment and remedies available to victims of sexual harassment
- Include information concerning employees' rights of redress and all available forums for adjudicating complaints
- Include information addressing conduct by supervisors and any additional responsibilities for such supervisors

Each employee must receive training on an annual basis.

Other Prohibited Harassment

Other prohibited harassment includes verbal, physical, or other conduct that demeans, degrades, or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual based on their race, color, religion or creed, gender, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, marital status, veteran status, or any other protected characteristic, and that interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

This prohibition applies to conduct in the workplace as well as in any work-related setting outside the workplace. Harassment may also include making false, malicious, or disparaging statements about colleagues or members of the School community, whether verbal, written, or communicated electronically.

These standards apply equally to interactions with students, parents, caregivers or guardians, visitors, and guests.

The School will not take or permit any retaliatory action against an individual who reports a possible violation of this policy or participates in the investigation of an alleged violation.

The School takes all reports of harassment seriously and is committed to handling such matters with sensitivity and discretion. Any report of harassment—whether based on race, color, national origin, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected characteristic—will be kept confidential to the extent appropriate and consistent with the need to investigate and address the issue. The investigation process and its outcome will also remain confidential to the extent appropriate, and information will only be shared with those who have a legitimate need to know. The School will take all reasonable steps to protect the privacy of all individuals involved while ensuring a fair and thorough response.

Employees are expected to report any harassment in accordance with this policy. In most cases, employees should report concerns to their direct supervisor. If the concern involves the employee's direct supervisor, or if the employee is not comfortable reporting to that individual for any reason, the employee must report the concern to another member of the Senior Management Team (SMT). Employees may also escalate concerns to any other SMT member if the issue is not resolved at the initial reporting level or if circumstances warrant further review.

Employee Responsibilities

All employees are expected to maintain a professional and respectful work environment and to promptly report any conduct they believe may constitute harassment.

Employees in supervisory or management roles, including members of the Senior Management Team (SMT), are required to report any complaints or observations of potential harassment to appropriate leadership, even if the concern is raised informally.

All employees are expected to cooperate fully and honestly in any investigation conducted under this policy.

Reports must be made in good faith. Knowingly making false or misleading reports may result in disciplinary action; however, no employee will be subject to discipline or retaliation for making a good faith complaint or participating in an investigation.

Workplace Investigations and Employee Cooperation

The School may conduct investigations into workplace concerns, allegations of misconduct, policy violations, complaints, safety issues, operational matters, legal compliance concerns, or any other matter the School deems appropriate. Investigations may be initiated based upon employee reports, student or family complaints, observations by supervisors or administrators, reports from governmental agencies, or information obtained from any other source.

Employees are expected to cooperate fully, honestly, and promptly in any investigation conducted by or on behalf of the School. This includes providing truthful information, participating in interviews, preserving and producing relevant documents and electronic communications, and otherwise assisting in the investigative process as requested. Employees shall not knowingly provide false, misleading, incomplete, or deceptive information during an investigation. To protect the integrity of an investigation, employees may be directed not to discuss certain matters with other employees, students, families, or third parties to the extent permitted by law.

Employees are prohibited from interfering with an investigation, destroying or altering records, withholding relevant information, attempting to influence witnesses, retaliating against individuals who participate in an investigation, or otherwise engaging in conduct that could compromise the investigative process.

The School reserves the right to place an employee on paid or unpaid administrative leave, reassign duties, modify reporting relationships, restrict access to School property or systems, or take other interim measures during the pendency of an investigation when the School determines such action is appropriate.

Investigations will be conducted in a manner deemed appropriate by the School under the circumstances. While the School will make reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, and information may be disclosed when necessary to conduct a thorough investigation, comply with legal obligations, protect student or employee safety, or address operational concerns.

Failure to cooperate with an investigation, providing false or misleading information, interfering with the investigative process, or engaging in retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

General Complaint Process

Charter School Complaint Process

The New York Charter Schools Act provides a formal complaint process for individuals, including employees, who believe that the School has violated a term of its charter, a provision

of the New York Charter Schools Act, or any other applicable law relating to the management or operation of the School.

Consistent with New York law, complaints must first be presented to the School's Board of Trustees or its designee for review and consideration. Individuals wishing to submit a complaint shall provide a written complaint that includes a description of the concern, the relevant facts supporting the complaint, and the relief requested. Complaints may be submitted by submitting a signed written complaint to the Board of Trustees through the School's administrative offices.

Upon receipt, the complaint will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees or its designee, and the School may request additional information as necessary to evaluate the matter. The School will make reasonable efforts to investigate and respond to complaints in a timely manner.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Board's determination or believes the matter has not been adequately resolved, the complainant may pursue the complaint process available through the New York State Education Department in accordance with applicable law and guidance governing charter school complaints.

All complaints by an individual or group should follow the standard escalation procedure:
Escalation Steps:

1. Direct Supervisor:
 - Present your complaint to your direct supervisor. This can be done informally or by filling out the Complaint form below.
2. Senior Management Team (SMT):
 - If unresolved, escalate the complaint to another member of the SMT.
3. ADP (Automatic Data Processing) (Employer of Record):
 - If further escalation is needed, contact ADP directly for assistance.
4. Board of Trustees:
 - Complaints can be brought directly to the NCHS Board of Trustees.

Board of Trustees Complaint Process:

- Submission:
 - Complaints may be submitted at least one week prior to the regular Board meeting for it to be officially addressed.
 - Complaints submitted less than one week before the next regular Board meeting will be addressed at the subsequent Board meeting.
 - Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis.
- Investigation and Response:
 - The Board will make every effort to address each matter respectfully and satisfactorily.
 - The Board may direct the SMT or another responsible party to investigate and/or act upon the complaint and submit a written report.
 - The Board will create a written response with determinations and rationales for every complaint submitted in writing.
- Appeal Process:
 - If a complainant believes the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint,

they may appeal to the charter entity, the NYSED.

- If the NYSED does not adequately address the complaint, the complainant may present it to the NYS Board of Regents.

Submission Methods:

- Complaints can be presented via USPS (424 Leonard St, Brooklyn, NY 11222) or email (board@northsidechs.org).
- The Board Chair will confirm receipt and outline the investigation process, timeline, and response method.

Harassment Policy

Investigation and Response:

- The School will thoroughly investigate any harassment report and take corrective action as necessary, including disciplining individuals who violate harassment policies.
- Employees must cooperate in investigations. Failure to cooperate or providing false information may result in disciplinary action, including termination.
- The School will not retaliate against employees who report harassment in good faith.

Confidentiality:

- Confidentiality will be maintained as practical and appropriate. Records of all complaints and investigations will be kept confidential.

Employee Responsibilities:

- Refrain from discrimination or harassment.
- Report complaints to their supervisor or directly to HR (hr@northsidechs.org), treating information with sensitivity.
- Cooperate in any investigation conducted by the School or its agent.

Supervisor Responsibilities:

- Maintain a workplace free of discrimination, harassment, and intimidation.
- Report complaints to the School or Board of Trustees.
- Promptly investigate complaints and take corrective action if necessary.
- Respect the confidentiality and privacy of all parties involved.
- Document each incident and its resolution.

School Responsibilities:

- Educate and train employees on policies regarding discrimination, harassment, and intimidation.
- Assist supervisors in investigating complaints and provide training on proper procedures.
- Investigate complaints promptly and report findings with recommendations for corrective action.

Employee Complaint / Concern Reporting Form

This form may be used by employees to report workplace concerns, complaints, policy violations, safety issues, harassment, discrimination, retaliation, misconduct, or other work-related matters.

The School prohibits retaliation against any employee who makes a good faith report or

participates in an investigation.

SECTION 1 — EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Employee Name: _____

Job Title/Position: _____

Department/Grade Level: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Preferred Contact Information: _____

SECTION 2 — TYPE OF COMPLAINT OR CONCERN

Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Harassment
- ☐ Sexual Harassment
- ☐ Discrimination
- ☐ Retaliation
- ☐ Workplace Safety Concern
- ☐ Student-Related Concern
- ☐ Staff Misconduct
- ☐ Policy Violation
- ☐ Bullying or Intimidation
- ☐ Conflict with Supervisor or Coworker
- ☐ Payroll/Compensation Concern
- ☐ Ethical Concern
- ☐ Technology or Data Privacy Concern
- ☐ Violence or Threatening Behavior
- ☐ Other: _____

SECTION 3 — PERSON(S) INVOLVED

Name(s) and title(s) of the person(s) involved in the concern or complaint:

SECTION 4 — DESCRIPTION OF CONCERN OR INCIDENT

Please describe the concern, incident, conduct, or issue in as much detail as possible, including dates, times, locations, witnesses, and any relevant background information. Attach additional pages if necessary.

SECTION 5 — WITNESSES OR SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Please identify any witnesses or supporting documents, messages, emails, photographs,

recordings, or other evidence related to this matter.

SECTION 6 — PRIOR REPORTING

Have you previously reported this concern?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please indicate:

- Date reported: _____
- Reported to: _____
- Outcome or response received: _____

SECTION 7 — REQUESTED RESOLUTION (OPTIONAL)

Please describe any resolution, corrective action, support, or follow-up you are requesting.

SECTION 8 — EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I certify that the information provided in this form is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the School may investigate the matters described in this report and may take appropriate action consistent with School policy and applicable law.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

Date Received: _____

Received By: _____

Method Received:

- ☐ In Person
☐ Email
☐ Anonymous Submission
☐ Other: _____

Assigned Investigator/Administrator: _____

Initial Follow-Up Date: _____

Resolution/Disposition Notes:

Date Closed: _____

Recruitment Policy

Selection Process:

- Applicants are selected based on experience, alignment with the School's mission, necessary credentials, and ability to perform required duties.
- Evaluations are based on skill and merit.

Verification:

- The School will verify information provided on employment applications.
- Misrepresentation, falsification, or omission of information may result in exclusion from consideration or termination of employment.

Applicant Pool Generation: The School uses various sources such as job postings, mailings, networking, job fairs, on-campus recruiting, online services, and other resources to generate a pool of qualified applicants.

ELIGIBILITY TO WORK IN A CHARTER SCHOOL

Charter school staff members are employees of the charter school, not the school district in which it is located. The School, as all charter schools, is required to request fingerprint clearance of prospective employees for purposes of determining whether or not the prospective employee has a criminal history, which could prevent him/her/them from working in a public school. Instructional employees should be certified and "Highly Qualified", in accordance with requirements applicable to other charter schools. If the status of an employee changes during their time at NCHS, a decision will be made by the CEO regarding whether or not the person can remain at NCHS.

Employment Categories

Each employee is categorized as full-time, part-time, temporary, or consultant:

- Full-time Employees – Full-time regular (exempt and non-exempt) employees work a minimum of 35 hours per week.
- Part-time Employees – Part-time (exempt and non-exempt) employees, below 35 hours or less are not eligible for benefits.
- Temporary Employees – Temporary employees are hired for short-term periods and are not eligible for benefits.
- Consultants – These independent contractors work under a consultancy agreement, have no employee status, and are not eligible for benefits.

Exempt Positions: Exempt employees are excluded from overtime eligibility under federal and state wage and hour law. Positions which meet the tests for exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act and any other applicable law will be classified as "Exempt". Individuals in this classification will be paid on a salary basis. As exempt employees are expected to work whatever hours are necessary for them to properly perform their job duties; they do not receive overtime pay.

Non-Exempt Positions: Certain staff positions are classified as "non-exempt". Non-Exempt employees are entitled to overtime pay under the specific provisions of federal and state laws. Non-exempt employees will be paid straight-time for all hours worked in excess of their regularly-scheduled hours up to forty (40) hours, exclusive of sick, personal, vacation, snow, holiday and emergency closing time. Non-exempt employees will be paid time and a half for all hours worked over forty (40), exclusive of sick, personal, vacation, snow, holiday and

emergency closing time. The School will notify employees if they are non-exempt, and therefore entitled to overtime pay. Please note that the School requires advance supervisor permission from any overtime.

Intellectual Property

All materials, works, and content created, developed, or authored by an employee within the scope of their employment with the School, or using School time, resources, or confidential information, including but not limited to lesson plans, curriculum, instructional materials, assessments, presentations, and related content (collectively, "Work Product"), shall be the sole and exclusive property of the School.

To the extent permitted by law, such Work Product shall be considered "works made for hire" under the U.S. Copyright Act. To the extent any Work Product does not qualify as a work made for hire, the employee hereby irrevocably assigns to the School all right, title, and interest in and to such Work Product, including all intellectual property rights therein.

This policy does not apply to materials that:

- (a) were created by the employee prior to employment with the School and were not developed using School resources or confidential information; or
- (b) are developed entirely outside the scope of employment, without use of School time, resources, or confidential information, and do not relate to the School's educational programs or operations.

Employees agree to cooperate with the School, both during and after employment, to execute any documents or take any actions reasonably necessary to confirm or protect the School's ownership of such Work Product.

Nothing in this policy is intended to limit any rights employees may have under applicable law.

Termination Of Employment

Return of School Property: Immediately upon termination or resignation, employees must return all books, files, keys, laptops, records, supplies, or any other school property in their possession to the IT department. Employees are not authorized to keep copies of School property, files, or other electronic data, and must delete any such property stored on personal devices upon termination or resignation.

Personnel Records and Files

The following information may be included in an employee's file:

- Employment application and résumé
- Reference checks
- Transcript(s)
- Certification(s)
- Job description(s)
- Performance evaluation(s)
- Disciplinary notice(s) or document(s)

- Emergency contact form(s)
- Professional development record(s)
- Termination record(s)
- Exit interview notes

The School keeps medical records in a file separate from the personnel file. Access to the information in personnel and medical records is restricted. An employee's supervisor(s) may review the employee's files only for a legitimate reason. An employee may review their files. If an employee wishes to review their file, they must provide reasonable advance notice, and will have the right to review their personnel file or medical file in School offices and in the presence of an individual appointed to maintain the files. An employee has the right to copy information and to submit a written statement to their file.

An employee must immediately notify HR at hr@northsidechs.org, in writing, of any changes in personal data such as changes to:

- Home address
- Home telephone number and, if available, cell phone number
- Number of dependents
- Name of individual to notify in case of an emergency
- Change in marital status
- Change in citizenship, permanent resident, or alien status
- Military status

Failure to report the correct information may adversely affect the benefits to which the Employee is entitled. Providing false information may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Employees can also make a written Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request for the contents of their personnel files, which may be redacted in accordance with FOIL.

The contact information for the School's Records Access Officer is as follows: CEO, 424 Leonard Street, Brooklyn, NY 11222, CEO@northsidechs.org

The School will not release any information about any employee to external sources other than dates of employment and job title, except where such release is required or authorized by law or otherwise authorized by the Employee. The School will provide information to any particular company or individual only upon the receipt of a written request and explicit authorization specifying the information to be provided and to whom it should be provided.

Nepotism

Any action that can be viewed as or gives the appearance of nepotism is not allowed.

Hiring an immediate family member must be approved by the CEO, including appropriate disclosure to the Board.

For the purpose of this section, immediate family is defined as spouse, siblings, caregivers,, children, in-laws, and grandchildren.

Employee Primary Goals And Responsibilities

Health and Safety:

Employees are responsible for promoting the health and safety of students under their supervision and any other students in their vicinity. Employees must always be alert to safety hazards and attentive while supervising students.

Student Development:

Employees are required to foster the development of each student's potential—social-emotional, physical, and intellectual. This includes encouraging good work habits and positive attitudes.

Communication:

Employees are to maintain open communication between caregivers, staff, and administrators. They should conduct themselves in a manner that ensures caregivers feel confident about their child's safety, mental health, happiness, and personal development. Employees should provide support, encouragement, and assistance to caregivers in the challenging task of raising a child, as caregivers strive to meet their career goals and personal fulfillment needs.

Respect for Diversity:

Employees must be non-judgmental towards people with different lifestyles, ethnic backgrounds, and cultures. They should respect families who have different goals and expectations for their children and themselves, and who may be dealing with changing lifestyles and family patterns in various ways. Employees must recognize that families face different stresses and have varying capacities for tolerating stress and organizing their lives.

Responsibility to the School:

All employees have a serious responsibility towards the School, its reputation, and its success as a high-achieving educational institution. They should help young students become caring individuals with high standards and goals—students who are well-organized, wise, and competent.

Creating an Effective Learning Environment:

By creating a well-designed and equipped environment (both social and physical), students will be provided with the most effective education. Teachers are expected to deliver an educational program and to fully cooperate with the School and their direct educational supervisor in matters of curriculum, pedagogy, and all other classroom matters.

Relationships with Our School Community

It is important to understand that Northside Charter High School (NCHS) exists to provide the community with an alternative approach and philosophy in educating the students we serve. Every interaction and publication regarding the School influences caregivers' perceptions, either strengthening or changing their impressions.

Community Expectations:

When caregivers choose to send their children to NCHS, they do so with great expectations and a very positive impression of our School and its Mission. It is the responsibility of all employees to meet these expectations and build a lasting, positive impression.

Professional Conduct:

Every action and statement made by employees must be delivered with the utmost quality and professionalism. This commitment is essential as the School's success depends on its reputation and relentless dedication to education.

Commitment to Excellence:

NCHS's reputation and success rest on the continuous effort and commitment of its employees to provide the highest standard of education. By fulfilling the community's expectations, employees contribute to the School's mission and help maintain its esteemed status.

Employee Children on Campus

From time to time, in special or emergency situations, it may be necessary for an employee to bring their child to campus during the workday. The following guidelines must be adhered to:

- **Supervisor Approval:** The employee must obtain prior approval from their supervisor before bringing their child to school.
- **Health and Supervision:** The employee must ensure that the child is well and supervised at all times while on campus.
- **No Interference:** The presence of the child must not interfere in any way with the employee's duties.

By following these guidelines, employees can ensure that the work environment remains productive and professional, even in special or emergency situations.

WORK DAYS AND WORK HOURS

Consistent and punctual attendance is an essential job requirement for all School employees. Because the School operates on a fixed schedule aligned with student arrival times, it is critical that all staff members are present, on time, and fully prepared to begin their duties when students enter the building. The safety, supervision, and overall success of our students depend on the reliable presence of staff. Attendance issues - such as lateness, unexcused absences, or failure to notify the School of an absence ("no call/no show") - create disruption and place an undue burden on School operations, including coverage, supervision, and instructional continuity. Employees are expected to plan accordingly to ensure they arrive on time and are ready to fulfill their responsibilities each day.

All employees are expected to work the established work week as determined by their supervisor. Additionally, classroom instructional staff is expected to work such hours that ensure the timely start of the school day, an orderly process for ending the school day, and sufficient interaction with other instructional staff and administrators to help support the educational mission of the School. Hours below may be changed at the discretion of the Management or Board of Trustees, and all employees are expected to comply with such changes in hours.

Employees who need to engage in personal business during a break period must receive prior written approval from their supervisor. All employees are expected to be on time daily and clocked in. On time is defined by Senior Management Teams. Working hours to be set by the Senior Management Team. Working hours may be adjusted/modified as needed to meet the needs of the School community.

Unexcused Absence

An "Unexcused Absence" is any failure to report for a scheduled workday or scheduled work hours that has not been approved in advance and does not qualify as protected leave under applicable federal, state, or local law.

Absences will be considered unexcused if the employee:

- Fails to provide timely notice of the absence in accordance with School procedures;
- Does not provide required documentation, if applicable;
- Is absent for reasons that are not covered by available paid or unpaid leave policies or applicable law;
- Exceeds available accrued leave balances without authorization; or
- Is absent on a day or during hours for which a request for time off was denied or not approved by the School.

Absences that are approved in advance, supported by appropriate documentation where required, or protected under applicable law (including, but not limited to, legally protected sick leave, family leave, or other statutory leave entitlements) will not be considered unexcused.

The School reserves the right to determine, in its discretion and consistent with applicable law, whether an absence is classified as excused or unexcused.

Notice of Absence

Notice of Absence and Lateness

- Letter to file on 1st instance for unexcused absence 1st verbal warning after 1st unexcused absence
- Performance Improvement Plan after 2nd unexcused absence
- Job Termination after 3rd unexcused absence

Unauthorized Absence

An employee is deemed to be on “unauthorized leave” when the employee is absent from required duties. This absence includes non-performance, unauthorized use of PTO leave, unauthorized use of other leave benefits, non-attendance at required meetings and failure to perform supervisory functions at School-sponsored activities.

Verification of Absence

The School may require verification for longer than 3 absences in a row. If verification is requested, the employee shall provide the verification to the School within five (5) working days of the absence.

Job Abandonment

Definition

Job abandonment occurs when an employee fails to report to work and does not notify the School of the absence for a period of **three (3) consecutive scheduled workdays**, or otherwise fails to maintain communication regarding their work status.

Employee Responsibility

Employees are required to:

- Notify their supervisor as soon as possible of any absence, in accordance with call-out procedures
- Maintain communication during extended absences
- Provide documentation when required (e.g., medical documentation for applicable leave)

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a determination of job abandonment.

Determination of Job Abandonment

If an employee:

- Is absent for **three (3) consecutive scheduled workdays** without notice, and
- Fails to respond to reasonable attempts by the School to make contact

the School may deem the employee to have **voluntarily resigned due to job abandonment**, effective the last day worked or last day of communication.

School Outreach Efforts

Prior to making a determination of job abandonment, the School may attempt to contact the employee using the most recent contact information on file, which may include:

- Phone calls
- Email communication
- Written notice

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure their contact information remains current.

Impact on Employment and Benefits

A separation due to job abandonment will be treated as a **voluntary resignation**. As such:

- The employee will be removed from payroll
- Eligibility for rehire may be affected
- Accrued benefits will be handled in accordance with School policy and applicable law

Interaction with Leave Laws

The School will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local leave laws, including but not limited to:

- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- New York Paid Family Leave (NYPFL)

Job abandonment will **not** be applied in situations where:

- The employee is on an approved leave of absence, or

- The employee has provided sufficient notice or documentation consistent with applicable law

Reservation of Rights

The School reserves the right to determine, in its sole discretion, whether an employee's absence constitutes job abandonment based on the specific facts and circumstances.

Lateness and Time Accountability

All school staff members are expected to report to work on time in accordance with their assigned schedules as established by the Senior Management Team. Timely attendance is essential to ensuring the safety, instruction, and consistent support of students and the effective operation of the School.

Because staff presence is directly tied to student learning and school operations, punctuality is considered a core job responsibility.

Definition of Lateness

An employee is considered late if they are not present and ready to begin work at their scheduled start time.

A grace period of up to five (5) minutes may be applied solely for administrative purposes. Arrival beyond five (5) minutes after the scheduled start time will be recorded as lateness.

Time Accounting for Lateness (No Netting of Time)

All instances of lateness will be recorded in **actual time increments** (minutes or fractional hours). Each occurrence of lateness is treated independently and will not be offset or netted against time worked on other days.

Employees are expected to accurately account for all time worked in the School's timekeeping system.

Application of Paid Time Off (PTO) or Unpaid Time

Accrued Paid Time Off (PTO) may be applied to cover time not worked due to lateness, subject to available balances.

Where PTO is applied, it will be used only in an amount equal to the actual time not worked.

If an employee does not have sufficient PTO available, the time not worked may be recorded as unpaid time in compliance with applicable wage and hour laws.

No "Make-Up Time" or Informal Offsetting

The School does not permit informal “make-up time” or off-the-record adjustments (e.g., working additional time on a different day to offset lateness).

All time adjustments must be:

- Recorded in the School’s official timekeeping system, and
- Approved and processed in accordance with payroll procedures

Only formally recorded and approved additional work time may be compensated.

Attendance Expectations and Progressive Intervention

The School expects consistent punctuality and may take progressive steps to address repeated lateness, including:

1. Pattern Identification (3 incidents in a 30-day period)

The employee will meet with their Direct Supervisor and/or a member of Senior Management to review attendance patterns, identify contributing factors, and establish clear expectations for improvement.

A written summary of the meeting, including expectations and potential consequences for continued lateness, will be placed in the employee’s personnel file.

2. Progressive Discipline

Continued patterns of lateness may result in disciplinary action as follows:

- **First Occurrence:** Verbal warning
- **Second Occurrence:** Written warning
- **Third Occurrence:** Final written warning and potential additional corrective action, which may include disciplinary measures up to and including suspension or termination

Disciplinary action is based on the pattern and frequency of lateness and is not limited to the steps above.

Excused Lateness

Lateness may be excused at the sole discretion of the School in circumstances involving unforeseen or unavoidable events. The School may request appropriate documentation to support the reason for lateness.

Compliance with Law

This policy will be administered in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, including wage and hour regulations and the New York City Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to reduce or eliminate employee rights under applicable law.

Core Expectation

Staff presence and punctuality are essential to maintaining a safe, structured, and effective learning environment. Repeated or patterned lateness undermines instructional continuity and may impact student outcomes and school operations.

Pay Periods And Paychecks

Pay Periods:

- **Semi-Monthly Schedule:** Pay periods are semi-monthly.
 - **First Pay Period:** From the 1st day of the month up to and including the 15th day of the month.
 - **Second Pay Period:** From the 16th day of the month up to and including the last day of the month.
- **Payday Adjustments:** If a payday falls on a holiday or weekend, checks may be distributed at the discretion of the School a business day earlier. The CFOO will notify employees of the specific pay dates.

Direct Deposit:

- Eligible employees can opt to have their pay directly deposited into their checking or savings account.
- **Enrollment:** Employees must complete the necessary paperwork to use Direct Deposit.
- **Pay Stub:** On payday, employees using Direct Deposit will receive a pay stub/report instead of a physical paycheck.

Lost Paychecks:

- **Reporting:** In the event of a lost paycheck, the CFOO must be notified in writing as soon as possible before a replacement check can be issued.
- **Recovered Checks:** If the lost paycheck is recovered and the CFOO identifies the endorsement as that of the employee, the employee must remit the amount of the replacement check within twenty-four (24) hours. Further consequences may be imposed on the employee by the School as deemed appropriate.

For any questions or issues related to payroll, employees should contact the CFOO.

Employee Pay

The School operates on a July 1st – June 30th Fiscal Year. All salaries are calculated annually-based on the School's fiscal year calendar.

Prorated Pay Policy for 10-Month Employees

Purpose

This policy outlines how Northside Charter High School calculates salary for 10-month employees who do not work the full academic year, whether due to starting after the beginning of the school year or separating employment before the end of the school year. The goal is to ensure clarity, fairness, and consistency in pay practices.

Employees who become eligible for and are enrolled in the School's health insurance plan during the school year will continue to receive employer-sponsored health insurance coverage during the summer months, provided they remain in good standing at the conclusion of their employment term for the school year.

This includes employees who are hired mid-year and meet the eligibility requirements for benefits enrollment. Coverage will continue through the end of the applicable summer benefit period in accordance with the School's insurance plan and carrier rules.

Continuation of summer health insurance coverage does not guarantee reemployment for the following school year and does not alter the at-will nature of employment, where applicable.

Prorated Salary Calculation

When a 10-month employee works less than the full school year, their pay will be calculated based on the portion of the school year they were employed, using the following method:

- **Full Calendar Month of Employment:**
The employee will earn 1/10th (10%) of their annual salary for each full calendar month worked.
- **Partial Calendar Month of Employment:**
For any partial calendar month, the employee will earn 1/200th (0.5%) of their annual salary for each paid work day they were employed during that month.

This method ensures employees are compensated proportionately for the total paid time in the school year.

Definition of a Paid Work Day

For purposes of this calculation, a paid work day is defined as any day the employee is considered in paid status, including:

- Days the employee is present and performing work duties
- Approved paid leave days (PTO, sick leave)
- Paid holidays
- Scheduled paid school breaks and recess periods (e.g., winter, midwinter, and spring breaks)

This definition ensures employees receive pay for all paid work days included in their annual salary, not only days of active attendance.

Rationale for 1/200th Divisor

The 1/200th per day calculation is based on the total number of paid work days in the standard 10-month school year, which includes:

- Approximately 185 instructional days employees are required to report to work, plus
- Approximately 25 additional paid non-instructional days, holidays, and scheduled breaks.

Using this divisor ensures that all paid time off is included proportionately in the prorated salary.

Application

This calculation applies to all 10-month employees who:

- Are hired after the first day of the school year; or
- Separate employment before the last scheduled paid work day of the school year.

Example 1: New Hire Starting Mid-Year

Employee Annual Salary: \$90,000

Start Date: October 10

Employment Period: October 10–June 30

- Full months worked: November–June (8 months)
- Partial month worked: October (15 paid work days)

Calculation:

- $8 \times 1/10 = 80\%$ of salary
- $15 \times 1/200 = 7.5\%$ of salary
- Total earned: 87.5% of annual salary

Example 2: Employee Separating Mid-Year

Employee Annual Salary: \$90,000

Separation Date: January 31

- Full months worked: September–January (5 months)
- Partial month worked: August (10 paid work days)

Calculation:

- $5 \times 1/10 = 50\%$ of salary
- $10 \times 1/200 = 5\%$ of salary
- Total earned: 55% of annual salary

If the employee was paid more or less than this amount through installments, the final paycheck will be adjusted accordingly.

Final Pay Adjustment

Upon separation, a final pay reconciliation will be performed:

- If the total salary paid to date exceeds the amount earned per this calculation, the overpayment will be deducted from the final paycheck or otherwise recovered.

If the total salary paid to date is less than the amount earned, the difference will be paid in the final paycheck.

Pay Deductions and Garnishments

The only deductions from an employee's paycheck are those required by law or authorized in writing by them. The check stub identifies each deduction and should be kept as a permanent record.

Pay deductions may also be taken by the School in response to a garnishment notice received from a court or other legal authority.

Coverages

All instructional staff are required to provide coverages for absent staff. The number of coverages will be capped at ten (10) for the school year.

PAID AND UNPAID LEAVE

Weather Days and Other Closings

When there is a snowstorm, or other weather emergency, Northside Charter High School will issue an alert to inform the school community of decisions regarding school closure or delayed opening.

At the discretion of the School, any classroom days lost to closure due to inclement weather or other reasons may be made up by adding an equal number of days to what was scheduled to be the end of the school year.

Note: given the ability to conduct remote learning; most instances of school closure due to inclement weather will result in a fully-remote learning day. All staff are required to work remotely.

Sick and Personal Time Off (PTO)

Purpose

Northside Charter High School (NCHS) provides paid leave to support employee health, wellness, and work-life balance. This policy outlines entitlements for sick leave, PTO, floating holidays, and related provisions.

Eligibility Categories

10-Month Employees

- Work the standard academic year
- Not expected to work over the summer unless separately contracted
- Receive all scheduled school breaks and holidays as paid time off

12-Month Employees

- Work year-round
- Receive all scheduled school breaks and holidays as paid time off without using PTO

Sick Leave

Eligibility and Allotment

Employee Group	Annual Sick Days	Frontloading Date
10-Month Employees	10 days per year	Start of school year or start date
12-Month Employees	12 days per year	July 1 or start date

10-Month Employees

- If employment begins **by September**, employees are front loaded **10 days**.
- For later start dates, days are prorated as follows:

Start Month	Sick Days Frontloaded
July	10 days
August	10 days
September	10 days
October	9 days
November	8 days
December	7 days
January	6 days
February	5 days
March	4 days
April	3 days
May	2 days

June	1 day
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12-Month Employees

- If employment begins **July 1**, employees are front loaded **12 days**.
- For later start dates, days are prorated as follows:

Start Month	Sick Days Frontloaded
July	12 days
August	11 days
September	10 days
October	9 days
November	8 days
December	7 days
January	6 days
February	5 days
March	4 days

April	3 days
May	2 days
June	1 day

Permitted Uses of Sick Leave

Sick leave may be used for:

- The employee's own illness, injury, or preventive care.
- Care for a family member with an illness or injury.
- Safe leave related to domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, or human trafficking, consistent with NYC Earned Safe and Sick Time Act or any other related law or regulation.

Notice and Documentation

- For foreseeable absences, employees must request leave in advance whenever practicable.
- For unforeseeable absences, employees must notify their supervisor **no later than 6:00 a.m. on the day of the absence, when possible.**
- Absences exceeding **three (3) consecutive workdays** require reasonable documentation, such as a healthcare provider's note or other acceptable verification, but do not require documentation of the reason for being out sick.

Payout and Carryover

Employee Group	Carryover	Payout
10-Month Employees	Up to 20 days carryover	Permitted to carry over up to 20 unused sick days from prior years into the following fiscal year. At the end of each fiscal year, employees have the option to either:

		• Cash out any unused sick days from that year at the approved payout rate (annual salary divided by 2080 hours), or • Carry over up to 20 days into the next fiscal year. If an employee resigns or is terminated before the end of the school year, they will not receive a payout for any sick leave accrued during the current school year. However, any previously carried over sick leave balance will be paid out upon separation at the approved payout rate.
12-Month Employees	Up to 20 days carryover	Permitted to carry over up to 20 unused sick days from prior years into the following fiscal year. If an employee resigns or is terminated before the end of the school year, they will not receive a payout for any sick leave accrued.

Paid Time Off (PTO)

10-Month Employees

- **No separate PTO is provided.**
- All scheduled school breaks and holidays are paid time off.

12-Month Employees

- **Accrual:** 0.833 days per month worked, totaling **10 PTO days per year**
- **Carryover:** Up to **20 PTO days (160 hours)** may be carried forward into the next fiscal year
- **Fiscal year end:** At the end of the fiscal year (June 30), any PTO balance above 20 days is forfeited, with no cash out
- **Separation:** All accrued unused PTO is paid out at: **Annual Salary ÷ 2,080 hours**
- **School Breaks:** 12-month employees receive all scheduled school breaks as **additional paid time off automatically**, without needing to use PTO. Employees may work during school breaks with prior approval, and those days will convert to PTO on a **1:1 basis**.

Floating Holidays

- Employees may designate up to **2 PTO or sick days per year** as floating holidays for personal, cultural, or religious observances.
- Requests must be submitted in advance and approved by the supervisor.
- Floating holidays **do not carry over** and **are not paid out** if unused.

Time Off Usage & Deductions

Partial-Day Absences

- Any time off exceeding **1 hour** in a workday is deducted from leave balances based on **actual time used**, rounded to the nearest **15-minute increment**:
 - Example:
 - 1 hour 20 min = 1.25 hours deducted
 - 2 hours 50 min = 2.75 hours deducted

Unpaid Time Off

- PTO and/or Sick Time off without an available balance is unpaid and will be deducted from the next paycheck.
- **Deduction Rate: Annual Salary ÷ 2,080 hours**
- Repeated unapproved or excessive unpaid absences may result in disciplinary action.

Truing-Up for Early Separations

- If an employee separates before the end of the school year, sick leave usage will be **trueed up** to the portion of the year worked.
- Any leave used in excess of accrued amounts will be **deducted from final pay** at: **Annual Salary ÷ 2,080 hours**

Request and Documentation

- **Planned Absences:** Submit requests via email to HR (hr@northsidechs.org) and copy your supervisor in advance, with at least 2 weeks notice if possible.
- **Unplanned Absences:** Notify your supervisor by **6:00 a.m.** on the day of absence and send an email to Callouts (callouts@northsidechs.org).
- **Documentation:** Absences longer than **3 consecutive days** require documentation (e.g., doctor's note or other verification). Documentation is **not required to specify the exact reason**.

In addition to any paid time off ("PTO") or other leave benefits provided by the School, and in accordance with applicable provisions of the New York City Earned Safe and Sick Time Law and related laws, the School will provide employees with up to thirty-two (32) hours of unpaid, job-protected Safe and Sick Leave upon the commencement of employment. Eligible

employees may use such leave for covered purposes, including, but not limited to: (a) attending to their own physical or mental health needs or those of a family member; (b) obtaining services, assistance, counseling, relocation assistance, legal services, or taking other safety measures when the employee or a family member is a victim of domestic violence, unwanted sexual contact, stalking, human trafficking, or workplace violence; (c) caring for a child or a family or household member with a disability; (d) attending housing, public benefits, educational, or related appointments and hearings; and (e) remaining away from work when a governmental authority declares a public health emergency or other qualifying public disaster that affects the employee, the employee's family, or the employee's workplace.

In addition, the School will provide eligible employees with up to twenty (20) hours of paid prenatal leave in accordance with applicable law. Paid prenatal leave may be used for qualifying prenatal health care services, medical appointments, examinations, monitoring, testing, fertility treatment, and other pregnancy-related health care needs as permitted by law. Employees seeking to use safe and sick leave or prenatal leave should provide notice to the School as soon as practicable and comply with applicable reporting and documentation requirements, consistent with law and School policy and procedures.

Anti-Retaliation

NCHS strictly prohibits retaliation for the lawful use of sick leave, PTO, or floating holidays, including leave protected by the NYC Earned Safe and Sick Time Act or other applicable law.

Questions

Contact the **Chief Financial and Operations Officer (CFOO)** or **Human Resources** with any questions about this policy or your leave balances.

Discretionary Compensatory Time (Non-PTO; Manager-Approved)

The following provision describes an informal practice and does not constitute a formal, accrued, or vested leave benefit.

Northside Charter High School may, at its sole discretion, allow employees to take informal compensatory time off ("comp time") in recognition of work performed outside of normal job expectations or scheduled work hours. This practice is intended to provide flexibility and is not a guaranteed benefit.

Compensatory time is subject to the following conditions:

- Comp time is entirely discretionary and may be granted, limited, or denied by a supervisor at any time

- Comp time is not earned, accrued, or vested, and does not constitute wages or a form of compensation
- Comp time is not tracked or recorded in any official payroll, HR, or leave system
- Comp time must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor before being taken
- Comp time should be used within a reasonable timeframe, as determined by the supervisor, and may not be carried over indefinitely
- Unused comp time is forfeited upon separation of employment and will not be paid out under any circumstances

This informal practice does not modify or replace any applicable wage and hour requirements. Non-exempt employees must accurately record all hours worked and will be compensated in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, including overtime requirements.

Supervisors are not authorized to promise, guarantee, or create any expectation of compensatory time beyond what is described in this policy.

The School reserves the right to interpret, modify, or discontinue this practice at any time.

Community Sick Leave Bank

Northside Charter High School has established a program that allows employees to donate Personal/Sick leave on a voluntary basis to a Community Sick Leave Bank. The Community Sick Leave Bank will be available to *eligible* employees who have suffered a *catastrophic illness or injury* and who have exhausted all of their Personal/Sick time.

Bereavement

If an employee has been employed by Northside Charter High School (NCHS) continuously for ninety (90) days or more, bereavement leave is available.

Eligibility and Duration:

- **Paid Bereavement Leave:** An employee who suffers the loss of an immediate family member is entitled to bereavement pay for up to four (4) consecutive days.
- **Additional Leave:** The employee may be granted additional time without pay or may use earned, unused Personal Time Off (PTO) for extended bereavement leave.

Notification:

- The employee should notify the Senior Management Team and their supervisor as soon as possible about the reason for and expected length of absence.

Definition of Immediate Family Member:

- **Immediate family member** includes a spouse, partner, father, mother, child, stepchild, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild of the employee, or any other person as defined by the CEO.

Verification:

- Within a reasonable period of time (no later than two weeks), the employee should provide verification of the death (such as an obituary or death certificate).

Military Duty

If an employee is a member of the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine, Coast Guard, National Guard, Reserves or Public Health Service, they will be granted an unpaid leave of absence for military service, training or related obligations in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA).

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Northside Charter High School (NCHS) provides job-protected leave in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Eligibility Requirements:

Employees are eligible if they have:

- Worked for NCHS for at least 12 months (not necessarily consecutive), **and**
- Worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months immediately preceding the start of leave.

Leave Entitlement:

Eligible employees may take up to 12 workweeks of leave in a rolling 12-month period for the following qualifying reasons:

- The employee's own serious health condition.
- The birth of a child and to bond with the newborn within one year of birth.
- Placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care, and to bond within one year of placement.
- To care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition.
- For certain qualifying exigencies arising out of a family member's military deployment.
- Up to 26 workweeks in a single 12-month period to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness.

Definition of Serious Health Condition:

An illness, injury, impairment, or physical/mental condition involving either:

- Inpatient care in a medical facility, **or**
- Continuing treatment by a healthcare provider.

Use of Paid Leave:

- Employees are required to use any available paid leave (e.g., accrued PTO) concurrently with FMLA leave.
- **For parental leave related to the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child, NCHS will provide full salary continuation for up to 12 workweeks.**
- If the full paid parental leave is exhausted, any remaining FMLA leave for other qualifying reasons will be unpaid (unless the employee has accrued PTO).

Medical Benefits During Leave:

- **Health Insurance:** NCHS will continue group health coverage during FMLA on the same terms as if the employee had not taken leave. Employees must continue to pay their

portion of premiums.

- For paid FMLA leave, premiums will be deducted from wages.
- For unpaid FMLA leave, employees must pay premiums directly by the first of each month. If more than 30 days late, coverage may be canceled.
- **Benefit Accrual:** Employees will not accrue PTO or seniority during unpaid FMLA leave, though time counts toward retirement plan eligibility and vesting.

Return from Leave:

Employees returning from FMLA leave will be reinstated to the same or an equivalent position unless they would not have been employed otherwise (e.g., layoffs). Failure to return to work after FMLA leave will be treated as a voluntary resignation. NCHS may recover the cost of health insurance premiums paid during any unpaid portion of leave unless the failure to return is due to a qualifying serious health condition.

Documentation:

Employees must request FMLA leave through ADP (1-844-448-0325) and notify a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT). Advance notice (at least 30 days) is required for foreseeable leave. Medical certification and recertification may be required.

New York State Paid Family Leave (PFL)

NCHS provides Paid Family Leave as required under New York State law, administered by MetLife.

Eligibility:

- Employees working 20 or more hours per week are eligible after 26 weeks of employment.
- Employees working fewer than 20 hours per week are eligible after 175 days worked.

Qualifying Events:

- Bonding with a new child (birth, adoption, or foster placement).
- Caring for a family member with a serious health condition.
- Supporting loved ones during a family member's active military deployment abroad.

Benefits:

- Up to 12 weeks of leave per year.
- Payments are issued **directly by MetLife**, not by NCHS.
- PFL pays 67% of the employee's average weekly wage, up to the maximum benefit set annually by New York State. 2026 cap = \$1,228.53 and changes annually.
- **For parental bonding leave (maternity or paternity), NCHS will supplement the MetLife PFL payment so that the employee receives 100% of their regular base pay during the 12-week period.**
- For all other qualifying reasons under PFL, the employee will receive payments directly from MetLife and will not receive additional pay from NCHS.

Pay During School Breaks/Vacations:

- If a vacation day or school break falls during fully paid PFL (e.g., 100% pay during parental leave), the employee receives 100% pay for that day (no extension of leave).

- If during a partially paid PFL (e.g., 67% pay for caring for a family member), the employee receives the standard MetLife payment for that day.
- If during an unpaid portion of leave, no pay is provided unless the employee returns to work the day before the break.

Notice and Documentation:

At least 30 days' notice is required if foreseeable. Employees must notify HR and their supervisor. All claims for PFL benefits must be filed directly with MetLife. Documentation (such as a birth certificate or medical certification) may be required.

Short-Term Disability (STD)

Employees unable to work due to their own non-work-related illness or injury may be eligible for Short-Term Disability benefits through MetLife.

Eligibility & Benefits:

- Begins after a 7-day waiting period.
- Pays up to 50% of the employee's average weekly wage, capped at the state-mandated maximum.
- The maximum duration is 26 weeks.

Application Process:

Employees must submit a claim directly to MetLife and provide required medical certification.

Coordination with FMLA:

STD benefits run concurrently with FMLA leave (if eligible). NCHS does not supplement STD benefits beyond what is required by law for non-parental leaves.

Parental Leave Summary

NCHS is committed to supporting employees during the birth or placement of a child. Accordingly:

- Employees are eligible for up to 12 workweeks of fully paid parental leave to bond with a new child within 12 months of birth, adoption, or foster placement.
- This fully paid leave will be coordinated by supplementing any payments received from MetLife under NYS Paid Family Leave or Short-Term Disability so that the employee receives 100% of their regular base pay.
- This leave runs concurrently with FMLA and NYS Paid Family Leave entitlements.
- Any additional leave beyond 12 weeks will be unpaid unless the employee has accrued PTO available.

General Leave Requirements & Process**Coordination of Leave Benefits:**

- FMLA leave may overlap with PFL and/or STD.
- Paid and unpaid leaves do not extend the total duration of entitlement (e.g., still subject to the 12-week FMLA limit for parental leave).

Failure to Return from Leave:

Employees who do not return from leave as scheduled or who fail to submit required documentation will be deemed to have voluntarily resigned.

Questions & Additional Information:

Contact the CFOO or ADP at 1-844-448-0325 for assistance regarding eligibility, paperwork, or coordination of leave benefits.

Lactation Accommodation Policy

- **Discussion Prior to Return from Parental Leave:** Before an employee returns from parental leave, NCHS will discuss with the employee whether they need a reasonable accommodation to express breast milk at work.
- **Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy:** NCHS will not tolerate discrimination or harassment against any employee based on the request for or usage of lactation accommodations. Any discrimination, harassment, or other violations of this policy can be reported to Human Resources.

Lactation Room:

- **Designation and Notification:** NCHS will designate a private room as a lactation room when employees need to express breast milk. Other employees will be notified that the room is prioritized as a lactation room and may only be used for expressing breast milk during the designated times. Proper signage will be posted to ensure that the room is free from intrusion and shielded from view.
- **Priority Use:** Employees who need the room for pumping will be given priority, and their pumping needs will determine the room's availability for other purposes.
- **Privacy and Cleanliness:** NCHS will ensure that the lactation room can be locked from the inside, is clean, and meets as many of the following requirements as possible:
 - Contains at least one electrical outlet.
 - Has a surface to place a pump and other personal items.
 - Provides a chair.
 - Is near running water and a refrigerator for storing breast milk.
- **Alternative Arrangements:**
 - **Multiple Users:** When more than one employee needs to use the lactation room, NCHS will discuss alternative options with all users to determine a suitable arrangement. Options may include:
 - Finding an alternative space.
 - Sharing the space among multiple users with screens, curtains, or other privacy measures.
 - Creating a schedule for use.

- **Temporary Space:** If the lactation room is unavailable, NCHS will provide an alternative space for temporary use as a lactation room.
- **Workspace Pumping:** An employee who wishes to pump at their usual workspace will be permitted to do so, as long as it does not create an undue hardship for NCHS.

Reasonable Time to Express Breast Milk

NCHS will provide a reasonable amount of time for an employee to express breast milk and will not unreasonably limit the amount of time or the frequency that an employee expresses breast milk. NCHS will speak with the employee to determine a schedule of breaks that reasonably accommodates the pumping needs of the employee.

NCHS does not require the employee to work while pumping. However, if the employee works while pumping, the employee will be paid at their regular rate for that time.

Undue Hardship

If NCHS believes that the lactation accommodation requested poses an undue hardship, NCHS will discuss reasonable alternatives with the employee to accommodate the employee's needs, initiating a cooperative dialogue as quickly as possible, but absolutely no later than five (5) business days from the date of the request. The conversation between NCHS and the employee will be in good faith, may occur orally or in writing, and will conclude with a final written determination of the accommodation granted or denied. This process gives the employee an opportunity to have an open discussion with NCHS about their needs, and NCHS has an opportunity to hear its employee and work with them to come up with an appropriate accommodation for the employee.

For example, if NCHS believes the length of time an employee needs to pump is an undue hardship for NCHS to accommodate, NCHS will engage in a cooperative dialogue with the employee to determine if there is an accommodation, such as an adjusted pumping schedule, or more frequent pumping breaks for shorter periods of time, that addresses NCHS's concerns and the employee's needs.

During the time it takes to respond to a request and/or engage in a cooperative dialogue to determine the accommodation, NCHS will provide a temporary accommodation to the employee so that the employee can pump in a manner that meets the employee's immediate needs unless doing so poses an undue hardship.

Jury Duty and Witness Subpoena

Employees will be granted jury duty leave when summoned for jury duty. The School will pay full-time employees for the difference between jury duty pay and normal straight-time pay, up to a maximum of two (2) weeks (ten (10) workdays) for actual time served on jury duty. All employees are required to report to work whenever the court schedule permits.

Every employee must report anticipated jury duty to the CFOO and their supervisor immediately upon receipt of the summons. Upon completion of jury duty service, an employee must provide a copy of your "Completion of Jury Duty" notice to their supervisor who will forward a copy to the CFOO for inclusion in their personnel file.

The School encourages employees to fulfill your civic responsibility to serve jury duty. Employees will continue to earn all benefits and, if applicable, vacation, during jury duty leave.

If an employee receives a duly issued subpoena to appear as a witness during work time, they must immediately notify the CFOO and their supervisor. All subpoenas involving possible testimony about the School and employment at the School, must also be immediately reported to the CEO and the CFOO.

Leave to Appear as a Victim or Witness in a Criminal Proceeding

An eligible employee may take time off from work, without pay, for any of the following reasons:

- To comply with a subpoena to testify in a criminal proceeding (including time off to consult with the district attorney);
- To give a statement at a sentencing proceeding;
- To give a victim impact statement at a pre-sentencing proceeding; or
- To give a statement at a parole board hearing.

Leave Eligibility

An employee is eligible for time off under this policy if he or she is:

- The victim of the crime at issue in the proceedings;
- The victim's next of kin;
- The victim's representative, if the victim is deceased as a result of the offense;
- A "Good Samaritan;" or
- Pursuing an application or the enforcement of an order of protection, as provided under relevant law.

For the purpose of this policy, a "Good Samaritan" is someone who acts in good faith to apprehend a person who has committed a crime in their presence, to prevent a crime or an attempted crime from occurring, or to aid a law enforcement officer in effecting an arrest. A victim's representative is a person who represents or stands in the place of another person, including, but not limited to, an agent, attorney, guardian, conservator, executor, heir or parent of a minor.

Notice and Certification

An employee must notify their supervisor of the need to take a leave under this policy no later than the day before the absence. In addition, the employee must provide the supervisor with verification of their service upon request.

The School will not retaliate or tolerate retaliation against any employee who seeks or obtains leave under this policy.

Voting Leave

Employees who do not have sufficient time outside of their working hours to vote may be granted time off from work to vote, including up to two hours of paid time off. If you need time off to vote, you must request voting leave from your supervisor between two (2) and ten (10) days before the election. Retaliation against an employee who requests leave under this policy is strictly prohibited.

Emergency Service Volunteer Leave

Upon presentation of a written request from the American Red Cross and with the approval of the CEO or the CEO's designee, employees certified by the American Red Cross as disaster volunteers will be granted leave from work with pay for up to twenty (20) days in any calendar year to participate in specialized disaster relief operations. This leave will be provided without loss of seniority, compensation, sick leave, vacation leave, or other overtime compensation to which the volunteer is otherwise entitled.

Bone Marrow Donation Leave

Employees will be granted leaves of absence if they seek to undergo a medical procedure to donate bone marrow. Such leave is not required to be paid. Only employees who work for NCHS for an average of twenty or more hours per week are eligible for leave under this policy. The total length of the leave for each employee will be determined by the physician, but may not be longer than 24 work hours without School approval. An employee who seeks leave under this section must provide verification from a physician of the purpose and length of the leave. The School will not retaliate or tolerate retaliation against an employee for requesting or taking bone marrow donation leave.

Blood Donation Leave

Employees will be provided with up to three hours of leave time in each calendar year to donate blood. Employees seeking leave to donate blood must give reasonable notice to their supervisors of at least three working days prior to taking leave for blood donation. Non-exempt employees will receive paid leave to donate blood if the donation occurs at a blood drive at the School or at a school-sponsored blood drive. Leave to donate blood will be unpaid, however, if the non-exempt employee's donation occurs at a blood drive or facility that is not sponsored or otherwise connected with the School. As required by the Fair Labor Standards Act, exempt employees taking leave to donate blood under this policy will do so without a loss or reduction in pay. All employees taking leave to donate blood through a non-school-sponsored blood drive or at a blood drive away from the school may be required to provide proof of their blood donation. The School will not retaliate or tolerate retaliation against an employee for requesting or taking blood donation leave.

Screenings for Cancer

Employees will be granted up to four hours of paid leave on an annual basis to undertake a screening for cancer. This leave will be excused and will not be charged against any other leave to which the employee is entitled.

BLACKOUT DAYS / HIGH-NEED ATTENDANCE PERIODS

Purpose

Northside Charter High School designates certain periods of the school year as high-need operational attendance periods. These include school days immediately preceding and following

scheduled breaks (including but not limited to winter break, spring break, and summer break), as well as other critical instructional or operational periods as determined by the Senior Management Team.

These periods are essential to maintaining instructional continuity, student support, and school operations.

Designation of Blackout Periods

The School may identify and communicate “Blackout Periods” in advance of the school year calendar or during the school year as needed based on operational requirements.

During these periods, employee attendance is especially critical.

Paid Time Off (PTO) During Blackout Periods

Requests for Paid Time Off (PTO), including vacation-type leave, during Blackout Periods are subject to enhanced review and approval by the School.

The School may:

- Approve PTO requests based on staffing and operational needs, or
- Deny PTO requests when coverage requirements do not allow for absence

Employees are strongly encouraged to avoid scheduling discretionary time off during these periods.

Sick Leave During Blackout Periods

Nothing in this policy limits an employee’s right to use accrued sick leave in accordance with applicable law, including the New York City Earned Safe and Sick Time Act.

Employees may use accrued sick leave during Blackout Periods for qualifying reasons, provided that:

- The employee follows established call-out procedures
- The leave is used for a qualifying reason under applicable law

The use of sick leave during Blackout Periods will be treated consistently with all other periods of the school year.

Attendance Monitoring and Pattern Review

Absences occurring during or adjacent to Blackout Periods may be reviewed as part of the School’s overall attendance monitoring process.

Repeated or patterned absences during these periods—whether using PTO or sick leave—may be subject to review with the employee’s supervisor and may result in:

- Attendance counseling
- Corrective action
- Progressive discipline, where appropriate

This review will focus on attendance patterns and operational impact and will not interfere with lawful use of protected sick leave.

Operational Expectations

Due to the instructional and staffing demands of these periods, employee presence is critical. The School expects employees to plan personal commitments outside of Blackout Periods whenever possible.

Maintaining consistent staffing during these periods is essential to supporting student learning and school operations.

Compliance with Law

This policy is intended to support operational needs while remaining fully compliant with applicable federal, state, and local laws, including but not limited to wage and hour laws and the New York City Earned Safe and Sick Time Act.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to restrict or interfere with an employee's lawful right to use protected leave.

School Discretion

The School reserves the right to define, modify, or update Blackout Periods as operational needs require.

BACKGROUND CHECKS AND EMPLOYEE VERIFICATION

New York State Education Law and Regulation of the Commissioner of Education require charter schools to fingerprint prospective employees for the purposes of a criminal history background check. The School, at its own discretion, may also conduct an independent background check. Employees who will work with children or be present in schools when students are present will have to undergo a criminal background check supported by fingerprints or hand scans through the New York State Education Department (NYSED) in accordance with NY Education Law §§ 2854(3)(a-2) and 3035.

Until the School receives the fingerprint clearance from NYSED, the employee must sign the required forms to receive a conditional clearance from the Board of Trustees of its designee and follow the supervisory policy for employees who have not received clearance. Such conditional clearances must be updated in accordance with NY Education Law. Employees who have been previously fingerprinted by the New York City Department of Education or NYSED must file a "Request for Clearance," which can be obtained from the CEO or their designee.

The School will also perform various background checks, including but not limited to:

- Education
- Certification
- References
- Social Media check

The School reserves the right to withdraw an offer of employment if it receives a report on any prospective employee that is less than satisfactory.

Federal law requires all employers to verify each new employee's identity and legal authorization to work in the United States via the USCIS I-9 Form. All offers of employment are conditional upon the receipt of satisfactory evidence of an applicant's authorization to work in the United States. This evidence of the right to work must be provided within three (3) days of the employee's hire date. Failure to provide the appropriate documentation will be grounds for termination. Should an employee subsequently become unauthorized to work, the law requires that he or she be discharged pending receipt of additional documentation demonstrating an extension of the authorization to work in the United States.

BENEFITS: INSURANCE/HEALTH

Medical And Dental Insurance

The School will select medical and dental insurance plans to cover full-time, regular employees. Employee contributions for medical, dental and vision coverage will be required, and will vary depending upon the level of coverage selected by the employee (individual, individual plus spouse, family, etc.). Employee contributions for elected coverages will be automatically withheld from employees' paychecks in an amount in accordance with a schedule maintained by the School.

Medical, dental and vision benefits are effective first of the month following thirty days of hire, provided that all required paperwork is submitted to the School in a timely manner. Employees may elect to change their plan coverage once each year during the School's open enrollment period or when a life-changing qualifying event occurs. Part-time employees who work fewer than 35 hours per week are not eligible for medical, dental or vision benefits.

List of qualifying events

- Change in legal marital status, including marriage, death of a spouse, divorce, legal separation and annulment.
- A change in the number of dependents, including birth, death, adoption, and placement for adoption.
- A change in employment status of the employee, or the employee's spouse or dependent, including termination.
- A change in coverage of a spouse or dependent under another employer's plan. *Must notify the CFOO within thirty days of the qualifying event.

Short-Term Disability Insurance

The School provides short-term disability insurance to all eligible employees. Short-term disability insurance allows payment to employees in the event of certain injuries, illnesses, or other disabilities occurring outside of the workplace that result in the employee's inability to perform the regular duties of their employment, including disability caused by pregnancy.

Short-term disability insurance payments commence after the seventh (7th) consecutive day of absence due to a disability. Under New York State law, employees on short-term disability leave will receive fifty percent (50%) of their salary up to a maximum of one hundred seventy dollars (\$170) per week, for a maximum of twenty-six (26) weeks, regardless of years of employment. Any employee wishing to claim disability pay must complete appropriate forms with the CFOO. Employees are also responsible for filing any other necessary forms, applications, or other information as required by applicable government policies.

Employees may opt to purchase additional short-term disability insurance coverage. Please see the CFOO for more information.

Long-Term Disability Insurance

The School provides long-term disability for all eligible employees. Long-term disability insurance allows payment to employees in the event of certain injuries, illnesses, or other disabilities occurring outside of the workplace that result in the employee's inability to perform the regular duties of their employment. Long-term disability insurance payments commence after ninety (90) days of absence due to a disability. Any employee wishing to claim disability pay must complete appropriate forms with Human Resources. Employees are also responsible for filing any other necessary forms, applications, or other information as required by applicable policies.

Life Insurance

The School provides life insurance to all eligible employees. Please check the benefits coverage options in ADP to better understand employees' options.

Employees may opt to purchase additional life insurance coverage. Please see the ADP for more information.

Declination of Benefits

Any employee who wishes to not accept any of the insurance benefits offered by the School is required to select the appropriate declination of coverage options in ADP.

Reservation of Rights

The School reserves the right to alter the benefits package made available to employees at any time, consistent with all applicable laws. Each employee will be notified of any modification to the benefits package in a timely fashion.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Deferred Compensation

The School may, subject to approval by the Board of Trustees, offer a deferred compensation 403(b) program to all eligible employees. Under such a program, employees may opt to defer a portion of their current gross pay, having that portion of pay invested in accordance with applicable federal and state guidelines governing deferred compensation programs and with procedures established by the School.

In accordance with federal guidelines, employees are subject to a maximum limit per year on deferred compensation. Employees shall take every reasonable precaution to ensure that the

per-paycheck amount of income requested to be deferred will not cause such limits to be exceeded in any given year.

Any contributions to the 403(b) Program are at the sole discretion of the School and shall be paid to the employees account on a semi-monthly basis.

Eligible employees will receive up to a 5% match. The School provides a matching contribution of up to 5% of an employee's eligible compensation. This means that if an employee contributes up to 5% of their pay to the 403(b) plan, the School will match those contributions dollar-for-dollar, up to a maximum of 5%.

For example, if an employee earns \$1,000 in a pay period and contributes 5% (\$50) to the 403(b) plan, the School will contribute an additional \$50. If the employee contributes less than 5%, the School will match only the amount contributed.

Employees must be actively contributing to the plan to receive the employer match. Additional terms, including eligibility requirements and vesting, may apply as outlined in the official plan documents.

Employees should review the Capital Group and ADP website for more information. They may also contact HR for further clarification.

Workers' Compensation

The School provides Workers' Compensation coverage to its employees in case of injury or illness arising out of and in the course of employment. Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses should inform their supervisor and the CFOO as soon as is practicable after the injury.

Unemployment Compensation

The School contributes to the Unemployment Compensation plan administered by the State of New York.

Benefits Continuation-COBRA

Under the federal **Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)**, employees and their qualified beneficiaries have the right to continue health insurance coverage under the School's group health plans when coverage would otherwise end due to a **qualifying event**.

Qualifying events include but are not limited to:

- Resignation or termination of employment (for reasons other than gross misconduct)
- Reduction in work hours or an approved leave of absence resulting in loss of coverage
- Divorce or legal separation from the covered employee
- Death of the covered employee
- A dependent child ceasing to meet plan eligibility requirements

Under COBRA, the employee or qualified beneficiary is responsible for the **full cost of coverage**, calculated at the School's group rates plus any applicable administrative fee (generally up to 2% of the premium).

Coverage under COBRA is typically available for up to:

- **18 months** for most qualifying events (e.g., termination, reduction of hours)
- **36 months** for certain other qualifying events (e.g., divorce, death of the employee, loss of dependent status)

Enrollment and Notice Requirements:

- The School, through its benefits administrator, will provide written notice of COBRA rights and election forms when a qualifying event occurs.
- Employees or qualified beneficiaries must **elect continuation coverage within 60 days** of receiving this notice or the date coverage would otherwise end, whichever is later.
- Payment of the applicable premiums must be made according to the timelines detailed in the COBRA election notice.

Tuition Program

The Tuition Program is intended to help employees increase their knowledge and skills to improve their overall expertise, as well as to improve their career path options for current and future Northside Charter High School opportunities. Northside Charter High School will pay \$800 per semester towards a degree or certification program that will support your career in education, pending approval by the School Management Team. The school reserves the right to not fund certain programs.

Eligibility: Employees in good standing with Northside Charter High School at the time of course enrollment are eligible to participate in the program.

Minimum Grade Requirement: To qualify for tuition reimbursement, employees must earn a grade of **B- or better** in each course. Courses not meeting this minimum grade requirement will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Undergraduate & Graduate Study: The degree or certification program must be a subject that relates to the employee's job or the mission of NCHS. Determination as to whether the course of study meets this criterion is made by the School Management Team. Northside Charter High School will reimburse up to \$800 TOTAL per semester for a degree- or certificate-related course that is successfully completed (e.g., PASSED or all requirements met).

Procedure: Employees seeking reimbursement must submit a Tuition Reimbursement Request Form along with their grade(s), bursar's receipt and the employee's proof of payment to the CFOO within 45 days of the end of the semester for which they are seeking reimbursement.

Service Obligation: In consideration of receiving tuition assistance under this policy, the employee is to agree to commit to 1 full school year of service with Northside Charter High School following the completion of each course. Should the employee, either voluntarily or involuntarily, no longer be employed at NCHS before completing the full semester and receiving tuition reimbursement, the reimbursed amount will be held from the final paycheck.

* Tuition Reimbursement is subject to annual budget consideration and the discretion of School Administration.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Evaluations, Observations And Job Requirements

The performance of each employee is critical to the overall success of Northside Charter High School (NCHS) and the accomplishment of our school's mission. Formal evaluations are conducted throughout the academic year to provide an objective, consistent, and fair way to assess each employee's job effectiveness. This process also offers an opportunity for supervisors and employees to develop strategies for improving future performance.

Purpose of Evaluations:

- **Assessment and Development:** Evaluations allow for the assessment of job tasks, identification and correction of weaknesses, encouragement and recognition of strengths, and discussion of purposeful approaches for meeting goals.
- **Reflection and Improvement:** Evaluations are designed to encourage reflection and lead to improvements both in and out of the classroom.

Evaluation Process:

- **Written Evaluations:** Evaluations will be in writing, and employees must sign their evaluation forms to acknowledge having received and reviewed them.
- **Documentation:** Evaluations, together with any employee written comments, will become a part of each employee's personnel file and may influence any personnel decisions involving the employee.
- **Supervisor Collaboration:** Supervisors will work closely with employees to help them perform to the best of their abilities. The frequency and method of performance evaluations will vary depending on the position. Supervisors will discuss the means by which job performance will be evaluated.

Professional Development:

- **No Probationary or Tenured Appointments:** NCHS does not recognize probationary or tenured appointments. Instead, it views each employee as a professional and accepts the obligation of assisting each employee in maximizing their professional potential.
- **Commitment to Excellence:** The School Management Team and Board of Trustees are committed to maximizing the educational experience of its pedagogical and professional staff. Observations, reviews, and evaluations will be conducted with the objective of enhancing the experience and abilities of all staff.

Merit Increases:

- **Eligibility for Salary Increase:** Annually, employees may be eligible for a salary increase based on their Annual Evaluation rating.
- **Standards and Expectations:** In the event an employee does not meet the NCHS mission and standards, any merit increase consideration may not be granted.

PROBLEM/CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS

An employee with a complaint, dispute, issue, or problem with personnel, students, or caregivers should always try to settle it in a professional manner with the parties involved. If a positive conclusion is not reached, please use the following guidelines to resolve the situation:

1. Initial Resolution Attempt:

- a. **Direct Resolution:** The employee should first attempt to resolve the complaint,

dispute, issue, or problem directly with the parties involved in a professional manner.

- b. **Escalation:** If the issue is not resolved, the employee should present the complaint, dispute, issue, or problem to their immediate supervisor in a timely manner.
- c. **Supervisor Conflict:** If the complaint, dispute, issue, or problem is with the employee's supervisor, the employee should contact a member of the School Management Team or the CFOO.

2. Meeting with Supervisor:

- a. **Scheduling:** The employee and their supervisor shall set a time to meet, which can be immediate upon presentation of the issue.
- b. **Good Faith Effort:** Both the employee and the supervisor will act in good faith and cooperate fully to resolve the issue.
- c. **Meeting Agenda:**
 - i. Identify the problem.
 - ii. Determine possible solutions.
 - iii. Determine a resolution.
 - iv. Set a course of action to achieve the resolution, including the process and timeline.
 - v. Schedule a follow-up meeting after the resolution process has been implemented.
- d. **Documentation:** The employee and their supervisor shall submit notes from the meeting and a written description of the process to be implemented to the employee's file.
- e. **Escalation to School Management:**
 - i. **Unresolved Issues:** If the issue is not resolved after a good faith attempt as outlined above, the employee may submit a written complaint to the School Management.
 - ii. **Management Review:** The School Management will follow the steps outlined in Step 2 above in a timely manner.
 - iii. **Administrative Conflict:** If the complaint is against the Management or the employee's immediate supervisor is an administrator, the employee may submit a written complaint to the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Grievance Policy and Complaint Procedure.
- f. **Escalation to the Board of Trustees:**
 - i. **Final Resolution:** If the issue was not resolved by any of the steps above, the employee may submit a written complaint to the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Grievance Policy and Complaint Procedure.¹

¹ Any person, including staff members, can bring a formal complaint to the NCHS Board of Trustees. The description above is for handling informal/workplace conflicts.

WORKPLACE REGULATIONS

Confidentiality

During employment at NCHS, employees may learn or work with and be entrusted with confidential and/or privileged information about fellow employees, administrators, school caregivers, students, or applicants. Every employee must exercise the highest degree of care not to disclose any such information, advertently or inadvertently, to any unauthorized person in or outside of the School.

Types of Confidential Information:

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Student records
- Financial information that is not a “public record” under New York’s Freedom of Information Law (“FOIL”)
- Personnel records and information
- Payroll records that are not “public records” under FOIL
- Computer programs, codes, processes, and passwords
- Personal information regarding the School’s caregivers and students

Restrictions on Disclosure:

Employees shall not release any confidential and/or privileged information about the School or its activities, or the activities of its personnel, students, or caregivers, except as reasonably required by their duties, expressly permitted by the School, and in conformity with applicable laws such as:

- New York’s Freedom of Information Law
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Any other applicable federal, state, or local law

Consultation Requirement:

If an employee believes confidential information must be disclosed to a third party, they must consult with the School prior to the disclosure. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential and/or privileged information is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Prohibited Actions:

- No employee shall publish, disclose, or use, or authorize anyone else to publish, disclose, or use, or cause to be published, disclosed, or used, any private or proprietary information acquired, learned, developed, or created by reason of employment with NCHS, unless authorized by the School in writing.
- Any document or material containing such information must be returned to the School upon an employee’s termination or resignation.
- Obligations under this policy continue after termination of employment.

Personnel Inquiries

Authorized Personnel:

- Only the Senior Management Team or their designee may provide reference letters, answer telephone calls, or respond to other inquiries from third parties about School

employees.

- NCHS's policy is to provide only neutral letters of reference.

Prohibited Actions:

- All other employees are prohibited from responding to personnel inquiries.
- Unauthorized responses of this nature are grounds for termination.

Professional Appearance and Dress Code

Our School requires students to wear a uniform to inspire self-esteem, prevent clothing-related conflicts, and create an equitable, academically-focused environment. It is important that faculty and staff show support for the uniform policy. While a staff uniform is not required at this time, professional attire (e.g., business casual) is to be worn Monday through Friday and at all school events. Exceptions can be granted by the Senior Management Team.

Acceptable Attire:

- Staff may wear the school uniform (short or long-sleeve purple polo) or any of the following:
 - Blazers, suits, or sport coats
 - Dress slacks
 - Work-appropriate khakis
 - Ties
 - Dress shirts with buttons and collars
 - Dress shoes
 - Dresses (knee length)
 - Skirts (knee length)
 - Blouses
 - Sweaters

Unacceptable Attire:

- Shorts (unless permitted on a dress-down day or event)
- Cutoffs
- Athletic wear (other than Physical Education Staff)
- Flip flops of any kind
- Spandex or Lycra such as biker shorts (or jeggings/leggings)
- Tube tops, halter tops, and any other type of top with spaghetti straps
- Underwear as outerwear
- Beachwear
- Midriff-length tops
- Form-fitting and/or low-cut/sheer attire
- Off-the-shoulder styles
- Workout clothes or shoes (other than Physical Education Staff, who may wear knee-length, loose-fitting athletic shorts)
- Evening wear

Caps/hats unless for religious reasons

The key to sustaining an appropriate but relaxed work attire program is the use of common sense and good judgment. If you question the appropriateness of the attire, it probably is not

appropriate. If an employee has a question, requests advice, or requires assistance in administering or interpreting this guideline, they should contact their direct supervisor.

The School recognizes that dress and grooming may be influenced by sincerely held religious beliefs, cultural practices, medical needs, or other legally protected characteristics. In such cases, the School will make reasonable accommodations in accordance with applicable laws. As a first step, employees who require an accommodation should consult with their supervisor or School Administration to discuss their needs and explore appropriate options.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

FERPA affords caregivers and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to the student's education records. Please review the School's FERPA Policy below:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

School officials with legitimate educational interest; Other schools to which a student is transferring; Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes; Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student; Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school; Accrediting organizations; To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issue

Cameras Policy

The School prohibits employee use of cameras in the workplace, including camera phones, as a preventative step believed necessary to secure employee privacy, student confidentiality and trade secrets and other school information. In addition, cameras shall not be used in any matter inconsistent with the School's social media policy, or in any other manner that portrays the School in a negative light.

Cameras and camera cell phones or PDAs may not be used in the workplace, except by an employee who is specifically required to take a photograph or make a video. Anyone improperly using these electronic devices during school hours may be subject to disciplinary action. However, the mere possession of a cell phone with a camera will not subject an employee to disciplinary action.

Relationships With Students

School employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in personal relationships with students, which are outside the scope of a professional adult/student relationship or which may give the appearance of being outside the scope of a professional adult/student relationship. This prohibition applies both on and off School grounds.

Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination. Employees who violate this policy may also be subject to being reported to law enforcement authorities, if the conduct is believed to constitute a crime under state law. If disciplinary action is taken against an employee, a report will be made to law enforcement and/or a child abuse report will be made for violation of this policy. In addition, the caregivers of the student involved will be notified of the situation and the actions taken by the School.

Under no circumstances may School employees connect with students on any social media platform, application, or messaging service. This includes, but is not limited to, "friending," "following," direct messaging, or otherwise engaging with students through personal social media accounts or digital platforms not expressly approved by the School for educational purposes. Such conduct is strictly prohibited, regardless of the employee's intent, and will be considered a serious violation of professional boundaries. Any employee found to have engaged in this behavior will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination, and may be reported to law enforcement or child protective services, as appropriate. In addition, such a violation may require the School to make a referral to the New York State Education Department's Office of School Personnel Review and Accountability (OSPRA).

Staff are also prohibited from naming students publicly or discussing students in private settings that could be considered a violation of their privacy.

Employees shall not transport students in personal vehicles or otherwise arrange private transportation for students except in emergency situations involving an immediate threat to a student's health or safety, or when specifically authorized in advance by the Chief Executive Officer or the CEO's designee. When authorized transportation is necessary, employees must comply with all School procedures, directives and the law.

Employees shall not transport a student alone in a vehicle when reasonable alternatives are available. Any authorized transportation of a student must be promptly reported to administration and appropriately documented.

Employees shall maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students at all times, including outside of regular school hours. Except for legitimate educational, extracurricular, athletic, safety, or other School-authorized purposes, employees should not engage in personal, social, or non-school-related communications or interactions with students outside of school hours. Any necessary communication with students outside of school hours should occur through School- approved communication platforms whenever practicable and should remain professional in nature.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employee Treatment of Students

All employees must adhere to the [Chancellor's Regulation A-420](#) which prohibits the use of corporal punishment against students and sets forth the reporting and investigative requirements for allegations of corporal punishment.

All employees must adhere to the [Chancellor's Regulation A-421](#) which prohibits verbal abuse of students and sets forth the reporting and investigative requirements for allegations of verbal abuse.

Post-Employment Inquiries

The School does not respond to oral requests for references. In the event your employment with the School is terminated, either voluntarily or involuntarily, the School will provide only dates of employment, job titles and compensation in response to a written request. Your supervisor may be able to provide a reference to potential employers only if you have completed and signed a release form.

As an employee of the School, do not under any circumstances respond to any requests for information regarding another employee unless it is part of your assigned job responsibilities. If it is not, please forward the information request to your supervisor.

Gifts and Gratuities

Employees of the School are prohibited from accepting gifts, money or gratuities in any form from persons receiving benefits or services from the School or from persons performing services under contract to the organization, or otherwise in a position to benefit from an employee action.

School employees are not permitted to accept gifts of any kind of a value exceeding fifty dollars annually—including but not limited to money, goods, food, entertainment, or services—directly or indirectly from: 1) individuals, schools, or companies serving as vendors or potential vendors for the School; 2) elected officials or their representatives; 3) candidates for public office or their representatives; or 4) political party officials or their representatives. Exceptions may be made by the CAO or their designee, including instances where such gifts intended for and will be used by the School. Offers of such gifts in excess of fifty dollars, even when refused, must be communicated immediately by the employee receiving such an offer to the CAO or their designee.

Solicitation

In the interest of efficiency and security, the School's general policy is to restrict solicitations or distributions by employees to non-work areas during non-work time. Employees are prohibited from soliciting or distributing literature in work areas or during work time. Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Solicitation or distribution of literature of any kind by non-employees is not permitted on the School premises at any time.

In addition, the use of school resources (such as stationery, e-mail, voice-mail, bulletin boards, and meeting facilities) for non-school solicitation is prohibited. Commercial ventures that wish to solicit the faculty, staff, students, or parent body of the school may only do so if they have the express written consent of the CEO, in accordance with NCHS Board policies which also apply. The CEO is encouraged to present any proposals for such solicitation to the Board of Trustees for recommendation.

Violence in the Workplace

The School is committed to preventing workplace violence. Given the increasing violence in society in general, the School has adopted the following guidelines to deal with intimidation, harassment, or other threats of (or actual) violence that may occur during business hours or on its premises.

All employees, including supervisors and temporary employees, should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from fighting, rowdy behavior, or other conduct that may be dangerous to others. Employees are prohibited from bringing firearms, weapons, or other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances onto the premises of the School.

The School prohibits conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, a student, visitor, guest, or candidate for employment. This prohibition includes all acts of harassment, including harassment that is based on an individual's gender, race, age, or any characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.

Employees must immediately report violence or threats of violence, both direct and indirect, to a supervisor. This includes threats by employees, students, or visitors. Reports should be as specific and detailed as possible.

The School will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of violence or threats of violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as is practically reasonable. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, the School may suspend employees, either with or without pay, pending investigation.

Anyone determined to be responsible for acts or threats of violence or other conduct in violation of these guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

The School encourages employees to bring their disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of their supervisors or the School, before the situation escalates into potential violence. The School shall assist in the resolution of employee disputes, and will not discipline an employee for raising such concerns.

Student Altercation Response Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff at Northside Charter High School respond to student altercations promptly, safely, and consistently. The goal is to protect students and staff from harm, maintain a secure learning environment, and comply with school safety protocols and applicable regulations.

Scope

This policy applies to all Northside Charter High School employees, including instructional staff, administrators, support personnel, and contracted service providers who may supervise or interact with students.

Policy Statement

All staff members share responsibility for maintaining a safe and orderly school environment. When a physical or verbal altercation occurs, staff are expected to act quickly to ensure safety, de-escalate the situation, and follow established reporting and documentation procedures.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. Before the Incident

Positive School Climate and Relationships

This focuses on the emotional and psychological well-being of students and staff.

- Trusting Relationships: Strong, positive relationships between students, teachers, and staff.
- Inclusivity and Respect: A culture that promotes respect for diversity, where all students feel valued, accepted, and that they belong.
- Emotional Support: Providing social and emotional learning (SEL) programs and mental health support.
- Positive Reinforcement: Recognizing and rewarding good behavior and effort.

2. Clear and Consistent Expectations

Orderliness comes from predictability and fairness.

- Defined Rules and Expectations: Clearly and positively stated behavioral expectations that are known by all students, staff, and parents.
- Routines and Structures: Establishing consistent classroom and school-wide routines help students know what is expected of them at all times.
- Consistent Enforcement: Consequences for breaking rules are defined, consistently applied, and equitable for all students.

- Restorative Practices: Using conflict resolution strategies and restorative justice to repair harm and restore relationships, rather than solely relying on punitive measures.

3. Physical Safety and Emergency Readiness

This involves measures to protect students and staff from harm.

- Physical Security: A clean, healthy, and well-maintained physical space. This may include secure entry points, active supervision in all areas, and appropriate classroom layouts.
- Emergency Preparedness: Well-defined and regularly practiced school safety plans, including procedures for various emergencies (like fire drills, medical crises, and other threats).
- Bullying Prevention: Comprehensive anti-bullying policies and programs, with monitoring of "hot spots" where bullying might occur.

Immediate Safety Response

- **Ensure Safety First:**
 - Staff must prioritize maintaining a safe environment for all individuals. Staff are not expected to place themselves at risk of harm when responding to student altercations. When safe to do so, staff should take reasonable steps to intervene, de-escalate the situation, and prevent injury.
- **Verbal De-escalation:**
 - Staff should use calm, clear, and firm verbal commands to separate students (e.g., "Stop," "Move back," "Give each other space") and direct bystanders away from the area. Staff should immediately seek assistance from additional personnel in accordance with School protocols.
 - Physical intervention may only be used when necessary to prevent imminent harm to a student or others and only when it can be performed safely, in a manner that is reasonable, proportionate, and consistent with School policy and applicable law.
- **Call for Assistance:**
 - Immediately alert nearby staff, a dean, or security personnel using the school's communication system (e.g., walkie-talkie, intercom, or emergency code).
 - If the situation poses immediate danger, a staff member should **call 911** and notify the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) or Chief Student Services Officer (CSSO)
 - 2. During the Incident
- **DO NOT** engage in shouting, physical retaliation, or any conduct that could escalate the situation.
- Direct uninvolved students away from the area.

- If the fight is occurring in a classroom or hallway, **secure bystanders** to prevent crowding.
- Trained staff (such as deans, school aides, community associates or School Safety Agents) should take the lead in separating students.

3. After the Incident

- **Check for Injuries:**
 - Assess all involved students for injuries. Contact the **school nurse** immediately if medical attention is required.
- **Notify Administration:**
 - The staff member who first responded must promptly inform the **CAO, CSSO, and/or Security Coordinator (Dean)**.
- **Student Support:**
 - Escort involved students to a designated safe area (e.g., Dean's office or Room 406) for debriefing and investigation.
- **Preserve Evidence:**
 - If applicable, secure the area for review of security footage or collection of statements.

4. Documentation and Reporting

- **Incident Report:**
 - The responding staff member must complete a written Incident Report Form within the same school day, detailing:
 - Time, date, and location of incident
 - Names of all students and staff involved
 - Description of events leading up to, during, and following the altercation
 - Actions taken and who was notified
- Reports must be submitted to the **CAO** and **CSSO** for review and recordkeeping.
- **Confidentiality:**
 - Staff must not discuss details of the incident with other students or unauthorized personnel.

5. Administrative Follow-Up

- The **Dean of Students** will investigate and determine disciplinary and/or restorative measures in line with the school's **Code of Conduct** and DOE guidelines.

- The **CAO** or **CSSO** will ensure caregivers of involved students are notified as soon as possible.
- The **School Counselor** or **Social Worker** will provide follow-up support to affected students.

6. Staff Conduct and Expectations

- Staff must remain professional, calm, and neutral during and after any incident.
- Physical intervention may be used **only when necessary to prevent imminent harm**.
- Any staff member who witnesses or becomes aware of an altercation, but fails to act or report it may face disciplinary action.

7. Training

- All staff will receive **bi-annual training** in September & January on::
 - De-escalation techniques
 - Crisis intervention and restraint policies
 - Proper reporting procedures
 - Roles during emergency or violent incidents

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by school administration and updated as needed to reflect school safety data, and best practices.

CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

All employees are responsible for observing rules of behavior and conduct. The purpose of these rules is not to restrict employee rights, but rather to provide a safe and nurturing environment.

The following list is not exhaustive of all unacceptable behavior in the workplace. The following are some examples of unacceptable conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property
- Falsification of records, including timekeeping and others
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace

- Negligence or improper conduct leading to harm to others or to damage of employer-owned property
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct (including refusal to follow a supervisor's lawful directives)
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Smoking in prohibited areas
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace or while at work outside the workplace
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice
- Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, or other employer-owned equipment
- Unauthorized disclosure of business "secrets" or confidential information
- Violation of personnel policies
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct

Some of the unacceptable forms of behavior are separately discussed in more detail elsewhere in this Handbook. Other misconduct will be evaluated based on the specific facts and circumstances.

In cases where a breach involves misconduct that may violate local, state, or federal law, the School reserves the right to refer the matter to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. Additionally, where applicable, the School may be required to report the conduct to the New York State Education Department's Office of School Personnel Review and Accountability (OSPRA) for further review and potential action against the employee's certification or eligibility to work in a school setting..

Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace

Alcohol, recreational drugs (i.e., recreational/legalized marijuana) and illegal drugs in the workplace are a danger to all. They impair safety and health, promote crime, lower productivity and quality, and undermine public confidence in the quality of education provided. Employees who work while under the influence of alcohol or drugs present a safety hazard to themselves, co-workers and students, and threaten the reputation and integrity of the School.

It is the policy of the School to create a drug-free workplace in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, sale or use of a controlled substance in the workplace or while engaged in business off premises (such as at a parent's home) is strictly prohibited.

To educate employees on the dangers of drug abuse, employees may be periodically required to attend information and training sessions in the area of alcohol and illegal drug dangers, treatment resources and workplace policy.

Employees convicted of controlled-substance-related violations, including pleas of nolo contendere (i.e., no contest), must inform the School within five (5) days of such conviction or plea.

Any employee who violates any aspect of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. At its discretion, the School may require employees who violate this policy to successfully complete a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program as a condition of continued employment.

Smoking

The New York State Education Law prohibits tobacco use on school grounds. "School grounds" means any building, structure and surrounding outdoor grounds contained within a public or private pre-school, nursery school, elementary or secondary school. In the interest of safety and health, the School endorses and incorporates this prohibition. Any employee found using tobacco on school grounds will be subject to discipline.

Recording of Meetings and Conversations

To maintain a professional, respectful, and trust-based work environment, employees are prohibited from recording meetings, conversations, or workplace interactions without the prior knowledge and explicit consent of all participants.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- In-person meetings
- Virtual meetings (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams)
- Telephone or video conversations
- Informal workplace discussions

This prohibition applies regardless of whether the recording is audio, video, or electronic in nature and regardless of the device used (including personal or school-issued devices).

Unauthorized recording of meetings or conversations is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Nothing in this policy is intended to restrict legally protected activity under applicable law.

Employees who wish to record a meeting for legitimate instructional, operational, or compliance purposes must obtain prior approval from Senior Management and ensure that all participants are informed in advance.

This policy is intended to protect confidentiality, encourage open communication, and ensure that all workplace interactions are conducted in a professional and transparent manner.

USE OF FACILITIES, TELEPHONES AND COMPUTER

This policy establishes rules governing employee use of the School computer network, electronic mail ("e-mail"), internet access, and telephone message handling ("voicemail"). The School has developed these rules to ensure that everyone understands how these options function and the limits which properly apply.

Use of School Equipment:

- All School equipment, including desks, telephones, computers and computer systems, computer software, e-mail, voicemail, and other physical and electronic items, are for business use only.
- All communications and information transmitted by, received from, or stored in these systems are School records and the property of the School.
- Employees have no right of personal privacy in any matter stored in, created, received, or sent over the School computer, email, internet, or voicemail system.

School Rights:

- The School retains the right, without notice, to search all directories, indices, diskettes, files, databases, e-mail messages, voicemail messages, internet access logs, and any other electronic transmissions contained in or used in conjunction with the School computer, e-mail, voicemail, and internet access systems and equipment.
- Computer, e-mail, and voicemail messages you delete or erase may remain stored in the School computer server or telephone system.
- By placing information on the School computer system, employees give the School the right to edit, delete, copy, republish, and distribute such information.

Compliance with Policies:

- The School's Harassment policy and Confidential Information policy apply to all forms of communication, including information conveyed in writing or via e-mail and/or voicemail.

User Identification and Passwords:

- All School systems require users to identify themselves with a user ID and password to obtain network access. Unauthorized use of systems without making this identification or by bypassing this process is a violation of School policy.
- Employees should make every effort to safeguard their passwords. Sharing network access with other users is strictly prohibited.

Internet Use:

- If the School provides an employee access to an internet service such as web-browsing, such access is to be used for business use only. This restriction includes any internet service accessed on or from School premises using the School's computer equipment or via School-paid access methods and/or used in a manner that identifies the Employee with the School.

Anti-Virus Precautions:

- Employees must take necessary computer anti-virus precautions before downloading or copying any file. Employees must notify their supervisor and/or the technology department personnel of any potential computer viruses.

Prohibited Activities:

- All internet data composed, transmitted, or received is subject to disclosure to law enforcement or third parties. Therefore, all information must be accurate, appropriate, ethical, and lawful.
- Data composed, transmitted, accessed, or received must not contain content that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, pornographic, obscene, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or disruptive. Examples of unacceptable content include, but are not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any other comments or images that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religion or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.
- Sending uninvited e-mail of a personal nature is also prohibited.
- Unauthorized use, installation, copying, receipt, or distribution of copyrighted, trademarked, or patented material is prohibited.
- Deliberate alteration of system files, accessing any restricted files, creating or propagating computer viruses, causing damage to School computer files, or disrupting

computer services is prohibited.

- Making changes to computer configurations without permission from the Technology Department is strictly prohibited. This includes installing software, modifying the operating system or installed applications, adding additional hardware, or moving computer systems from their assigned locations.
- The School expressly prohibits the illegal duplication of software and its related documentation.

Disciplinary Actions:

- Any employee who violates this policy is subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
- Any employee who uses the School's technology for defamatory, illegal, or fraudulent purposes may also be subject to civil liability and criminal prosecution.

Right to Monitor:

- Employees have no right to privacy with respect to any activities using School-provided email, voicemail, or internet access and services at the School.
- The School reserves the right to review or otherwise monitor any files, messages, or communications sent, received, or stored in the School's computer or telephone systems.

Use of Copiers, Mail and Fax Systems

Employees may not use photocopiers for personal purposes. Employees may not use the School's postage meters and fax machines for personal use. Employees may not receive personal mail at the School.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

This policy has been developed in effort to ensure the school communicates clearly and consistently and whenever possible, avoids conflicts. These policies are not intended to limit creativity but to support faculty and staff through efficient systems and prevent overlap, confusion or gaps.

Family Communication**Professional Communication:**

- Communication in person, over the phone, or via email with any family members should be professional in tone.
- Whenever appropriate or requested, families should be provided with an interpreter to communicate and advocate in the language they prefer.
- All requests for interpreters should be made to the CFOO in writing at least two business days in advance of the meeting.

Logging Communication:

- All parent contact should be recorded (logged) in the Student Information System as designated.
- Please note that all communication with caregivers, as well as records of communication, are subject to collection at any time by the School Management Team and may be subpoenaed by a court of law.

Approval for Mass Distribution Documents:

- All documents produced for the purpose of mass distribution externally must be forwarded to the employee's immediate supervisor and approved by a member of the Senior Management Team in advance of distribution.
- This includes the following materials:
 - Letters to families of more than 30 students.
 - Letters to students of a group greater than one class (more than 30 students).
- Mailings include a Bulletin by school/grade and any additional items as approved by the Senior Management Team.
- All items to be included in regular mailings must be sent to the Senior Management Team (for faculty) for approval at least two weeks in advance of the mailing.
- A schedule of intended mailings will be shared. To find out when the next mailing will be sent, please contact the Senior Management Team as appropriate.

Digital Communication

With increasing use of email and other mediums, all faculty and staff should be mindful of their tone, timing and content. All emails to School Management and supervisors will be responded to within one (1) business day. If the answer is not readily available, confirmation of receipt of the email will be sent along with a timeline for the expected response.

The use of School computers and mobile devices are intended for work use only. During lunch hours, planning periods, and before and after school-hours faculty and staff must limit use of this equipment for personal business, using discretion regarding content. During work/classroom time, personal use of cell phones is strictly prohibited. Excessive use of personal email, phone or communication will be grounds for progressive discipline up to and including termination.

Internet-access filters are in place. Any websites or content blocked by these filters deemed necessary for instruction should be reported to the CFOO and/or the Technology Manager

All emails should contain subjects so they can be easily filed and relocated if necessary. Email use is not a substitute for face-to-face meetings with colleagues, and this should be kept in mind when chosen as a medium.

EMPLOYEE LAPTOPS, DESKTOPS AND PERSONAL DEVICES

With the approval from the CFOO, employees may install software on their assigned laptops or desktop computers or install personal devices such as PDA, provided, however, that no employee may install any School-owned or leased software on their personal computer systems or electronic devices, and no employee may install any of their own or others' software on the School's systems or devices, without obtaining the express written approval of the CFOO, subject to the requirements below.

Installing Software

Employees are free to install software on the machine provided they:

- Have received the expressed written approval of the CFOO
- Have purchased the software and it is registered and licensed to themselves; • Provide a copy of the licensing agreement and proof of purchase to the Technology Department; • Do

- not illegally distribute this or any other software to others;
- Understand the software will not be supported by any member of the Technology Department; and • Understand the Technology Department may determine that software they have purchased and installed is interfering with the operation of School required software programs and may require that the employee's personally purchased software be removed.

Broken Parts

Repairs generally covered by warranty will be made at no cost. For non-warranty repairs, the School will contribute, per incident, \$150 or the cost of repair, whichever is less. The employee will be required to pay for the remaining repair or replacement costs, including any labor. If the computer is out of warranty and the repair is through no fault of the employee then the equipment will be replaced at no cost to the employee.

Loss/Theft of Laptop or Accessories

Employees are responsible for keeping laptops in a secure place or in their presence at all times. Employees should report immediately the loss or theft of the computer to the School Management Team and Security. The School will cover the loss of a computer that is stolen from campus or while on official school business. In all other cases, the Employee is responsible for the replacement cost of the computer. It is the Employee's responsibility to investigate and purchase, if deemed necessary, insurance to cover this potential loss and that, if the Employee chooses to insure, the cost of insurance is to be paid solely by the Employee.

Copies of the license and proof of purchase or laptop will be maintained and filed with the Technology Department. If, at any time, any employee's laptop is found to contain unlicensed software, or software that does not have this proof of license, the technology staff will remove the software and install a security policy that will prevent future software installation.

Borrowing Equipment

The School does not lend technology equipment such as computers, projectors, or any other devices to other schools, or to for-profit or not-for-profit charter school organizations. Employees that wish to borrow technology equipment for use off campus must complete the Equipment Request Form to get permission from the Technology Manager and/or CFOO.

Allowing Others to Use School-Issued Laptop

The laptop remains the property of the School and is being made available for employee's use only. Employees may not loan this laptop to other parties such as family or friends.

Returning Assigned Laptop

The laptop is to be used while employed at the School. An employee may keep this laptop over the summer break as long as they have been invited to return for the following academic year and have signed the letter indicating intent to stay. The School reserves the right to request that a laptop be returned to the technology department for periodic check-ups and servicing. Furthermore, if the laptop cannot be found, is returned with damage, or accessories are missing, the appropriate policies governing these areas will be enforced at that time.

Traveling with School-Issued Laptop

Other than school-issued laptops, Chromebooks, or hotspots, employees are strictly prohibited from traveling with school-issued technology. All technology items must remain on site at all times or prior written consent is required by the supervisor.

Employee Owned Property

An employee who brings their personal property onto the School's premises should store it in a secured location. The School is not responsible for any loss, theft or damage to an employee's personal property.

Academic Year's End

Computers, Email Accounts, and Technology Issues Upon Separation of Employment or at the Academic Year's End.

Unless an employee receives express authorization from the Senior Management Team, all computer equipment assigned to an employee must be returned by their last day on campus unless otherwise stipulated by the School Management Team. Network and email accounts for any employee leaving before the end of the school year are terminated on the Employee's last day.

Press/Blogs**First Amendment Protections:**

- All faculty and staff are protected by the First Amendment and may speak freely to the press or participate in their personal time in any online blogs or social network sites.

Restrictions on Public Communication:

- Any publicly available communication that negatively impacts or reflects on students, staff, or the School will be grounds for progressive discipline, possible termination, and legal action.

Handling Press Inquiries:

- All calls from members of the press should be forwarded immediately to the CEO regardless of content.
- For this purpose, "Press" includes all written, broadcast, and web-based media.

Social Media**Internet Access and Usage:**

- NCHS provides employees with access to the Internet. Employees are prohibited from reading, writing, or otherwise contributing to blogs, chat rooms, online message boards, or online discussion groups during work hours or from using any School-provided equipment or systems unless such activity is directly related to and necessary for an employee to perform their job.

Personal Blogging and Online Activity:

- **Personal Time and Equipment:** Blogging or participating in online forums is a personal activity. When you are away from the office, on your own time and equipment, you may choose to read or contribute to blogs, maintain a personal blog, or participate in an online chat room, message board, or discussion group.

- **Guidelines for Responsible Blogging:** NCHS asks that you understand and respect certain guidelines for responsible blogging or other online participation:
 - Do not identify, “friend,” or otherwise connect with students on social media platforms.
 - Do not identify NCHS, management, co-workers, or students, or discuss the School or individuals in a manner that could disparage the School or its students, defame any individual associated with the School or any student, or damage the reputation of anyone associated with the School or any student.
 - If your blog post concerns your job, prominently post a disclaimer stating that you are expressing only personal opinions that are not endorsed by and do not represent the opinion or viewpoints of the School.
 - Avoid posting pictures or descriptions of conduct that would subject a teacher to school discipline as it could be detrimental to their status as an educator and could negatively impact the academic process.

Disclosures and School Representation:

- If an employee posts something favorable about the services of NCHS using any type of social media, they must disclose that they are employed by NCHS.
- Any employee engaging in social networking or blogging for legitimate business purposes (i.e., on a school-sponsored blog or media site) must get express approval of all content prior to posting.
- Employees engaged in school-authorized social networking or blogging are responsible for complying with all School policies.

Confidentiality and Proprietary Information:

- Staff may not disseminate any NCHS information that could be considered proprietary, confidential, or intellectual property.
- Staff may not use the School’s logo, graphics, trademarks, trade names, or corporate slogans except on school-sponsored media sites or blogs. It is critical to maintain the confidentiality of nonpublic School information.

Monitoring and Compliance:

- NCHS may monitor blogs or School-related chat rooms.
- Failure to abide by the above guidelines or the School’s policies may result in legal or disciplinary action by the School and others.
- If you have any questions or concerns about this Policy, please contact the

CFOO.

Cellular Telephone and Electronic Device Usage

The School is aware that employees utilize their personal, NCHS-supplied cellular telephones and other electronic devices for business purposes and for personal reasons. The use of these devices is a distraction in the workplace, causing disruptions during working time and leading to human errors and delays.

Therefore, we ask that personal use of these devices be kept to a minimum. It is best that personal telephone calls be made or received before or after working time, during lunch and/or prep time and made in a private space to ensure privacy of the matter and to avoid instructional interruptions.

Employees must make all efforts possible to avoid using their electronic devices in a public space.

Also, due to the potential for issues such as invasion of privacy, sexual harassment, and loss of productivity, no employee may operate a camera phone on NCHS property or while performing work for Northside Charter High School.

This Cellular Telephone and Electronic Device Usage policy applies to any electronic device that makes or receives phone calls, leaves messages, sends text messages, surfs the Internet, or downloads and allows for the reading of and responding to email whether the device was supplied by NCHS or personally owned.

FRATERNIZATION POLICY

Staff at NCHS form deep, lasting friendships with colleagues or members of the community, and, on occasion, more intimate social relationships may evolve. While NCHS does not strictly forbid dating or intimate relationships among consenting adults, we prohibit any intimate involvements in which one person may have undue influence over the other, particularly, when there is direct reporting or direct supervision between individuals or if the relationship could impact our service to our students. All relationships with students beyond appropriate academic or counseling interactions are strictly prohibited. Upon discovery, any such relationship will result in immediate termination and criminal prosecution if outside age of consent or other illegal issues exist.

Examples of relationships that might be prohibited include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Teacher and Member of School Leadership team
- Supervisors and direct reports
- Personnel responsible for admissions and caregivers of potential students

If an employee develops an intimate relationship with another employee or member of the NCHS community, it is very important that the relationship:

- Be disclosed immediately to the CEO and/or Board Chair;
- Does not involve direct report or supervision between intimately involved individuals;
- Is and continues to be completely voluntary and consensual;
- Is unrelated to and does not impact or interfere with professional responsibilities and duties; and
- Does not make others uncomfortable or affect their professional responsibilities.

Should a situation arise where individuals in a direct report relationship become intimately involved, we require immediate disclosure. When such situations are reported in a timely manner, NCHS will make every effort to retain both parties through appropriate and available action. In the event a suitable arrangement cannot be made, NCHS reserves the right to dismiss one or both parties at its discretion, subject to the policies and procedures governing employee dismissal. Failure to disclose such a relationship shall result in disciplinary action for any involved staff member(s).

In cases where the conduct may reflect a breach of ethical or professional standards, or where the behavior may impact an employee's fitness to work in a school setting, the School reserves the right to refer the matter to the New York State Education Department's Office of School Personnel Review and Accountability (OSPRA) for further investigation and potential disciplinary action at the state level.

MEETINGS, EVENTS AND INVITATIONS

All events/meetings scheduled for engaging or informing families or community members must be scheduled through the School Management Team. This includes meetings, workshops and social events (This does not apply to events that are for students only). All events and documents should work to include translation and interpretation into the most commonly spoken languages in each school. For this reason, all require advance preparation. Except in the case of emergency, all documents and events must be prepared for at least 2 weeks in advance through the School Management Team. Please ensure draft documents are written in language that can accommodate swift and clear translation (no jargon or colloquialisms). An employee should contact their supervisor to initiate scheduling an event before reaching out to the School Management Team for support.

Visitors in the Workplace

All visitors for the day will be listed on the daily security manifest and be required to have a security-issued ID at all times.

Leaving Campus

During planning periods, teaching periods, professional development time and lunch hours, all staff must be accounted for, for safety reasons. To that end, all staff must inform their supervisor when leaving and when returning to the building. Staff must also alert the Director of Technology and Operations so that an accurate count is available in case of emergency.

Staff Leaving Campus to Attend Students Games/Functions

Employees wishing to attend students' games and activities that take place outside of the building must alert their supervisor and CFOO via email by 1pm the day of such events.

Please note that attending the students' games and activities should not interfere with any of the employees' classes and other responsibilities per their domain.

Supervisors are responsible for monitoring and enforcing all personnel policies. If there is questionable action or performance in relation to any personnel policies or procedures the respective supervisor/manager will hold a personal, private discussion with the employee to advise and counsel the employee regarding the issue and method for improvement and the timeline for review.

Emergency Drill and Response Responsibilities

The School conducts various emergency drills throughout the year, including but not limited to evacuation (fire), lockdown, lockout, and shelter-in-place drills. All staff and students are expected to follow established procedures for each type of drill.

Evacuation (Fire Drill):

Faculty and staff must promptly evacuate the building using designated routes, proceed to assigned locations, report attendance, and carry out assigned roles. Students must evacuate in an orderly manner, proceed to their assigned area, and line up as directed.

Lockdown:

In the event of a lockdown, staff must immediately secure students in classrooms or designated spaces, ensure doors are locked, cover door windows if applicable, remain out of sight, and

maintain a quiet environment until the all-clear is given.

Lockout / Secure Perimeter:

When a potential threat exists outside the building, all exterior doors will be secured. Staff and students must remain inside the building and continue normal operations while following any additional instructions provided.

Shelter-in-Place:

In situations requiring shelter-in-place, staff and students must remain indoors and follow specific instructions based on the nature of the emergency (e.g., environmental hazard), including sealing rooms or relocating as directed.

It is essential that all drills are taken seriously. Staff and students must remain attentive, follow directions, and maintain appropriate behavior, including silence when required, to ensure preparedness for real emergency situations.

Staff Outside the Building During Emergency Conditions

In the event of a lockdown or shelter-in-place, any staff member who is outside of the building at the time the emergency is initiated must not attempt to re-enter the building unless explicitly directed to do so by school leadership or emergency responders.

Staff should immediately move to the nearest safe and secure location away from the building, remain alert to their surroundings, and await further instructions. If safe to do so, staff should notify the School of their status and location.

Staff must follow all directions provided by emergency personnel and school leadership and should not take independent action that could place themselves or others at risk.

ATHLETIC CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

The School encourages staff to organize student based after-school programs and activities as these activities are an effective way to keep children safe and supervised. It is also an opportunity to further engage students in academic, social, and physical activities. However, to ensure maximum safety and cooperation of our students; coaches/activity advisors must:

- Follow the guidelines outlined in the Coaches, Clubs and Special Events Coordinators Guide.
- Notify the Director of Student Experience and Community Engagement of all activities as the school occupies a shared-space campus and prior approval/permits must be acquired prior to the event planned.
- If a permit is required, please submit the request at least 3 weeks in advance to the Director of Student Experience and Community Engagement and/or the Director of Technology and Operations.
- Send an updated list of students that are registered and are cleared for participation in the activity on a weekly basis.
- Send all posters of event/activity flyers to the Director of Student Experience and Community Engagement and CSSO for approval before being posted.
- Inform the Senior Management Team via email if an athletic event requires students' early dismissal from school.
- If students are participating in a club/activity during the lunch period, they must be supervised in the classroom. They must not loiter in the hallways. And if they need to utilize

- the bathroom, they must have a pass.
- Always inform the caregiver of all activities at all times. Caregivers forget—and then the burden will fall on the faculty advisor of that particular club/activity.
- Clubs/Activities/Athletics are a privilege, thus please hold your student-participants accountable for their behavior, character, missed academic assignments and all other required elements of the program(s) and the NCHS Core Values of Commitment, Accountability, Integrity and Respect.
- Submit weekly timesheets by 8am every Monday.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Employment shall not be offered as a consideration or reward for the political support of any political party or candidate for public office. Furthermore, no employee may engage in any political activity at any time as a representative of NCHS. This will be kept in the file of each employee. No employee may use work time, property or materials of NCHS to try to affect proposed legislation. NCHS may respond to requests for information from local, state and federal officials. All such responses shall be issued from the CEO. Should an employee be invited to testify at a hearing or other activity, permission shall be obtained from the CEO prior to such participation and testimony.

AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act provides civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.

The School will comply with the requirement to provide reasonable accommodation(s) to any qualified employee or applicant with a known disability to the extent required by law.

Individuals who believe they need accommodation to perform the essential functions of their jobs should submit a written request to the CFOO with appropriate medical documentation to support their request. Employees requesting an accommodation may be required to provide medical certification from the employee's health care provider that includes: (1) identification of the health care provider; (2) the health care provider's diagnosis of the disabling condition; (3) specific limitations and/or suggested restrictions and their relation to the disability; and (4) suggested accommodations. Consideration of a request for an accommodation may be delayed or denied if the appropriate documentation is not provided in a timely manner.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT

Consistent with federal Occupational Safety and Health Act ("OSHA") and New York's Public Employee Safety and Health Act ("PESH") requirements and to protect the well-being of employees, the School recognizes a need to limit the potential harmful effects of occupational exposure to blood and other potentially infectious bodily fluids where exposure to these materials could result in infection, illness or death of employees. The Health Safety policy covers all employees but particularly those who may reasonably anticipate coming into contact with these materials as a result of their job duties. If an employee's job duties may put them into this category, the School will provide that employee with appropriate information.

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

General

The School requires its employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics, as such personal ethics relate to the organization, in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. Employees and representatives of the School must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

The matters which should be reported under this policy include suspected fraud, theft, embezzlement, accounting or auditing irregularities, bribery, kickbacks, misuse of the School's assets or suspected regulatory, compliance, or ethics-related issues, concerns or violations. Violations of the School's applicable human resources policies, problems with co-workers or supervisors, or issues related to alleged employment discrimination or sexual harassment, or any other form of unlawful harassment, should be dealt with in accordance with other sections of this Handbook, as it is those policies and procedures that are applicable to such matters.

Reporting Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all directors, officers and employees to report in good faith violations or suspected violations of high business and personal ethical standards, as such personal ethics relate to the organization, and/or applicable legal requirements ("Violations") in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy.

No Retaliation

No director, officer or employee who in good faith reports a Violation shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequences because of such a report. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a Violation in good faith is subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the School prior to seeking resolution outside the School.

Reporting Violations

Employees with questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints regarding the ethical and legal standards noted above should complete a complaint form and submit it to the School's Board of Trustees. The Members of the Board of Trustees are responsible for investigating and resolving all reported Violations and shall advise the Chair of the School's Board of Trustees, and the Finance Committee of all reported complaints and allegations of violations.

Accounting and Auditing Concerns

The Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls, or auditing. The Finance Committee shall immediately notify the Finance Committee of any such complaint and work with the Board of Trustees until

the matter is resolved. Prompt upon receipt, the Board of Trustees shall evaluate whether a complaint constitutes an accounting complaint, and if so, shall promptly determine what professional assistance, if any, it needs in order to conduct an investigation. The Board of Trustees will be free in its sole discretion to engage outside auditors, counsel, or other experts to assist in the investigation and in the analysis of results.

Investigations

The Board of Trustees may delegate the responsibility to investigate a reported Violation, whether relating to accounting and auditing matters or otherwise, to one or more employees of the School or to any other individual, including persons not employed by the School selected by the Board of Trustees; provided that the Board of Trustees may not delegate such responsibility to an employee or other individual who is the subject of the reported Violation or in a manner that would compromise either the identity of an employee who reported the Violation anonymously or the confidentiality of the complaint or resulting investigation. Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, the scope, manner and parameters of any investigation of a reported Violation shall be determined by the Finance Committee in its sole discretion and the School and its employees will cooperate as necessary in connection with any such investigation.

Confidentiality

In making a complaint or submission, an employee of the School may request that such complaint be treated in a confidential manner (including that the School take reasonable steps to ensure that the identity of the employee making the complaint remains anonymous). The School takes seriously its responsibility to enforce this Whistleblower Policy and therefore encourages any employee reporting a Violation to identify him or herself so as to facilitate any resulting investigation. Employees may, however, submit complaints on an anonymous basis. Reports of Violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a Violation must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed may indicate a violation of such standards. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

Handling of Reported Violations

The Board Chair or their designee will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five (5) business days, but only to the extent the sender's identity is disclosed or a return address is provided. All reports will be promptly investigated, the scope of any such investigation being within the sole discretion of the Finance Committee, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

Records

The Finance Committee will retain on a strictly confidential basis for a period of seven years (or otherwise as required under the School's record retention policies in effect from time to time) all records relating to any complaint and to the investigation and resolution thereof. All such records shall be considered privileged and confidential.

Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, this Whistleblower Policy is not an employment contract and does not modify the employment relationship between the School and its employees, nor does it change the fact that employees of the School are employees at-will. Nothing contained herein provides any director, officer, or employee of the School with any additional rights or causes of action, other than those provided by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of

2002.

Employee Arrest and Criminal Charges Policy

Northside Charter High School (NCHS) is committed to maintaining a safe, lawful, and professional environment for students and staff. This policy outlines employees' obligations to report arrests and criminal charges, and describes the School's response procedures in compliance with New York State and New York City laws.

Reporting Requirements

1. Mandatory Employee Notification

- a. Employees must report any arrest, criminal charge, or conviction to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Chief Financial and Operations Officer (CFOO) within 24 hours or as soon as practicable.
- b. Notification must be in writing and include:
 - i. The date of the arrest
 - ii. The law enforcement agency involved
 - iii. The nature of the charge(s)
 - iv. The status of any pending legal proceedings

2. Failure to Notify

- a. Failure to report an arrest or criminal charge as required may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

School Reporting to NYSED

1. OSPRA (NYSED Office of School Personnel Review and Accountability)

- a. NCHS will report arrests and criminal charges to OSPRA to comply with:
 - i. Education Law §3035.
 - ii. Commissioner's Regulations Part 87 (Fingerprinting and Criminal History).
 - iii. Part 83 (Moral Character) for certified employees.
- b. Reports will be made in writing to:
 - i. OSPRA (ospa@nysed.gov).
 - ii. For certified employees: Moral Character Unit (moralcharacter@nysed.gov).

2. NYSED Charter Authorizer Liaison

- a. NCHS will also notify the School's assigned NYSED Charter School Office liaison promptly upon learning of an arrest, providing:
 - i. The general nature of the charges.

- ii. The employee's position.
 - iii. Actions taken by the School (e.g., administrative leave).
- b. This notification fulfills the School's obligations under its Charter Agreement and Charter School Performance Framework.

Administrative Leave and Investigatory Action

1. NCHS reserves the right to place any employee on **administrative leave, with or without pay**, pending further investigation or the resolution of criminal proceedings.
2. The employee may be temporarily reassigned or removed from duties involving student contact during this period.
3. Placement on administrative leave does not constitute a presumption of wrongdoing or a disciplinary action.

Fair Chance Act Compliance and Individualized Assessment

In compliance with the **NYC Fair Chance Act** and **New York State Human Rights Law Article 23-A**, NCHS will not take adverse action solely based on an arrest or pending criminal charge unless:

1. There is a direct relationship between the alleged conduct and the employee's job duties, **or**
2. Continuing employment would involve an unreasonable risk to property, the safety of students or staff, or the welfare of the school community.

Before making a final employment decision, NCHS will:

- Conduct an **individualized assessment** that considers:
 - The specific responsibilities of the position
 - The nature and seriousness of the offense
 - The time elapsed since the alleged conduct
 - Evidence of rehabilitation or good conduct
 - The employee's work history and performance
 - The legitimate interests of protecting students and complying with applicable law
- Provide the employee with:
 - A written notice of the potential adverse action and the reasons
 - A copy of any criminal history or background information used in making the decision
 - A reasonable opportunity to respond and submit additional information prior to a final determination

Fingerprint Clearance and Certification

- All employees must maintain valid fingerprint clearance through NYSED.

- Any arrest, charge, or conviction may impact clearance or certification.
- If NYSED suspends or revokes clearance or certification, the employee's employment with NCHS will terminate immediately.

Impact on Employment

- If charges are dismissed or resolved without conviction, NCHS may still take appropriate action based on the underlying conduct or other relevant circumstances.
- Conviction of certain serious offenses—including crimes involving children, violence, sexual misconduct, or significant fraud—may result in termination of employment.

Confidentiality

Information regarding arrests or criminal charges will be treated as confidential and disclosed only to those with a legitimate need to know, including NYSED, the School's authorizer, and legal counsel, as required.

Questions and Reporting

Questions about this policy should be directed to the CEO or CFOO. Reports of arrests or criminal charges must be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial and Operations Officer.

How to Report an Employee Arrest to NYSED

1. If the Employee Is Certified (e.g. teacher, school leader with a certificate):
 - Moral Character Unit (OPMC):

Under Part 83 of Commissioner's Regulations, you must report any arrest, indictment, criminal conviction, or other conduct that may reflect on the employee's moral character.
 - How to Report:
 - Send written notification to:
New York State Education Department
Office of School Personnel Review and Accountability (OSPRA) – Moral Character Unit
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234
Phone: (518) 474-6400
Email: moralcharacter@nysed.gov
 - Include:
 - Employee's full name
 - Last 4 digits of SSN or TEACH ID
 - Date and nature of the arrest or charge

- Any supporting documentation (arrest record, indictment, police report if available)

Note: You are not required to wait for a conviction. NYSED wants timely notification.

2. If the Employee Is Fingerprinted/Background Cleared but Not Certified:

- OSPRA also monitors fingerprint clearances under Education Law §3035 and Commissioner's Regulations Part 87.
- Generally, arrests or convictions are automatically reported by DCJS (Division of Criminal Justice Services) to NYSED, who in turn notify your school.
- If you learn of an arrest before NYSED notifies you, it is good practice to proactively inform OSPRA.

You can contact:

OSPRA

Email: ospa@nysed.gov

Phone: (518) 473-2998

3. For Charter Schools:

- Your Charter Authorizer liaison (e.g., SUNY CSI, NYC DOE Charter School Office) may also require notification.
- It's recommended you inform your authorizer when an arrest involves:
 - Violence
 - Child endangerment
 - Sexual misconduct
 - Fraud/theft
 - Any other conduct that raises fitness or safety concerns
- Keep written records of all notifications.

ETHICS/CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Employees have an obligation to conduct their affairs within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. Actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for them, for a relative, or for anyone else who has a close personal relationship with the employee as a result of School business dealings. For the purpose of this policy, a relative or a person with a close personal relationship is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

No "presumption of guilt" is created by the mere existence of a relationship with an outside firm or vendor. However, if an employee has any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts, or supplies, the employee must disclose that relationship to the School immediately so that safeguards can be established to protect all parties.

Common conflicts which employees should avoid include, but are not limited to:

- Using proprietary or confidential information for personal gain or to the School's detriment;
- Directly or indirectly accepting gifts, loans, services, entertainment, etc., of more than a minimal value from a vendor or someone seeking to do business with the School (as noted in the Ban on Acceptance of Gifts section);
- Using the School's assets or labor for personal use; and
- Instances where an employee or an employee's relative, or someone with a close personal relationship, has a significant ownership in the vendor or firm with which the School does business.

If the School finds that any employee has engaged in any conduct, which presents a conflict of interest with the School, such employee is subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

All employees will receive and be responsible for compliance with the School's Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy.

CHILD ABUSE

All School staff have a legal and ethical obligation to report any suspected incidents of child abuse or maltreatment. When a staff member has reasonable cause to suspect that a child may be abused or maltreated - whether the concern arises from direct observation, disclosure, or other information - a report must be made. If there is any doubt as to whether a situation warrants a report, staff should err on the side of caution and proceed with making the report. Employees who report suspected abuse or maltreatment in good faith are protected by law and are immune from civil and criminal liability, even if the report is later determined to be unsubstantiated or unfounded. The safety and well-being of students must always be the first priority.

Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse

Child Abuse or Maltreatment Pursuant to §411 et. seq. of the Social Services Law

Pursuant to §413 of the Social Services Law, school officials are required to report instances of suspected child abuse or maltreatment to the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment ("SCR"). A hotline has been established for reporting by mandated reporters, which include school officials. The hotline number is 1-800-635-1522.

Child "abuse" occurs when a parent or other person legally responsible for the child inflicts serious physical injury upon the child, creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury, or commits a sex offense against the child. In addition, the definition includes instances where the parent (or person legally responsible) knowingly allowed another to inflict such harm.

Child "maltreatment" (which includes neglect) occurs when a child's physical, mental, or emotional condition has been impaired, or is in imminent danger of impairment, by the parent's (or other person legally responsible for the child) failure to exercise a minimum degree of care by (1) failing to provide sufficient food, clothing, shelter or education; (2) failing to provide proper supervision, guardianship, or medical care; or (3) inflicting excessive corporal punishment, abandoning the child, or misusing alcohol or other drugs and, in doing so, cause the child to be placed in imminent danger.

As mandated reporters, school officials are required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment when they have reasonable cause to suspect either has occurred. "Reasonable

cause” to suspect child abuse or maltreatment means that, based on a school official’s rational observations, professional training, and experience, the official suspects that the parent or other person legally responsible for the child has harmed the child or placed the child in imminent danger of harm.

The following procedures should be followed in reporting instances of child abuse and maltreatment:

- If a School employee learns of or suspects a situation of abuse or maltreatment of a student by their parent or person legally responsible for the student’s care, the employee must report the situation to the School immediately. It should be reported to the employee’s supervisor, the student’s school counselor, and any leader on the Senior Management Team.
- If, based on the employee’s report, the School reasonably believes that abuse or maltreatment has occurred, the School must immediately call the SCR hotline at 1-800-635-1522 and make a verbal report.
- The School should ask the SCR representative his or her name and the “Call I.D.” • Within 24 hours of the School’s verbal report to the SCR hotline, he/she must complete and submit to SCR mandated reporter form “LDSS-2221A”. Form LDSS-2221A may be obtained from the CFOO’s office, or from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services website at: www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/forms or by calling (518) 472-0971.
- If a school official is uncertain about whether a situation rises to the level of abuse or maltreatment, the official should contact the hotline to discuss the matter with a trained SCR specialist. • The School shall document for their confidential file the events, conversations, and facts associated with an allegation of child abuse or neglect, whether or not those circumstances rise to the level of reasonable suspicion that cause him/her to make a report to SCR.
- All information relating to reports of child abuse or maltreatment shall be strictly confidential.

Child Abuse in the Educational Setting Pursuant to Education Law Article 23-B.

Pursuant to New York Education Law §1126, and the regulations of the Commissioner of Education (8 N.Y.C.R.R. 100.2(hh)), any oral or written allegation to a teacher, school nurse, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, administrator, board member, or other school personnel required to hold a teacher or administrator license or certificate, as well as a licensed and registered physical therapist, licensed and registered occupational therapist, licensed and registered speech-language pathologist, teacher aide or school resource officer, that a child has been subjected to child abuse by an employee or volunteer in an educational setting, shall promptly make a report, on a form provided by the Commissioner of Education, consisting of the following:

- The full name of the child alleged to be abused.
- The name of the child’s parent.
- The identity of the person making the allegation and their relationship to the alleged child victim.
- The name of the employee or volunteer against whom the allegation is made.
- A listing of the specific allegations.

The report must immediately be given to the School Management Team. The report and all other written materials, photographs, and/or videos concerning the allegation and report are strictly confidential and may only be disclosed to law enforcement authorities involved in the investigation of the alleged child abuse, or as expressly authorized by law or pursuant to a

court-ordered subpoena. Willful disclosure to a confidential record to an unauthorized person is a class A misdemeanor.

The duties of administrators upon receipt of a written report alleging child abuse in an educational setting, where the administrator has a reasonable suspicion that an act of child abuse has occurred, shall be as follows:

- If the alleged child-victim made the report, promptly notify the parent of the allegation and provide the parent with a written statement pursuant to §100.2(hh) of the Commissioner's Regulations setting forth the duties of employees and administrators upon receipt of the allegation, additional duties of superintendents, notification by the district attorney pursuant to Education Law §1130, and actions to be taken upon criminal conviction of a licensed or certified school employee pursuant to Education Law §1131.
- If the parent made the allegation, promptly provide the parent with the above-referenced written statement.
- If someone other than the child-victim or parent made the report, ascertain from the reporting person the source and basis of the allegation, promptly notify the parent and provide the parent with the requisite written statement.
- If a public school administrator received the written report alleging abuse, the administrator must promptly provide the superintendent with a copy of the report as well.
- A report of child abuse in an educational setting must be promptly forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- The School shall forward the report of child abuse to the Commissioner of Education if the accused employee or volunteer holds a license or certification issued by the New York State Education Department.
- Any child abuse report that does not, after investigation, result in criminal conviction shall be expunged after five (5) years or at such earlier time that the School determines.

If the alleged abuse was by an employee or volunteer of a school other than one within the school district of the child's attendance, the report must be forwarded promptly to the superintendent of the other district.

Moreover, at least annually, the School shall provide training to all mandated reporters, including all new teachers, school nurses, guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, administrators, board members, and other school personnel required to hold a teacher or administrator license or certificate regarding requirements of reporting of child abuse in an educational setting. Such training programs shall be in compliance with Education Law Article 23-B and the regulations of the Commissioner of Education (8 N.Y.C.R.R. 100.2(hh)).

CERTIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF PERSONNEL HANDBOOK

I have received a copy of the Northside Charter High School's Personnel Handbook and understand that I am responsible for becoming familiar with the policies described in it. I understand that the information contained in the Handbook represents management guidelines only, which may be modified from time to time. I understand that neither the Handbook's policies, nor any representations made by a management representative at the time of hire, or subsequently, are to be interpreted as a contract between the School and any of its employees. I further understand that my employment is voluntarily entered into, that I am free to resign at any time and that the School may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason or no reason at all, with or without cause, and with or without notice.



Personnel Handbook

Print Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____