

STAFF HANDBOOK

2007-2008



Harmony Science Academy
Austin

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NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of Harmony Science Academy not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

It is the policy of Harmony Science Academy not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its employment practices as required by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Harmony Science Academy will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

1. Purpose

Harmony Science Academy ("the Academy") has adopted certain employment policies and procedures, which are contained in this personnel handbook. This personnel handbook is effective as of the 20th day of August 2005.

The policies in this handbook are a source of information for employees who have questions about the Academy's personnel practices. These policies are not contractual in nature and may be unilaterally rescinded, revised, or added to by the Academy from time to time. Additionally, although management generally will follow these policies, the Principal/Director may, in his or her sole discretion, authorize deviations from or exceptions to these policies if, in the Principal's/Director's opinion, such a deviation or exception is warranted under the circumstances. The provisions of this handbook control over any contrary statements, representations, or assurances by any supervisory personnel.

This handbook is not to be construed as or declared to be a contract of employment by any employee of the Academy. Absent a written contract, Harmony Science Academy is an at-will employer. As an at-will employee, any employee may voluntarily leave employment or may be terminated by the Academy at any time, for any or no reason, with or without notice.

This personnel handbook is the property of the Academy. All employees and trainees will be provided with a copy of the handbook and will be required to read and abide by it. While the Academy intends to notify employees whenever there has been a significant modification or addition to any of the policies in the handbook, the policies are subject to change at any time, with or without notice, at the Academy's sole discretion.

2. Code of Ethics

An effective educational program requires the services of men and women of integrity, high ideals, and human understanding. To maintain and promote these essentials, the Academy expects all professional staff members to maintain high standards in their working relationships, and in the performance of their professional duties, to:

- A. recognize basic dignities of all individuals with whom they interact in the performance of duties;
- B. represent accurately their qualifications;
- C. exercise due care to protect the mental and physical safety of students, colleagues, and subordinates;
- D. understand and apply the knowledge and skills appropriate to assigned responsibilities;
- E. keep in confidence legally confidential information as they may secure;
- F. ensure that their actions or those of another on their behalf are not made with the specific intent of advancing private economic interests; refrain from using position or public property, or permitting another person to use an employee's position or public property for partisan political or religious purposes. (This will in no way limit constitutionally or legally protected rights as a citizen.);
- G. avoid accepting anything of value offered by another for the purpose of influencing judgment.

3. Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency (e.g. state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering a facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to a local office or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400). Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent.

Please note: a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Educators Code of Ethics and prosecution for the commission of a Class B misdemeanor.

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agencies. In addition, employees must cooperate with child abuse and neglect investigators. Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report to the appropriate state agency. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the investigator is prohibited.

4. Staff Dress and Grooming

The Board of the Governing Body (Cosmos Foundation) (the Board) believes that all staff members set an example in dress and grooming for their students to follow. A professional staff member who understands this precept and adheres to it enlarges the importance of his/her task, presents an image of dignity, and encourages respect for authority. These factors act in a positive manner toward the maintenance of discipline.

The Board retains the authority to specify the following dress and grooming guidelines for staff that will prevent such matters from having an adverse impact on the educational process.

Faculty and staff members are expected to dress in a professional and appropriate manner. The campus principal and/or supervisor will be solely responsible for initially interpreting and enforcing the faculty/staff dress requirements; questions concerning dress requirements may be appealed as provided by Board Policy.

Employees will keep themselves neatly groomed and dressed and will keep their hair neat and clean. Grooming and dress that will disturb, interfere with, or detract from the educational process will not be allowed. "Neatly groomed and dressed" shall be defined as dress and grooming that is standard and conforms to local community and school district etiquette and decorum. It is within these principles that Harmony Science Academy will enforce the following dress code items, specifically but not limited to:

1. No Shorts, Wind Pants/Shorts, or Warm-Ups may be worn on any school-day (i.e., a day for which a person is being paid) except for:
 - A. P. E. class (but not worn in the regular classroom)
 - B. Field-based, Class Activity Days (but not worn in the regular classroom).

2. No Jeans of any color may be worn on any school-day (i.e., a day for which a person is being paid) except for:
 - A. Campus Designated Days (designation is done by the administration); and
 - B. Field-based Activities (but not worn in the regular classroom).
3. Male Grooming:
Hair length is the same as student grooming code and must be neatly trimmed and no earrings may be worn. Men must always wear business shirt.
4. Female Dress:
 - A. Short and mini skirts are prohibited. Skirt and dress length is not less than three inches from the top of the kneecap (below kneecap);
 - B. Fitted leggings and spandex-type leggings are not permitted as outer wear; they may be worn under a dress, skirt or tunic top provided that outer wear meets the student skirt and dress code length requirements. Loose-fitting stirrup pants and loose-fitting leggings are permitted.
 - C. Dress culottes, skorts, and split skirts must meet the student dress and skirt code length requirements. These are clothes that have the appearance of a skirt in the front but are split.
 - D. Appropriate undergarments must be worn at all times.
 - E. Clothing that exposes cleavage, private parts, the midriff or undergarment is prohibited.
 - F. Tight clothing exposing body parts is prohibited.
 - G. Capri pants are not acceptable on any school day except on a workday and field day.
 - H. Women must be in business attire.
5. Shirts, Blouses, and Tops
 - A. All tops (etc.) shall cover the back and stomach. No skin is to show at the waist.
 - B. Shirts and blouses must be buttoned appropriately.
6. Shoes
 - A. No sandals, slippers, flip-flops or thongs
7. Pants/Slacks
 - A. Pants must be worn with a belt, unless designed without belt loops.
8. Jewelry and Other Accessories
 - A. All tattoos shall be covered and hidden from view.
 - B. Jewelry used in conjunction with body piercing (such as nose rings, eyebrow or tongue studs) is prohibited.

5. Drug-Free Workplace

The board believes that quality education is not possible in an environment affected by drugs. It will seek, therefore, to establish and maintain an educational setting which is not tainted by the use or evidence of use of any controlled substance.

The board shall not permit the manufacture, possession, use, distribution, or dispensing of any controlled substance, including alcohol, by any member of the professional staff at any time while on school property or while involved in any school-related activity or event. Any staff member who violates this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Board policy.

The District prohibits the unlawful distribution, possession, or use of illicit drugs and alcohol on school premises or as part of any of the District's activities.

Harmony Science Academy is committed to maintaining a drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of illegal drugs in the workplace. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Such sanctions may include referral to drug and alcohol counseling or rehabilitation programs or employee assistance programs, termination from employment with the District, and referral to appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution.

Compliance with these requirements and prohibitions is mandatory and is a condition of employment. Board policy establishes standards of conduct for District employees. (This notice complies with notice requirements imposed by the federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989, 20 U.S.C. 3224a and 34 CFR 86.201.)

Liability-Report of Drug Offense:

Teachers, school administrators, or school employees are not liable in civil damages for reporting to a school administrator or governmental authority a student whom the teacher suspects of using, passing, or selling on school property, marijuana or a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, an abusable glue or aerosol paint, a volatile chemical, or an alcoholic beverage.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing:

Noninvestigatory searches in the workplace, including accessing an employee's desk, file, cabinets, classroom or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes may occur when an employee is unavailable. Therefore, employees are hereby notified that they have no legitimate expectation of privacy in those places. In addition, the district reserves the right to conduct searches when there is reasonable cause to believe a search will uncover evidence of work-related misconduct. Such an investigatory search may include drug and alcohol testing if the suspected violation relates to drug or alcohol use. The district may search the employee, the employee's personal items, work areas, lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or worksites or used in district business.

Employees required to have a commercial driver's license:

The purpose of alcohol and drug testing is to ensure safety and prevent accidents and injuries resulting from the misuse of alcohol and drugs by drivers of commercial motor vehicles. Any employee who is required to have a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to drug and alcohol testing. This includes all drivers who operate a motor vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people, counting the driver; drivers of large vehicles; or drivers of vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials. Teachers, coaches, or other employees who primarily perform duties other than driving are subject to testing requirements when their duties include driving.

Alcohol and drug tests may be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted following accidents. Return-to-duty and follow-up testing will be conducted when an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs return to duty.

All employees required to have a CDL who are subject to alcohol and drug testing will receive a copy of the district's policy, the testing requirements, and detailed information on alcohol and drug abuse and the availability of assistance programs. Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact the school administration.

6. Policy Statement Against Sexual Harassment and Harassment

Because Harmony Science Academy believes in the dignity of each person and values working in conditions that enhance that dignity, Harmony Science Academy views sexual harassment and coercive sexual advances as unacceptable in the school workplace. Such behavior will not be tolerated or condoned.

Sexual Harassment:

Employee-to-Employee: Sexual harassment of a coworker is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct under the following conditions:

- Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions
- The conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or otherwise offensive work environment

Employees who believe that they have been sexually harassed by another employee are encouraged to come forward with complaints. The district will promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment and will take prompt and appropriate disciplinary action against employees found to have engaged in conduct constituting sexual harassment of other employees.

Employee-to-Student: Sexual harassment of students by employees is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. Sexual harassment of students includes any welcome or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other oral, written, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature. Romantic relationships between district employees and students are strictly prohibited, regardless of the age of the student. Other prohibited conduct includes the following:

- Engaging in sexually-oriented conversations for the purpose of personal sexual gratification
- Telephoning students at home or elsewhere and engaging in inappropriate social relationships
- Engaging in physical contact that would reasonably be construed as sexual in nature
- Enticing or threatening students to get them to engage in sexual behavior in exchange for grades or other school-related benefits

In most instances, sexual abuse of a student by an employee violates the student's constitutional right to bodily integrity. Sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to, fondling, sexual assault, or sexual intercourse.

Employees who suspect a student is being sexually harassed or abused by another employee are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal. All allegations of sexual harassment or sexual abuse of a student will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. Conduct that may be characterized as known or suspected child abuse also must be reported to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. Employees with questions or concerns relating to the alleged sexual harassment of a student should contact the principal.

Harassment:

Harassment of a coworker or student motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. A substantial charge of harassment against a student or employee shall result in disciplinary action. The term harassment includes repeated unwelcome and offensive slurs, jokes, or other oral, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment.

Employees who believe they have been harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal or supervisor. If the campus principal or supervisor is the subject of a complaint, the employee shall report the complaint directly to the superintendent. An employee who suspects or knows that a student is being harassed by a school employee or by another student shall inform his or her principal or immediate supervisor.

Any allegation of harassment of students or employees shall be investigated and addressed. An employee may appeal the decision of the principal or supervisor regarding the investigation into the allegations in accordance with the employee complaint and grievance policy and procedures (See *Complaints and Grievances* section). To the greatest extent possible, complaints shall be treated as confidential. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. The district will not retaliate against an employee who in good faith reports perceived harassment.

7. Solicitation and Distribution

There will be no soliciting of employees by other employees or any person anywhere on Academy property unless prior approval is obtained in writing from the Principal/Director. This includes selling and delivery of merchandise (e.g., Girl Scout cookies, Tupperware, or tickets to fundraising events) and/or the distribution of literature, petitions, etc.

8. Intellectual Property Rights

Any materials created by staff members for use by HE, or produced using the staff or resources of the school, are works-for-hire and all intellectual property rights are vested in the school.

9. Equal Employment Opportunity

The Board of Cosmos Foundation and its agents, employees or administrators shall not discriminate in the payment of wages on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin or ancestry by paying wages to any employee at a rate less than the rate at which wages are paid to any other employee for equal work on jobs which require equal skill, effort and responsibility and which are performed under similar conditions, unless payment is made pursuant to the following:

- A. a seniority system;
- B. a merit system;
- C. a system which measures earnings by the quantity or quality of production;
- D. a wage rate differential determined by any factor other than race, color, religious, sex, age, national origin or ancestry.

10. Hiring and Rehiring Standards

HE believes that the quality of the professional staff determines the quality of education offered in the school. It is therefore the responsibility of the school Principal/Director to locate, recruit and rehire the best qualified teachers to meet the school's educational needs.

Staff evaluation and selection shall be based on; ♦Strong academic preparation, ♦Professional competence, ♦Intellectual rigor, ♦Emotional maturity, ♦Enthusiastic professional attitude, ♦Knowledge of instructional practices, ♦Ability to contribute to the furtherance of the school's educational goals.

Attention shall be paid, among other factors, to the candidate's academic records, and his/her previous relevant experience.

Staff must demonstrate that they are aware that children have many different family circumstances and that they are willing and able to provide the educational support that a diverse student population needs in school.

The HE teaching staff members must fulfill their individual responsibilities and work in concert with the other members of the teaching team.

The Principal/Director of the school will be responsible for evaluation of the teachers and also advertising available jobs and soliciting applications from new qualified candidates.

The Principal/Director will evaluate the teachers and screen all applicants for vacancies and make recommendations to The Personnel Committee for hiring/rehiring. By a majority of votes, the Board shall approve employment for hiring/rehiring with the salary.

HE is committed to hire/rehire the individuals who are best qualified for the job without regard to race, sex, religion, age, nationality or handicap unrelated to the job.

Performance Evaluation

Evaluation of an employee's job performance should be a continual process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor at least annually. Written evaluations will be completed on forms approved by the district. Reports, correspondence, and memoranda also can be used to document performance information. All employees will receive a copy of their written evaluation, have a performance conference with their supervisor, and get the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

11. Personnel Files

Personnel File. The Academy personnel office maintains an official permanent record file for each employee.

Contents. Only that information which pertains to the professional role of the employee and is submitted by duly authorized school administrative personnel and the Board may be entered in the official record file. This file should contain the following items and other employment documents and records:

◆ Application; ◆ Employment contract; ◆ Retirement registration; ◆ Applications for health insurance; ◆ Resume; ◆ Reference letters; ◆ Signed Consent Form for Fingerprinting Records Checks; ◆ Records Check; ◆ Certificates (copies); ◆ I-9 Immigration Form (completed after employment); ◆ W-4 forms; ◆ Copy of Disclaimer/Receipt of School Handbook.

Employee Inspection Rights. Upon request, the employee will be allowed to inspect his or her own file. Under state law employee has the right to copy his/her file, except for pre-employment recommendations and records and such other information as may be privileged under law and not subject to employee inspection.

Employees who wish to review their own personnel **file** shall: request access in writing; review the record in the presence of the administrator designated to maintain said records or designee; make no alterations or additions to the record nor remove any material there from.

Employees who wish copies of material in their personnel file shall: request copies in writing; pay a copying fee of ten (10) cents per page.

Employees wishing to appeal material in their record shall make a request in writing to the Principal/Director and specify therein: name and date; materials to be appealed; reason for appeal. The Principal/Director shall make a determination within ninety (90) days of the appeal.

Employment References: The Academy provides references regarding former employment only if the Academy receives written authorization and release from the former employee. Otherwise, the Academy will only verify dates of employment, the position held, and rate of pay. Requests for references should be directed to the Principal/Director.

12. Pay and Compensation

Payroll: Professional and paraprofessional staff members receive their pay in twelve (12) equal monthly payments based upon the total contracted salary. All employees are required to be on automatic payroll deposit for the 2007-2008 school year. With direct deposit, an employee's pay is immediately available on the pay date. During the school year direct deposit slips are delivered to school districts. Direct deposit slips will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the slip without the employee's written authorization.

Payments for substitute teachers, hourly and part-time staff members will cover the period from the 16th working day of the current month to the 16th working day of the next month. Any substitute, extra duty, hourly and overtime (for nonexempt employees) payments accrued after the 16th working day of the current month will be included in next month's payroll.

Automatic payroll deductions for the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and federal income tax are required for all full-time employees. Medicare tax deductions are also required for all employees hired after March 31, 1986. Temporary and part-time employees who are not eligible for TRS membership must have their Social Security contributions deducted. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

Retirement: The Board shall not require the retirement of any employee. It is recommended that personnel considering retirement discuss the matter with the Superintendent of Schools several months in advance in order for the necessary procedures and actions to be completed. Prior planning can be to the advantage of the person who is retiring.

Teacher Retirement: All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least one-half of the normal work schedule are members of the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS). Substitutes not receiving TRS service retirement benefits who work at least 90 days a year are also eligible for TRS

membership and to purchase a year of creditable service. TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify their campus principal and the Business Office Manager as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available. Additional inquiries should be addressed to: Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-397-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web (www.trs.state.tx.us).

Reimbursement upon Retirement: Upon retirement from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS), all employees with five or more years of service with the District and with accumulated state personal or state sick leave shall be paid one-half the wellness stipend daily rate for all state leave days accumulated in or out of the District.

Payment shall be made after 45 days from the date of retirement, as verified by TRS.

Overtime: The district compensates overtime for nonexempt (paraprofessional and auxiliary) employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. Professional and administrative employees are ineligible for overtime compensation.

Overtime worked may result in compensatory time off, additional compensation at regular rate of pay, or additional compensation at a rate equal to time and a half.

When overtime work time is under 40 hours, the employee accrues one hour of compensatory time for each hour of work time. When work time exceeds 40 hours in a work week, employees accrue compensatory time off at a rate of one and one-half hours for each hour of employment in excess of the 40 hour work week.

The limit to accrual of compensatory time off is generally 240 hours. Any employee who has accrued more than 240 hours must be paid overtime compensation. Administrators must allow the use of compensatory time within a reasonable time. Employees who accrue compensatory time off are entitled to payment for unused compensatory time upon termination.

Advance approval from a supervisor is required for overtime work that will result in additional compensation. Unauthorized use of compensated overtime hours may result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including termination. Exceptions are granted for advanced approval if the overtime is in support of unforeseeable or emergency circumstances and approval is obtained within one working day of the event.

Payment for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week is made at a rate equal to time and a half. If the scheduled workweek is less than 40 hours, extra hours up to 40, are paid at the regular rate.

Health Insurance: Health insurance coverage is available to all employees. The district's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the Board of Trustees. Cosmo Foundation pays \$300.00 towards the cost of employee health insurance. If the insurance plan chosen by the employee costs less than \$300, the excess is not payable to the employee. An employee may pay to add his/her spouse, children, or family at group rates.

Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, prices, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet.

The insurance plan year is from September 1st through August 31st. New employees must complete enrollment forms within the first 30 days of employment.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits: At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for Dental, Vision, Disability, Group Life, and Accidental Death and Dismemberment. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the principal for more information.

13. Employment after Retirement

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed in part-time positions without affecting their benefits. The amount of time a retiree may be employed without losing benefits is governed by TRS rules and laws. Service retirees who retire before May 31 may begin working in a Texas public school one full calendar month after the retirement date under strict conditions. Retirees may work in the following capacities:

- As a substitute at no more than the daily substitute pay rate. (Individuals receiving disability retirement benefits may not work for more than 90 days in a school year.)
- On a half-time or less basis during any month, provided they are not also employed as a substitute in that month. Half-time employment cannot exceed the lesser of 50 percent of the position's full-time load or 92 hours in a month.
- On a full-time basis during a six-month period during a school year, provided that this is their only employment in a Texas public school. Individuals who retire in August may begin employment in October of the school year following their retirement.

Under this last provision, retirees must submit annual written notice to TRS by the last day of the first month of full employment to avoid a disruption of benefits. Working any part of a month counts as a full month.

Other restrictions apply when a person has retired because of a disability. Individuals retiring because of a disability should contact TRS for details about employment restrictions.

Certain retirees may return to teaching on a full-time basis in acute shortage areas without a reduction in their annuities. To be eligible for full TRS benefits without a reduction while being employed as a classroom teacher in a designated acute shortage area, a retiree must meet the following criteria:

- Be a classroom teacher
- Have not been subject to a reduction in benefit for retirement at an early age
- Have a 12-month continuous break in public school service since retirement
- Be certified to teach in the TEA-approved acute shortage areas for the applicable school year

Employees can contact TRS by calling 800-223-8778 or 512-397-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web (www.trs.state.tx.us).

14. Employee Leave

Leaves and Absences: Harmony Science Academy offers employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence in times of personal need.

Employees who take an unpaid leave of absence may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health care benefits for employees on leave authorized under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the district as they were when they were working. Otherwise, the district does not make benefit contributions for employees who are not on active payroll status.

Employees must follow the district and campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete appropriate leave request form. Any employee who is absent more than two (2) consecutive days because of a personal or family illness must submit a medical certification form from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and in the case of personal illness-the employee's fitness to return to work. Medical certification shall be made by a health care provider as defined by the Family and Medical Leave Act. Upon request for family and medical leave for the employee's serious health condition or that of a spouse, parent, or child, and at 30-day intervals thereafter, the employee shall provide medical certification of the illness or disability.

Personal leave is earned on an accrual basis. Leave is available for the employee's use as anticipated and unanticipated leave. If an employee leaves the district before the end of the work year, the cost of any unearned leave days taken shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

Personal Leave: The district only grants **five (5) personal leave** days annually to all school employees as entitled by state law. The district does not grant any local leave days other than personal leave.

Personal leave is earned at a rate of one-half a workday for each eighteen (18) workdays of employment. A day of earned personal day is equivalent to an assigned workday. There is no limit on the accumulation of state personal leave, and it can be transferred to other Texas school districts and generally transferable to education service centers.

There are two types of personal leave **anticipated and unanticipated:**

Unanticipated: Leave that is taken for personal and family illness, emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered unanticipated leave. This type of leave allows very little or no advance planning.

Anticipated: Leave that is taken at an employee's discretion and that can be scheduled in advance is considered anticipated leave.

An employee wishing to take anticipated personal leave must submit a written notice of the request (5) days in advance of the anticipated absence to his or her principal or supervisor. The reasons for which personal leave may be used shall not be limited by the District. In deciding to approve anticipated personal leave, however, the supervisor or designee shall consider the effect of the employee's absence on the educational program, as well as the availability of substitutes. Anticipated personal leave will be granted on a first-come first-served basis.

Anticipated personal leave may not be taken for more than three consecutive days, except in extenuating circumstances as determined by the Superintendent or Principal.

Anticipated personal leave shall not be allowed in the following circumstances except in extenuating circumstances as determined by the Superintendent or Principal:

1. The day before a school holiday.
2. The day after a school holiday.

3. Days scheduled for end-of-semester or end-of-year exams.
4. Days scheduled for TAKS tests.
5. District norm-reference testing days.
6. Professional or staff development days.

Family and Medical Leave: Employees who have been employed by the district for at least 12 months, and have worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12 months immediately preceding the need for leave are eligible for family and medical leave. Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave each year between August 1st and May 31st for the following reasons:

- The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child
- To care for a spouse, parent, or child with a serious health condition
- An employee's serious health condition

A husband and wife who are both employed by the district are subject to limits in the amount of leave that they can take to care for a parent with a serious health condition or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child.

Eligible employees are entitled to continue their health care benefits under the same terms and conditions as when they were on the job and are entitled to return to their previous job or an equivalent job at the end of their leave. Under some circumstances, teachers who are able to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue their leave until the end of the semester.

Family and medical leave runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. The district will designate the leave as family and medical leave, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

In some circumstances, employees may take family and medical leave in blocks of time or by reducing their normal weekly or daily work schedule. Intermittent leave may be taken under the following circumstances:

- An employee is needed to care for a seriously ill spouse, child, or parent
- An employee requires medical treatment for a serious illness
- An employee is seriously ill and unable to work
- An employee becomes a parent or has a foster child placed in his or her home

When the need for family and medical leave is foreseeable, employees who want to use it must provide 30-day advance notice of their need. When the need for leave is not foreseeable, employees must contact their supervisor as soon as possible. Employees may be required to provide the following:

- Medical certification from a qualified health care provider supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting the employee or an immediate family member
- Second or third medical opinions and periodic recertification of the need for leave
- Periodic reports during the leave regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work
- Medical certification from a qualified health care provider at the conclusion of leave of an employee's ability to return to work

Employees requiring family and medical leave should contact the personnel office for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Maternity Leave

'Note: needs to be added for paid 20 business days'

Extended Sick Leave: An employee who has exhausted earned leave benefits shall be permitted up to 20 days of extended sick leave to be used only for the employee's personal illness or disability, including pregnancy-related disability. The substitute's daily rate shall be deducted from the employee's pay during this time whether or not a substitute is employed.

Extended sick leave is to be used for single, long-term illnesses or conditions. Single is defined as one illness or condition; long-term is defined as an absence of ten or more consecutive days. An employee is eligible for extended sick leave every three years. To be eligible for extended sick leave, an employee must have worked for the District for one full school year.

Medical certification from the employee's doctor must accompany the extended sick leave request.

Temporary Disability: The purpose of temporary disability leave is to provide job protection to full-time educators who cannot work for an extended period of time because of a mental or physical disability nature. A full-time educator may request to be placed on temporary disability leave or be placed on leave. Pregnancy and conditions related to pregnancy are treated as any other temporary disability.

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. The leave request must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the maximum length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days. If disability leave is not approved, the employee must return to work or be subject to termination procedures.

If an employee is placed on temporary disability leave involuntarily, he or she has the right to request a hearing before the Board of Trustees. The employee may protest the action and present additional evidence of fitness to work.

When an employee is ready to return to work, their supervisor and the business office should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able to do the job. Professional employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned as soon as an appropriate position is available. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, professional employees will be reinstated at the beginning of the following school year.

Medical Release: The employee's request for reinstatement shall be accompanied by medical certification of the employee's ability to perform essential job functions.

Jury Duty/Other Court Appearances: Employees will receive leave with pay and without loss of accumulated leave for jury duty. Employees must present documentation of the service.

Employees will be granted paid leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding. Absences for court appearances related to an employee's personal business must be taken as personal leave or leave without pay (if no personal leave is available). Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

Substitute Teacher's Pay: Substitute teachers/aides should have prior authorization and training from the superintendent's office before being used on the campus level. Substitute's paperwork

must be processed through the business office in order to be paid. Teachers are not permitted to employ a substitute without the proper authorization and going through the proper procedures. The daily rate for Harmony Science Academy is \$80.00.

15. Leaving School during School Hours

All staff members should obtain authorization from the principal when leaving assigned school campuses during work hours. This procedure will prevent many misunderstandings, etc., as well as protect the professional employee.

16. Discipline and Termination

Absent a written employment contract, employment with the Academy is terminable at will, meaning that the employment relationship can be terminated by either the employee or the Academy at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause. The at-will nature of an individual's employment with the Academy may not be modified except by a written document approved by the Academy's Principal/Director. Any express or implied agreements or assurances concerning the terms, conditions, or duration of an individual's employment with the Academy are not binding upon the Academy unless they are in writing, approved by the Principal/Director. Nothing in this Handbook is intended to modify the at-will employment status of any employees.

With the exception of substitute employees and temporary employees (one year or less), these policies apply to all employees of the Academy, including certified, classified, and administrative personnel, and apply to all job-related activities of such employees.

Bases for Disciplinary Action: The following acts or omissions, among others which evidence unfitness to perform duties, by an employee in the scope of employment are prohibited and shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action:

1. Insubordination, including the willful refusal of an employee to perform an assignment or to comply with a directive given by the employee's supervisor.
2. Unprofessional job-related conduct.
3. Incompetence or inefficiency in the performance of duties.
4. Corporal punishment of students.
5. Improper conduct toward students and other employees.
6. Conduct in violation of any Academy policy or established expectation of performance.
7. Conviction of a felony related to the employee's employment, or which seriously impairs the employee's ability to perform his or her assigned duties.
8. Serious misconduct related to the employee's job.
9. Abuse of the Academy's sick leave policy.
10. Excessive tardiness.
11. Excessive absenteeism.
12. Unexcused absences from work.
13. Gross negligence or gross carelessness in the performance of duties.
14. Use of Academy policy or property for personal gain.
15. Negligent or willful damage to Academy property.

16. Gross waste of Academy supplies or equipment.
17. Dishonesty or falsification of any information involving the Academy, including grades, credits, data on forms, employee records, or any other information involving the Academy.
18. Possession of alcohol or other intoxicants or illegal narcotics, or other controlled substances without prescription on school property or at any school function.
19. The use of or being under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants or illegal narcotics, or other controlled substances without prescription on school property or at any school function.
20. Deliberate conduct which has the apparent purpose of exposing the Academy to censure, ridicule, or reproach (this prohibition is not intended to deprive employees of any free speech rights guaranteed by the United States or Texas Constitutions).
21. Verbal and/or physical fighting on school premises or at any school related activities.
22. Falsification of records or data with intent to defraud.
23. Sexual misconduct which deviates from the ordinary standards of morality prevalent in the area served by the Academy.

Persons Authorized to Initiate and Carry Out Disciplinary Actions:

1. Verbal and written warnings may be issued by the Board of Education, principal/director, supervisor, administrator, or other supervisory personnel relative to employees under their jurisdiction.
2. Suspensions with and without pay, final warnings, probation, and dismissal may be administered only by the Principal/Director and the Board of Education.

Termination of Employment

Resignation

Employees who resign from the Academy should give at least two weeks' notice. The letter of resignation should state fully the reason(s) for leaving and should be turned in to the employee's supervisor.

Resigning employees will be given their final paychecks no later than the next regularly scheduled payday if the resignation date is prior to the 21st working day of the current month. Final paychecks will be given next month if the resignation date is after the 21st working day of the current month. All applicable mandatory and optional, authorized deductions will be made from the employee's last paycheck. The Academy reserves the right to pay the resigning employee for the notice period and accept the resignation immediately.

Dismissal of Employees

Unless otherwise provided in a written employment contract with an employee, employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, religion, sex, national origin, disability, military status, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See *Complaints and Grievances* section).

17. Complaints

All employees are encouraged to bring their work-related problems or concerns to the immediate attention of their supervisors. In turn, Academy supervisors will try to reach a quick and fair solution. If, however, an employee is not satisfied with the supervisor's solution, he or she may bring the matter to the attention of the Principal/Director.

18. Health Services

School Health Services supplement the efforts of parents and personal health care providers to promote, improve, and maintain the health and well-being of students. Certified school nurses provide care for pupils who become ill or injured while at school and assist with the health policies of Harmony Science Academy. School Health Services are not intended to replace outside health care and should not be viewed as an alternative to seeking medical attention outside of the school.

Teachers should be alert for signs of illness in their students and report such signs immediately to the school nurse and / or Principal/Director. Admission of children back into school following a communicable disease shall be based on the recommendations from TEA Communicable Disease Guidelines for Schools.

The following procedure should be followed in case of serious accidents, injuries, or sudden illness:

Accidents, Injuries, or Sudden Illness:

- A. Administer first aid.
- B. Notify parents.
- C. Call school nurse or family doctor if unable to locate parents or others listed in contact information.
- D. If indicated, call an ambulance to transport to the emergency room of local hospital. Harmony Science Academy does not assume the responsibility for the payment of ambulance, hospital, or doctor's fees.
- E. Complete an incident form.

Administering Medication to Students: Only designated employees can administer medication to students. A student who must take medicine during the school day must bring a written request from his or her parent and the medicine, in its original, properly labeled container. Contact the principal or school nurse for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students.

19. Lesson Plans

The lesson plan is the basic teaching tool. It is valuable to the teacher because it tells where the learners are going, how they will get there, and when they will arrive.

All teachers are expected to write lesson plans. Lesson plans shall be made available to the supervisor upon request.

Procedure:

1. Overall yearly plan: Provides an overview of the course in harmony with the Harmony Science Academy Curriculum. It indicates the units to be taught and the time devoted.
2. The daily lesson plan: A written account of what a teacher would like to have happen during a certain lesson or class period. It should contain the concept or objective, the time block, the procedure and the instructional materials needed.

3. Substitute teacher plan: Lesson plans for substitute teachers should be carefully planned and written in detail. Detailed plans give the substitute teacher a feeling of confidence and security. The lesson plans should be placed on the teacher's desk in plain view.
4. Each teacher should use the written plan that is most practical and usable for him/her. Lesson plans may be written in a lesson plan book, notebook, log, journal, etc.
5. The degree to which a teacher needs to engage in detailed lesson planning will depend upon the teacher's knowledge of the subject matter and the familiarity with course objectives. The first year teacher must realize that as a general rule, it will be necessary to plan in considerable more detail than the teacher with more experience and training.
6. Teachers should feel free to chart their own course (following the HE Curriculum). The plan should be practical and usable, be economical in terms of teacher time, and strengthen the educational program.

Important Parts of a Lesson Plan:

1. Concept or objectives to be taught (tells the student what they will learn).
2. Time block (approximate time you expect to devote to lesson).
3. Procedure to be used (design for instruction).
4. Materials needed (student/teacher).
5. Questions (to check student understanding).
6. Independent practice (student time on task).
7. Evaluation (student understanding & application).

20. Extra Duties

Each campus has extra duties which must be performed in order to ensure the proper supervision of students outside the classroom. Professional and paraprofessional staff members are expected to assume and perform these responsibilities in a professional manner.

Tutorials: Each professional staff member shall assume responsibility for providing tutorial services to students in his/her classes. Students who are failing or in danger of failing shall be given priority regarding tutorial services. It is the responsibility of the staff member to notify parent(s)/guardian(s) when a student is in need of tutorial assistance. A student whose grade in a subject for a grade reporting period is lower than 70 on a scale of 100 is required to attend any tutorials. Texas Education Code § 29.084.

21. School Activities

Staff members should attend and participate in as many school activities as possible. A teacher's presence projects support and interest to the students, the school, and the community.

Many staff members will be involved in school related organizations, clubs, etc. No activities may be scheduled by school personnel the night before TAKS.

Staff members should receive permission from Principals regarding the use of school facilities for meetings, etc.

Extracurricular Vehicle Trips: Staff members should initiate with the principal, requests for field trips and excursions. The principal, in turn, may approve or disapprove the request.

22. Student Attendance

Punctual and regular school attendance is expected. Excessive absenteeism and/or tardiness shall be reported by the teacher to the principal as this problem may not be recognized in the school's office. A student is to be readmitted to class following an absence only after receiving an admission slip from the office. The absence shall be recorded in the teacher(s) grade book. ***No student should ever be excused from a class or school unless authorized by the principal or his/her designee.***

A student shall not be given credit for a class if he or she has been in attendance less than 95 percent of the days the class is offered, unless an attendance committee established according to school policy gives credit because there were extenuating circumstances for the absences. The school shall establish guidelines for determining what constitutes extenuating circumstances and shall establish alternative ways for students to make up work or regain credit lost because of absences for extenuating circumstances.

23. Bad Weather Make-up

Harmony Science Academy may close because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the principal will make the official decision concerning the closing of Harmony Science Academy.

24. Building Use

The campus principal and superintendent are responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the campus principal to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

25. Technology Use and Data Management

The district's electronic communications systems, including its network access to the Internet, is primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use of the system is permitted if the use:

- Imposes no tangible cost to the district
- Does not unduly burden the district's computer or network resources
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications systems are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use. All computers used by Harmony Science Academy employees are the property of the school, and any and all data stored on those computers likewise becomes the property of the school. Harmony Science Academy reserves the right to review all data stored on school computers or software loaded on school computers – including any data showing Internet use – to ensure that school technology is being used for appropriate purposes.

Employees and students who are authorized to use the systems are required to abide by the provisions of the district's communications system policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action.

Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the district technology director.

Online System Utilization: Harmony Science Academy employees use several online systems and forms to accomplish many of their daily tasks. It is the responsibility of each staff member to be aware of these systems, understand their use, and utilize them when appropriate. The list of online systems we employ increase often and currently includes, but is not limited to, the following examples: e-mail, schedules, conferences, substitute request forms, and absence from duty forms.

Telephone Usage at the School: Professional staff members are expected to use reasonable judgment regarding the use of the school phone. When there is an emergency call for a teacher, the teacher will be called to the phone immediately; otherwise, the party will be requested to give a return number and advised that the teacher will return the call. The school phone is for school use only; its use for personal business matters is discouraged.

If a personal long distance call must be made on a school phone, the staff member should charge the call to his/her home number. The Business Office will not honor calls unless authorized and approved by the Principal as school related business. Utilization of cell phones and a regular phone for personal use must not occur during student instructional time and/or assigned duty time with students.

26. Copyrighted Materials

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of copyright law relating to the unauthorized use, reproduction, distribution, performance, or display of copyrighted materials (i.e., printed material, videos, computer data, web material, and programs, etc.). Rented videotapes are to be used in the classroom for educational purposes only. Duplication or back-ups of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

27. Criminal History Record Information

Harmony Science Academy is authorized by state law to obtain criminal history record information on applicants Harmony Science Academy intends to employ (Texas Education Code §22.083). Additionally, Harmony Science Academy obtains a report on each employee annually.

28. Employee Arrests and Convictions

An employee who is arrested for any felony or any offense involving moral turpitude must report the arrest to the principal or immediate supervisor within three calendar days of the arrest. An employee who is convicted of or receives deferred adjudication for such an offense must also report that event to the principal or immediate supervisor within three days of the event. Moral turpitude includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit
- Theft
- Misrepresentation
- Deliberate violence

- Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor
- Drug- or alcohol-related offenses
- Acts constituting abuse under the Texas Family Code

29. Dietary Supplements

Texas Education Code, Section 38.001, prohibits employees from knowingly selling, marketing, or distributing a dietary supplement that contains performance-enhancing compounds to students. In addition, it also prohibits school employees from endorsing or suggesting the ingestion, intranasal application, or inhalation of a performance-enhancing dietary supplement to any student.

30. Emergencies

All employees should be familiar with the evacuation diagrams posted in their work areas. Fire, tornado, and other emergency drills will be conducted to familiarize employees and students with evacuation procedures. Fire extinguishers are located throughout all district buildings. Employees should know the location of the extinguishers nearest their place of work and how to use them.

31. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g (FERPA) is the federal law that sets forth basic privacy requirements for personally identifiable information contained in educational records maintained by schools. Only school employees with an ‘educational need to know’ are allowed to access an individual student’s records; disclosing such information to persons other than the parent(s) or another school employee with a legitimate education interest is a violation of this act.

32. Instructional Supplies

Staff members should initiate requests for supplies through the principal’s office. The school district will assume no fiscal responsibility for merchandise or services purchased without a purchase order issued through proper channels.

33. Name and Address Change

It is important that employment records be kept up-to-date. Employees should notify the campus office and the Business Office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, home telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. Forms to process a change in personal information can be obtained from the campus office or at the Administration Building.

34. Outside Employment and Tutoring

Employees who wish to accept outside employment or engage in other activities for profit must submit a written request to the Principal. Approval for outside employment will be determined by the Principal and superintendent and based on whether outside employment interferes with the duties of the regular assignment. Teachers are not allowed to privately tutor students of the campus for pay, except during the summer months and not on school property.

35. Parent/Guardian Communications

Instructional and administrative staff members are expected to notify a parent or guardian when, in his/her opinion, the student is performing or beginning to perform failing academic work or the student is displaying or beginning to display improper school conduct (poor attitude or classroom behavior, poor attendance, excessive tardiness, etc.) which could possibly lead to academic failure and/or serious disciplinary actions.

36. Parent and Student Complaints

In an effort to hear and resolve parent and student complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the Board has adopted orderly processes for handling complaints on different issues. Any campus office or the superintendent's office can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint.

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teachers or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved should be directed to the campus principal. The formal complaint process provides parents and students with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with a principal's response. Once all administrative complaint procedures are exhausted, parents and students can bring complaints to the Board of Trustees.

37. Possession of Firearms and Weapons

Employees, visitors, and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, illegal knives, or other weapons onto school premises or any grounds or buildings where a school-sponsored activity takes place. For the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisors immediately.

38. Professional Staff Accountability

Teachers

Each teacher is a professional educator and is responsible for the classroom instruction using the established curriculum, time allotments, and educational resources and, therefore, for the learning of each student in the class. It is expected that each teacher will fully utilize all instructional resources, including time, and that students will receive professional supervision when in the charge of the teacher.

Each teacher may receive unscheduled walk-throughs during the school year by campus administrators.

Principals/Assistant Principals

The principal and assistant principal are professional educators and are responsible for teachers carrying out classroom instruction using the established curriculum, time allotments, and educational resources and, therefore, for the learning of each student. It is expected that each administrator see that all instructional resources, including time, are fully utilized, and that students will receive professionally adequate or acceptable supervision when in the charge of the teacher and while at school (breakfast, lunch, before/after school).

Other Professional Staff

Other professional staff include the director of technology, director of special programs, youth officer, librarians, counselors, and nurses. Their responsibilities shall include planning, implementing, and evaluating respective assigned programs; complying with all district and/or campus routines and regulations; communicating effectively with colleagues, students, and parents; and compiling, maintaining, and filing all reports, records, and other required documents.

Director of Curriculum & Instruction

The curriculum and instruction director is a professional educator and is responsible for evaluating and providing leadership for the overall instructional program of the district, which includes curriculum and staff development. Responsibilities include planning, implementing, and evaluating instructional programs with teachers and principals, including learning objectives, instructional strategies, improving the public relations program as it relates to personnel and instructional services, assessment techniques; and facilitating the effective use of computers and other technology in instruction programs district-wide.

Director of Finance & Operations

The director of finance and operations is a professional and shall be of administrative assistance to the Superintendent and shall assume responsibility for the operations of the district in the absence of the Superintendent. Responsibilities shall include implementing organizational and management plans, improving the public relations program as it relates to finances, assisting other administrators, providing direction and plans for maintenance and repair of school facilities and equipment, purchasing of supplies and equipment, preparing bid specifications, assisting with preparation of campus and district budgets, providing direction for the business affairs, maintaining all insurance policies, assisting in complying with all state and federal mandates, and using effective management practices.

Director of Special Programs

The director of special programs is a professional educator and is responsible for evaluating and providing leadership for the overall special programs of the district, which includes, Title I, Gifted and Talented, Special Education, Vocational Education, English as a Second Language, Dyslexia, Migrant, and Section 504 Programs. Responsibilities include planning, implementing, and evaluating special programs with teachers and principals, including learning objectives, improving the public relations program as it relates to personnel and special programs services, assessment techniques, and facilitating the effective use of computers and other technology in special programs district-wide.

Director of Technology

The director of technology is professionally trained, licensed, and certified in the field of technology, and is responsible for providing leadership and evaluation for the overall technology program for the school district. Responsibilities include planning, implementing, and evaluating

technology applications with teachers and principals, including learning objectives, assessment techniques, and facilitating the effective use of computers and other technology in technology programs district-wide.

Superintendent

The Superintendent is the educational leader and chief executive officer of the district and responsible for the effective execution of policies adopted by the district's Board of Trustees. The Superintendent assumes administrative responsibility for the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the education programs, services, and facilities of the district and for the annual appraisal of district staff. The Superintendent has thorough knowledge of school law, school finance, and curriculum and instruction.

39. Purchasing and Reimbursements

Purchasing Procedures: All requests for purchases must be submitted to the business office on an official district purchase order (PO) form with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district can be made without a PO number. The district will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the district's business office. Contact the business office for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Reimbursement for Purchases, Travel, Expenses, etc.: Harmony Science Academy will honor reimbursement requests only if the expenditure has had prior approval and requested according to established procedures. All requests of this nature must have original receipts attached. Staff members should consult with the principal regarding matters of this nature in order to prevent misunderstandings, assumptions, etc. Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor must give approval. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule authorized by the Board of Trustees and the Internal Revenue Service. Employees *must submit original receipts* to be reimbursed for expenses other than mileage.

40. Staff development

Staff development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and the district. Staff development is predominantly campus-based. The teachers are required to attend the staff development days whether it falls weekdays or weekends.

Professional personnel, for reasons other than personal/family illness or death in the immediate family, may be granted permission to be absent from work only by the Superintendent or designee. A letter requesting prior approval and stating the reasons for the absence should be given to the campus principal and forwarded to the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum/Instruction (see "Leaves and Absences"). Principals and administrators are responsible for ensuring that their assigned professional personnel are on duty during workdays and are in attendance at staff development activities.

41. Student Discipline

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management procedures that have been adopted by the district. Other employees that have concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or campus principal.

Teachers must file a written report with the principal or another appropriate administrator when they have knowledge that a student has violated the Student Code of Conduct. The principal or administrator will send a copy of this report to the student's parents within 24 hours.

Discipline should be handled by the professional staff members to the extent possible. The staff member should confer with the student, principal, and parents in all unusual problems. Cooperation and understanding between the parents and the school can often eliminate problems before they develop into unpleasant situations.

42. Student records

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records. The following people are the only people who have general access to a student's records:

- Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes
- The student (if 18 or older) or attending an institute of postsecondary education
- School officials with legitimate education interests

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus principal for assistance.

43. Substitute Teachers (Responsibilities of the Regular Classroom Teacher)

1. Upon arrival the substitute will be furnished the following materials in the Substitute Teacher's Folder:
 - a. Daily plans made out in sufficient detail
 - b. Weekly and daily time schedule of classes
 - c. List of pupils' names and seating chart
 - d. Grouping chart
 - e. List of supervisory responsibilities such as days on duty at noon, recess, etc.
 - f. Fire drill and other emergency procedures
 - g. Important or unusual information about any child (physical problems, daily medications, etc.)
 - h. Name(s) of student helper(s) for each class
 - i. Classroom rules and consequences
 - j. Emergency lesson plans are available in the office and classroom; see campus administrator
2. Have on desk copies of textbooks, manuals, and workbooks being used.
3. Three emergency lesson plans are to be filed in the office by the fourth week after school starts.

44. Textbook Responsibilities

Professional staff members are responsible for the control and use of textbooks by students, including control of classroom sets. Textbooks should be checked regularly for covers, damages, etc. Please notify the principal when a student loses or damages a book. It is the student's responsibility to pay for the lost/damaged book. Do not issue another textbook without authorization from the principal's office.

45. Tobacco Use

Smoking or using tobacco products is prohibited by law on all district-owned property. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for athletics and other activities. Drivers of district-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking while inside the vehicle.

46. Workload and Work Schedules

Professional employees: Professional and administrative employees are exempt from overtime pay. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule for teachers and all school holidays. Notice of work schedules, including required days of service and scheduled holidays, will be distributed each school year.

Teachers and other staff are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes. The district may require teachers to supervise students one day a week when no other personnel are available.

Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees: Support employees are employed at will and will be notified of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees are not exempt from overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor.

47. Work Hours

Professional and paraprofessional staff members generally shall adhere to the following work hour schedules:

Administrators	7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Administrative Assistants	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. or 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (8 hours a day and 1 hour lunch break)
Nurse	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. or 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (8 hours a day and 1 hour lunch break)
Teachers	7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Please note that these hours are not exclusive, but are simply the hours that an employee is expected to be at work.

48. Visitors in the Workplace

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

Employee Acknowledgement

I have received a copy of and have read the foregoing HARMONY SCIENCE ACADEMY Personnel Handbook and am familiar with its terms. I understand that it is not a binding contract, but a source of information and a set of guidelines for implementation of personnel policies. I understand that HARMONY SCIENCE ACADEMY can unilaterally rescind, modify, or make exceptions to any of these policies, or adopt new policies, at any time. I also understand that the provisions of this Handbook will control over any contrary statements, representations or assurances made by any supervisory personnel except the Principal/Director.

I expressly authorize the School to withhold funds from my final paycheck upon my resignation or dismissal for debts owed and unpaid to the School and any School equipment I fail to return.

I acknowledge that the School pays its employees in twelve equal payments during any fiscal year (September through August) and expressly authorize the School to spread my salary over the 12 monthly payments.

I understand and acknowledge that all property purchased with public funds, including, but not limited to, computers, telephone systems, furniture, and lockers, are public property held in trust by the School for the benefit of students and that I shall not have any expectation of privacy in my use of such property including, but not limited to, email communications and telephone messages.

I acknowledge that the School is subject to the Texas Public Information Act and that information contained in my personnel file may be subject to disclosure unless I request confidentiality. I elect to deny public access to _____ Home Address; _____ Home Telephone Number; _____ Information that reveals whether I have family members (check any that apply)

I have read and understood this information. I acknowledge that my employment with the School is at-will and may be terminated by myself or the School at any time for any reason or no reason, in accordance with applicable federal and state law. I acknowledge that the School may change the policies and procedures within this Employee Handbook. I acknowledge and understand the School's actions may vary from this Employee Handbook. I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions I have regarding this information.

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE

PRINTED NAME

DATE: _____

Please sign this page and return it to the Principal immediately. A copy of this acknowledgement will be retained in your personnel file.