

Gateway Charter Academy

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



Table of Contents

<i>SCHOOL INFORMATION</i>	4
<i>Mission Statement</i>	6
<i>Superintendent’s Vision</i>	6
<i>Board of Directors</i>	6
Compliance Coordinators	9
Student Discrimination and Harassment	11
Fingerprinting	23
Leaving the Classroom	27
Scheduling and Attending Parent-Teacher Conferences	27
<i>EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WELFARE</i>	43
Texas Educator Code of Ethics	43
Financial Ethics.....	46
Standards of Conduct	47
<i>STUDENT WELFARE: REPORTING ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT</i>	48
Purpose of Reporting Law.....	48
Protection for Reporting Child Abuse and/or Neglect	48
Photographs	49
Notifying the Parents.....	50
Officer/Caseworker Interviewing/Removing a Student.....	50
<i>GENERAL STUDENT ISSUES</i>	50
Equal Educational Opportunities	50
Student Records	51
Lesson Plans	51
Parent and Student Complaints	51
Student Health Services	52
Administering Medication to Students.....	52
Dietary Supplements	52
Psychotropic Drugs.....	52
Student Conduct and Discipline.....	53
Student Attendance.....	53

Greetings from the Superintendent

Dear Gateway Charter Academy Employees:

It is an honor to be the Superintendent of Gateway Charter Academy and to work with you to provide excellent education for our students. The School Board, parents and community are partners with us in the education process, and we have many resources in this community to assist us in this endeavor.

While we may perform different duties, we all share one very important goal - educating our children. It is imperative that we embrace our responsibility to the highest level to ensure the academic success of our students, regardless of the positions we hold.

Whether you are new to Gateway or a returning staff member, please take time to read carefully the very important policies and procedures covered in the employee handbook.

As an employee of Gateway, we want you to have information at your fingertips that will answer questions you may have about employment with our school. That is the goal for this handbook. Much of this handbook summarizes policies that have been adopted by the School Board to help guide our work. Please review the policies that most pertain to your employment so you are familiar with them.

Thank you for being a part of Gateway Charter Academy and for your service

to our students.

Sincerely,

Robbie Moore, Ed. D.

Superintendent



Welcome

Welcome to Gateway Charter Academy We are delighted that you have chosen to join our organization and hope that you will enjoy a long and successful career with us. As you become familiar with our culture and mission, we hope you will take advantage of opportunities to enhance your career and further Gateway Charter Academy's goals.

You are joining an organization that has a reputation for outstanding leadership, innovation, and expertise. Our employees use their creativity and talent to invent new solutions, meet new demands, and offer the most effective services/products in the industry. With your active involvement, creativity, and support, Gateway Charter Academy will continue to achieve its goals. We sincerely hope you will take pride in being an important part of Gateway Charter Academy's success.

Please take time to review the policies contained in this handbook. If you have questions, feel free to ask your supervisor or contact the Human Resources Department.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Description of Gateway Charter Academy

Gateway Charter Academy ("Gateway Charter Academy", "GCA," or "School") is an open-enrollment charter school. For more than a decade, GCA has provided students in underserved communities an opportunity to excel in the classroom and develop the skills necessary to become successful members of the community.

Philosophy of Gateway Charter Academy

A philosophy of education is the foundation on which a school is built, and upon which the product of the school program is evaluated. The philosophy herein subscribed to by the Board of Education shall be a guide in determining the policies, rules and regulations of the school board.

Recognizing each student as a unique individual, we believe that education should provide an opportunity for the maximum development of each individual within the limitations of his or her capacities. Through education, it is possible for the individual to discover and endeavor to achieve to the limits of his or her capacities.

We believe that in a democratic society, education must help the student realize his or her worth as an individual and should lead him or her toward becoming a productive member of society. Strong emphasis must be placed upon elected values which are important for an effective and satisfying personal and social life.

We believe that the role of the teacher in the educational process is to provide opportunities for the individual to achieve at the maximum level of capacity, to create a learning situation in which individual motivation for learning is the stimulus for achievement, and to promote through teaching and example the principles of the democratic way of life.

We believe that parents have definite responsibilities in education. They need to have confidence in the school, and they need to impart this confidence to the students. The parents may do this by cooperating to the fullest with the school, by encouraging the students to give his or her best efforts to the daily school responsibilities, and by participating in school activities.

We believe that the student must have responsibilities in the education program of the community. The most important of these is attitude. The student is obliged to come with an open mind, equipped with all the necessary materials, ready to fulfill the responsibilities in the learning process. The basic attitude should be that the school is an institution of opportunity, staffed with trained personnel to help the student become a contributing member of society.

We believe that the foundation of the school's educational program is based on the development of competencies in the basic fundamentals of reading, oral and written communication and mathematics.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of Gateway Charter Academy to provide an educational environment for children of the school, which will foster and accelerate their intellectual, physical, social and career development.

- The uniqueness, worth, and dignity of each individual must be acknowledged and nurtured.
- The rights and property of every person must be respected.
- The ability to learn is fundamental and deserves to be comprehensively and continually developed.
- Education is a shared responsibility involving students, families, schools, and

other institutions.

- The schools must adapt to the dynamic needs of children, society, and the environment.
- Education must be orchestrated by pacesetters committed to insightful, student-centered leadership.
- Risk taking is encouraged, in a safe environment, to explore alternative paths for providing quality education and services for all students.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Gateway Charter Academy is to provide all students the opportunity to develop the knowledge, discipline, skills, and abilities necessary to reach their potential, adapt to continuing change and contribute positively to society. To achieve this, Gateway Charter Academy shall develop and maintain high standards for academic, student and staff performance and a safe environment that is conducive to learning.

Superintendent's Vision

It is the vision of Dr. Robbie Moore that Gateway Charter Academy shall be a leader that focuses on making a positive and significant difference in students' academic performance while stressing achievements and excellence at all levels. The district's curriculum is balanced with extracurricular activities that offer students the opportunity to explore their various interests as well as develop and sharpen their skills and talents. Students shall be engaged in challenging academic programs designed to allow students to reach their highest potential. Dr. Moore envisions our students become creative thinkers and problem solvers, engage our students in the effective use of emerging technology, and provide the necessary skills to prepare them to be life-long learners in an ever-changing global society. Dr. Moore believes our students should develop a concept of teamwork through academic and extracurricular activities and understand the need to contribute positively while striving towards excellence.

Board of Directors

Texas law grants the Board of Trustees the power to govern and oversee the management of Gateway Charter Academy. The board is the policy-making body within GCA. The board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by the state and federal law and regulations.

The Board of Trustees is elected to represent the community's welfare to provide strong educational program in the best interest of all children. Members serve without compensation and must be registered voters.

The Board of Trustees usually meet each quarter at 6:30 p.m. on the last Thursday of the quarter in the conference room of the high school campus. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on both campuses at each entry door at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and agenda of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with two-hour notice.

All meetings are open to the public. In certain circumstances, Texas law permits the Board to go into a closed session from which the public and others are excluded. Closed session may occur for such things as discussing prospective gifts or donations, real-property acquisition, certain personnel matters including employee complaints, security matters, student discipline, or consulting with attorneys regarding pending litigation.

Employment at Will

Employment at Gateway Charter Academy is on an at-will basis unless otherwise stated in a written individual employment agreement signed by the Superintendent.

This means that either the employee or the district may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without notice.

Nothing in this employee handbook is intended to or creates an employment agreement, express or implied. Nothing contained in this or any other document provided to the employee is intended to be, nor should it be, construed as a contract that employment or any benefit will be continued for any period of time. In addition, no district representative is authorized to modify this policy for any employee or to enter into any agreement, oral or written, that changes the at-will relationship.

Any salary figures provided to an employee in annual or monthly terms are stated for the sake of convenience or to facilitate comparisons and are not intended and do not create an employment contract for any specific period of time.

Nothing in this statement is intended to interfere with, restrain, or prevent concerted activity as protected by the National Labor Relations Act. Such activity includes

employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment. Gateway Charter Academy employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

Compliance Coordinators

Gateway Charter Academy has designated the following employees as Coordinators to oversee compliance with the following state and federal laws:

Title IX Coordinator

Reports of prohibited conduct based on gender, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Title IX Coordinator

Name: Nadine Clark
Position: Human Resources Manager
Address: 1015 E. Wheatland Road Dallas, TX 75241
Telephone: (214) 375-1921

Section 504 Coordinator

Reports of prohibited conduct based on disability may be directed to the Section 504 Coordinator:

Name: Shawanna Prout-Wilson
Position: Counselor
Address: 1015 E. Wheatland Road Dallas, TX 75241
Telephone: (214) 375-1921

Title VII, Age and Disability Coordinator

Reports of prohibited conduct based on age and/or disability and civil rights complaints, including sexual misconduct may be directed to the Title VII/Age and Disability Coordinator:

Name: Nadine Clark
Position: Human Resources Manager
Address: 1015 E. Wheatland Road Dallas, TX 75241
Telephone: (214) 375-1921

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Reasonable Accommodation

To ensure equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, Gateway Charter Academy will make reasonable accommodations for the known disability of an otherwise qualified individual, unless undue hardship on the operation of the business would result

Employees who may require a reasonable accommodation should contact the Human Resources Department.

Commitment to Diversity

Gateway Charter Academy is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace in which all employees have an opportunity to participate and contribute to the success of the business and are valued for their skills, experience, and unique perspectives. This commitment is embodied in district policy and the way we do business at Gateway Charter Academy and is an important principle of sound business management.

Harassment and Complaint Procedure

Sexual and other unlawful harassment is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), as amended, as well as many state laws. Harassment based on a characteristic protected by law, such as race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, religion, age, disability, veteran status, or other characteristic protected by state or federal law, is prohibited.

It is Gateway Charter Academy's policy to provide a work environment free of sexual and other harassment. To that end, harassment of Gateway Charter Academy's employees by management, supervisors, coworkers, or nonemployees who are in the workplace is absolutely prohibited. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual or other harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated. Gateway Charter Academy will take all steps necessary to prevent and eliminate unlawful harassment.

Definition of Unlawful Harassment. "Unlawful harassment" is conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; has the purpose or effect of substantially and unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities because of the individual's membership in a protected class.

Unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, epithets; slurs; jokes; pranks; innuendo; comments; written or graphic material; stereotyping; or other threatening, hostile, or intimidating acts based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, veteran status, or other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

Definition of Sexual Harassment. While all forms of harassment are prohibited, special attention should be paid to sexual harassment. “Sexual harassment” is generally defined under both state and federal law as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of any individual’s employment or as a basis for employment decisions; *or*
- 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.

Other sexually oriented conduct, whether intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to workers may also constitute sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct that, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending on the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwanted sexual advances, whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one’s sex life, comments about an individual’s body, comments about an individual’s sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing up against the body, sexual gestures, or suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one’s sexual experiences; *and*
- Discussion of one’s sexual activities.

All employees should take special note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of sexual harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated at Gateway Charter Academy.

Student Discrimination and Harassment

Gateway Charter Academy prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, age, academic, artistic or athletic ability, the school district the student would otherwise attend, or any other basis prohibited by law. Discrimination against a student is defined as conduct directed at a student on the above legally protected classifications that adversely affects the student. GCA employees will not engage in discrimination of students nor tolerate student-to-student discrimination.

Gateway Charter Academy further prohibits sexual harassment against students. Such harassment includes unwelcome verbal or physical sexual advances, including

but not limited to

- Engaging in sexually-oriented conversations
- Telephoning students at home or elsewhere to solicit unwelcome social relationships
- Physical contact that would reasonably be construed as sexual in nature
- Threatening or enticing students to engage in sexual behavior in exchange for grades or other school-related benefit
- Request for sexual favors, sexually-motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from a program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile or offensive educational environment.
- Sexual harassment of students by employees is always a violation of law and, therefore, cannot be defended on the grounds that the student may have sought or encouraged the conduct.

Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and school employees are prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus Principal or designated school counselor. All allegations of prohibited harassment of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or has a cause to believe child abuse, neglect or maltreatment of a child must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, within 48 hours as required by law. Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is a criminal offense.

GCA will investigate all allegations of such discrimination and will take appropriate disciplinary action against employees or students who have engaged in such acts. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of GCA policy. Employees will not tolerate any form of discrimination of students, and will report any alleged acts immediately. Failure to promptly report alleged discrimination may impair GCA's ability to investigate and address the harassment and any employee violating this policy is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment.

Complaint and Grievances Procedure (level one)

Any employee who believes he or she has been subject to or witnessed illegal discrimination, including sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment, is requested and encouraged to make a complaint. You may complain directly to your immediate supervisor or department manager, the HR director, or any other member of management with whom you feel comfortable bringing such a complaint. Similarly, if you observe acts of discrimination toward or harassment of another employee, you are requested and encouraged to report this to one of the individuals listed above.

No reprisal, retaliation, or other adverse action will be taken against an employee for making a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment or for assisting in the investigation of any such complaint or report. Any suspected retaliation or intimidation should be reported immediately to one of the persons identified above.

All written complaints will be investigated within 5 business days and, to the extent possible, with regard for confidentiality.

If the investigation confirms conduct contrary to this policy has occurred, Gateway Charter Academy will take immediate, appropriate, corrective action, including discipline, up to and including immediate termination.

Formal Process (level two)

An employee may initiate a formal process by timely filing a written complaint form. Complaint forms can be obtained from the Human Resources Department. Even after initiating a formal complaint, employees are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. An employee whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time. Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form.

Appeal

If the employee did not receive the relief requested at level two or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may appeal the decision to the Superintendent.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing on a form provided by Gateway Charter Academy, within ten days after receipt of a response or, if so response was received, within ten days of the response deadline at level two. The Human Resources Department must inform the employee of the date, time and place of the meeting with the Superintendent at which the complaint will be heard. The Human Resources Department shall provide the Superintendent with copies of the complaint form, all responses; all appeal notices, and all written documentation previously submitted by the employee or administration. The Superintendent shall consider only those issues and documents presented at the preceding levels and identified in the appeal notice. The Superintendent shall determine whether the complaint will be presented to the Board in open or closed meeting in accordance with Texas Open Meeting Act.

Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

Conflicts of Interest

Gateway Charter Academy expects all employees to conduct themselves and district business in a manner that reflects the highest standards of ethical conduct, and in accordance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. This includes avoiding real and potential conflicts of interests.

Exactly what constitutes a conflict of interest or an unethical business practice is both a moral and a legal question. Gateway Charter Academy recognizes and respects the individual employee's right to engage in activities outside of employment which are private in nature and do not in any way conflict with or reflect poorly on the district.

It is not possible to define all the circumstances and relationships that might create a conflict of interest. If a situation arises where there is a potential conflict of interest, the employee should discuss this with a manager for advice and guidance on how to proceed. The list below suggests some of the types of activity that indicate improper behavior, unacceptable personal integrity, or unacceptable ethics:

1. Simultaneous employment by another firm that is a competitor of or supplier to Gateway Charter Academy
2. Carrying on district business with a firm in which the employee, or a close relative of the employee, has a substantial ownership or interest.
3. Holding a substantial interest in, or participating in the management of, a firm to which the district makes sales or from which it makes purchases.
4. Borrowing money from customers or firms, other than recognized loan institutions, from which our district buys services, materials, equipment, or supplies.
5. Accepting substantial gifts or excessive entertainment from an outside organization or agency.
6. Speculating or dealing in materials, equipment, supplies, services, or property purchased by the district.
7. Participating in civic or professional organization activities in a manner that divulges confidential district information.
8. Misusing privileged information or revealing confidential data to outsiders.
9. Using one's position in the district or knowledge of its affairs for personal gains.
10. Engaging in practices or procedures that violate antitrust laws, commercial bribery laws, copyright laws, discrimination laws, campaign contribution laws, or other laws regulating the conduct of district business.

Confidential Information

The protection of confidential business information and trade secrets is vital to the interests and success of Gateway Charter Academy Confidential information is any and all information disclosed to or known by you because of employment with the district that is not generally known to people outside the district about its business.

An employee who improperly uses or discloses trade secrets or confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and legal action, even if he or she does not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

All inquiries from the media must be referred to the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent.

This provision is not intended to, and should not be interpreted to, prohibit employees from discussing wages and other terms and conditions of employment if they so choose.

Employment Relationship

Employment Classification

In order to determine eligibility for benefits and overtime status and to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, Gateway Charter Academy classifies its employees as shown below. Gateway Charter Academy may review or change employee classifications at any time.

Exempt. Exempt employees are paid on a salaried basis and are not eligible to receive overtime pay.

Nonexempt. Nonexempt employees are paid on an hourly basis and are eligible to receive overtime pay for overtime hours worked.

Regular, Full-Time. Employees who are not in a temporary status and work a minimum of 30 hours weekly and maintain continuous employment status. Generally, these employees are eligible for the full-time benefits package and are subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefits program.

Regular, Part-Time. Employees who are not in a temporary status and who are regularly scheduled to work fewer than 30 hours weekly, but at least 20 hours weekly, and who maintain continuous employment status. Part-time employees are eligible for some of the benefits offered by the district and are subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefits program.

Temporary, Full-Time. Employees who are hired as interim replacements to temporarily supplement the workforce or to assist in the completion of a specific project and who are temporarily scheduled to work the district's full-time schedule for a limited

duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status.

Temporary, Part-Time. Employees who are hired as interim replacements to temporarily supplement the workforce or to assist in the completion of a specific project and who are temporarily scheduled to work fewer than 30 hours weekly for a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status.

Staff Development

Staff development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and GCA. Staff development is predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, and addressed in the campus improvement plan, which is approved by a campus-level advisory committee. Staff development for non-instructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements and continued skill development.

Staff development may consist of work at local colleges/universities, professional memberships, workshops, in-service trainings, retreats, and conferences. Employees must submit a request to the Associate Principal in advance of registering for development opportunities in order to be fully or partially reimbursed for participation.

Communication and Permissions

Name and Address Change

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify Gateway Charter Academy of any changes in personnel data. Employees should notify Human Resources of any changes or corrections to their name, home address, telephone number, and marital status, names of dependents, emergency contacts, or beneficiaries. Name changes must be consistent with and match other documentation, including driver's licenses and social security identification.

Building Use

Requests to use school facilities should be directed to the appropriate campus Associate Principal. A request may be granted with the Superintendent's or designee's approval.

Instructional Supplies

All instructional materials purchased by Gateway Charter Academy become property of the School. Employees may not keep teacher resource materials when leaving employment with GCA.

Communication with Parents in General

Teachers and administrators are expected to notify a parent when a student performs poorly on classwork or testing or begins to misbehave at school. GCA encourages teachers and administrators not to send information regarding grades, disciplinary issues, or other sensitive matters via e-mail.

Parent and Student Complaints

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with teachers and appropriate administrators in an effort to resolve issues in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible. Complaints that cannot be resolved informally should be directed to the Executive Principal. After all administrative complaint procedures are exhausted, parents and students can bring complaints to the Board of Directors for consideration.

Work Week and Hours of Work

The standard workweek is from Sunday through Saturday and generally consists of 40 work hours. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., lunch breaks and rest breaks are determined by each department.

Department Work Hours

Teachers and Teacher Assistants work 7:30AM-4:00PM

Administration works: 7:30AM to 4:00PM or 8:00AM to 4:00PM

Food Service: 6:00AM to 2:30PM

Bus Drivers: 5:00AM to 8AM and 2PM to 5PM

*****Work schedules may vary depending on the needs of each department.**

Meal and Rest Breaks

Lunch breaks and rest breaks are determined by each department.

Time Records

All nonexempt employees are required to complete accurate weekly time reports showing all time actually worked. These records are required by governmental regulations and are used to calculate regular and overtime pay. At the end of each week, the employee and his or her supervisor must review and sign the time sheet attesting to its correctness before forwarding it to the Business Administration Office.

Overtime

When required due to the needs of the business, you may be asked to work overtime. Overtime is actual hours worked in excess of 40 in a single workweek. Nonexempt employees will be paid overtime compensation at the rate of one and one half their regular rate of pay for all hours over 40 actually worked in a single workweek. Paid leave, such as holiday, PTO, bereavement time, and jury duty does not apply toward work time. All overtime work must be approved in advance by the Assistant Superintendent.

Summer Work Schedule

Summer hours are Monday through Thursday from 7AM – 5PM and closed on Fridays.

Gateway Charter Academy is closed on the first week of July.

Dress Code: Summer dress code is casual. No flip flops or revealing clothing.

Summer schedule will start the first week of June.

Deductions from Pay/Safe Harbor Exempt Employees

Gateway Charter Academy does not make improper deductions from the salaries of exempt employees and complies with the salary basis requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Employees classified as exempt from the overtime pay requirements of the FLSA will be notified of this classification at the time of hire or change in position.

Permitted deductions. The FLSA limits the types of deductions that may be made from the pay of an exempt employee. Deductions that are permitted include:

- Deductions that are required by law, e.g., income taxes;
- Deductions for employee benefits when authorized by the employee;

- Absence from work for one or more full days for personal reasons other than sickness or disability;
- Absence from work for one or more full days due to sickness or disability if the deduction is made in accordance with a bona fide plan, policy or practice of providing compensation for salary lost due to illness;
- Offset for amounts received as witness or jury fees, or for military pay; or
- Unpaid disciplinary suspensions of one or more full days imposed in good faith for workplace conduct rule infractions.

During the week an exempt employee begins work for the district or during the last week of employment, the employee will only be paid for actual hours worked. In addition, an employee may be paid only for hours worked during a period when the employee is using unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Improper deductions. If an employee classified as exempt believes that an improper deduction has been taken from his or her pay, the employee should immediately report the deduction to the Human Resources Department. The report will be promptly investigated and if it is found that an improper deduction has been made, the district will reimburse the employee for the improper deduction.

Paychecks

Gateway Charter Academy's pay period for exempt employees is the last business day of each month. Then hourly staff is paid on the 15th and the last business day of each month. If pay day falls on a federal holiday, employees will receive their paycheck on the preceding workday. Paychecks are directly deposited into your checking and/or savings accounts.

Access to Personnel Files

Employee files are maintained by the Human Resources department and are considered confidential. Managers and supervisors may only have access to personnel file information on a need-to-know basis. Personnel file access by current employees and former employees upon request will generally be permitted within 3 days of the request unless otherwise required under state law. Personnel files are to be reviewed in the Human Resources department. Employee files may not be taken outside the department. Representatives of government or law enforcement agencies, in the course of their duties, may be allowed access to file information.

Employment of Relatives and Domestic Partners

Relatives and domestic partners may be hired by the district if (1) the persons concerned will not work in a direct supervisory relationship, and (2) the employment will not pose difficulties for supervision, security, safety, or morale. For the purposes of this policy, "relatives" are defined as spouses, children, siblings, parents, or grandparents. A

“domestic partnership” is generally defined as a committed relationship between two individuals who are sharing a home or living arrangements.

Current employees who marry each other or become involved in a domestic partnership will be permitted to continue employment with the district provided they don't work in a direct supervisory relationship with each other or otherwise pose difficulties as mentioned above. If employees who marry or live together do work in a direct supervisory relationship with each other, the district will attempt to reassign one of the employees to another position for which he or she is qualified if such a position is available. If no such position is available, the employees will be permitted to determine which **one** of them will resign from the district.

Separation from Employment

In all cases of voluntary resignation (one initiated by the employee), employees are asked to provide a written notice to their supervisors at least 10 working days in advance of the last day of work. The 10 days must be actual working days. Holidays and paid time off (PTO) will not be counted toward the 10-day notice. Employees who provide the requested amount of notice will be considered to have resigned in good standing and generally will be eligible for rehire.

In most cases, Human Resources will conduct an exit meeting on or before the last day of employment to collect all district property, and to discuss final pay. If applicable, information regarding benefits continuation through the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) will be sent to the employee's home address.

Should it become necessary because of business conditions to reduce the number of employees or work hours, this will be done at the discretion of the district.

Job Abandonment

Employees who fail to report to work without notice to, or approval by, their supervisor for (3) three consecutive workdays may be considered to have abandoned or voluntarily resigned their job.

Reduction-in-Force Policy

A reduction-in-force (RIF) occurs when district reorganization, decreased enrollment, or decreased funding necessitates a decrease in positions. Gateway Charter Academy shall develop and implement a reduction-in-force policy that will not unduly limit educational services and opportunities for students.

- **District Reorganization:** Declining enrollment, unmanageable financial difficulty, or any other cause

- that warrants closing, consolidation, elimination, curtailment, or reorganization of facilities, programs, or curriculum offerings.
- **Decreased Enrollment:** Occurs when the enrollment or projected enrollment for the next succeeding school year is inadequate to justify continuation of the course or program.
- **Decreased Funding:** Any decline in the school district's financial resources that is brought about by the decline in enrollment or by other actions or events that change the district's current operational budget; or any decrease or elimination in funding for a particular program; any insufficiency in funding that would render the district unable to continue existing programs at current levels.

The Board of Trustees has the responsibility for providing and maintaining quality schools in the district. In order to carry out its responsibility the board may abolish or combine job positions, reduce the length of the work year with a parallel reduction in salary, the same to be in no event less than 187 days per contract year, salary of employees, and/or reduce the number of employees. When doing so, the board will take into account the following reasons for reduction in force: Declining enrollment, unmanageable financial difficulty, consolidation, elimination, curtailment, or reorganization of facilities, and educational programs/curriculum offerings, and human, material and financial resources.

The primary objective of the board when reducing the work force will be the maintenance of a fair and balanced educational program consistent with the needs of the students and the functions and responsibilities of the school district. The board will consider the following factors, not necessarily in the order listed:

1. Necessity of the position to the mission, goals, and objectives of the school district
2. Area(s) and level(s) of competence indicated by certification
3. Recent performance evaluation
4. Efficiency and effectiveness of management level operational functions and processes, including staff productivity, job performance, utilization of technology, and implementation of innovative ideas and methodology.
5. Experience, professional training and length of service within the district and the work assignment
6. Quality of performance including character, teaching capacity and/or executive ability
7. Skills in areas where the district has instructional and/or supervisory need initially, staff reduction will be accomplished by attrition.

Retirement

Employees planning to retire are required to give written notification to their supervisor and the Human Resources Department at least one month before the retirement date.

Return of School Property

All materials, including but not limited to business information, files, research, records, memoranda, books, lists, computer disks, hardware, software, cell phones and other wireless devices, documents, drawings, models, apparatus, sketches, designs and any other embodiment of confidential information or intellectual property received by an employee during employment or volunteer service, and any tangible embodiments of such materials created by an employee, alone or with others, whether confidential or not, are the property of Gateway Charter Academy.

Upon separation of employment with GCA or cessation of volunteer services, or upon the request of GCA, an individual will return to GCA all such materials, including copies thereof, in the individual's possession or under the individual's control. Such materials will be returned within 24 hours of notice of separation or upon request of GCA, whichever comes first.

The cost of repairing or replacing any GCA supplies, materials, equipment, or other property that is damaged (other than normal wear and tear), stolen, or lost by an employee or that is not returned to GCA upon separation of employment may be deducted from the employee's wages.

Any materials created by staff members for use by GCA, or created on GCA time, or produced using the staff or resources of GCA, are considered works-for-hire and all intellectual property rights are vested exclusively in GCA.

Workplace Safety

Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace

It is the policy of Gateway Charter Academy to maintain a drug- and alcohol-free work environment that is safe and productive for employees and others having business with the district.

The unlawful use, possession, purchase, sale, distribution, or being under the influence of any illegal drug and/or the misuse of legal drugs while on district or client premises or

while performing services for the district is strictly prohibited. Gateway Charter Academy also prohibits reporting to work or performing services under the influence of alcohol or consuming alcohol while on duty or during work hours. In addition, the Gateway Charter Academy prohibits off-premises abuse of alcohol and controlled substances, as well as the possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs, when these activities adversely affect job performance, job safety, or the District's reputation in the community.

To ensure compliance with this policy, substance abuse screening may be conducted in the following situations:

Pre-employment: As required by the district for all prospective employees who receive a conditional offer of employment

For Cause: Upon reasonable suspicion that the employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs that could affect or has adversely affected the employee's job performance.

Random: As authorized or required by federal or state law.

Compliance with this policy is a condition of employment. Employees who test positive or who refuse to submit to substance abuse screening will be subject to termination. Notwithstanding any provision herein, this policy will be enforced at all times in accordance with applicable state and local law.

Any employee violating this policy is subject to discipline, up to and including termination, for the first offense.

Fingerprinting

In compliance with state law, all employees and substitutes hired must complete the fingerprinting process with the SBEC/Texas DPS Clearinghouse prior to employment.

Employment Applications

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

Employment Checks

GCA performs criminal history and fingerprinting checks as required by law, and checks applicant employment references. Fingerprinting is done prior to employment with the district and each candidate must pay for their own fingerprinting to be completed.

Criminal History Record Information

GCA is authorized by state law to obtain criminal history record information on applicants GCA intends to employ. Additionally, national criminal history checks based on an individual's fingerprints, photo, and other identification will be conducted on employees and entered into the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Clearinghouse. This database provides GCA and SBEC with access to an employee's current national criminal history and updates to the employee's subsequent criminal history.

Termination or Refusal to Hire

GCA will discharge or refuse to hire an employee or applicant for employment if GCA obtains information through a criminal history record information review (or otherwise) that:

1. The employee has been convicted of any felony or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude;
2. The employee has been convicted of any offense listed in Education Code section 37.007(a); or
3. Has been convicted of an offense listed in the Code of Criminal Procedure section 62.001(5).

Additionally, the School shall discharge or refuse to hire an employee or applicant if the individual's criminal history information shows that:

- 1) The employee or applicant has been convicted of:
 - a. A felony offense under Title 5, Penal Code;
 - b. An offense on conviction of which the employee or applicant is required to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62, Code of Criminal Procedure; or
 - c. An offense under the laws of another state that is equivalent to an offense under paragraphs (a) or (b) above; and
- 2) At the time the offense occurred, the victim of the offense was under 18 years of age or enrolled in a public school.

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

Smoke-Free Workplace

Smoking is not allowed in any district buildings or work areas at any time. "Smoking" includes the use of any tobacco products (including chewing tobacco), electronic smoking devices, and e-cigarettes.

Smoking is only permitted during break times in designated outdoor areas. Employees using these areas are expected to dispose of any smoking debris safely and properly.

Workplace Violence Prevention

Gateway Charter Academy is committed to providing a safe, violence-free workplace for our employees. Due to this commitment, we discourage employees from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual or from behaving in a threatening or violent manner. Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any employee will not be tolerated. A threat may include any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, attempts to intimidate others, menacing gestures, stalking, or any other hostile, aggressive, and/or destructive actions taken for the purposes of intimidation. This policy covers any violent or potentially violent behavior that occurs in the workplace or at district-sponsored functions.

All Gateway Charter Academy employees bear the responsibility of keeping our work environment free from violence or potential violence. Any employee who witnesses or is the recipient of violent behavior should promptly inform their supervisor, manager, or the Human Resources Department. All threats will be promptly investigated. No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline as a result of reporting a threat in good faith under this guideline.

Any individual engaging in violence against the district, its employees, or its property will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. All acts will be investigated, and the appropriate action will be taken. Any such act or threatening behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Gateway Charter Academy prohibits the possession of weapons on its property at all times, including our parking lots or district vehicles. Additionally, while on duty, employees may not carry a weapon of any type. Weapons include, but are not limited to, handguns, rifles, automatic weapons, and knives that can be used as weapons (excluding pocketknives, utility knives, and other instruments that are used to open

packages, cut string, and for other miscellaneous tasks), martial arts paraphernalia, stun guns, and tear gas. Any employee violating this policy is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal for the first offense.

The district reserves the right to inspect all belongings of employees on its premises, including packages, briefcases, purses and handbags, gym bags, and personal vehicles on district property. In addition, Gateway Charter Academy may inspect the contents of lockers, storage areas, file cabinets, desks, and work stations at any time and may remove all District property and other items that are in violation of District rules and policies.

Commitment to Safety

Protecting the safety of our employees and visitors is the most important aspect of running our business.

All employees have the opportunity and responsibility to contribute to a safe work environment by using commonsense rules and safe practices and by notifying management when any health or safety issues are present. All employees are encouraged to partner with management to ensure maximum safety for all.

In the event of an emergency, notify the appropriate emergency personnel by dialing 9 for an outside line, then dial 911 to activate the medical emergency services.

Emergency Closings

Gateway Charter Academy will always make every attempt to be open for business. In situations in which some employees are concerned about their safety, management may advise supervisors to notify their departments that the office is not officially closed, but anyone may choose to leave the office if he or she feels uncomfortable.

If the office is officially closed during the course of the day to permit employees to leave early, nonexempt employees who are working on-site as of the time of the closing will be paid for a full day. If you leave earlier than the official closing time, you will be paid only for actual hours worked, or you can take PTO time. Exempt employees will be paid for a normal full day but are expected to complete their work at another time.

Workplace Guidelines

Attendance

All employees are expected to arrive on time, ready to work, every day they are scheduled to work. If unable to arrive at work on time, or if an employee will be absent for an entire day, the employee must contact the supervisor as soon as possible. **Voice mail and e-mail messages are not acceptable except in certain emergency circumstances.** Excessive absenteeism or tardiness and/or leaving work prior to designated time: will result in discipline up to and including termination. Failure to show up or call in for a scheduled shift without prior approval may result in termination. If an

employee fails to report to work or call in to inform the supervisor of the absence for 3 consecutive days or more, the employee will be considered to have voluntarily resigned employment.

Leaving the Classroom

Students must be supervised at all times – it only takes a second for something to happen. If it is necessary to leave the classroom, a teacher must notify the school office or another teacher immediately. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure their class is supervised and covered at all times if he or she cannot be in a scheduled class for any period of time.

All employees must obtain authorization from the campus Principal when leaving the school during scheduled work hours.

Scheduling and Attending Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents are the first educators and must be treated with respect. Teachers are responsible for attending and conducting all Parent Open House Meetings unless approved in writing by a Principal.

Individual parent conferences must be scheduled during non-instructional hours. Teachers are expected to call parents of students who are at risk of failing starting the third week of school after benchmarks. Teachers are expected to make positive phone calls to parents. Parent-Teacher conferences are not to be scheduled during instruction time. Teachers are also expected to call parents to invite them to "Parent Nights."

Job Performance

Communication between employees and supervisors or managers is very important. Discussions regarding job performance are ongoing and often informal. Employees should initiate conversations with their supervisors if they feel additional ongoing feedback is needed.

Generally, formal performance reviews are conducted annually. These reviews include a written performance appraisal and discussion between the employee and the supervisor about job performance and expectations for the coming year.

Outside Employment

Employees are permitted to work a second job as long as it does not interfere with their job performance with Gateway Charter Academy. Employees with a second job are expected to work their assigned schedules. A second job will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel, or refusal to work overtime or different hours.

If outside work activity causes or contributes to job-related problems, it must be discontinued, or the employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Dress and Grooming

Gateway Charter Academy provides a business casual work environment for its employees. Even though the dress code is casual, it is important to project a professional image to our customers, visitors, and coworkers. All employees are expected to dress in a manner consistent with good hygiene, safety, and good taste. Please use common sense.

Any questions or complaints regarding the appropriateness of attire should be directed to your immediate supervisor or Administration. Decisions regarding attire will be made by the Human Resources department and not by individual departments or managers.

Social Media Acceptable Use

Gateway Charter Academy encourages employees to share information with co-workers and with those outside the district for the purposes of gathering information, generating new ideas, and learning from the work of others. Social media provide inexpensive, informal, and timely ways to participate in an exchange of ideas and information. However, information posted on a website is available to the public and, therefore, the district has established the following guidelines for employee participation in social media.

Note: As used in this policy, “social media” refers to blogs, forums, and social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, and SnapChat, among others.

Off-duty use of social media. Employees may maintain personal websites or weblogs on their own time using their own facilities. Employees must ensure that social media activity does not interfere with their work. In general, the district considers social media activities to be personal endeavors, and employees may use them to express their thoughts or promote their ideas. Employees are not allowed to friend or contact students through their own personal social media. Even when the student graduates

from our school or is no longer attending the school, employees are not allowed to associate with them on their own personal social media.

On-duty use of social media. Employees may engage in social media activity during work time provided it is directly related to their work, approved by their manager, and does not identify or reference district clients, customers, or vendors without express permission. The district monitors employee use of district computers and the Internet, including employee blogging and social networking activity.

Respect. Demonstrate respect for the dignity of the district, its owners, its customers, its vendors, and its employees. A social media site is a public place, and employees should avoid inappropriate comments. For example, employees should not divulge Gateway Charter Academy's confidential information such as trade secrets, client lists, or information restricted from disclosure by law on social media sites. Similarly, employees should not engage in harassing or discriminatory behavior that targets other employees or individuals because of their protected class status or make defamatory comments. Even if a message is posted anonymously, it may be possible to trace it back to the sender.

Post disclaimers. If an employee identifies himself or herself as a district employee or discusses matters related to the district on a social media site, the site must include a disclaimer on the front page stating that it does not express the views of the district and that the employee is expressing only his or her personal views. For example: "The views expressed on this website/Weblog are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer." Place the disclaimer in a prominent position and repeat it for each posting expressing an opinion related to the district or the district's business. Employees must keep in mind that if they post information on a social media site that is in violation of district policy and/or federal, state, or local law, the disclaimer will not shield them from disciplinary action.

Competition. Employees should not use a social media to criticize the districts competition and should not use it to compete with the district.

Confidentiality. Do not identify or reference district clients, customers, or vendors without express permission. Employees may write about their jobs in general but may not disclose any confidential or proprietary information. For examples of confidential information, please refer to the confidentiality policy. When in doubt, ask before publishing.

New ideas. Please remember that new ideas related to work or the district's business belong to the district. Do not post them on a social media site without the district's permission.

Links. Employees may provide a link from a social media site to the district's website during employment (subject to discontinuance at the district's sole discretion). Employees should contact the Web design group to obtain the graphic for links to the district's site and to register the site with the district.

Trademarks and copyrights. Do not use the district's or others' trademarks on a social media site, or reproduce the district's or others' material without first obtaining permission.

Avoid statements about the district's future. Because the district is publicly held, writing about projected growth, sales and profits, future products or services, marketing plans, or the stock price may violate Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rules or other applicable laws.

Legal. Employees are expected to comply with all applicable laws, including but not limited to, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines, copyright, trademark, and harassment laws.

District restrictions. Because the district is publicly held, it may require that employees temporarily confine social media commentary to topics unrelated to the district or that employees temporarily suspend such activity to ensure compliance with the SEC's regulations or other laws. The district may also require employees to delete references to it on a website or Web log and to stop identifying themselves as an employee of the district.

Discipline. Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Note: Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit your rights under any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including your rights under the National Labor Relations Act to engage in protected concerted activities with other employees to improve or discuss terms and conditions of employment, such as wages, working conditions, and benefits.

Bulletin Boards

All required governmental postings are posted on the boards located in the break room. These boards may also contain general announcements.

Employees may submit to Human Resources notices of general interest, such as for-sale notices; recreational-type announcements and/or club functions (e-mail should not be used for the aforementioned); postcards; expressions of gratitude or sympathy; and notices looking for/offering carpools, tickets, roommates, or pets. Human Resources approves, posts, and takes down all notices. All notices posted by employees will be removed after 2 weeks unless otherwise stipulated. The district reserves the right to refuse permission to post or to take down any announcement.

Solicitation

Employees should be able to work in an environment that is free from unnecessary annoyances and interference with their work. In order to protect our employees and visitors, solicitation by employees is strictly prohibited while either the employee being

solicited or the employee doing the soliciting is on “working time.” “Working time” is defined as time during which an employee is not at a meal, on break, or on the premises immediately before or after his or her shift.

Employees are also prohibited from distributing written materials, handbills, or any other type of literature on working time and, at all times, in “working areas,” which includes all office areas. “Working areas” do not include break rooms, parking lots, or common areas shared by employees during nonworking time.

Nonemployees may not trespass or solicit or distribute materials anywhere on district property at any time.

Computers, Internet, Email, and Other Resources

The district provides a wide variety of communication tools and resources to employees for use in running day-to-day business activities. Whether it is the telephone, voice mail, fax, scanner, Internet, intranet, e-mail, text messaging, or any other district-provided technology, use should be reserved for business-related matters during working hours. All communication using these tools should be handled in a professional and respectful manner.

Employees should not have any expectation of privacy in their use of district computer, phone, or other communication tools. All communications made using district-provided equipment or services including email and internet activity, are subject to inspection by the district. Employees should keep in mind that even if they delete an email, voicemail or other communication, a copy may be archived on the district’s systems.

Employee use of district-provided communication systems, including personal e-mail and internet use, that are not job-related have the potential to drain, rather than enhance, productivity and system performance. You should also be aware that information transmitted through e-mail and the internet is not completely secure or may contain viruses or malware, and information you transmit and receive could damage the district’s systems as well as the reputation and/or competitiveness of the district. To protect against possible problems, delete any e-mail messages prior to opening that are received from unknown senders and advertisers. It also is against district policy to turn off antivirus protection software or make unauthorized changes to system configurations installed on district computers. Violations of this policy may result in termination for a first offense.

The district encourages employees to use e-mail only to communicate with fellow employees, suppliers, customers, or potential customers regarding district business. Internal and external e-mails are considered business records and may be subject to federal and state recordkeeping requirements as well as to discovery in the event of litigation. Be aware of this possibility when sending e-mails within and outside the district.

All use of district-provided communications systems, including e-mail and internet use, should conform to our district guidelines/policies, including but not limited to the Equal

Opportunity, Harassment, Confidential Information, and Conflicts of Interest. So for example, employees should not engage in harassing or discriminatory behavior that targets other employees or individuals because of their protected class status or make defamatory comments. Similarly, employees should not divulge confidential information such as trade secrets, client lists, or information restricted from disclosure by law on social media sites.

Because e-mail, telephone and voice mail, and internet communication equipment are provided for district business purposes and are critical to the district's success, your communications may be accessed without further notice by Information Technology department administrators and district management to ensure compliance with this guideline.

The electronic communication systems are not secure and may allow inadvertent disclosure, accidental transmission to third parties, etc. Sensitive information should not be sent via unsecured electronic means.

Office telephones are for business purposes. While the district recognizes that some personal calls are necessary, these should be kept as brief as possible and to a minimum. Personal use of the district's cell phones, long-distance account, or toll-free numbers is strictly prohibited. Abuse of these privileges is subject to corrective action up to and including termination.

The district reserves the right to monitor customer calls to ensure employees abide by district quality guidelines and provide appropriate levels of customer service. Employees working in sales and customer service will be subject to telephone monitoring and e-mail. [move to above] Should the subject matter of any telephone conversation become personal while monitoring is taking place, monitoring of the call will immediately be discontinued.

Nothing in this policy is designed to interfere with, restrain, or prevent employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment as protected under the National Labor Relations Act. Employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

Disciplinary Procedure

The district expects employees to comply with the district standards of behavior and performance and to correct any noncompliance with these standards.

Under normal circumstances, the district endorses a policy of progressive discipline in which it attempts to provide employees with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to improve. It does, however, retain the right to administer discipline in any manner it sees fit. This policy does not modify the status of employees as employees-at-will or in any way restrict the District's right to bypass the disciplinary procedures suggested.

The following steps are suggested in the discipline procedure. All steps should be documented in the employee's personnel file.

Step 1: Informal Discussion. When a performance problem is first identified, the nature of the problem and the action necessary to correct it should be thoroughly discussed with the employee.

Step 2: Counseling. If a private informal discussion with the employee has not resulted in corrective action, following a thorough investigation, the supervisor should meet with the employee and (a) review the problem, (b) permit the employee to present his or her views on the problem, (c) advise the employee that the problem must be corrected, (d) inform the employee that failure to correct the problem will result in further disciplinary action which may include discharge, and (e) issue a counseling notice to the employee.

Step 3: Reprimand. If satisfactory performance and corrective action are not achieved under Steps 1 and 2, the supervisor and his or her superior should meet with the employee in private and proceed via (a) through (d) above, and issue a reprimand notice to the employee.

Step 4: Suspension. Supervisors have the authority to temporarily remove employees from the workplace, with or without pay, if approved in advance by the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent and Human Resources. An exempt employee generally may not be suspended without pay for less than a full day, and the suspension must be related to written workplace conduct rules applicable to all employees, e.g., such as a written policy prohibiting sexual harassment or workplace violence.

Step 5: Failure to improve. Failure to improve performance or behavior after the written warning or suspension can result in termination.

The progressive disciplinary procedures described above also may be applied to an employee who is experiencing a series of unrelated problems involving job performance or behavior.

In cases involving serious misconduct, **or any time the supervisor determines it is necessary, such as a major breach of policy or violation of law, the procedures contained above may be disregarded.** Typically, the supervisor should suspend the employee immediately (with or without pay) and an investigation of the incidents leading up to the suspension should be conducted to determine if any further action, such as termination, should be taken.

Time Off and Leaves of Absence

Holidays

- Please see the school calendar for holiday schedule (calendars should be posted on the Gateway Charter Academy website).

Any additional holidays will be designated by the district.

If one of these holidays falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on the following Monday. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, the district will select either the following Monday or the preceding Friday as a substitute holiday. The district reserves the right to pay eligible employees in lieu of time off if the holiday falls on Saturday.

Religious observances

Employees who need time off to observe religious practices or holidays not already scheduled by the district should speak with their supervisor. Depending upon business needs, the employee may be able to work on a day that is normally observed as a holiday and then take time off for another religious day. Employees may also be able to switch a scheduled day with another employee, or take vacation time, or take off unpaid days. The district will seek to reasonably accommodate individuals' religious observances.

Vacation

Gateway Charter Academy recognizes the importance of time off from work to relax, spend time with family, and enjoy leisure activities. The district provides paid vacation time to full-time employees that are:

- 216 employee – 4 weeks of vacation
- 226 employee – 2 weeks of vacation
- 235 employee – 2 weeks of vacation

Employees are encouraged to take vacation during the school year.

Personal Days

Gateway Charter Academy does not participate in the State Personal Leave Program; therefore, accumulated stated personal leave days from other Texas School Districts cannot be transferred in or out of the GCA System. Gateway Charter Academy provides full-time

employees an entitlement of eight (8) personal days per year with pay upon the completion of **(30) days of probationary period**. New-hires employed throughout the year will receive a pro-rated amount of personal days. An employee who has not completed the probationary period (30 days) is not eligible to use any personal days and will have unpaid/docked time. If an employee uses all of his/her personal days, and takes additional time off they will have unpaid/docked time.

Summary:

- All new hires are on **30 day probation**
- Personal time is not available until the completion of the 30 day probation
- Time taken off prior to the 30 day probation will be unpaid/docked time
- Time taken off after the exhaustion of allotted personal time off days will be unpaid/docked time.

Employee Starting Month

Number of personal days

August- September	8
October – November	6
December – January	4
February – March	2
April – May	1

Perfect Attendance Incentive

Employees who work the year without using any personal days will be paid out for 5 PTO days and the remaining 3 will roll-up to the new academic year.

Family and Medical Leave

Gateway Charter Academy complies with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which requires employers to grant unpaid leaves of absence to qualified workers for certain medical and family-related reasons. The district also abides by any state and local leave laws. The more generous of the laws will apply to the employee if the employee is eligible under both federal and state laws.

Please note there are many requirements, qualifications, and exceptions under these laws, and each employee’s situation is different. Contact the Human Resources department to discuss options for leave.

The FMLA requires private employers with 50 or more employees and all public agencies, including state, local, and federal employers, and local education agencies (schools), to provide eligible employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in any 12-month period for certain family and medical reasons. The 12-month period is a rolling period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave, except for leaves to care for a covered service member with a serious illness or injury. For those leaves, the leave entitlement is 26 weeks in a single 12-month period, measured forward from the date an employee first takes that type of leave.

Basic Leave Entitlement. The FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons: (1) for incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or child birth; (2) to care for the employee's child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care; (3) to care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition; or (4) for a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to work.

Military Family Leave Entitlements. Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or called to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include addressing issues that arise from (1) short notice of deployment (limited to up to seven days of leave); (2) attending certain military events and related activity; (3) arranging childcare and school activities; (4) addressing certain financial and legal arrangements; (5) attending certain counseling sessions; (6) spending time with covered military family members on short-term temporary rest and recuperation leave (limited to up to five days of leave); (7) attending post-deployment reintegration briefings; (8) arranging care for or providing care to a parent who is incapable of self-care; and (9) any additional activities agreed upon by the employer and employee that arise out of the military member's active duty or call to active duty.

The FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties and for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

Benefits and Protections During FMLA Leave. During FMLA leave, the District will maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees will be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. However, an employee on FMLA leave does not have any greater right to reinstatement or to other benefits and conditions of

employment than if the employee had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period.

Certain highly compensated key employees also may be denied reinstatement when necessary to prevent “substantial and grievous economic injury” to the District’s operations. A “key” employee is an eligible salaried employee who is among the highest paid ten percent of the District’s employees within 75 miles of the worksite. Employees will be notified of their status as a key employee, when applicable, after they request FMLA leave.

Use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee’s leave.

Employee Eligibility. The FMLA defines eligible employees as employees who: (1) have worked for the District for at least 12 months; (2) have worked for the District for at least 1,250 hours in the previous 12 months; and (3) work at or report to a worksite which has 50 or more employees or is within 75 miles of District worksites that taken together have a total of 50 or more employees.

Definition of Serious Health Condition. A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee’s job or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school, work, or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

Use of Leave. An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced work schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer’s operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies also may be taken on an intermittent or reduced work schedule basis.

Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave. Employees may choose or employers may require the use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. Accordingly, the District requires employees to use any accrued paid vacation, personal, and sick days during an unpaid FMLA leave taken because of the employee’s own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member or to care for a seriously ill or injured family member in the military. In addition, the employee must use any accrued paid vacation or personal days (but not sick days) during FMLA leave taken to

care for a newborn or newly placed child or for a qualifying exigency arising out of a family member's active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation. In order to use paid leave for FMLA leave, employees must comply with the District's normal paid leave procedures found in its Vacation and Sick Leave policies.

Employee Responsibilities. Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days' notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with the District's normal call-in procedures. The District may delay leave to employees who do not provide proper advance notice of the foreseeable need for leave, absent unusual circumstances preventing the notice.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the District to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the District if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also are required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. The District also may require a second, and if necessary, a third opinion (at the District's expense) and, when the leave is a result of the employee's own serious health condition, a fitness for duty report to return to work. The District also may delay or deny approval of leave for lack of proper medical certification.

District Responsibilities. The District will inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under the FMLA. If they are, the notice will specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If employees are not eligible, the District will provide a reason for the ineligibility.

The District will inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. If the District determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the District will notify the employee.

Other Provisions. Under an exception to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in the FMLA regulations, hourly amounts may be deducted for unpaid leave from the salary of executive, administrative, and professional employees; outside sales representatives; certain highly-skilled computer professionals; and certain highly compensated employees who are exempt from the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the FLSA, without affecting the employee's exempt status. This special exception to the "salary basis" requirements for the FLSA's exemptions extends only to eligible employees' use of FMLA leave.

Employees may not perform work for self-employment or for any other employer during an approved leave of absence, except when the leave is for military or public service or

when the District has approved the employment under its Outside Employment policy and the employee's reason for FMLA leave does not preclude the outside employment.

Unlawful Acts by Employers. The FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer (1) to interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under the FMLA; or (2) to discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to the FMLA.

Enforcement. An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

Military Leave

Gateway Charter Academy supports the military obligations of all employees and grants leaves for uniformed service in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Any employee who needs time off for uniformed service should immediately notify the Human Resources department and his or her supervisor, who will provide details regarding the leave. If an employee is unable to provide notice before leaving for uniformed service, a family member should notify the supervisor as soon as possible.

Upon return from military leave, employees will be granted the same seniority, pay, and benefits as if they had worked continuously. Failure to report for work within the prescribed time after completion of military service will be considered a voluntary termination.

All employees who enter military service may accumulate a total absence of 5 years and still retain employment rights.

Bereavement Leave

Employees with more than 3 months' service may take up to 3 days of paid bereavement leave upon the death of a member of their immediate family. "Immediate family members" are defined as an employee's spouse, domestic partner, parents, stepparents, siblings, children, stepchildren, grandparent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, or grandchild. All regular, full-time employees may take up to one (1) day off with pay to attend the funeral of an extended family member (aunts, uncles, and cousins).

The district may require verification of the need for the leave. The employee's supervisor and Human Resources will consider this time off on a case-by-case basis.

Payment for bereavement leave is computed at the regular hourly rate to a maximum of 8 hours for 1 day. Time off granted in accordance with this policy shall not be credited as time worked for the purpose of computing overtime.

Jury Duty/Court Appearance

The district supports employees in their civic duty to serve on a jury. Employees must present any summons to jury duty to their supervisor as soon as possible after receiving the notice to allow advance planning for an employee's absence.

Nonexempt employees will be paid for up to 2 weeks of jury duty service at their regular rate of pay minus any compensation received from the court for the period of service. Exempt employees are subject to the same 2-week limitation except that they will also receive pay for any days they serve as a juror or witness in a workweek in which they actually perform work. All employees may use any accrued time off if required to serve more than 2 weeks on a jury.

If an employee is released from jury duty after 4 hours or less of service, he or she must report to work for the remainder of that work day.

Time for appearance in court for personal business will be the individual employee's responsibility. Normally, personal days or vacation days will be used for this purpose.

Time Off for Voting

Gateway Charter Academy recognizes that voting is a right and privilege of being a citizen of the United States and encourages employees to exercise their right to vote. In almost all cases, you will have sufficient time outside working hours to vote. If for any reason you think this won't be the case, contact your supervisor to discuss scheduling accommodations.

Employee Benefits

Gateway Charter Academy recognizes the value of benefits to employees and their families. The district supports employees by offering a comprehensive and competitive benefits program. For more information regarding benefit programs, please refer to the district Summary Plan Descriptions (SPD), which are found on the district intranet, or contact the Human Resources department. To the extent of the information provided here conflicts with the SPD or full plan document, the full plan document will control.

Medical, Dental, and Vision Insurance

Full-time employees working 30 hours or more per week are eligible for insurance on the first day of employment with Gateway Charter Academy. To keep coverage in force, every insured employee must work a minimum of 30 hours per week.

Group Life Insurance

Gateway Charter Academy provides life insurance for full-time employees who work a minimum of 30 hours per week. Employees are eligible for this benefit on the first of the month following 30 days of service. The life benefit is equal to an employee's annualized base rate. The cost of this coverage is paid for in full by the district.

Short-Term Disability

Short-term disability is offered to full-time employees working a minimum of 30 hours per week. Employees are eligible for this benefit on the first of the month following 30 days of service. Short-term disability is meant to bridge the 90-day period until long-term disability can cover an employee. If an employee becomes disabled and cannot work for a short period of time, this coverage pays 60 percent of the employee's salary, up to the policy limits. This is a voluntary benefit and is funded solely by the employee. In addition, employees will not be paid vacation or sick leave for approved absences covered by the district's program, except to supplement the short-term disability benefits.

Short-term disability benefits may run concurrently with FMLA leave and/or any other leave where permitted by state and federal law.

Some states have a mandatory disability program where you may be charged a premium in the form of a payroll tax. You may elect to purchase the district disability benefits as a supplement to the state program.

Long-Term Disability

Long-term disability benefits are offered to full-time employees working a minimum of 30 hours per week. If an employee becomes totally disabled and cannot work for an extended period of time, this coverage pays 60 percent of the employee's salary, up to the policy limits. This is a voluntary benefit and is funded solely by the employee.

Long-term disability benefits will run concurrently with FMLA leave and/or any other leave where permitted by state and federal law.

Teachers Retirement Plan and 403B and 457

Gateway Charter Academy recognizes the importance of saving for retirement and offers eligible employees Teachers Retirement System (TRS) which is automatically deducted from your check and we offer 403B and 457 retirement plans.

Eligibility, vesting, and all other matters relating to these plans are explained on our benefits website that can be obtained on-line or from Human Resources.

Teacher Retirement

Employees should refer retirement questions to TRS. TRS eligibility is established by state law and regulation. Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the Teacher Retirement System as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, Texas 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web (<http://www.trs.state.tx.us>).

Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation is a "no-fault" system that provides compensation for medical expenses and wage losses to employees who are injured or who become ill because of employment.

Gateway Charter Academy pays the entire cost of workers' compensation insurance. The insurance provides coverage for related medical and rehabilitation expenses and a portion of lost wages to employees who sustain an injury on the job.

The district abides by all applicable state workers' compensation laws and regulations.

If an employee sustains a job-related injury or illness, it is important to notify the supervisor and Human Resources immediately. The supervisor will complete an injury report with input from the employee and return the form to the Human Resources department. Human Resources will file the claim with the insurance district. In cases of true medical emergencies, report to the nearest emergency room.

Workers' compensation benefits (paid or unpaid) will run concurrently with FMLA leave, if applicable, where permitted by state and federal law. In addition, employees will not be paid vacation or sick leave for approved absences covered by the district's workers' compensation program, except to supplement the workers' compensation benefits such as when the plan only covers a portion of the employee's salary as allowed by state law.

Reporting Requirements

Any employee suffering an injury or illness that is work related is responsible for immediately reporting that illness or injury – no matter how minor – to his or her campus Principal and/or supervisor. The employee should not attempt to make any medical decisions on his or her own.

The Principal and/or supervisor will assist the individual immediately to obtain all the details of the incident and the identities and contact information of any witnesses, if necessary and report incident to Human Resources immediately.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WELFARE

An effective educational program requires employees to exemplify integrity, high ideals, and human understanding. GCA expects all professional staff members to maintain high standards in their working relationships, and in the performance of their professional duties, by:

- Recognizing the basic dignity of all individuals;
- Accurately representing their qualifications;
- Exercising due care to protect the mental and physical safety of students, colleagues, and subordinates;
- Maintain confidentiality; and
- Refraining from using his or her position or school property for partisan political or religious purposes.

Additionally, all employees are expected to act with the highest ethical standards and are subject to the following ethical codes:

Texas Educator Code of Ethics

NOTE: The term “educator” as used in this section will apply to all GCA employees. All GCA employees must adhere to the Texas Educator Code of Ethics. Violations will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

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

Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance:

- The educator will not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the School or educational institution.
- The educator will not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.
- The educator will not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.
- The educator will not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

- The educator will neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard will not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.
- The educator will not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.
- The educator will comply with state regulations, written School Board policies, and other state and federal laws.
- The educator will apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.
- The educator will not make threats of violence against School employees, School Board members, students, or parents of students.
- The educator will be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.
- The educator will not intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.
- The educator will refrain from the illegal use or distribution of controlled substances and/or abuse of prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.
- The educator will not consume alcoholic beverages on School property or during School activities when students are present.

Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues:

- The educator will not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
- The educator will not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the School system.
- The educator will adhere to written School Board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.
- The educator will not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.
- The educator will not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.
- The educator will not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.
- The educator will not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC, or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding.

Ethical Conduct Toward Students:

- The educator will not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
- The educator will not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.
- The educator will not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.
- The educator will not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.
- The educator will not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.
- The educator will not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.
- The educator will not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child, or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age, unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child, to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.
- The educator will maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.
- The educator will refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, e-mail, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:
 - the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
 - the subject matter of the communication;
 - whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
 - whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
 - whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
 - whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Professional Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, adopted by the Professional Practices Commission, Texas Education Agency, March 1, 1998; last amended December 26, 2010.

Financial Ethics

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

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

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

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

Reports of suspected fraud or financial impropriety will be treated as confidential to the extent permitted by law. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a full investigation or to comply with law. All employees involved in an investigation will be advised to keep information about the investigation confidential.

Neither the Board nor any GCA employee will unlawfully retaliate against a person who in good faith reports perceived fraud or financial impropriety.

If an employee is found to have committed fraud or financial impropriety, the

Superintendent or designee will take or recommend appropriate disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment and, when circumstances warrant, the Board of Directors, Superintendent, or designee may refer matters to appropriate law enforcement or regulatory authorities.

Standards of Conduct

All employees are expected to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of GCA and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public. In addition to the ethical standards outlined above, employees are expected to follow all appropriate standards that relate to:

- Abuse of GCA's leave policy.
- Alteration or falsification of school records, including grades, academic records, employee and/or student forms, or any other school information.
- Conduct in violation of any GCA policy or established expectation of performance.
- Conducting personal business during business hours while on school property.
- Corporal punishment of students.
- Excessive absences and/or tardiness. Improper conduct toward students and other employees.
- Incompetence or inefficiency in the performance of duties.
- Insubordination, including the willful refusal to perform an assignment or to comply with a directive given by a supervisor. However, in the event a supervisor directs an employee to perform an illegal or immoral act/task, the employee should notify the next level of authority immediately.
- Malicious gossip and/or spreading rumors; engaging in behavior designed to create discord and lack of GCA; interfering with fellow employee's job performance; willfully restricting work output or encouraging others to do the same.
- Negligence or any careless action that endangers the life or safety of another person, or damages or destroys the property of GCA.
- Possession, use, or being under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants, illegal narcotics, or other controlled substances on school property or during any school function.
- Sexual misconduct.
- Theft of GCA-owned property or of fellow employees; unauthorized possession or removal of any school property, including documents, from the premises without prior permission from a supervisor; unauthorized use of GCA's equipment or property for personal reasons or personal profit.
- Threatening, intimidating, or coercing fellow employees on or off GCA premises, at any time, for any reason.
- Unexcused absences from work.
- Unprofessional job-related conduct.
- Use of GCA property for personal gain.
- Verbal and/or physical fighting on school premises or at any school related

activities.

- Wasting of GCA supplies or equipment.
- Willfully or with gross negligence causing the destruction or damage of GCA property or the property of fellow employees, volunteers, suppliers or visitors, or students.

The preceding list is not intended to limit the type of unacceptable employee behavior. Questions regarding GCA's expectations for employee conduct should be directed to the appropriate supervisor or Executive Principal. Violations of these or any other standards of employee conduct may lead to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

All GCA employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, GCA policies and procedures, and ethical standards.

STUDENT WELFARE: REPORTING ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

Purpose of Reporting Law

The purpose of the reporting law is to protect the child by encouraging more complete reporting of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. This purpose is accomplished by:

1. Identification of the child in peril as quickly as possible;
2. Designation of the agency, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), and local law enforcement to receive and investigate reports of suspected child abuse;
3. Offering, where appropriate, services and treatment.

Protection for Reporting Child Abuse and/or Neglect

Any GCA officer, employee, agent or volunteer who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse, neglect or other maltreatment by any person, must immediately make a report as required by law.

If a professional employee has cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused, maltreated, or neglected, he or she **MUST** make a verbal report within 48 hours after the person first suspects abuse, neglect or maltreatment. The person **MAY NOT** delegate to or rely on another person to make the report. For purposes of this reporting requirement, the term "professional" means an individual who is licensed or certified by the state or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the state and who, in the normal course of official duties or duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children.

If the suspected abuse or neglect involves a person responsible for the custody, care or welfare of the child, the report must generally be made to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). All other reports should be made to any local or state law enforcement agency, the DFPS, the Texas Education Agency (if the abuse or neglect occurred at school), another state agency near where the abuse occurred, or any agency designated by a court as responsible for the protection of children.

A report should reflect the reporter's belief that a child has been or may be abused or neglected or has died of abuse or neglect. The reporter will identify the following information, if known:

- The name and address of the child;
- The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child; and
- Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.

Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment of up to 180 days and/or a fine of up to \$2,000 ([Texas Family Code, Chapter 261](#)).

Gateway Charter Academy or its agents may not suspend or terminate the employment of, or otherwise discriminate against, a professional employee who, in good faith:

- Reports child abuse or neglect to:
 - The employee's supervisor,
 - An administrator of the facility where the employee works,
 - A state regulatory agency, or
 - A law enforcement agency; or
- Initiates or cooperates with a governmental investigation or proceeding relating to an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services reporting website:

<http://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx>

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services reporting hotline: 1-800-252-5400

Photographs

Only during an on-site investigation can CPS or a law enforcement officer direct an

employee to photograph alleged abuse.

Photographing will be conducted in a way that protects the privacy of the child and ensures professional conduct on the part of the employee taking the photographs. Photographs may only be taken using equipment furnished by the investigation agency.

Notifying the Parents

The CPS/DFPS or law enforcement agency conducting the investigation is responsible for notifying the parents when a child abuse report has been made concerning their child. The campus and GCA staff do not ordinarily notify parents of such investigations unless CPS directs the campus or staff to do so.

Officer/Caseworker Interviewing/Removing a Student

If a member of a law enforcement agency or a CPS caseworker requests permission to interview a student on or off campus, the Principal or Principal's designee (professional employee) should verify and record the identity of the officer or caseworker making the request and determine the purpose of the interview. The Principal may also contact the supervisor of the officer or caseworker to validate the person's authority to conduct the interview.

The Principal or designee will not impede a CPS investigation; however, students should not be removed from class in order for CPS to simply check on the child or conduct counseling sessions.

If the student is to be interviewed on campus, the Principal or designee should ask the caseworker or law enforcement officer if he or she may be present with the child during the questioning to serve as an advocate for the child in the absence of a parent/guardian. If the investigator raises a valid objection to a third party's presence, documentation of the request and the response of the investigator should be recorded.

If the student is to be removed from the campus, the Principal will complete an "Acknowledgement of Student Removal/Questioning by Law Enforcement Officials" form to document the action.

GENERAL STUDENT ISSUES

Equal Educational Opportunities

Gateway Charter Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), as amended; [Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972](#); and [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), as amended. In accordance with state charter school law and regulations, GCA also does not discriminate against students based on academic, artistic or athletic ability or the school district a student would otherwise attend.

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students based on any of the reasons listed above should be directed to the Superintendent or designee.

Student Records

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use under federal law known as the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA). 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: Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights;
- The student (if 18 or older or emancipated by a court); and
- School officials with legitimate educational interests.

Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus Principal for assistance.

Lesson Plans

Lesson plans are the most basic teaching tool, and are valuable because they tell where students are going academically, how they will get there, and when they will arrive.

All teachers are expected to write lesson plans. Lesson plans will be made available to the teacher's supervisor upon request.

Teachers should follow the lesson plan submission format requested by their Principal.

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 Principal 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 teacher or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved to their satisfaction should be directed to the campus's 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.

Student Health Services

GCA's school health services supplement the efforts of parents and personal health care providers to promote, improve, and maintain student health and well-being. These 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 immediately report such signs to the school nurse and/or Principal.

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

- Administer first aid, if necessary and appropriate.
- Notify the student's parents.
- Contact the school nurse or the student's family doctor if the student's parents or emergency contacts cannot be located.
- If necessary, call an ambulance.
- Complete an incident form, and return the completed form to the Principal.

Administering Medication to Students

Only designated employees can administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. A student who must take medication 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.

Dietary Supplements

School employees are prohibited by state law from knowingly selling, marketing, or distributing a dietary supplement that contains performance-enhancing compounds to students. In addition, employees may not knowingly endorse or suggest the ingestion, intranasal application, or inhalation of a performance-enhancing dietary supplement to any student.

Psychotropic Drugs

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

School employees are prohibited by state law from doing the following:

- Recommending that a student use a psychotropic drug
- Suggesting a particular diagnosis
- Excluding from class or any school-related activity a student whose parent refuses to consent to a psychiatric evaluation or to authorize the administration of a psychotropic drug to a student.

However, a School officer or employee may:

- Make an appropriate referral under Child Find;
- Recommend that a child be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if the employee is a registered nurse, advanced nurse practitioner, physician, or certified or appropriately credentialed mental health professional; or
- Discuss an aspect of a child's behavior or academic progress with the child's parent or other School officer or employee, as appropriate.

Student Conduct and Discipline

Students are expected to follow classroom rules, campus rules, and the rules contained 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 adopted by GCA. Non-instructional employees with concerns about student behavior should contact the student's classroom teacher or the Discipline Coordinator.

Teachers must file a written report with the Principal or another appropriate administrator upon learning 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 professional staff members. The staff member should confer with the student, Principal, and parents in unusual circumstances. Cooperation and understanding between parents and the school can often eliminate problems.

Student Attendance

Teachers and staff should be familiar with GCA's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. Contact a Principal for additional information.



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK 2018-2019 ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RECEIPT

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the employee handbook of Gateway Charter Academy. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies in the handbook.

I understand that the handbook and all other written and oral materials provided to me are intended for informational purposes only. Neither it, district practices, nor other communications create an employment contract or term. I understand that the policies and benefits, both in the handbook and those communicated to me in any other fashion, are subject to interpretation, review, removal, and change by management at any time without notice.

I further understand that I am an at-will employee and that neither this document nor any other communication shall bind the district to employ me now or hereafter and that my employment may be terminated by me or the district without reason at any time. I understand that no representative of the district has any authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to assure any other personnel action or to assure any benefits or terms or conditions of employment, or make any agreement contrary to the foregoing.

I also understand and agree that this agreement may not be modified orally and that only the superintendent of the district may make a commitment for employment. I also understand that if such an agreement is made, it must be in writing and signed by the superintendent of the district.

Employee's Name in Print

Signature of Employee

Date Signed by Employee

TO BE PLACED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE



Receipt of Harassment Policy

I have read and I understand the Gateway Charter Academy's Harassment Policy.

Employee's Name in Print

Signature of Employee

Date Signed by Employee

TO BE PLACED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE

