



**Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School**

**Employee Handbook**





**Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School**

**Employee Handbook**

**This manual is subject to a full-scale review at anytime. Individual changes made outside of the full-scale review will be completed on an “as needed” basis.**

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

August 2017

#### Welcome Statement from the Executive Director & Board of Directors

Welcome to Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School. Our goal is to create a positive and rewarding experience that will enable employees to provide the finest and most authentic Montessori primary and elementary education to each and every one of our students. By working together we will continue as a successful school. Our 'working' theme for this year is 'Collaborating for Excellence & Authenticity'.

This Employee Handbook, including any updates or amendments implemented throughout the school year, outlines general information, policies, procedures, and benefits that we will implement at Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School in SY 2017-2018, and serves as a guide to help create a transparent working environment for new and returning employees.

We look forward to your success and support at Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School.

Atentamente, ,

**R. RODRIGUEZ, PhD**

Executive Director & Head of School

Berica Broomfield - Chair  
Kamal Wright-Cunningham, PhD - Vice Chair  
Aldel Brown  
Willa Golden  
Kamina Newsome  
Jessica Phillips-Silver, PhD  
Shawn Samuels  
Janet Walkoe, PhD

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

#### Table of Contents

#### **I. INTRODUCTION, 6**

Mission Statement, 6

Vision, 6

History, 6

Our Philosophy, 6

Our Goals, 6

Governance, 7

Handbook Statement, 7

#### **II. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES, 8**

Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination, 8

Employee Background Check, 18

Immigration Reform Control Act (IRCA), 9

Americans with Disability Act (ADA), 9

Pregnancy Accommodation Law, 9

Breast Feeding Mothers, 10

#### **III. EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WORK ETHICS, 10**

Prohibition of Harassment, 10

Grievance Procedure, 11

Conflict of Interest, 11

Ethics Policy Statement, 12

Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy, 13

Smoke-Free Work Environment, 14

Violence in the Workplace Policy, 14

Weapons, 15

Whistleblower Policy, 15

Media Communications and Outside Agencies, 16

#### **IV. EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES, 16**

School Hours of Operation, 16

Safety and Security Checks, 17

Inclement Weather, 18

Attendance and Punctuality, 18

Time & Labor Recording, 18

Solicitation and Distribution, 19

Employment of Relatives, 19

Dress Code and Personal Appearance, 19

Social Media Use/Social Networking, 20

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

Personal Calls, 21
Monitoring & Surveillance Policy, 21
Use of Equipment & Technology, 21
Intellectual Property, 24
Contracts, 24
Personal Property, 24
Personnel Records, 24
School and Student Policy and Privacy, 25
School Confidentiality and Privacy Policy, 26
<b>V. COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS, 27</b>
Compensation and Employee Classifications, 27
Payroll Schedule, 27
Payroll Deductions, 27
Transportation Benefits, 28
Payroll Corrections, 28
Direct Deposit, 28
Pay Raises, 28
Pay Advances, 28
Overtime, 28
Comp Time, 28
Benefits Overview, 28
Eligibility for Benefits, 29
Medical, Dental, Vision Insurance, 29
Short and Long Term Disability, 29
Retirement, 29
Flexible Spending Account, 29
Life Insurance, 30
Tuition Reimbursement Policy, 30
Observed Holidays, 30
Paid Time Off, 34
Voting Leave, 34
Bereavement Leave, 34
Parental Leave, 34
Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), 34
Military Leave, 35
Leave of Absence (When FMLA does not apply), 36
Health Insurance Continuation of Coverage (COBRA), 36
Worker's Compensation, 37
Unemployment Insurance, 37
<b>VI. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, 37</b>
Job Descriptions, 37
Performance Review Cycle and Evaluation, 37

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

Professional Development, 38

Standards of Conduct and Disciplinary Action, 38

#### **VII. SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT, 39**

Resignation, 39

Exit Interview, 39

Employment References, 40

Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School Acknowledgment, 41

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

#### I. INTRODUCTION

##### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School is to offer a quality Montessori education infused with culturally inclusive principles to guide children to develop to their fullest potential.

##### VISION

The vision of the founders of Shining Stars Montessori Academy is one that seeks to alter the educational outcomes of children living in Washington, DC, thereby positioning them for future success. In keeping with our mission, we will strive to nurture the genius of all the children who come through our doors, guiding them in the principles of the Montessori approach.

##### HISTORY

In 2008, a group of community activists and parents desired to establish an educational program and began the process of applying for a charter from the DC Public Charter School Board. In 2010, the charter application was approved and the Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS was established as a unique, culturally empowering, and high-quality Montessori school in the District of Columbia.

The founding group of Shining Stars Montessori Academy reflected a true diversity of the community that it serves. The founding members include two Montessori teachers, two lawyers, two non-profit leaders, a psychologist, a social worker, and a Howard University student. The group was comprised of parents, education activists, and supporters.

Initially, the Academy served children in two Primary classrooms and has now expanded to include Primary, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary programs serving children ages 3 to 12.

##### OUR PHILOSOPHY

Shining Stars Montessori Academy follows the Montessori belief in the education of the whole child. We maintain that education begins at birth and continues through four subsequent stages (*i.e.*, planes of development), each distinct in terms of characteristics and needs. From birth, the human being is in the process of adaptation to his/her surroundings and is engaged in a unique self-construction of personality. The first two planes of development are encompassed in childhood (birth to 12), during which the child undergoes this process of self-construction through work. The work of the child is done in a scientifically designed and carefully prepared environment.

The teacher in the environment (or classroom) works as a guide, linking the child to the materials in the environment. All of the materials used by the child are specifically designed to facilitate this process of self-construction. The teacher will observe the child's work and make any necessary interventions or adjustments to ensure the child's continuous development and active education.

##### OUR GOALS

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

- Stimulate the growth of the whole child by following the natural developmental cycles of human beings.
- Encourage the child to follow their own individual interests as they learn at their own pace.
- Provide multi-age classrooms to facilitate and encourage individualized learning.
- Provide an uninterrupted work cycle in which learning can occur.
- Encourage the child to be motivated and rewarded by his/her own individual achievement.
- Promote the child's ability to find out and do things for him/herself through manipulation of the materials (auto-education), leading to his/her functional independence.
- Encourage the development of positive self-image through specialized culture-based learning activities and materials.

### GOVERNANCE

Shining Stars is a public charter school governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board has the ultimate responsibility for success of the school and is accountable to the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board to ensure that we meet the terms of our charter contract. The Board sets policy for the school. Working through the Executive Director, the Board ensures that all laws and regulations are being followed and that operations are consistent with the mission of the school.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director is the school's chief administrator and is responsible for its successful leadership and management. The Executive Director retains all rights of possession, care, control and management of the school and retains the right to exercise these functions. These rights include, but are not limited to directing all operations of the school; establish and require observance of reasonable work rules and schedules of work; hire, promote, transfer, schedule and assign employees in positions within the school; suspend, discharge and take other disciplinary action against employees; relieve employees from their duties because of a lack of work or other legitimate reasons; maintain efficiency of the school's operation; take whatever action is necessary to comply with state, district or federal law, or comply with state or federal court/agency decisions or orders; introduce new or improved methods or facilities; select employees, establish quality standards and evaluate employee performance; determine the methods, means and personnel by which the school's operations are conducted; take whatever action is necessary to carry out the functions of the school in emergency situations; determine the educational policies of the school; and to contract out for goods and services.

### HANDBOOK STATEMENT

#### A. Purpose

This Employee Handbook (the "Handbook") sets forth certain policies affecting you as an employee of Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School. It also provides you with practical information and general guidelines as to our expectations of you as an employee. This Handbook is not all-inclusive or intended to provide strict interpretations of our policies. This Handbook applies to all Shining Stars Montessori Academy employees. You must read, understand, and comply with all provisions of this Handbook. This Handbook supersedes all prior handbooks, policy manuals, or practices of Shining Stars.



## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

Shining Stars may unilaterally amend, suspend, revoke, terminate, supplement, modify, or eliminate one or more of the benefits, rules or policies, in whole or in part, described in this Handbook, or any other employment benefits, rules or policies, with or without prior notice. Shining Stars will make every effort to keep you informed of our policies, however we cannot guarantee that notice of revisions will be provided. If you have any questions about any of these policies, or changes to the policies, please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Director. We value your employment with us and count on your efforts and contributions to help ensure our success.

Throughout this Handbook, Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School may be referred to as “School,” “Shining Stars,” “Employer,” or “Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS”

#### **B. Disclaimer**

This Handbook does not constitute an express or implied employment contract of any kind with respect to any of its provisions, including those provisions describing our disciplinary and discharge procedures. This Handbook is not intended to bind Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School contractually in any manner whatsoever. You may not rely on any provision of this Handbook as limiting the School’s discretion to discipline or discharge you. Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School will determine, in its sole discretion, what disciplinary procedures to implement, up to and including discharge.

#### **C. At-Will Employment**

Employment with Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School is “at-will.” Your employment with Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School has no specified term. While we anticipate a mutually rewarding relationship, employment “at will” means that any employee is free to leave employment voluntarily, with or without cause or notice, and that by the same Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School retains the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice. While you may have been hired for a particular school year, Shining Stars may still terminate you at anytime during the school year and/or the School may decide based on a variety of factors not to extend your employment for subsequent school years. Nothing contained in this Handbook, employment applications, training manual, offer letter, agreement, or any other materials provided to employees in connection with their employment in no way modifies the “at-will” nature of your employment with Shining Stars. Any oral statements, promises, or assurances contrary to Shining Star’s “at-will” employment policy are not binding on Shining Stars and should not be relied upon by employees or job applicants.

## **II. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

### **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY & NONDISCRIMINATION**

It is the policy of the School to provide equal employment opportunity to all qualified employees and qualified applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, physical or mental disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

condition or any other basis or status protected by law. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment including, but not limited to, hiring, placement, training, compensation, transfer, promotion, discipline, leave of absence, termination, layoff, and recall. Shining Stars complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, physical or mental disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition, or any other basis or status protected by law.

Any employee who believes he/she has been subjected to any conduct that may violate this Equal Employment Opportunity Policy should bring their complaint to the attention of the School immediately. You can make your complaint to your supervisor, to the Executive Director, or to the Board of Directors. Violations may also be made the subject of a complaint filed under the School's Grievance Procedures contained in this Handbook.

The School considers the implementation and monitoring of this Equal Employment Opportunity Policy to be an important part of each supervisor's responsibility. Supervisors will inform all employees of the Policy and shall take positive steps in an effort to seek adherence to the Policy by all employees within the sphere of their responsibility.

The failure of any employee to comply fully with this Policy will not be tolerated and may be grounds for discipline up to and including discharge.

### EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECK

Employees are required to submit to a fingerprint and criminal background check as a condition for employment. All employees must comply with state requirements such as, but not limited to, fingerprinting, certification, Child Abuse Index, Criminal Record Statement, tuberculin tests, First Aid/CPR (if applicable), prior to beginning employment. Employees are required to go to the Metropolitan Police Department located at 300 Indiana Ave, NW Washington, DC 20001 to complete a fingerprint and criminal background check. The expense associated with the fingerprint and criminal background checks is reimbursable. The employee must submit a receipt and proof that the checks were done. These requirements must be completed prior to beginning employment, with all documentation submitted to the Director of Operations. Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS reserves the right to require that each employee undergo a post-employment criminal background check as a condition of continued employment. In addition, each employee must advise the Executive Director if she or he is arrested for or convicted of any offense, (other than a minor traffic violation) within 3 days of her/his arrest or conviction. Failure to give prompt notice is grounds for termination of employment. Background checks and fingerprints are to be conducted every two years.

### IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT (IRCA)

Shining Stars is committed to complying with all laws requiring employees to be legally permitted to work in the United States. Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) requires employers to verify the identity and employment eligibility of all employees, by completing the Employment Eligibility

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

Verification (I-9) Form, and reviewing documents showing the employee's identity and employment authorization.

All offers of employment are contingent on verification of employment eligibility. On your first day of work you will be asked to provide original documents verifying your eligibility to work and, as required by federal law, to sign Federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form.

If you at any time cannot verify your employment eligibility within 72 hours of initial hiring you will be automatically discharged.

### AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The School is committed to complying with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It is the School's policy not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment with regard to any terms or conditions of employment because of the individual's disability or perceived disability. Consistent with our policy of nondiscrimination, the School will provide reasonable accommodations to any qualified individual with a disability, as defined by the ADA, who has made the School aware of his or her disability and who can perform the essential functions of the job, provided that such accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship on the School.

The School encourages staff members with a disability who believe they need a reasonable accommodation to immediately contact the Executive Director and request in writing a reasonable accommodation. Shining Stars, will work with you, through an interactive process, to try to find a reasonable accommodation for your disability that enables you to perform the essential functions of your job. So that we may understand your disability and the accommodation you may need, we may request medical documentation and information about your disability, as well as information about the reasonable accommodation. Medical documentation will include, at a minimum, the following:

- Description of the nature, severity, and duration of the employee's impairment, the activity or activities that the impairment limits; and
- the extent to which the impairment limits the employee's ability to perform the activity or activities; and
- substantiates why the requested reasonable accommodation is needed.

Confidentiality of qualified individuals will be maintained, except as necessary to structure the accommodation or as may be required under applicable legislative, regulatory, or court pronouncements.

### PREGNANCY ACCOMMODATION LAW

Shining Star's employment policies and practices apply to disabilities due to pregnancy or childbirth on the same terms and conditions as they are applied to other temporary disabilities. If a pregnant employee requests a reasonable accommodation, Shining Stars will explore certain reasonable

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

accommodations, that do not constitute an undue hardship on Shining Stars, with the employee that may include but are not limited to:

- Changing the employee's job duties;
- Changing the employee's work hours;
- Relocating the employee's work area;
- Providing mechanical or electrical aids;
- Transferring the employee to a less strenuous or less hazardous position; or
- Providing the employee with unpaid leave, if the employee has exhausted paid leave, from employee's position.

Shining Stars reserves the right to require employees to provide a certification from a health care provider concerning the medical advisability of a reasonable accommodation to the same extent a certification would be required for other temporary disabilities. The certification must include the date the reasonable accommodation became medically advisable; the probable duration of the reasonable accommodation; and an explanatory statement as to the medical advisability of the reasonable accommodation.

### **BREAST FEEDING MOTHERS**

Shining Stars supports breastfeeding mothers by providing reasonable accommodations for employees who wish to express milk during their workdays when separated from their newborn children. The school will allow a reasonable number of break times to permit mothers to express milk in private. Employees are requested to work with their supervisors to develop a schedule for breaks, whenever possible, to lessen disruptions. Please contact the Director of Operations so that you may be given access to the lactation room.

## **III. EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WORK ETHICS**

### **PROHIBITION OF HARASSMENT**

It is the express policy of the School to not tolerate harassment of any employee for any reason. In particular, harassment of any employee by a supervisor, co-employee, or non-employee (outsider) on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender identity or expression, personal appearance, marital status, family responsibilities, political affiliation, or any other basis protected by state, federal or local law is strictly prohibited.

With respect specifically to sexual harassment, all employees must be particularly careful to avoid any action or conduct, which is, or could be viewed as, sexual harassment. The following are some examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment: (1) sex-oriented verbal kidding, teasing or jokes; (2) repeated offensive sexual flirtation, advances, or proposition; (3) continued or repeated verbal abuse

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

of a sexual nature; (4) graphic or degrading comments about an individual or his or her appearance; (5) the display of sexually suggestive objects or picture; (6) subtle pressure for sexual activity; or (7) inappropriate physical contact.

For purposes of this Policy, “harassment” -- in addition to the types of harassment, described elsewhere in this Policy, that are based on a protected characteristic, including race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, disability or, gender identity or expression, personal appearance, marital status, family responsibilities, political affiliation -- comprises any continuing acts of unwelcome and unwarranted criticism of, or attacks upon, another individual, which a reasonable person would view as threatening or upsetting to the individual who is the subject of the behavior. This is a zero-tolerance policy. Shining Stars Academy PCS will investigate all complaints of harassment and will take immediate and appropriate disciplinary action and/ or termination if harassment has been found within the workplace.

In order to ensure a work environment that is free from harassment to the greatest extent reasonably possible, every manager, supervisor, and employee must be careful to ensure that his/her conduct is proper and does not fall within the prohibitions of this policy. Any employee who believes they have been subjected to harassment, sexual or otherwise, at work should bring their complaint to the attention of the School *immediately*.

The School will be able to address such conduct if employees bring their complaint as soon as possible. You can make your complaint to your supervisor, to the Executive Director, or to the Board of Directors. You are not required to complain first to your supervisor if he or she is the individual whom you believe is harassing you. Complaints will be promptly handled in a confidential manner, although our efforts to maintain confidentiality will not necessarily ensure complete anonymity. Violations may also be made the subject of a complaint filed under the School’s Grievance Procedure. Retaliation against any employee who makes a complaint about harassment or other improper conduct, or against any other employee who provides information in support of the complaining employee, is strictly forbidden.

### GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

#### Purpose

The purpose of this section is to provide an internal method for resolving complaints concerning discipline, harassment, workplace safety, working conditions, and discrimination of any kind as well as any other complaints which employees seek to have resolved.

The School maintains an “open door” policy. Under that policy any employee may bring to the attention of management any concerns or complaints that he/she may have. These include concerns or complaints that the employee has been subjected to any kind of discrimination or harassment, including any sexual or racial harassment.

#### Procedure

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

An aggrieved (complainant) employee must process a grievance in the following manner:

Step 1: Prior to preparing and submitting a written formal grievance, (see Grievance Form) the employee shall meet with his/her immediate supervisor to discuss the situation and attempt to resolve the issue. In the event the issue involves the employee's immediate supervisor, then the employee should speak with the next level of supervision. (Example: employee A assigned to Unit A has an issue or complaint against his/her immediate supervisor-Director of Unit A, then the issue/complaint should be discussed with the Executive Director who is the next level of the school's supervision). The issue/complaint should be resolved within ten (10) days. If the issue/complaint is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction at step 1, he/she may proceed to step 2.

Step 2: Within three (3) days after receiving the immediate supervisor's (or the next level of supervision) determination, the employee may prepare and file a formal written grievance. The original must be given to the employee's immediate supervisor and a copy to the Executive Director. If the grievance involves the employee's immediate supervisor then the employee should give the original written grievance form to the next level of supervision and NOT to his/her immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor and/or the next level of supervision shall investigate the employee's grievance and provide a written response concerning the results of the investigation within ten (10) days or as soon thereafter as possible.

In the event the employee's grievance involved his/her immediate supervisor and the grievance was submitted to the next level of supervision (the Executive Director), upon completion of the investigation and written response, the issue and its resolution is final. In the event the grievance does not involve the employee's immediate supervisor and the employee does not believe the issue was resolved, he/she may proceed to step 3.

Step 3: Within 3 (three) days of receiving the determination from step 2, the employee may request in writing that the Executive Director review the determination of the employee's immediate supervisor. In the event that the issues stated in the employee's grievance is within the scope of this policy, the Executive Director may review the supervisor's decision and reach his/her own determination. In the event the Executive Director's determination involves discipline of an employee, the disciplinary sanction shall be given to the employee in writing.

Step 4: The employee if not satisfied with the determination, may submit a written grievance to the Board Secretary who will document the concern and submit the complaint to the Board Chairperson.

#### Definitions

Grievance: A grievance is a complaint.

Discipline: For the purpose of this procedure means an employment action that results in a verbal reprimand, written reprimand, suspension or demotion. Discipline does not include performance evaluations or reviews; non-disciplinary wage, salary, or benefit adjustments; improvement plans; voluntary quit; job abandonment through failure to report to work; termination due to lack of

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

qualification; layoffs; decreases in work assignment, or any other workforce reduction; job transfer or reassignment; or termination upon conclusion of a temporary position.

#### Timeliness

Failure to process a grievance based on the established timeline outlined above means that the employee has waived their interest in filing the complaint/grievance and therefore the complaint will be considered to have been resolved. To encourage the prompt filing of grievances, the timeframe given must be strictly enforced.

#### Exclusive Remedy

**This procedure constitutes the exclusive internal process to address employee grievances. However, nothing in this grievance procedure shall prevent any employee from addressing concerns regarding matters not subject to the grievance procedure with the administration and employees are encouraged to do so. Matters not subject to the grievance procedure that are raised by employees shall be considered by administration which has final authority.**

Generally, the following procedure should be used for communicating any problem to supervision or management:

- The employee may present his/her concern or complaint to his/her supervisor, who will investigate it and attempt to resolve it.
- If the supervisor cannot resolve the problem, or if the concern or complaint involves the supervisor, the employee may discuss it with the Executive Director.
- If the Executive Director cannot resolve the matter, the employee may submit it in writing to the Board Secretary who will document the concern and submit the complaint to the Board Chair.

Shining Stars will investigate employee complaints and grievances and to the extent practicable and necessary, keep the employee apprised of the status and outcome of the investigation. Shining Stars may not, however, divulge confidential information related to another employee or student.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The School expressly prohibits all of its employees from engaging in any activity that conflicts with, or appears to conflict with, the interests of the School or of any of its clients. This means that employees must devote their loyalties exclusively to the interests of the School and must make business decisions and act in the best interests of the School exclusively and without any consideration whatsoever for their own personal interests. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

No employee may use his/her position with the School to obtain personal gain for him or herself, a relative of the employee, or any other person. This means that, among other things, no employee may take advantage of a business relationship established through his/her employment with the School to



## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

obtain special consideration, personal services, special discounts, other financial benefits, or gifts from individuals or companies that either do business with the School, have done business with the School, or want to do business with the School. In addition, no employee may have a financial interest in any firm that does business with the School, unless it is a publicly traded entity, or approved by the Executive Director.

The prohibitions described above:

- Do not prohibit an employee from taking advantage of discounts or other market concessions available to the general public.
- Do permit an employee to accept occasional, reasonably priced business meals that do not involve any extravagant entertainment and which have a legitimate business purpose.
- Do permit each employee to accept small holiday gifts or promotional items from individuals or companies with whom or with which the School has an established business relationship, provided that the value of any such item does not exceed \$100.00, and further provided that the value of all such items received by an employee in any 12-month period from all such individuals and companies does not exceed \$250.00.
- Does permit an employee to have a social relationship with a person who does business, or wants to do business with the School, provided that the relationship does not involve any express or implied business commitment.

Employment with the School must be an individual's primary employment. An employee may hold an outside part-time job or provide consulting services, provided that:

- Such employment is not with, or such provision of consulting services is not to, either a competitor of the School, any person or entity operating in the public charter school industry, or a contractor, vendor, or prospective contractor or vendor of the School.
- No such employment or provision of consulting services may involve providing services similar to, or in competition with, those provided by the School.
- No such employment or provision of consulting services may be performed during work hours, with the use of school equipment or materials, or utilizing the skills and/or efforts of other school employees.
- Such employment or provision of consulting services does not interfere with the employee's ability to meet the School's performance standards and/or to perform his/her work duties to the fullest extent required by the School, including his/her ability to work overtime, as required, to complete his/her duties for the School.
- No employee may participate in any civic or trade association, if such activities pose, or may pose, a conflict of interest with the employee's work for the School or interfere with the performance of the employee's duties for the School.



## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

The violation of the School's Conflict of Interest policy may be grounds for discipline up to and including discharge.

#### ETHICS POLICY STATEMENT

Shining Stars maintains certain policies to guide its employees with respect to standards of conduct. Such standards are expected in areas where improper activities could damage Shining Star's reputation or otherwise result in serious adverse consequences to Shining Stars and its employees. The purpose of this policy is to affirm, in a comprehensive statement, required standards of conduct and practices.

An employee's actions under this policy are significant indications of the individual's judgment and competence. Accordingly, those actions constitute an important element in the evaluation of the employee for assignments and promotion. Correspondingly, insensitivity to or disregard of the principles of this Policy will be grounds for appropriate management disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The following are examples of conduct prohibited by Shining Stars. The following examples are not intended to constitute a complete and exhaustive list of prohibited conduct as other actions, or inaction may violate this policy. Violations of these or any other Shining Star's policies may subject you to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination:

1. Engaging in theft, fraud, embezzlement, or other acts of dishonesty.
2. Supplying false or misleading information when applying for employment or promotion, or omitting relevant information when making such application for employment or promotion.
3. Compromising the confidentiality and/or integrity of student, parent, employee, or business information.
4. Using or misusing Shining Star's property and assets for purposes not related to Shining Star's or in a manner contrary to Shining Stars policy, procedure, practice, authorization, or instruction.
5. Reporting for work under the influence of intoxicants or drugs, drinking alcoholic beverages, using drugs (except using prescription drugs in the manner prescribed) possessing drugs (except prescription drugs prescribed for the employee); or possessing, selling, or distributing intoxicants, drugs and/or alcoholic beverages either while on School time or premises.
6. Insubordination, i.e. refusing to follow legitimate instructions of a superior directly related to performance of one's job.
7. Excessive tardiness, excessive absenteeism or unacceptable patterns of absenteeism.
8. Committing any act, on or off Shining Stars premises, which threatens or is potentially threatening to, or which embarrasses or is potentially embarrassing to, the reputation of Shining Stars or any of its employees, customers, or vendors.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

9. Repeatedly failing to meet job responsibilities, or quality requirements.
10. Repeatedly failing to use a time clock or time sheet as directed.

### DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

Shining Stars has a commitment to providing a safe, quality-oriented, and productive work environment consistent with the standards of the community in which we operate. Alcohol and drug abuse pose a threat to the health and safety of Shining Star's employees and students, and to the security of our equipment and facilities. For these reasons, Shining Stars is committed to the elimination of drug and/or alcohol use and abuse in the workplace. Except as outlined below, employees may not use, possess, manufacture, distribute, dispense, transport, offer, sell, solicit, buy or be under the influence of or be impaired by illegal drugs or alcohol while on Shining Star's premises, operating any vehicle owned, rented or leased by Shining Stars or while conducting any activity related to the School at any place away from Shining Star's premises.

Such activities not only violate Shining Stars rules, but also can jeopardize performance. You may use legally prescribed drugs on the job only if they do not impair your ability to perform the essential functions of your job effectively and safely without endangering yourself or others. Employees in violation of this policy are subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Additionally, Shining Stars reserves the right to require an employee to undergo drug and/or alcohol testing under appropriate circumstances. An employee of Shining Stars who is convicted under a criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace shall notify his or her immediate supervisor no later than three (3) days after such conviction. Failure to do so will result in instant dismissal.

Shining Stars acknowledges and accepts that occasionally employees may consume alcohol in a social setting either on the School's premises, at an event sponsored by the School, or with vendors or guests of Shining Stars away from the premises. The consumption of alcohol shall never be mandatory or a condition of an employee's employment: it is always at the employee's discretion. The consumption of alcohol on Shining Star's premises during social events will not be considered a violation of this policy if (1) the employee consumes alcohol responsibly and in moderate amount; (2) the employee's consumption of alcohol does not impair the employee's judgment or jeopardize the safety of the employee or others; (3) the employee's consumption of alcohol does not violate any laws concerning the consumption of alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol.

### SMOKE-FREE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Smoking or use of other tobacco products is not permitted inside of the School's facilities, or school grounds. This policy includes electronic cigarettes, otherwise known as e-cigarettes. The use of e-cigarettes is prohibited as outlined above for smoking.

Violations of Shining Star's policies related to smoking, drugs and alcohol consumption may subject you to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

#### **VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY**

The School strongly believes that all employees should be treated with dignity and respect. Acts of violence or threats of violence committed by one employee or more against another employee will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, such actions as abusive or offensive comments, threats, and stalking, or aggressive and/or unwelcome physical contact.

The School's prohibition against violence in the workplace applies to all persons involved in school operations, including but not limited to personnel, contract, and temporary workers and anyone else on school property. Every employee is encouraged to report incidents of threats or acts of physical violence of which he/she is aware to the employee's supervisor or the Executive Director.

All complaints will be fully investigated and will be kept confidential to the extent possible, investigated, and documented. Employees are expected to report and participate in an investigation of any suspected or actual cases of workplace violence and will not be subjected to disciplinary consequences for such reports or cooperation.

If you receive or overhear any threatening communications from an employee or outside third party, report it to the Executive Director at once. Do not engage in either physical or verbal confrontation with a potentially violent individual. If you encounter an individual who is threatening immediate harm to an employee, student, or visitor to our premises, dial 911 immediately.

The School will promptly respond to any incident or suggestion of violence. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate discharge.

#### **WEAPONS**

Shining Stars specifically prohibits the possession or storing of weapons by any employee while on Shining Stars premises or while conducting Shining Stars business, on or off the premises. This ban includes keeping or transporting a weapon in a vehicle that is on Shining Star's property. Weapons include, but are not limited to, guns, knives, explosives, and other items with the potential to inflict harm. If the weapon is illegal Shining Stars may contact the police and report your possession. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate discharge.

#### **WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

The School requires its directors, officers, employees and volunteers to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities within the School. As representatives of the School, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and must comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

The purpose of this Whistleblower Policy is to create an ethical and open work environment, to ensure that the School has a governance and accountability structure that supports its mission and to encourage and enable directors, officers, employees and volunteers of the School to raise serious

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

concerns about the occurrence of illegal or unethical actions within the School before turning to outside parties for resolution.

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Whistleblower Policy to the contrary, this Whistleblower Policy is not an employment contract and does not modify the employment relationship between the School and any of its directors, officers, employees or volunteers, nor does it change the fact that all employees of the School are employees at will. Nothing contained in this Whistleblower Policy provides any director, officer, employee or volunteer of the School with any additional rights or causes of action not otherwise available under applicable law.

#### A. Reporting Responsibility

All directors, officers, employees and volunteers of the School have a responsibility to report any action or suspected action taken within the School that is illegal, unethical or violates any adopted policy of the School ("Violations"). Anyone reporting a Violation must act in good faith, without malice to the organization or any individual in the organization and have reasonable grounds for believing that the information shared in the report indicates that a Violation has occurred. A person who makes a report does not have to prove that a Violation has occurred. However, any report which the reporter has made maliciously or, which the reporter has good reason to believe is false, will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

#### B. No Retaliation

No one who in good faith reports a Violation or who, in good faith, cooperates in the investigation of a Violation shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequences. Any individual within the School who retaliates against another individual who has reported a Violation in good faith or who, in good faith, has cooperated in the investigation of a Violation is subject to discipline, including termination of employment or volunteer status.

If you believe that an individual who has made a good faith report of a Violation or who has, in good faith, cooperated in the investigation of a Violation is suffering harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequences, please contact the Executive Director.

#### C. Reporting Process

All directors, officers, employees and volunteers should address their concerns relating to a violation to any person within the School who can properly address those concerns. In most cases, the direct supervisor of an employee or volunteer is the person best suited to address a concern. However, if the reporter is not comfortable speaking with his/her supervisor or is not satisfied with the supervisor's response, the individual is encouraged to speak to the Executive Director, to the chairperson of the Board of Directors or to anyone in management that s/he feels comfortable approaching.

The School encourages anyone reporting a Violation to identify him or herself when making a report in order to facilitate the investigation of the Violation. However, reports addressed to an individual within

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

the School may be submitted on a confidential basis and reports may be submitted to the Executive Director anonymously by sending the Executive Director a written statement.

#### D. Executive Director as Compliance Officer

A supervisor, manager or board member is required to notify the Executive Director of every report of a violation, as the Executive Director is the School's designated Whistleblower Compliance Officer. The Executive Director will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of a report of Violation within (5) five business days, but only to the extent the sender's identity is disclosed or a return address is provided.

The Executive Director is responsible for promptly investigating all reported Violations and for causing appropriate corrective action to be taken if warranted by the investigation. The audit committee of the Board of Directors is responsible for addressing all reported concerns or complaints of Violations relating to corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing. Therefore, the Executive Director must immediately notify the audit committee of any such concern or complaint. In addition, if the Executive Director deems it appropriate, the Executive Director may advise the Board of Directors or the audit committee of any other reported Violations.

The Executive Director has direct access to the Board of Directors and is required to report to the Board of Directors at least annually on compliance activity.

#### MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTSIDE AGENCIES

All inquiries by the media and outside agencies regarding the School and its operations must be referred to the Executive Director. Only the Executive Director and/or Board of Directors or a person designated by the Executive Director, is authorized to make or approve public statements pertaining to the School or its operations. Employees wishing to write and/or publish an article, paper, or other publication on behalf of or about the School must first obtain approval from the Executive Director and/or Board of Directors before publication. Violation of this policy may be used as a basis for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### IV. EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

#### SCHOOL HOURS OF OPERATION

Our normal business hours are 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Staff should report according to their specified hours or their daily schedule, as determined by their immediate supervisor. Staff may be required to work additional hours for meetings, parent conferences, or school events. There will be a monthly mandatory all-staff meeting, which will not exceed one hour in duration. Should staff members work beyond their specified hours, they are still expected to report on subsequent days according to their normal schedule.

In general, salaried, exempt employees will not receive additional pay for any hours worked in addition to the normal business hours. The Executive Director may approve additional pay to salaried, exempt employees who, in addition to their normal schedule, facilitate workshops, or after-school activities such

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

as drumming, enrichment programs, or parent workshops. The amount of any additional compensation is determined at the discretion of the Executive Director.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY CHECKS

### A. Safety

Each employee is responsible for acting in a safe and reasonable manner at work, for obeying any safety rules established by the School, and for reporting any unsafe condition to his/her supervisor so that it may be corrected. Any on-the-job injury must be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor.

All employees will be provided care, first-aid and emergency service, as required, for injuries or illnesses while on School premises. Employees should call 911 in the event of a significant accident or emergency.

If an employee is injured on the job, the school provides coverage and protection in accordance with the Worker's Compensation Law. On the job injuries must be reported immediately. Failure to report accidents is a serious matter as it may preclude an employee's coverage under Worker's Compensation Insurance.

### B. Security Checks

The School is concerned with protecting the health, and providing for the safety and security, of everyone at the School. We also want to protect School and employee property and our facilities.

Access to Shining Stars' premises is limited to those individuals with a legitimate business interest. All visitors must sign-in, present a copy of their ID, and will be given a visitor's badge. All visitors must sign out upon leaving Shining Stars. All individuals picking up children must show identification, and any individual picking up a child other than a parent or guardian must be on the child's pick up list.

If an unknown person seeks entry to Shining Stars, the person handling the front desk must speak with that person through the intercom to determine their interest. If they do not have a business interest or do not have an appointment with any of the staff, either the Director of Operations or the Executive Director must be notified. The Executive Director or Director of Operations will determine if the individual can enter the building. If the Director of Operations or the Executive Director determines that the person may not enter, then the front desk personnel must not permit the person to enter the building.

The School expressly reserves the right, in its discretion, with or without notice:

- to question any employee or other person before he or she enters or leaves the School premises, job-sites, or facilities; and

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

- to search or inspect the vehicle, locker, desk, work area, computer systems, lockers, and telephone messaging systems, containers, handbags, briefcases, packages, parcels, and personal belongings of any employee or other person.

Any employee who refuses to submit to, and cooperate with School officials in conducting a search will be disciplined, up to and including discharge. Any information discovered during such inspections that would indicate violation of this policy may be used as a basis for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### CLASSROOM VISITATION

Employees with children who attend the school are required to schedule appointments with Guides and/or other classroom personnel when there are any concerns regarding their children. Disruption of classroom instruction is prohibited. In the event there is an issue or concern that must be addressed immediately, the employee should contact the Executive Director.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER

In most cases, the School will follow District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) for school closings and delays. Please check major local TV and radio stations for information. In addition, the School will send notification to staff via the school's One Call system (One Call). Should the School close outside of DCPS's closing and delays, staff will be notified via One Call.

Severe weather is to be expected during certain months of the year. Except in cases of snow days, we are all expected to work our regular hours. Your personal safety is of the utmost importance; therefore, when faced with inclement weather you must ultimately determine if you are able to safely travel. Time taken off due to poor weather conditions while the school remains open is unpaid; however, the Executive Director may offer waivers at her discretion.

### ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Attendance and punctuality are important factors for your success within our school. Working as a team requires that each person be in the right place at the right time.

Every employee is expected to report for work as scheduled. Excessive tardiness or absenteeism will not be tolerated. Excessive tardiness or absenteeism may be grounds for discipline, up to and including discharge.

Employees must submit a Leave Request Form in advance for scheduled leave. Request forms must be submitted as soon as practicable prior to the date of your requested leave. Leave Request Forms must be submitted via hand delivery to your supervisor. All requests for leave are approved or denied by the Executive Director. If your leave is unscheduled, notify your immediate supervisor as far in advance as feasible under the circumstances, but no later than 7:15 AM on the day of your absence. You should call, email or text your immediate supervisor, the classroom Guide, or the Director of Operations, if you



## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

cannot reach your supervisor, in order to give time to obtain a substitute or to make proper preparations. Under no circumstance should you leave a message on the School's answering machine

If an unscheduled absence is longer than one day, you must notify your supervisor on each day you are absent. The failure of an employee to call his/her supervisor as required may also be grounds for discipline, up to and including discharge, unless the employee is physically unable to make the call and no friend or family member is available to make the call.

An employee who fails to call in to report his/her absence directly to his/her manager or an appropriately designated representative of the manager on three (3) consecutive days is considered to have voluntarily terminated employment, as of one hour after his/her regular starting time on the third day.

### TIME AND LABOR RECORDING

All employees must clock in and out based on their respective contractual schedule which designates their expected time of arrival and departure. Any employee who fails to clock in or out will not be paid for the day. Repeated, failure to sign-in or sign-out, may result in discipline, up to and including discharge.

District of Columbia law requires that Shining Stars keep accurate records of the precise time worked each day by nonexempt employees. As such, it is imperative that each employee time be recorded on a daily basis. The time-clock will forward all time & attendance directly to Paychex and EdOps to meet this compliance and legal requirement.

### SOLICITATION AND DISTRIBUTION

It is important that employees are not disturbed or distracted by activities unrelated to School operations. Because every employee's work deserves full attention during scheduled working time, employees may not solicit other employees, nor may they distribute literature, for any purpose during their working hours. An employee who is not on working time may not solicit or distribute literature to employees who are also on working time. Distribution of literature in work areas is prohibited at all times.

### EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES

The employment of relatives can cause various problems, including charges of favoritism, conflicts of interest, family discord, and scheduling conflicts that work to the disadvantage of both the School and its employees.

In order to prevent situations that might result in conflicts of interest, unfair preferential treatment, or creation of a hostile work environment, Shining Stars will not hire, transfer, promote or retain any of your immediate relatives into the same reporting chain or into a confidential position. You must inform Shining Stars of any situation that would result in the hiring of a close relative. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.



## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

A “close relative” includes the following relationships, whether established by blood, marriage, or other legal action; mother, father, husband, wife, son, daughter, sister, brother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, step-child, aunt, uncle, nephew, niece or cousin. “Reporting chain” refers to positions reporting directly or indirectly to the same supervisor or that will have routine contact in reporting lines above or below the immediate supervisor. A “confidential position” is a position that involves access to confidential or sensitive information, such as positions in Administration, or certain management and leadership positions.

### DRESS CODE AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE

#### A. Dress Code Policy

Employees are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal cleanliness and present a neat, professional appearance at all times. Whether or not your job responsibilities place you in direct contact with students or parents, you represent the Shining Stars with your appearance as well as your actions. The properly attired individual helps to create a favorable image for the School to the public and fellow employees we ask staff to adhere to a “business casual” dress code and to refrain from wearing inappropriate outfits.

In general, business casual clothing is slightly more relaxed than the traditional professional dress of business suits, tie, etc. Remember, not all casual clothing is suitable for a professional environment. For instance, you are prohibited from wearing t-shirts, shorts, jogging pants, hats, or ripped clothing during the school year, and jeans on any day of the school year other than Friday.

#### B. Personal Appearance

Maintaining a professional, business-like appearance is very important to the success of our School. Part of the impression you make on others depends on your choice of dress, personal hygiene and courteous behavior. A daily regimen of good grooming and hygiene is expected of everyone. Please ensure that you maintain good personal hygiene habits. While at work, you are required to be clean and well groomed.

Your sound judgment and the guidance of your supervisor are key. If clothing or appearance fails to meet standards, as interpreted by your supervisor, you will be asked not to wear the inappropriate item to work again. If the problem persists, you may be sent home to change clothes. All policies about personal time use will apply. You may be disciplined, up to and including termination, for violations of Shining Stars dress and appearance policy.

### SOCIAL MEDIA USE/SOCIAL NETWORKING

#### A. What Is Considered Social Media?

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social net-working or affinity website, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the company, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

#### **B. Personal Use of Social Media-What Is Prohibited?**

Shining Stars respects the right of employees to write blogs and use social media and social networking sites. Shining Stars does not want to discourage employees from self-publishing and self-expression, and Shining Stars takes a neutral position towards employees who use Social Media in connection with personal interests and affiliations, or for other lawful purposes. The same principles and guidelines found in the company's policies apply to employees' activities on-line. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees or otherwise adversely affects students, parent, suppliers, people who work on behalf of the School or the School's legitimate interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees are expected to follow the guidelines and policies set forth to make clear that your comments and posts are made by you as an individual, not by you as an employee, agent, or representative of Shining Stars.

Unless specifically authorized in writing by supervisor, employees are not authorized to, and therefore are restricted from, speaking on behalf of Shining Stars through Social Media. Employees may not discuss any privileged, confidential and/or proprietary work-related matters and information or documents through Social Media. You are personally responsible for your commentary and posts through Social Media.

You can be held personally liable for commentary that is considered defamatory, threatening, intimidating, harassing, obscene, proprietary or libelous. Employees cannot use Shining Stars equipment, including computers, company-licensed software or other electronic equipment, facilities, or work time, to conduct personal business, personal blogging or social media/social networking activities. When using Social Media, employees must use their personal e-mail address, and may not use their Shining Stars e-mail address, as their means of identification and communication. Employees cannot use blogs or social media/social networking sites to defame, disparage, threaten, intimidate, harass, discriminate against, or retaliate against employees or anyone associated with, or doing business with, Shining Stars.

If you choose to identify yourself as an employee of Shining Stars through Social Media, please understand that some readers may view you as a spokesperson for the company. Because of this possibility, we ask that when using Social Media, you state clearly that you are speaking on behalf of yourself, that your comments, posts, and views are your own, and that you are not authorized to speak on behalf of Shining Stars. Employees cannot link from a personal blog, social media, or a social networking site to Shining Stars internal or external website. Employees may not visit social media sites during working hours using computer technology provided by the school, including wireless

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

internet, or cell phones, except for maintenance and updating of school accounts/sites. Nothing in this policy or handbook is intended to infringe upon employee rights under Section Seven (7) of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

You may be disciplined, up to and including discharge, for violations of Shining Stars Social Media policy.

#### PERSONAL CALLS

Guides and teacher assistants may not use their cell phone and/or receive personal phone calls in the classroom and/or during the school day. Cell phone usage includes sending or receiving text messages, visiting social media or other websites, and using any applications on your cell phone. Family members should be instructed to call the main office in the event of an emergency.

Staff observed using cells phone will be given a verbal warning. The second offence will result in a written warning and the employee will be asked to turn in his/her phone at the receptionist desk at the beginning of the day. The phone may be retrieved at break time and the end of the day.

Employees may not use school telephones to place long-distance or international calls and will be asked to reimburse the school for the cost. Abuse of the telephone policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

#### MONITORING & SURVEILLANCE POLICY

As stated throughout this Handbook, Shining Stars, consistent with applicable law, may monitor an employee's use of voicemail, e-mail and any School equipment. In addition, Shining Stars has placed surveillance cameras throughout the campus for safety purposes but also to monitor classroom activity. Shining Stars will not place cameras in places where there is an expectation of personal privacy, such as in restrooms. Employees, however, will be disciplined if caught violating School policies or procedures, regardless of where the violation occurs and regardless of whether there is video evidence of the infraction. Employees who seek to block or otherwise prevent surveillance when the use of School equipment is involved will be subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees with questions regarding the School's policy with respect to monitoring should contact the Executive Director.

#### USE OF EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

##### a. Equipment

You are expected to demonstrate proper care when using the School's property and equipment. No property may be removed from the premises without the proper authorization of the Executive Director. If you lose, break, or damage any property, report it to your supervisor immediately.

##### b. Technology

The School's technical resources – including desktop and portable computer systems, fax machines, cell phones, internet access, voice mail, electronic mail (e-mail), electronic bulletin boards, and its intranet.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

This policy applies to all technical resources that are owned or leased by the School, that are used on or accessed from School premises, or that are used in School business.

#### 1. Acceptable Uses

The School's technical resources are provided for the benefit of the School, its students and volunteers. These resources are provided for use in the pursuit of School business and are to be reviewed, monitored, and used only in that pursuit, except as otherwise provided in this policy.

Unless otherwise directed by the Executive Director, Employees are permitted to use the School's technical resources for occasional, non-work purposes. Nevertheless, employees have no right of privacy as to any information or file maintained in or on the School's property or transmitted or stored through the School's computer, internet, voice mail, e-mail, or telephone systems.

#### 2. Unacceptable Uses

The School's technical resources should not be used for personal gain or the advancement of individual views.

- Employee postings are not permitted on the School's intranet or electronic bulletin board. Playing computer games during regular work hours is not permitted.
- Solicitation for any non-School business or activities using School resources is strictly prohibited. Your use of the School's technical resources must not interfere with your productivity, the productivity of any other employee, or the operation of the School's technical resources.
- You should not send e-mail or other communications that either mask your identity or indicate that someone else sent them.
- You should never access any technical resources using another employee's password.

Similarly, you should only access the libraries, files, data, and domains that are related to your work duties. Unauthorized review, duplication, dissemination, removal, installation, damage, or alteration of files, passwords, computer systems or programs, or other property of the School, or improper use of information obtained by unauthorized means, is prohibited.

Sending, saving, or viewing offensive material is prohibited. Messages stored and/or transmitted by computer, voice mail, e-mail, or telephone systems must not contain content that may reasonably be considered offensive in nature. Offensive material includes, but is not limited to, sexual comments, jokes or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any comments, jokes, or images that would offend someone on the basis of his or her race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, veteran status, marital status, familial status, genetic characteristics, religious creed, handicap, pregnancy, arrest record, deafness, illness, as well as any other category protected by federal, state, or local laws. Any use of the Internet/World Wide Web, intranet, or electronic bulletin board to harass or discriminate is unlawful and strictly prohibited by the School. Violators may be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

The School does not consider conduct in violation of this policy to be within the course and scope of employment or the direct consequence of the discharge of one's duties. Accordingly, to the extent permitted by law, the School reserves the right not to provide a defense or pay damages assessed against Employees for conduct in violation of this policy.

#### 3. Access to Information

The School asks you to keep in mind that when you are using the School's computers you are creating School documents using a School asset. The School respects the individual privacy of its employees. However, that privacy does not extend to an employee's work-related conduct or to the use of School-provided technical resources or supplies.

The School's computer, voice mail, e-mail, or telephone systems, and the data stored on them are and remain at all times the property of the School. As a result, computer data, voice mail messages, e-mail messages, and other data are readily available to numerous persons. If, during the course of your employment, you perform or transmit work on the School's computer system and other technical resources, your work may be subject to the investigation, search, and review of others in accordance with this policy.

All information, including passwords, e-mail messages and files, that are created, sent, or retrieved over the School's technical resources is the property of the School, and should not be considered private or confidential. Employees have no right to privacy as to any information or file transmitted or stored through the School's computer, voice mail, e-mail, or telephone systems. Any electronically stored information that you create, send to, or receive from others may be retrieved and reviewed when doing so serves the legitimate business interests and obligations of the School. Employees should also be aware that, even when a file or message is erased from the internet browser history erased, or website is closed, it is still possible to recreate the message or locate the website. The School reserves the right to monitor your use of its technical resources at any time. All information including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or to other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver.

#### 4. Copyrighted Materials

Employees should not copy and distribute copyrighted material (e.g., software, database files, documentation, articles, graphics files, and downloaded information) through the e-mail system or by any other means unless you have confirmed in advance from appropriate sources that the School has the right to copy or distribute the material. Failure to observe a copyright may result in disciplinary action, including discharge, by the School as well as legal action by the copyright owner. Any questions concerning these rights should be directed to the Executive Director.

#### 5. Security of Information

Although you may have passwords to access computer, voice mail, and email systems, these technical resources belong to the School, are to be accessible at all times by the School, and are subject to inspections by the School with or without notice. The School may override any applicable passwords or

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

codes to inspect, investigate, or search an Employee's files and messages. All passwords or access codes must be made available to the Executive Director upon request or upon termination of your employment with Shining Stars. You should not provide a password to other employees or to anyone outside the School and should never access any technical resources using another employee's password.

In order to facilitate the School's access to information on its technical resources, you may not encrypt or encode any voice mail or e-mail communication or any other files or data stored or exchanged on School systems without the express prior written permission from the Executive Director.

#### 6. Software Policy

If you want to install software on School computers, you must contact the Executive Director for approval. If approval is granted, the systems administrator will install the software. Employees are prohibited from installing any software on any School technical resource without prior consent.

#### 7. Your Responsibilities

Each employee is responsible for the content of all text, audio, or images that they place or send over the School's technical resources. Employees may access only files or programs, whether computerized or not, that they have permission to enter.

Violations of any guidelines in this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. In addition, the School may advise appropriate legal officials and law enforcement authorities of any conduct that constitutes a violation of law.

### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

During your employment with Shining Stars you may create work that may be entitled to intellectual property protection. Employees understand that the copyright, trademark, patent, or any other intellectual property rights in designs, artwork, computer programs, and related documentation, and works of authorship, either prepared within the scope of employment, or specially ordered or commissioned for use by Shining Stars are owned by the School.

The School is not required to attribute to Employee authorship of any design, artwork, computer program or related documentation, or other work of authorship when distributed publicly or otherwise, nor to make any distribution, nor to forebear from any modifications. Unless otherwise agreed to in writing between the employee and Shining Stars, employees waive, to the extent permitted by law, all rights to any intellectual property.

### CONTRACTS

Employees may not enter into a contract on behalf of Shining Stars with an outside agency under any circumstances. This includes field trips, presentations, or other school business. All contracts must be approved and signed by the Executive Director.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

Employees who enter into contracts which are unrelated to his/her employment with Shining Stars may not do so without the expressed written consent of the Executive Director. In the event that consent is granted by the Executive Director, no employee may contract with a person or an outside agency in which the work hours conflict with that of his/her Shining Stars employment contract. Failing to abide by this additional employment policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### PERSONAL PROPERTY

The School is not responsible for loss or damage to personal property. Valuable personal items, such as purses and all other valuables, should not be left in areas where theft might occur. The School will provide, within reason, a place for employees to store personal property, however, employees are responsible for securing their personal items.

### PERSONNEL RECORDS

#### A. Personnel Data Information

In order to assist you and/or your family in matters of personal emergency, we need to maintain up-to-date information. Changes in name, address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents or changes in next of kin and/or beneficiaries should be given to the Director of Operations to be kept on file.

#### B. Management

Personnel records, including application forms, are the property of the School. Access to these records is restricted to authorized individuals of the School.

The School may, in its sole discretion and without notifying the affected employee or former employee, respond to any request by a law enforcement agency for, or to any legal subpoena or court order requesting, documents from an employee's or former employee's personnel file, by making such documents available to the law enforcement agency that made such request or to the attorney or entity that arranged to have the subpoena or court order issued.

#### C. Access

Upon written request, you may inspect your own personnel file. Inspections will be held on school premises in the presence of a school official. Contact the Director of Operations or designee to arrange a time to view these records. You will be permitted to review records related to your qualification for employment, compensation and disciplinary action. You are not permitted access to any letter of reference maintained by the School. If you disagree with the accuracy of any statement in the records and no correction can be agreed upon, you may submit an explanatory statement, which will be attached to the records.

### SCHOOL AND STUDENT POLICY AND PRIVACY

The staff of Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School works collaboratively to develop and implement a comprehensive approach to behavior and discipline. Building a strong school culture of



## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

mutual respect with an emphasis on self-discipline is an essential component to the Montessori philosophy to which we adhere.

#### **Our Behavioral Mission:**

At Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School, we strive to foster an environment where the children, Guides, assistants, parents, non-instructional staff and administrators are respectful, caring, and purposeful.

#### **A. Behavior and Discipline**

All staff members at Shining Stars are expected to model Grace & Courtesy and behaviors that are mindful of the communal need for safety at all times. At the heart of reflective and restorative discipline in the classroom is an empathetic Guide who genuinely cares for the children and wants to lead children to find peaceable solutions to conflicts. When addressing the child, a staff member should always get down to the child's level and speak directly and with a mindful tone.

If a child demonstrates difficulty following the expectations of the community, the response will be developmentally appropriate and may include research-based early intervention strategies. Personal attention, redirection, substitution, use of Responsive Classroom or 2nd-Step-type strategies and/or removal from the situation are examples of some approaches used in the Primary and Elementary environment(s).

Many instances resolve themselves, as the child - within the bounds of safety - experiences the logical consequences of his/her actions. (For example: cleaning up after throwing something on the floor.) If the child demonstrates a disregard for the expectations of the classroom and/or school community, the Guide will seek to discover the underlying cause(s) in order to help the child understand the inappropriateness of his/her actions, as well as provide an acceptable alternative behavior. The guide assists the child in finding a constructive and appropriate alternative to the negative or undesired behavior.

In general, Shining Stars' staff will implement the following discipline steps:

**Step 1:** Redirect the child.

**Step 2:** Give the child specific instructions and clearly state the behavioral expectations.

**Step 3:** Offer the child an opportunity to perform the expected behavior and observe as he/she does so.

**Step 4:** State consequence as a clear choice while de-escalating behaviors as needed.

**Step 5:** Administer consequence while de-escalating behaviors as needed.

**Step 6:** Complete an incident report form, as required. (A copy will be placed in the incident/accident binder child's cumulative file and another copy will be sent home to inform parents of the incident as well as indicate any necessary follow-up.)\*\* Please refer to the School's Behavior & Discipline Guide for additional responses to minor and major instances of noncompliance. Behavioral issues outside of the Guides control or expertise should always be referred to the Director of Education. For students with IEPs or 504s, the Director of Behavioral Support & Clinical Services should also be contacted.\*\*



## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

#### **B. Mandated Reporting**

As an employee of Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS, you have a legal obligation to immediately report any maltreatment of a child. Specifically, the statutory provisions state:

“... any person [mandated reporter] who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child known to him or her in his or her professional or official capacity has been or is in immediate danger of being a mentally or physically abused or neglected child,... shall immediately report or have a report made of such knowledge or suspicion to either the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia or the Child and Family Services Agency [CFSA].”

The employee who suspects neglect, abuse or other physical/mental harm to a child, should make the call to CFSA. The employee may discuss the decision with a supervisor; however, if it is determined that a call to CFSA or the MPD, the employee who suspects the abuse, neglect or harm should call. Additionally, if a student informs an employee of what they heard/witnessed, and it falls within the category of neglect, abuse or harm, the employee must NOT have the child repeat the story to another person.

Please refer to the Mandated Reporting: Policies & Procedures for additional details and an explanation of how to handle suspected cases of abuse and neglect.

Please speak with the Executive Director regarding any training you may have to undergo as a mandated reporter.

#### **C. Student Support**

Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS aims to be responsive to the diverse academic and socio-emotional needs of our students. At times, a child may demonstrate a need that cannot be met within the context of the classroom or may need special attention. The School uses the Response to Intervention (RTI) and SMART/Student Support Team (SST) model to engage students and families in early interventions. Any staff member may refer a child for an SST (forms are available in the Main Office). For more details about the RTI/SMART and SST process, please contact Director of Education. For students with IEPs or 504 Plans, please contact the Director of Behavioral Support & Clinical Services. In all instances, the Guides must notify a parent in the event that a child is recommended to the SMART process for academic and or behavioral supports.

#### **D. Data Documentation and Communications**

There are several ways in which Shining Stars Montessori Academy collects data about the program, its students, staff, and families. Throughout the course of the year you may be asked to document various types of information for the purposes of data collection. Additionally, it is strongly encouraged that all communications with families and/or major stakeholders are documented in written format. It is recommended that all staff keep both electronic and hardcopy notes for their personal records.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

#### SCHOOL CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY POLICY

Protecting information about the School, its business affairs, its employees, parents, guardians of students, students, suppliers and vendors is the responsibility of every employee, and we all share a common interest in making sure it is not improperly or accidentally disclosed. Information should be kept confidential and divulged only to individuals within the school who have demonstrated both a need to receive the information and proper authorization to receive the information. No confidential information or information about the School's business dealing should be discussed in public. At all times, employees of the School must remain conscious of their surroundings when discussing the School, whether inside or outside of the School building. If in doubt as to whether information should be divulged, err in favor of not divulging the information and discuss the situation with the Executive Director. E-mail messages containing confidential information should include the following statement, in all capital letters, at the top of the message: **CONFIDENTIAL: UNAUTHORIZED USE OR DISCLOSURE IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.**

All records and files maintained by the School are confidential and remain the property of the School. Records and files are not to be disclosed to any outside party without the express permission of the Executive Director. Confidential information includes, but is in no way limited to: financial records; business, personnel, and payroll records regarding current and former employees; the identity of, contact information for, and any other account information on parents, guardian, students, vendors, techniques, and processes; and any other documents or information regarding the School's operations, procedures, or practices. Confidential information may not be removed from School premises without express authorization.

#### V. COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

##### COMPENSATION AND EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS

Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS offers a competitive salary based on education and experience.

##### A. Exempt Employee

Exempt employees are paid on a salary basis for any week in which the employee performs any work without regard to the number of hours worked.

##### B. Non-Exempt Employee

A "non-exempt" employee may be paid on an hourly basis or a salary basis Any employee, exempt or nonexempt, who has any questions or concerns about his/her compensation, including questions or concerns about any deductions that may have been made to his/her salary or compensation, should immediately notify the Director of Operations. Concerns may also be made the subject of a complaint filed under the School's Grievance Procedure. The School will fully investigate all such complaints, maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable, and correct any errors, including inappropriate deductions that may have been made as circumstances warrant.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

#### **PAYROLL SCHEDULE**

The School currently maintains semi-monthly payroll schedule. Paychecks will generally be distributed in on the 15<sup>th</sup> and last day of each month. If the payday should fall on a holiday or weekend, checks will be distributed on the working day, which precedes the holiday or weekend. All appropriate wage and payroll deductions will be taken out of each paycheck as required by law.

#### **PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

The School is required by law to make certain deductions from your paycheck each pay period. Such deductions typically include federal and state taxes and Social Security (FICA) taxes. Depending on the state in which you reside and the benefits you choose, there may be additional deductions. All deductions and the amount of the deductions are listed on your pay stub. These deductions are totaled each year for you on your Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement. If you have any questions or concerns about any pay deductions, employees may discuss with the Director of Operations.

#### **TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS**

Parking facilities are limited. The school is not responsible for any parking infractions, violations, tickets, loss, damage to or theft of your vehicle. Employees are eligible for an employee-paid, pre-tax transportation benefit. Employees may set aside income on a pre-tax basis to cover the cost of commuting by mass transit or vanpools, up to \$255.00 per month. Please contact the Director of Operations to coordinate this benefit.

#### **PAYROLL CORRECTIONS**

The school takes all reasonable steps to ensure that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that employees are paid on the scheduled payday. In the event that there is an error in the amount of pay, the employee should promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of the Director of Operations.

#### **DIRECT DEPOSIT**

Employees can be paid through direct deposit of funds to savings or checking accounts. To activate direct deposit, a Direct Deposit Authorization form needs to be completed and signed. If you banking information changes during your employment, please immediately notify the Director of Operations to complete new deposit forms.

#### **PAY RAISES**

Depending upon factors, such as your performance, educational attainment, years of service and the School's financial status, adjustments in your pay may be made on a yearly basis. Any adjustments will be effective on July 1 for twelve- month employees or the beginning of the employee's contract date for teaching staff. Any and all pay raises are at the discretion of the Executive Director.

#### **PAY ADVANCES**

Shining Stars does not grant pay advances to any employee for any reason.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

#### OVERTIME

Non-exempt employees must have all overtime approved in advance by the Executive Director. Only actual hours worked count toward computing weekly overtime. If you have any questions concerning overtime pay, direct them to the Executive Director. Working overtime without prior written approval may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

#### COMP TIME

Employees may be eligible for compensatory time, *i.e.* comp time. In order to receive comp time; the employee must get prior approval from the Executive Director

#### BREAKS

Employees should contact their immediate supervisor to determine when he or she may take breaks including lunch breaks.

#### BENEFITS OVERVIEW

The School is pleased to provide all of our employees with a wide range of benefits. We believe that our employees deserve these benefits, in addition to their straight-time pay, for their hard work and loyalty to the School. We urge you to take full advantage of all of these benefits. If you have any questions about any of the benefits, you may ask the Executive Director. The description of benefits contained herein is necessarily brief and subject to the actual provisions of the applicable insurance and other agreements. You are encouraged to review the plan documents, contracts and agreements for the benefits described in this Handbook. In the event there is any question or conflict in language or interpretation between those booklets and documents and this Handbook or any guidance you have received from Shining Stars, the terms of the actual contracts and other plan documents take precedence and are controlling.

The School currently offers the following benefits: paid holidays and paid time off; medical insurance; dental insurance; vision insurance; retirement; flexible spending accounts; life insurance; and short and long-term disability.

The School, however, reserves the right, in its sole discretion to:

1. change the level of its contribution for insurance coverage, the scope of coverage and benefits provided under each type of insurance, and/or the kinds and carriers of insurance provided;
2. eliminate any kind of insurance coverage currently provided; and/or
3. change, modify, amend, add to, or eliminate any of the other benefits described in this Handbook.

In addition, an employee who is on unpaid leave or on other unpaid status (that is, he/she is not receiving wages or salary from the School) will cease to accrue vacation or personal time, until he/she returns to paid status, except as otherwise required by law.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

#### **ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFITS**

Full-time 10 and 12 month employees are eligible for all of the benefits described in this employee handbook provided you meet the eligibility requirements for each particular benefit. Coverage is available to you and your dependents as defined in the benefit explanation materials. To discuss benefit packages, please contact Mr. Brian Hutt of Blue Point Financial, LLC., (301) 214-6790 or visit their website at [www.bluepoint1.com](http://www.bluepoint1.com)

Temporary employees and employees working less than 30 hours per week on a regular basis are not eligible for benefits.

#### **MEDICAL, DENTAL, VISION INSURANCE**

All employees are eligible to receive health insurance benefits from the School. The School contributes a flat rate for individual coverage for employees and another flat rate for employees with dependents. Dental and vision coverage may be added at an additional cost. The School also makes a flat contribution to dental and vision insurance. Please contact the school's Benefits Administrator, Blue Point Financial, LLC, Brian Hutt, Partner at 301-214-6790, Fax. 301-214-6792. Blue Point Financial's website is [www.bluepoint1.com](http://www.bluepoint1.com). for more information on your plan and the benefits. For benefit forms and general information, please speak to the Director of Operations.

#### **SHORT AND LONG TERM DISABILITY**

Full-time employees are eligible for either short or long-term disability leave after completing their introductory period. Should you need to utilize short or long-term disability, please see the Executive Director.

#### **RETIREMENT**

The School provides employees with the opportunity to contribute to a retirement plan.

#### **FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT**

The School offers Flexible Spending Account for eligible employees. For additional information, please see the Blue Point Benefits Administrator listed above..

#### **LIFE INSURANCE**

The School offers a life insurance policies to its employees. For additional information, please see the Benefits Administrator listed above.

#### **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

Shining Stars recognizes the benefit of employees' furthering their education. Therefore, the School may, in its discretion, reimburse employees for tuition costs; however, application fees must be paid by the employee. Employees who have been with Shining Stars at least one year (12 months) and who desire to take advantage of this benefit must obtain pre-approval of the course or program of study he

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

or she decides to pursue before enrolling in such course or program of study. Any request must be made in writing to the Executive Director. Employees who receive a grade of “C” or higher (or an equivalent numerical grade) will be eligible for reimbursement. No reimbursement will be made for grades below a “C” (or numerical equivalent). If a class is only graded as “PASS” or “FAIL” reimbursement will only be made for employees who receive a “PASS.” Employees will only be reimbursed for courses taken at accredited colleges, universities and trade schools. Courses and programs of study must be related to employee’s position at Shining Stars. The Executive Director will make the determination whether such course or program of study is eligible for reimbursement. The Executive Director may decide to refund all or only a portion of any course or program of study. Tuition reimbursements may be taxable under IRS regulations.

Employees understand that if they leave Shining Stars for any reason, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, within one year (12 months) following the date of reimbursement, the total amount reimbursed will be withheld from his or her final paycheck and/or any other funds that are due upon termination. If the final paycheck is insufficient to cover the amount of tuition reimbursement the employee agrees that he or she owes to Shining Stars the amount of tuition reimbursement received. Any omission, falsification or misrepresentation of any information used to support a tuition reimbursement request is grounds for immediate discharge. If an employee is discharged for omission, falsification or misrepresentation of information, Shining Stars will deduct all amounts paid from your final paycheck and/or any other amounts due to the employee at that time.”

In limited circumstances, at the sole discretion of the Executive Director tuition cost may be advanced to Employees. If an Employee leave Shining Stars within one year (12 months) of completing any program for which cost were advanced, the Employee agrees to refund Shining Stars in the same manner as if the cost has been reimbursed.

### OBSERVED HOLIDAYS

The School normally observes the following holidays during the year:

- New Year's Day;
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day;
- Presidents' Day;
- District of Columbia Emancipation Day;
- Memorial Day;
- Independence Day;
- Labor Day;
- Indigenous People's Day;
- Veterans' Day;
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve;
- Christmas Day; and
- New Year's Eve.
- Spring Break (specific time listed in the school's Master Calendar)

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

●  
Full-time employees are eligible for paid holidays immediately upon hire.

#### TIME AND LEAVE POLICY

##### ACCRUAL OF TIME POLICY

As of the school calendar year 2017-2018, employees will NO longer receive sick and vacation days at the start of the school year. All employees will now earn sick and vacation days on a monthly (accrual) basis.

Employees who use sick and/or vacation time before they have been earned will not be paid for those days.

Any unused personal and vacation days will be lost if not used by the end of the school year however, sick days may be carried over to the next school year.

For employees who have unused personal and/or vacation days prior to the 2017-2018 school year, they will be paid at the rate of \$100.00 for each day of unused time. However, sick time will be carried into the 2017-2018 school year

#### VACATION DAYS

##### 10 MONTH EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT EMPLOYEES

Each employee will earn one -half (1/2) vacation day per month, on the last day of each month. The maximum number of vacation days that can be earned for the 2017-2018 school year is five (5). In the event an employee begins employment at anytime other than the beginning of a month, the employee's vacation day/time will be prorated.

##### 12 MONTH EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT EMPLOYEES

Employees will earn one-half (½) vacation day per month on the last day of each month. The maximum number of vacation days that can be earned is six ( 6 ). In the event an employee begins employment at anytime after the beginning of the month, their vacation days/time will be prorated.

#### PERSONAL DAYS

All employees (10 or 12 month employment contract employees) will receive ( 3 ) personal days for the calendar year 2017-2018. PERSONAL DAYS ARE NOT ACCRUED.

#### SICK DAYS



## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

10 month employees will receive one-twentieth ( .20 ) sick day per month on the last day of each month. The maximum number of sick days that can be earned is two (2). Employees who are not hired at the beginning of a month will have their sick day/time prorated.

12 month employees will earn one-quarter (¼) sick day per month on the last day of each month. The maximum number of sick days that can be earned is three (3). Employees who are not hired at the beginning of a month will have their sick day/time prorated.

The Executive Director shall receive twenty (20) vacation days, 3 personal days and 3 sick days.

Sick days may be carried over from year to year.

### LONGEVITY AND CAREER AWARDS

Employees are rewarded for long, dedicated and continued service to the school. The school will provide the following additional benefits to employees based on the number of years of service:

Five (5) years of service	2 vacation days and 2 sick days
Ten (10) years of service	3 vacation days and 3 sick days
Fifteen (15) years of service	4 vacation days and 4 sick days

### PAID TIME OFF

Both paid and unpaid time off may be granted to eligible 10 and 12-month employees, according to the following policy and accompanying matrix. Please consult with the Executive Director for further information or questions.

- Employees may not request and will not be granted paid time off during the first week of the school year, immediately before or after a holiday, on a scheduled professional development day, or during the two week period prior to the end of school.
- Time off benefits will not accrue while an employee is on leave of absence, unless otherwise required by law. This policy applies to all employees. Employees should check with the Executive Director to determine insurance coverage during a leave of absence, as after a 30-day absence, you may be required to pay your own premiums or become eligible for Cobra coverage.
- Employees who resign or are terminated for any reason during their employment may not request and will not receive payment for earned, unused time off benefits unless otherwise required by law.

Appointments for medical, dental or other health related services are considered sick leave but should be made during non-teaching hours whenever possible. Personal leave days are not to be taken on days



## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

directly preceding or directly following holidays . Vacation Leave taken without prior approval is considered unauthorized leave without pay.

Shining Stars will not pay out accrued but unused vacation leave at the end of the employment year or at the termination of or resignation from employment.

Use of vacation leave must be applied for through the use of the Leave Request Form. Vacation Leave taken without prior approval is considered unauthorized leave without pay. Shining Stars will not pay out accrued but unused sick and/or personal time at the end of the employment year or at the termination of or resignation from employment.

### Leave Requests

All employees must follow the appropriate protocol when requesting leave of any kind. All staff must first request leave, via the leave request form. Upon completing the form, staff must seek their leave balance from the Operations Associate. Once the leave balance is input on the leave request form, staff, staff must submit the leave request form to their supervisor. The supervisor will either approve or reject the leave request in writing on the leave request form. If the leave is approved, the supervisor must indicate on the leave request form who will substitute while the staff is on leave. Then the supervisor will inform the staff that they have approved the request, and that Executive Director approval is required. The supervisor will seek the Executive Director's approval of leave on behalf of the requesting staff member. The supervisor will inform the staff member via email, whether the request has been approved or rejected. The supervisor must give the leave request form to the Operations Associate. The Operations Associate will maintain an up-to-date tracker and file the leave request forms. The Executive Director must approve applications for leave before leave may be taken

### Vacation Upon Termination or Resignation

An employee terminated for cause or an employee who resigns may not use any paid vacation days between the time the employee is terminated or gives notice of his or her resignation and the last day of employment.

### VOTING LEAVE

Any employee whose work schedule does not provide him or her four consecutive hours to vote while polls are open will be granted up to two paid hours off in order to vote. Any additional time off will be without pay. We reserve the right to select the hours you are excused to vote.

Exempt employees may be provided additional time off with pay when necessary to comply with state and federal wage and hour laws. Notify your supervisor of the need for voting leave at least ten days before the election. When you return from voting leave, you must present a voter's receipt to your supervisor as soon as possible.

### BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

In the event of the death of an immediate family member, staff may request up to three (3) days of paid leave. In this instance, "immediate family member" is defined as child, stepchild, spouse, mother, step-mother, father, step-father, sibling, step-sibling or grandparent. Employees may request up to two days leave in the event of the death of a mother-in-law or father-in-law. Employees may be required to provide documentation of the death and/or funeral to the Executive Director. Bereavement leave is not counted towards your vacation, sick or personal leave hours, rather it is in addition to any other leave employees may have.

### PARENTAL LEAVE

The D.C. Parental Leave Act requires Shining Stars to provide 24 hours of Parental Leave per year (unpaid) to allow you to attend school-related events for your own children or other children in your direct family. Employees may elect to take parental leave either on an unpaid basis or to utilize any available vacation or personal leave. When practicable, please give ten days' advance notice, or as much notice as possible. The Executive Director may only deny Parental Leave if it creates an undue hardship on the department's operations. If you are a parent, an uncle, aunt, grandparent or guardian, whether or not you have been legally appointed as such, you qualify for Parental Leave to attend school-related events sponsored by a teacher, school, or parent-teacher association, including: concerts, plays, rehearsals, sporting games or practices, and meetings with teachers or counselors. To request parental leave, employees should follow the same procedure as that of personal leave.

### FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)

Shining Stars follows the DC FMLA. Each employee who has been employed by the School for at least one year without a break in service, and has worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12 months is entitled to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave during any 24-month period for any of the following reasons:

- to care for your child after birth or after placement for adoption or foster care;
- to care for your spouse, child (including when the employee is acting in place of a parent, i.e., in loco parentis), or parent who has a serious health condition;
- because you have a serious health condition that makes you unable to perform your job; or

The determination of the 24-month period, for purposes of calculating available leave, will be made based on the 24-month period measured forward from the date of an employee's first FMLA leave begins.

A "serious health condition" generally means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either: (i) inpatient care in a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility, or (ii) continuing treatment by a health care provider.

Any accrued sick and/or vacation leave you have may be used during the leave period, if the leave is because of your own serious health condition, provided that once you begin to receive any short term disability benefits to which you are entitled, you may not continue to use accrued sick and/or vacation

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

leave. Once accrued sick and/or vacation leave has been used up, if the employee is not entitled to disability benefits, the remainder of the leave will be unpaid.

You must provide 30 days advance notice for taking leave under this section, when the need for leave is foreseeable and such notice is practicable. If the need is not foreseeable, you must give notice as soon as both possible and practicable. When you give notice of the need for family and/or medical leave, the School will provide you with a notice that explains our specific expectations and your obligations with respect to the leave.

In addition, the School may require medical certification to support a request for leave because of a serious health condition.

During your family and/or medical leave, the School will maintain all of your group medical insurance coverage on the same basis as if you were not on leave. Your portion of the premiums must be paid during the leave. If you do not return to work from your leave, you may be responsible for repaying the School for the premiums it paid on your behalf during the leave period.

When you return from family and/or medical leave, generally you will be restored either to your original job or to an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. The use of leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that you accrued before the start of the leave. However, you cannot accrue any additional benefits while on leave, except during any period that you are using any accrued sick and/or vacation leave, as provided above.

Before you may return to work from a medical leave necessitated by your own serious health condition, you must present a fitness-for-duty certification from an appropriate health care provider that you are able to resume your work duties.

An employee on FMLA leave (other than for a workplace injury or illness) may not accept gainful employment during the leave, if such employment occurs during the employee's normal working hours. An employee who does so will be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

Instructional staff should contact the Director of Operations to discuss FMLA as there may be additional requirements and/or restrictions. If at anytime Shining Stars employs more than 50 individuals then the provisions of the Federal FMLA will also be applicable to Shining Stars Employees. If at anytime Shining Stars employees less than 50 individuals then the provisions of the DC FMLA may not apply.

### MILITARY LEAVE

Employees who are required to fulfill military obligations in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States or in state military service will be given the necessary time off and reinstated in accordance with federal and state law.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

The time off will be unpaid, except where any state or federal law dictates otherwise. Exempt employees may be provided time off with pay when necessary to comply with state and federal wage and hour laws.

Accrued paid time off (PTO) may be used for this leave if the employee chooses. Military orders should be presented to the Executive Director and arrangements for leave made as early as possible before departure. Employees are required to give advance notice of their service obligations to the School unless military necessity makes this impossible. You must notify the Executive Director of your intent to return to employment based on requirements of the law. Your benefits may continue to accrue during the period of leave in accordance with state and federal law. Additional information regarding military leaves may be obtained from the Director.

#### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE (When FMLA does not apply)**

##### **Medical Leave**

The School may allow, in its discretion, employees to take a leave of absence because of a non-work related illness or injury, provided that the need for leave is confirmed by appropriate documentation from a health care provider. The employee must first exhaust all accrued sick/personal leave and then must use all accrued vacation leave. The remainder of the leave will be unpaid. Leave will be permitted for up to six weeks, except as otherwise required by law.

##### **Non-Medical Leave**

The School may, in its discretion, allow employees to take a leave of absence for non-medical or personal reasons. The employee must first exhaust all accrued vacation leave. The remainder of the leave will be unpaid. Leave will be permitted for up to six weeks, except as otherwise required by law.

All medical and non-medical leave requests must be made in writing/emails to the Director of Operations. The Executive Director will provide the final approval on all medical or non-medical leave requests. In addition, the employee must submit a Leave Request Form.

#### **Insurance Coverage; No Accrual of Benefits, Eligibility**

Insurance benefits may be continued during a leave of absence at the expense of the employee.

An employee who is on a leave of absence, either medical or nonmedical, will cease to accrue additional benefits of any kind (for example, vacation, sick or personal leave) and to accrue additional eligibility time for entitlement to benefits or for a change in employment status.

#### **Reinstatement**

Employees returning from a leave of absence are not guaranteed either reinstatement or if reinstated, reassignment to the same position and shift they had when leave was taken, except as otherwise required by law. However, reasonable effort will be made to reinstate employees to the first available position of equivalent classification and pay. An employee who does not accept the position offered on return from leave of absence will be considered to have voluntarily resigned from employment.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

#### **MATERNITY AND PATERNITY LEAVE**

Employees who are pregnant or whose spouses are pregnant, are entitled to maternity/paternity leave of to eight (8) weeks. The leave will be unpaid, although an employee may use accumulated sick leave. An employee who is not able to return to work after eight (8) weeks and who has used all of his/her accumulated sick leave may be granted an additional unpaid leave of absence.

A pregnant employee should promptly notify her supervisor of her expected date of delivery no less than two weeks before her/his anticipated date of departure and notify her/his supervisor of the date she expects her/his leave to begin.

#### **HEALTH INSURANCE CONTINUATION OF COVERAGE (COBRA)**

##### **A. Coverage**

Under the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) law provision and you become covered under the school's health insurance plan, you (and your family, if also covered) will have the opportunity for a temporary extension of coverage at group premium rate for the period 18 months.

##### **B. Qualifying Events**

In the event you would lose your coverage under the school's health insurance plan the following qualifying events will apply for your eligibility:

- Reduction of hours of employment
- Termination of your employment (unless you are terminated for gross misconduct).

Your spouse and dependent children who are covered by the plan also will have rights to choose continuation coverage, under certain additional circumstances. When you enroll in the plan, you will be given a notice that describes all of your continuation rights. Your spouse will also be given a notice, when he/she becomes covered under the plan.

#### **WORKER'S COMPENSATION**

On-the-job injuries are covered by our Workers' Compensation insurance policy. This insurance is provided at no cost to you. If you are injured on the job, no matter how slightly or how minor the injury may appear, report the incident immediately to the Executive Director. Consistent with applicable state law, failure to report an injury within a reasonable period of time could jeopardize your claim. We ask for your assistance in alerting management to any condition that could lead to or contribute to an employee accident.

#### **UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

Upon separation from employment, you may be entitled to state and federal unemployment insurance benefits. Information about unemployment insurance can be obtained from the Executive Director.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

#### VI. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

##### JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The School maintains a job description for each position. The job description outlines the essential duties and responsibilities of the positions and working conditions. When the duties and/or responsibilities of a position change, the job description is revised to reflect those changes.

If you have any questions or wish to obtain a copy of your position's job description, please see the Director of Operations.

##### PERFORMANCE REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

To achieve the goals we seek for our employees the school implements the Danielson Framework for Teaching evaluation model. The main objective is to drive our employee's goals, performance, and progress to ensure employees understand their performance standards and expectations. The Danielson's evaluation system is intended to be candid and informative in which both an employee and his/her supervisor fully and constructively participate.

The performance review cycle generally is conducted bi-annually in December and May of each year using the Danielson Framework for Teaching performance assessment method. Reviews may be given at other times or times not stated in this Handbook at the discretion of the Executive Director.

##### Professional Development Plan (PDP) Performance Evaluation

The Professional Development Plan (PDP) performance evaluation process begins with each employee creating a PDP in the beginning of the year, where each employee uses the (SMART) and/or Framework of Teaching method to set individual goals.

In December and in May, employees will review their progress on the goals and make the necessary adjustments as needed. Additional reviews may be conducted at any time if warranted by special circumstances, such as an employee's poor work performance.

Each employee performance review involves a written evaluation by his/her supervisor, and an employee self-evaluation. At the completion of the performance review employee is required to sign his/her performance evaluation to confirm that the employee has read and understands the evaluation.

Some of the factors on which employee performance is evaluated are:

- Quality of work;
- Job skills;
- Work habits;
- Dependability;
- General attitude;
- Attendance;
- Cooperativeness;
- Knowledge of work;

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

- Willingness to assume responsibilities;
- Adherence to School policies;
- Lack of, or extent of, any discipline imposed; and
- Improvement since the last review.

An employee's failure to create a PDP, failure to return in a timely manner self-evaluation forms, or failure to participate in the evaluation process, is grounds for discipline, up to and including discharge.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All instructional staff members are required to complete 35 hours of professional development training/courses during the school year. Those employees must provide documentation demonstrating that the professional development training/course was completed. In order for the School to pay for any portion of a professional development course, approval from the Executive Director must be received prior to registration. In all instances, you may not be reimbursed for professional development training/courses. Employees may have to cover the cost of some or all of their professional development.

### STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

It is impossible to describe every standard of conduct for every circumstance in the Handbook. However, all employees are expected to comply with and abide by all of our rules and standards at all times, and discipline and discharge may be imposed for unacceptable conduct or performance. The level of discipline or discharge imposed by the School for unacceptable conduct will depend upon, among other things, the seriousness of the employee's conduct, the circumstances under which it occurred, the employee's record of prior discipline, and the employee's record of work performance.

Some of the School's rules and standards, a violation of which can result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or discharge, are listed below. These rules are not all-inclusive. You may be discharged or disciplined for a variety of reasons, at the discretion of the Executive Director and/or Board of Directors. Unsatisfactory job performance, as determined by management

- Incompatibility with supervision or management
- Insubordination
- Excessive Absenteeism
- Failure to ensure the safety and well-being of students

The action taken by the School, whenever a rule or standard of conduct is not followed, may include the following disciplinary methods. As a result, you may be disciplined, with or without notice, up to and including discharge, without using these standards and procedures.

### Verbal Warning

A verbal warning may be given for any violation of School rules or standards that does not warrant more severe discipline. The supervisor shall keep a record of the verbal warning given by having an appropriate record placed in the employee's personnel file.



## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

#### Written Warning

Written warnings may be given for repeated or cumulative violations for which a verbal warning has been issued or for those violations too serious to warrant a verbal warning. A copy of the written warning is to be signed by the supervisor as well as the employee. The signature by the employee will constitute an acknowledgment that he/she has been issued the written warning. Failure or refusal of the employee to sign the warning shall be deemed to be insubordination for which additional discipline, up to and including discharge, may be imposed. A copy of the written warning will be placed in the employee's personnel file and a copy given to the employee.

#### Suspension

An employee (regardless of whether the employee is exempt or nonexempt) may be required to take time off without pay (that is, suspended) for repeated or cumulative violations for which verbal and written warnings have been issued or for actions requiring disciplinary action stronger than a written warning but not severe enough to warrant discharge. Under present applicable federal law, disciplinary deductions from the pay of exempt employees may be made for one or more full days for: (i) penalties imposed for infractions of safety rules of major significance and (ii) for unpaid disciplinary suspensions imposed for infractions of workplace conduct rules.

#### Termination

Serious violations of School rules or standards or repeated or cumulative violations of a lesser nature may result in termination of the employee.

Employees who are terminated for unacceptable conduct or performance are not eligible for reemployment, except as otherwise required by law.

Shining Stars' use of progressive discipline in no way alters the "at-will" nature of your employment. You may be discharged, at any time, without the use of discipline method described in this Handbook.

## VII. SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT

### RESIGNATION

Should you decide to leave your employment with us, we ask that you provide your immediate supervisor with at least two weeks advance notice. Your thoughtfulness is appreciated and will be noted favorably should you ever wish to reapply for employment with the School or seek to use the School as a reference for future employment.

The School considers any oral or written statement or suggestion by an employee that he/she is or will be resigning to be a serious offer to sever the employment relationship. As a result, the employee may not withdraw any such offer that he/she has made, unless the School decides to offer a waiver within its discretion.



## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

Employees who are rehired following a break in service in excess of six months, other than an approved leave of absence, are considered new employees from the effective date of their reemployment for all purposes, including the purposes of measuring benefits.

When employees leave employment, they will receive payment for accrued vacation days however, employees will not be compensated for any accrued personal and/or sick days.

### EXIT INTERVIEW & RETURN OF PROPERTY

If an employee resigns or is terminated, Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS conducts exit interviews to provide a benefits summary based on the last day employment to ensure the school complies with federal and state regulations related to *i.e.* continuation of health coverage, retirement. During the exit interview, employees shall return all School property, including computers, books, passwords and any material provided by Shining Stars to you. During the exit interview you also can provide insight into areas for improvement for Shining Stars Montessori Academy. The school makes every effort to keep all information confidential. If no exit interview is held employees shall return all property belonging to Shining Stars at a place and time designated by the Executive Director.

If Shining Stars terminates an employee's, final wages will be paid the day after termination. If an employee resigns, that employee's final wages will be paid either on the next regularly scheduled payday or within seven days after the resignation, whichever is earlier. Exit interviews will be conducted by the Unit Director of the exiting employee and/or his or her designee.

### EMPLOYMENT REFERENCES

It is the policy of the School that it will not provide any information about a former employee's employment to a prospective new employer, except date of hire, position held, and length of employment, unless the individual has signed an Employee Reference Request, Authorization, and Release provided by the School. Signing the release will permit the School to provide information about the individual's employment, including information about his/her workplace performance and behavior, the reason for the conclusion of employment, and whether the individual is eligible for rehire. If an employee, who is leaving the School's employment, or a former employee does not sign such form, any prospective employer seeking a reference for that individual will be told of this policy.

## Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

### Employee Handbook

#### SHINING STARS MONTESSORI ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have received a copy of the School's Employee Handbook (the Handbook). I have read it carefully and recognize my obligation to comply with all of its rules and policies. I specifically acknowledge that I understand the following school policies on:

- Prohibition of Harassment
- Handbook Statement
- Drug & Alcohol Free Workplace Policy
- Violence in the Workplace & Weapons Policy
- School's Compensation & Benefits Policies
- Technology Usage & Social Media Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Leave Policy
- The School's Mission, Philosophy and Goals
- Confidentiality
- Intellectual Property
- Standards of Conduct & Disciplinary Action

If I have any questions about any of the School's rules and policies, including those in this Employee Handbook, I will ask my supervisor. I also understand that the Handbook includes only a brief description of the benefits offered to me by the School and an overview of its rules and policies. The School may change these at any time with or without notice.

I also acknowledge and understand that the Handbook does not constitute an expressed or implied employment contract of any kind with respect to any of its provisions, including those provisions describing the disciplinary and discharge procedures of Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School. I further understand that nothing in the Handbook is intended to bind the School contractually, and I may not rely on any provision in the Handbook as limiting the School's discretion or ability to discipline or discharge me. I understand and acknowledge that my employment is terminable at will so that both the School and I remain free to choose to end our work relationship.

I acknowledge that I have received information concerning my wages, including the rate of pay, overtime rate of pay, any exemption from overtime and pay days.

I acknowledge that the School may revise, suspend, revoke, terminate, change or remove, prospectively or retroactively, any of the policies or procedures of the company, whether outlined in this Handbook or elsewhere, in whole or in part, with or without notice at any time, at the company's sole discretion

**Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School**

**Employee Handbook**

---

Employee Name (PRINT)

---

Employee Signature & Date

---

Executive Director (Seal & Date)