



**PERSONNEL POLICY HANDBOOK  
APPROVED BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AUGUST 2018**

*The Employee Handbook has been revised and approved by the Board of Trustees and is promulgated effective AUGUST 2018.*

Chairperson, Board of Trustees \_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

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## I. Introduction

IDEA Public Charter School welcomes you as a new or returning employee. IDEA is a nonprofit, educational, tax-exempt public charter school founded in 1998. IDEA had its origins as an Army JROTC school-within-a-school technical and leadership academy at Phelps Senior High School in 1993. The mission of IDEA Public Charter School is to prepare students with the academic, social, leadership, and occupational skills for post-secondary opportunities and to be responsible citizens who contribute to the community.

The IDEA Public Charter School is funded through per pupil allocations from the District of Columbia Office of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), federal and local grants, and charitable contributions. IDEA has a volunteer Board of Trustees that is comprised of parents and community members who are selected based on the IDEA Public Charter School By-laws. The Executive Director, Principal, and COO serve as non-voting, ex-officio members of the Board. The Board of Trustees has fiduciary responsibilities for the school, establishes the mission and the policies and hires the Executive Director to implement them. At the discretion of the Board, the Executive Director's responsibility is to hire, supervise, and make personnel decisions regarding all additional employees, although the Executive Director may choose to delegate some of these responsibilities to other managerial staff within IDEA Public Charter School in keeping with the policies established by the Board.

Because of IDEA's academic mission, community visibility, and public support, IDEA employees have a special responsibility to adhere to the highest standards of ethics and professionalism in representing IDEA and carrying out its mission.

## II. Purpose of Employee Handbook

This Employee Handbook is intended to serve as a directive and guideline, describing the basic personnel policies and practices ordinarily applied by IDEA. **It does not create or establish a contract of employment.** No contractual rights, express or implied, are conferred on the employee by this handbook; its provisions do not include contractual obligations enforceable against IDEA Public Charter School. Nor does it guarantee employment for any period of time.

IDEA reserves the right to make changes, from time to time, with or without notice, in the policies and practices described in this handbook. Moreover, because it is impossible to anticipate every situation that may arise, IDEA reserves its right to address a situation in a manner different from that described herein if, in IDEA's judgment, the circumstances so warrant.

This handbook supersedes all prior policies or procedures as to subjects addressed in the Handbook and all representations, oral or written, regarding an employee's employment status or duration of employment, except those signed in writing by the President of the Company. In the event of a contradiction between this handbook and the representation of a supervisor, the terms of this handbook will govern.

## III. Equal Employment Opportunity

IDEA Public Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries or complaints regarding the non-discrimination policies: Executive Director, IDEA Public Charter School, 1027 45th Street NE, Washington, DC 20019. Phone: (202) 399-4750.

#### **IV. Terms and Conditions of Employment**

##### **A. At-Will Status**

Employees of IDEA are employed at will. This means that either the employee or IDEA may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause.

Only the Executive Director has the authority to execute an offer letter or financial authority to approve an offer for a definite period of time. If someone has made a commitment to you that is not in writing and signed by the Executive Director, please consult with the Executive Director immediately to clarify your employment status. Nothing shall be read to change your status as an at-will employee unless expressly stated in writing and signed by the Executive Director.

##### **B. Classification of Employees**

IDEA uses several classifications to describe its employees and the benefits that are available to them during the term of their employment:

- “Twelve-month employees” are administrators, faculty, or staff who work 12 months of the year. They are eligible for all benefits described in this handbook, so long as they meet the applicable requirements, such as length of service.
- “Ten-month employees” are those who work on a regular basis for fewer than 12 months. They are eligible for all benefits described in this handbook, so long as they meet the applicable requirements, such as length of service.
- “Part-time” and “hourly employees” will work 40 hours or less per week. Some part-time and hourly employees may be further categorized as 10- or 12-month employees; however, they are not normally eligible for benefits and their salary will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions will be addressed by letter through the Human Resources Office.
- Hourly employees will receive an hourly pay rate. Hourly employees will normally receive their regular pay and any overtime accrued. Unless specifically negotiated and due to special circumstances required by the hourly rated position and related work requirements, hourly employees will not receive medical, or insurance benefits. All overtime or additional hour should be approved in writing in advance by their supervisor and Executive Director; if abused, disciplinary actions can be taken by the supervisor.

- “Temporary employees” are those hired with the understanding that their employment will not continue beyond a stated date or beyond completion of a specified project or projects. They are eligible for only those benefits specifically associated with their status as stated in this handbook.

There are several classes of people who are present at IDEA who are not considered employees of the organization:

- “Volunteers” are people or entities who provide services to IDEA without financial compensation, other than reimbursement of authorized expenses.
- “Independent contractors” are people or entities who are paid on a fee-for-service basis to perform certain services. Independent contractors may be workers such as lawyers, construction workers, painters, electricians, caterers, plumbers, or subcontractors who follow an independent trade, business, or profession in which they offer their professional services to the public.

Because neither independent contractors nor volunteers are considered employees of IDEA, their rights, obligations and responsibilities are not covered by this handbook.

### **C. Exempt/Non-exempt Employees; Overtime Pay**

IDEA employees are further classified as exempt and non-exempt employees. This classification determines whether an IDEA employee is eligible for overtime pay when an employee has worked for more than 40 hours.

#### **Exempt employees**

Generally speaking, exempt employees are those whose jobs are primarily executive, administrative or professional in nature, as defined by federal regulations, and who are paid on a salary basis, again as defined by federal regulations. Exempt employees are responsible for working as many hours as necessary to get the job done; however, they are not eligible for overtime pay.

If an exempt employee is required to work an extraordinary amount of hours during an unusually busy time or on a special project, the employee may be granted additional leave or pay, upon the recommendation of his or her supervisor, when the Executive Director, in his/her sole discretion, finds it appropriate and circumstances permit.

#### **Non-exempt employees and overtime**

Non-exempt employees are covered by the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act and are paid overtime at the rate determined by applicable laws for any hours worked beyond 40 hours in a given work week. Examples of such positions include clerical and janitorial roles.

Overtime compensation will be earned in 15-minute increments. Only those hours that are actually worked by the employee will be considered "hours worked" in computing whether overtime is due and, if so, how much. Scheduled and unscheduled absences and time off for holidays, vacation, sickness, jury duty, bereavement leave or military leave, or for other reasons, will not count as hours worked for this purpose.

#### **D. Time Recording**

The human resources manager or designated representative will record daily attendance for all employees, to include paid time off use. Electronic or manual means will be used to record time.

#### **E. Reporting to Work**

The workday is Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with a 30-minute lunch period. Absences for any reason must be reported to the supervisor and logged into Paycom before 6:00 a.m. of the day of absence. Unanticipated lateness must be reported to the supervisor immediately to ensure adequate supervision of students.

Absence without notice for two days may be considered a voluntary resignation. Requests for administrative, jury duty and bereavement leave must be logged in Paycom and accompanied by appropriate documentation to be approved. A doctor's excuse will be required for medical absences that are in excess of three days.

#### **F. Background Check Policy**

IDEA will not employ or have as a volunteer any individual whose background check reveals that he/she was connected in any way to any of the following:

- 1) Any crime involving a child
- 2) A violent history
- 3) A crime connected with mental instability
- 4) A recent (within the last 5 years) pattern of irresponsible behavior
- 5) Any activity that causes legitimate concern for the safety of staff or students at IDEA.

### **V. Compensation and Benefits**

#### **A. Pay**

Employees are paid semi-monthly - on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> or the preceding business day if pay day falls on the weekend or on a holiday. The Leave and Earning Statements are available electronically within Paycom (current payroll software). All employees must select direct deposit and have their checks sent directly to their personal bank account. All other reimbursement checks or stipends written by IDEA not added to regular payroll will be issued as an electronic check. It is against the school's policy to advance pay or lend funds to employees.

## **B. Expenses**

Employees must obtain the **advance** written consent of the Executive Director (via their immediate supervisor) before incurring expenses for which they will seek reimbursement. Approved expenses must be documented, with receipts attached, and submitted to the Chief Operating Officer for payment, within the month of the date on which they were incurred.

## **C. Benefits**

This section describes the benefits currently offered to employees of IDEA. Except where specifically indicated, these benefits are available only to 12- and 10-month employees.

Some of these benefits are described in more detail in Summary Plan Descriptions and in official plan documents, such as the certificates of coverage prepared by insurance companies. The Summary Plan Descriptions and official plan documents contain information about eligibility, coverage, deductibles, and premiums. Please read these documents carefully; if there is a discrepancy between this handbook or the Summary Plan Descriptions or the official plan documents, the official plan documents will supersede.

IDEA reserves the right, in or at its discretion, to change the nature of the benefits offered to employees, or to change insurance carriers, deductibles, premiums, or other features of any benefit plan. In addition, IDEA may decide to discontinue one or more benefits. Covered employees will be notified of such changes or discontinuations as soon as practicable.

### **1. Paid holidays**

Each year a list of paid holidays that will be recognized by IDEA is circulated to employees. A copy of this year's list may be obtained from the human resources manager.

Ten- and 12-month employees are paid for each observed holiday that falls during the time they are officially on duty.

Neither 12-month non-exempt employees nor 10-month non-exempt employees will be paid for a holiday unless they either worked on their regularly scheduled work days immediately preceding and immediately following the holiday, or they were out on approved vacation or sick leave on those days.

### **2. Paid Time Off**

Both 10- and 12- month employees will accrue paid time off (PTO) in addition to the holidays designated by IDEA. All 10-month teacher employees accrue 10 days of PTO per year. These are paid days off that the employee may take at any time (with at least three days advance notice and the supervisor's permission) for any purpose, including to celebrate religious or other holidays not on our holiday list, vacation, or sick or personal leave. Unused leave by non-instructional employees will be lost. Unused leave by instructional employees is carried over and will be paid out at a rate of \$25/hr. IDEA enforces a strict use- or- lose policy when it comes to leave.

Twelve-month employees will accrue 15 days of PTO per year. These employees will be eligible to take leave (with at least three days advance notice and the supervisor's permission), preferably during times that least impact professional duties in their designated role. The actual days will be determined through an application process. If IDEA needs additional teachers to work during the summer, they will be hired based on the special compensation rate schedule. If a holiday falls while an employee is on leave, the employee will not be charged leave for that day. IDEA enforces a strict use or lose policy regarding leave.

### **3. Bereavement leave**

Ten- and 12-month employees who experience the death of a parent, spouse/domestic partner, sibling, or child may take up to five days of paid bereavement leave per academic year. Generally, an employee who wants to use bereavement leave must first notify his or her supervisor and provide documentation.

### **4. Jury duty**

An employee who must be absent from work for official jury duty is excused from work with pay for the duration of the period the employee is required to serve so long as the employee gives the supervisor notice of the selection for jury duty within five business days of receiving the notice by providing the summons/selection confirmation to their supervisor/HR Office. Absence while on jury duty is not deducted from PTO and benefits are not affected. Jury duty is treated as administrative leave. Whereas employees are still compensated by IDEA during jury duty, there should be no earnings from the state for the service (other than any travel stipend given).

### **5. Military leave**

An employee who must be absent from work to participate in military exercises or official training in response to military orders or in fulfillment of an obligated portion of military service is eligible for military leave for the duration of the tour of duty. This is unpaid leave. However, the employee may elect to use PTO. Military leave is unpaid leave so an employee does not accrue vacation leave or sick leave while on unpaid leave. If you must be absent from work due to service in the uniformed services, please notify your supervisor as much in advance as possible, so the school can make plans for your absence. IDEA complies with federal law regarding reemployment of persons who leave work to serve in the uniformed services.

### **6. Unpaid leave**

Ten- and 12-month employees may request unpaid leave (i.e., time off for a reason not covered by any of the other policies included herein or time off for which the employee has no accrued leave), by filing a written request (*Appendix A*) through their supervisor to the Executive Director. The Executive Director may grant or deny the request, at his or her discretion, depending on the circumstances of the request and the needs of IDEA. An employee does not accrue PTO while on unpaid leave. If a request for unpaid leave is granted, IDEA will, at its discretion, determine whether any benefits will continue through the leave, and at what cost, if any, to the employee. This will depend upon a number of factors, including the nature and extent of the leave.

## **7. Family and Medical Leave**

Eligible employees are entitled to take 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) in any 12-month period and 16 weeks of unpaid leave in a 24 month period for employees exercise rights under the District of Columbia Family and Medical Leave Act (“DC FMLA”)for the reasons listed below. When the employee's leave is over, he or she will be reinstated to the same or similar position he or she held prior to taking leave.

### **a. Employee Eligibility**

To be eligible for FMLA leave an employee must:

1. have worked at least 12 months for the school;
2. have worked at least 1,250 hours for the school (1000 hours under the DC FMLA);  
and
3. have a condition triggering FMLA leave.

Principles established under the Fair Labor Standard Act (FSLA) are used to determine the number of hours worked by an employee.

### **b. Conditions Triggering FMLA and DC FMLA Leave**

Up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave may be taken for the following reasons:

1. birth of a child or to care for a newborn child;
2. placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
3. to care for an immediate family member, spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition if the employee is needed to care for that person; or
4. because of the employee’s serious health condition which makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his or her job;
5. any qualify exigency arising because a covered military member is on active duty or has been called to cover active duty status as defined by law.

Up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave may be taken for the following reasons:

1. to care for a covered servicemember who, for a serious injury or illness is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; is otherwise in outpatient status; or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list;
2. to care for a covered veteran who, for a serious injury or illness, is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

Up to 16 weeks in a rolling 24-month period of DC FMLA family leave may be taken for the following reasons:

1. birth of a child or to care for a newborn child;
2. placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
3. placement of a child with the employee for whom the employee permanently assumes and discharges parental responsibility;

4. to care for a family member (defined under the DC FMLA as a person to whom the employee is related by blood, legal custody, or marriage; a foster child; a child who lives with the employee and for whom the employee discharges parental responsibility; or a person with whom the employee shares or has shared, within the last year, a mutual residence and with whom the employee maintains a committed relationship) who has a serious health condition if the employee is needed to care for that person; or

Up to 16 weeks in a rolling 24-month period of DC FMLA medical leave may be taken for the serious health condition of the employee that renders the employee unable to perform the functions of his or her position.

In all cases, leave available and taken under the FMLA runs concurrently with leave available and taken under the DC FMLA.

#### **c. Duration of leave**

Eligible employees may receive up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period, measured backward from the date of the FMLA leave. FMLA leave for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care must be concluded within 12 months of the birth or placement.

#### **d. Employee benefits**

1. IDEA's group health plan and insurance coverage will be maintained for employees on FMLA and/or DC FMLA leave.
2. Employees must reimburse the school for paid premiums if the employee chooses not to return to work when FMLA and/or DC FMLA leave ends.
3. An employee is always allowed to use PTO during or in addition to FMLA or DC FMLA leave.

#### **e. Notice and Health Certification**

##### **i. Scheduling and Notice Requirements**

Having employees gone for 12 weeks at a time can be disruptive to a workplace. Recognizing this, the FMLA requires employees to give IDEA 30 days notice of the need for leave if it is foreseeable. This is most often the case if leave will be taken for the birth or adoption of a child, or to care for a family member recovering from surgery or other planned medical treatment. If the need for leave is not foreseeable, the employee is required to give notice as soon as possible. If a medical emergency arises, for example, it might be impossible for an employee to give IDEA notice in advance.

In some circumstances, an employee may want to take leave intermittently rather than all at once. If an employee requires physical therapy for a serious injury, for example, or needs to care for a spouse receiving periodic medical treatment, it might make more sense to take several hours off per week rather than twelve weeks at once. Intermittent leave is permitted for the birth of a child, to care for a newborn child, or for placement of a child for adoption or

foster care. Employees who require intermittent leave or reduced schedule leave must try to schedule their leave so that it will not disrupt the school's operations.

## **ii. Certifications: Health Proof of Illness**

The law allows IDEA to require proof that the employee or family member actually suffers from a serious health condition. The employee must provide a certification from the treating doctor giving details about the condition, including the duration of the condition, a diagnosis, and the treatment prescribed.

The employee may ask for a second opinion from a doctor of IDEA's choosing, as long as IDEA pays for it and the doctor chosen is not regularly employed by IDEA. If the first and second certifications conflict, IDEA can require a third opinion from yet another doctor; this opinion will be binding on both the employee and IDEA. If the employee is out for an extended period, IDEA may ask for a periodic re-certification which is generally not more often than every 30 days.

## **8. Family Leave**

New parents that have been employed by IDEA for one calendar year or more may receive 4 weeks of paid leave following the birth or adoption of a baby. An additional 4 weeks of paid leave is also granted to such an employee following the birthing of a child.

Having employees gone for 4-8 weeks at a time can be disruptive to a workplace, especially at a school providing educational services. Recognizing this, IDEA encourages employees to provide as much as six-months notice so that proper plans and coverage can be arranged in advance.

In some circumstances, an employee may want to take leave intermittently rather than all at once. IDEA may, but is not required to, work out flexible, intermittent leave scheduling under FMLA. Intermittent leave *is not* permitted for the birth of a child, to care for a newborn child, or for placement of a child for adoption or foster care. Employees who require intermittent leave or reduced schedule leave must try to schedule their leave so that it will not disrupt the school's operations.

## **9. Worker's compensation**

All employees of IDEA are covered by worker's compensation insurance, as required by law. Employees must report any work-related injury or illness immediately to the human resources department, which will provide information to the supervisor and school safety officer as necessary. Forms will be provided to the employee.

## **10. Health insurance**

IDEA offers individual health insurance coverage to all permanent employees. IDEA will share the cost of health insurance premiums at the single rate for employees. The employee portion and the premium may change; as of September 1, 2018, IDEA covers 80% of the HMO price for all permanent employees regardless of the individual plan chosen. Notice will

be provided to the employee as soon as IDEA receives the change. Ask the human resources manager for current cost information.

Benefits provided, as well as exclusions, deductible amounts, requirements for eligibility, and other terms and conditions of coverage, are summarized in the Summary Plan Description, and are more fully described in the certificate of coverage, which you should receive from the insurer when you enroll. If, for any reason, you do not have a copy of these, please see the human resources manager.

Under some circumstances, you and/or any members of your family who are covered under your group health insurance plan will have the right under COBRA to continue coverage under the group plan for a temporary period, at your or your family member's expense, even after eligibility would otherwise terminate due to your death, termination of employment, divorce, or various other qualifying events. For further information about the right to continued coverage, and any requirements you must fulfill to be eligible, please see the human resources manager.

### **11. Life insurance, dental insurance, and disability insurance**

IDEA currently provides life insurance, dental insurance, and disability insurance to its permanent full-time employees. Summary Plan Descriptions of these insurance plans describe, in general terms, eligibility requirements, benefits provided, and current costs to employees. If, for any reason, you do not have a copy of this, please see the human resources manager. Consult the actual policies for more details.

### **12. Retirement plans (403b)**

All permanent employees are eligible to participate in IDEA's *non-contributory* retirement plan upon employment. All permanent employees are eligible for participation in IDEA's *contributory* retirement plan after one calendar year of employment.

Employees are encouraged to enroll in the IDEA Public Charter School Retirement Plan. Each employee may contribute up to five percent of gross earnings by payroll deduction and to have this amount matched by an equal percentage contribution from the school.

When an eligible employee has contributed to the retirement plan, the employee has a vested right to the accrued retirement income when contributions are left on deposit for retirement. The matching portion of the employer contributions are placed in the same retirement account. The employee cannot draw on these funds before retirement or while he or she is still an active employee of IDEA Public Charter School. The employee may withdraw funds, cash out, or take loans against these non-contributory funds if they desire.

**13. Unemployment Compensation.** Forms and procedures may be obtained from your local unemployment agency. Contact the business manager or human resources manager for assistance if required.

Note: COBRA. School is required to provide notification of COBRA rights upon hire and a qualifying event. I have attached some examples you should consider but something needs to be here. Since you will not describe everything in detail in your handbook, make

sure they receive a brochure, letter or other handout upon hire, describing their COBRA rights and that you receive an acknowledgement that they receive it. Since spouses also are entitled to notice, it is a good idea to send to the home as well.

## **VI. Job Performance and Conduct as Employee**

Formal performance reviews of all employees will be conducted on an annual basis, at a minimum, however job performance is not limited to any single review. The expectation for professionalism includes performance of assigned duties, appropriate daily conduct with all stakeholders, preparedness for supervisory check-ins, responsiveness to coaching, and portfolio completion. Performance reviews are intended to identify both those aspects of the job which are being performed well and those aspects that need attention. Performance appraisals are also a formal opportunity for the employee to express any concerns about the job or about his or her employment with IDEA.

In addition to expecting employees to perform their jobs competently and reliably, IDEA expects employees to conduct themselves in a professional, ethical, and responsible manner that reflects well upon IDEA, promotes a spirit of cooperation and teamwork among employees, and is respectful of parents, students, volunteers, and members of the public with whom we interact. Failure to do so may lead to corrective action, including dismissal.

While it is impossible to anticipate in advance every possible kind of misconduct that would be of concern to IDEA and that could lead to corrective action, loss of pay, or dismissal, the following conduct is prohibited and will not be tolerated by IDEA. This list of prohibited conduct is illustrative only and is not intended to be exhaustive.

1. Violation of any policies described in this handbook or otherwise communicated to employees.
2. Conduct, profane gestures, or language that physically harms or threatens others or that is abusive to or disrespectful of IDEA directors, employees, contractors, students, volunteers, or other persons involved with IDEA.
3. Failure to adhere to the work schedule. This includes absence without notice to IDEA, except where an emergency prohibited the giving of notice and notice was given as soon as reasonably possible.
4. Failure to be honest in communications with IDEA or falsifying records or other documents.
5. Theft or misappropriation of property or resources owned by IDEA, a co-worker, a student, or anyone else.
6. Unlawful conduct that might lead our students or the public to lose confidence in the employee or in IDEA.
7. Insubordination.
8. Failure to conduct oneself in a professional and cooperative manner while on duty.

9. Neglect of duty; failure to perform your responsibilities in a manner acceptable to IDEA.
10. Inappropriate relations or contacts with students or other staff members.

## **VII. Corrective Action; Dismissal; and Grievance Procedure**

When performance issues are identified with respect to an employee, when instances of unacceptable conduct occur, or when for any reason the employment relationship has become problematic from the point of view of IDEA, any of a variety of steps might be taken, up to and including termination. Other steps may include verbal or written warnings, formal notices of professional counsel, performance improvement plan, immediate probation, administrative leave, suspension without pay, demotion, or other corrective action might take place. IDEA reserves its right to determine what it believes is an appropriate response, and to implement it including immediate termination without cause and without any of these prior steps or corrective action being taken.

If an employee feels that inappropriate corrective action has been taken against him or her, and the employee has been unable to resolve the matter informally by speaking with the supervisor, the employee may file a written grievance with the supervisor of the person who took the action and provide a copy to the Executive Director within 10 business days of the taking of the action. The person with whom the grievance has been filed will conduct an investigation of the incident, where appropriate, and will provide a written response to the employee within 20 business days. If more time is needed to respond to the complaint, the person filing the complaint will be notified. The Executive Director will likewise review the complaint during the same time period and provide a response if the supervisor's resolution does not satisfy the employee. If the employee wishes to pursue the matter further, a letter will be provided to the Executive Director to forward the case to the Board of Trustees' executive committee for final resolution.

The filing of a grievance does not operate to suspend the action against the complaining employee. For instance, if the employee is complaining that s/he was unfairly suspended without pay, s/he will remain suspended without pay for the period initially determined, unless and until the person with whom the grievance was filed reverses the decision leading to the suspension. Similarly, IDEA has no obligation to keep a terminated employee on the payroll or enrolled in any benefits not ordinarily available to terminated employees, pending completion of the grievance process. However, if the action is reversed, the person with whom the grievance was filed may determine, at his or her discretion, that the employee should be reimbursed for some or all of the pay and/or benefits lost during this interim.

## **VIII. Separation from Employment**

As stated above, all employees of IDEA are employed at will, meaning that they or the employer may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, and without notice. The following policies apply to those who are separating from IDEA employment.

### **A. Notice**

Employees are asked to give at least two weeks of notice of resignation even though they are at-will. Some employees, upon hiring, will be asked to give more notice than this because of the nature of their employment. IDEA reserves the right to pay a resigning employee for the notice period, but to prohibit the employee from working for IDEA during that time. Should IDEA decide to terminate an employee's employment for causes contained in this document, the employee may be given notice with pay.

## **B. Layoffs**

There may be times when IDEA determines that it is necessary to make cutbacks or reductions in staff, leading to the layoff of one or more employees. In determining which employee(s) shall be laid off, IDEA may consider any and all factors that it deems relevant, including, without limitation: the needs of IDEA as a whole; the skills, qualifications, and performance histories of individual employees; anticipated changes in funding received or services to be provided by IDEA; seniority; budgetary constraints; and any restrictions or guidelines imposed by law or by funding sources.

## **C. Pay Upon Termination**

Upon voluntary or involuntary termination of the employment relationship, regardless of the reason, the employee will be paid any wages earned but not yet paid. No payment will be made for unused leave.

## **IX. Confidentiality**

IDEA and its employees have an ethical and legal obligation to respect the privacy of our students, and to protect and maintain the confidentiality of all information that we learn about our students, their family members and friends in the course of providing services to them.

Employee and student records are legally protected confidential records and must be treated as such. Employee and student records should never leave the offices where kept without written authorization.

Records and related business (including the names of students) should not be discussed with or disclosed to anyone except co-workers who are specifically authorized under IDEA's Confidentiality Policy to have access to such information (i.e. the employee's supervisor; the Executive Director; any person with whom the Executive Director has authorized you to share the information or any person authorized by the client to obtain information about the client from IDEA. These authorizations must be in writing approved by the Executive Director and must be retained in the employee's file. As tempting as it may be at times, it is illegal, unethical, and a violation of our Confidentiality Policy for employees to discuss client matters with friends, spouses, relatives, or anyone else, except those persons listed above, unless you are ordered to do so by a court or otherwise required to do so by law. If someone is insisting on obtaining information from an employee about another employee or student, and the employee, parent/guardian has not authorized the disclosure; refer the matter to human resources, then to the Executive Director.

Violations of the IDEA Confidentiality Policy are considered very serious, and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## **X. Reporting Abuse or Neglect**

Under District of Columbia law, any individual who has reason to suspect that a child has been sexually, physically, or psychologically abused or neglected is required to report to DC's Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) the suspected abuse or neglect. The report is to be made immediately upon forming the suspicion of abuse or neglect.

Similarly, an individual who has reason to believe that an adult has been subjected to physical abuse, neglect or exploitation, or is living in hazardous conditions, must orally report the suspected abuse, neglect or hazard to DC's Adult Protective Agency (APS) and/or MPD. The oral report must be followed immediately by a written report. If the appropriate agency is not open, because it is a weekend or after hours, the report should be made to local law enforcement agency.

While this legal obligation falls on individuals, IDEA Public Charter School needs to know whenever your employment brings you into contact with any situation in which you suspect abuse or neglect of a child or an incapacitated adult. In such circumstances, report your suspicions immediately to Director of Student Support Services and the Executive Director. Do not wait until the next business day; call the Director of Student Support Services and the Executive Director at home/on cell if he or she is not available or on-site. If neither the Director of Student Support Services and the Executive Director can be reached, report the matter immediately to the principal.

However, if for any reason you are unable to confer immediately with the Director of Student Support Services and the Executive Director, do not delay in making your report to the appropriate agency with a report to the Director of Student Support Services and the Executive Director as soon as possible thereafter.

Sometimes, circumstances arise in which an employee suspects abuse or neglect but does not want to report it because the filing of the report may destroy his or her rapport with the family or individuals to whom the employee is providing services. However, failure to file a report of suspected abuse or neglect places both the employee and IDEA Public Charter School at risk. If you are struggling with a concern about possible abuse or neglect, you must discuss the matter at once with the Director of Student Support Services and the Executive Director.

## **XI. Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse is inappropriate sexual contact of a criminal nature or interaction for gratification of the adult who is a caregiver and responsible for the patient or child's care. Sexual abuse includes sexual molestation, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or sexual injury, but does not include sexual harassment. Any incidents of sexual abuse reasonably believed to have occurred will be reportable to appropriate law enforcement agencies and regulatory agencies. IDEA prohibits and does not tolerate sexual abuse in the workplace or in any school-related activity. IDEA provides procedures for employees, volunteers, family members, board members, students, or others to report sexual abuse. No employee,

volunteer, board member or third party, no matter his or her title or position, has the authority to commit or allow sexual abuse. All complaints will be investigated. IDEA has a zero tolerance policy for any sexual abuse committed by an employee, volunteer, student, board member, or third party. Upon completion of the investigation, disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and criminal prosecution may ensue.

## **Reporting Procedure**

If you are aware or suspect sexual abuse is taking place, you must immediately report it to the Director of Student Support and Executive Director. If the suspected abuse is to an adult, you should report the abuse to DC's Adult Protective Services (APS) Agency and/or MPD. A staff person suspected of violating individual rights through sexual abuse or any other violation will be placed on administrative leave immediately and an investigation will be conducted by the appropriate authorities and officials of IDEA Public Charter School. A finding of guilt will result in immediate termination and/or actions taken by the District of Columbia.

If a student is the victim, see Section X above: "Reporting Abuse or Neglect."

## **Anti-retaliation**

IDEA prohibits retaliation against any employee, volunteer or board member who reports a good faith complaint of sexual abuse or who participates in any related investigation. Making false accusations of sexual abuse in bad faith can have serious consequences for those who are wrongly accused. IDEA prohibits making false and/or malicious sexual abuse allegations, as well as deliberately providing false information during an investigation. Anyone who violates this rule is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **Investigation and Follow-up**

IDEA will take all allegations of sexual abuse involving a member of the school staff, students, or volunteers seriously whether occurring at the school or during a school activity. IDEA will promptly and thoroughly investigate whether sexual abuse has taken place. IDEA will use an outside third party and/or rely upon law enforcement authorities to conduct an investigation. IDEA will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory agencies. It is IDEA's objective to support a fair and impartial investigation. IDEA has the option of placing the accused on administrative leave or reassign the accused to duties that avoid contact with any suspected victims until the investigation is completed.

IDEA will make every reasonable effort to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation.

## **XII. Discriminatory Harassment**

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

IDEA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities,

political affiliation, source of income, disability, or age. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Executive Director, IDEA Public Charter School, 1027 45th Street, NE, Washington, DC 20019. Phone: (202) 399-4750.

## **Grievance Procedures for Allegations of Discrimination, Harassment, and/or Retaliation**

IDEA Public Charter School does not engage in or permit discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation and believes in the basic tenets of equality and fairness. Any person who believes that IDEA Public Charter School has violated the above Notice of Non-Discrimination may submit a complaint to the Human Resources Manager or Executive Director. If the complaint involves the Executive Director, the employee should submit the complaint to the Chair of IDEA's Board of Trustees.

The grievance procedures outlined below establish how to file a complaint and how complaints will be investigated and resolved. These grievance procedures are intended to provide for a prompt and equitable resolution of complaints and may be used by employees, students, parents, or third parties. These grievance procedures do not bar individuals from filing claims in other forums to the extent permitted by state or federal law.

IDEA will not retaliate against any person who files a complaint or participates in an investigation in accordance with these procedures. IDEA will also not tolerate retaliation against such persons by others, and will take appropriate disciplinary steps against any IDEA employee found to have engaged in retaliation.

A formal complaint may be filed by following the steps outlined below:

### **Step 1**

Within 90 calendar days of the alleged discrimination or harassment, written notice of the complaint must be filed with the individual designated above. Grievants may use the complaint form attached to the grievance procedure, or submit the complaint in other written form as long as all of the identified information is provided. Grievants are encouraged to include all information and supporting documentation they believe is relevant to the complaint, including identification of any known witnesses, at the time the complaint form is submitted. The written notice must include the nature of the complaint, the date(s) of the occurrence, the desired result, and must be signed and dated by the person making the complaint. Incomplete complaint forms will be returned to the grievant, with a directive for completion within five business days.

Upon receipt of the written notice of the complaint, the designated individual to whom the complaint was submitted will immediately initiate an adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation of the complaint. This may include specific requests for additional information from the grievant or other individuals. Each investigation will include, as necessary, interviewing witnesses, obtaining documents and allowing parties to present evidence. All documentation related to the investigation is considered confidential, and should be

maintained as such by the investigator to the extent not inconsistent with state or federal laws or the requirements for a thorough investigation.

Within 15 school days of receiving the written notice of the complaint, the individual investigating the complaint will respond in writing to the grievant. A copy of the complaint and the response shall be forwarded to the Board of Trustees at this time. If the investigator determines that additional time is needed for the investigation, the individual shall notify the grievant of such information in writing within 15 school days of receiving the written notice of complaint and include the reason for the additional time and the expected date of response. The response will summarize the course and outcome of the investigation, and identify an appropriate resolution. If, as a result of the investigation, it is determined that discrimination or harassment has occurred, appropriate corrective and remedial action will be taken.

## **Step 2**

If the grievant wishes to appeal the decision from Step 1, s/he may submit a signed statement of appeal to the Executive Director within 10 calendar days after receipt of the response. If the Step 1 decision was issued by the Executive Director (or if the complaint involves the Executive Director), the appeal may be submitted directly to the Board of Trustees at IDEA Public Charter High School, 1027 45th Street, NE, Washington, DC 20019. The written appeal must include all documentation from the initial grievance and the reasons why the grievant does not agree with the decision. The Executive Director or the Board will review the submitted information. The Executive Director or the Board may, at its discretion, request a meeting with the grievant or other involved parties. If the grievant presents to the Board, such presentation may be made in public or closed session, as appropriate. Within 15 school days of receiving the statement of appeal, the Executive Director will respond in writing to the complainant summarizing the outcome of the appeal and any corrective or remedial action to be taken. If the appeal is submitted to the Board, the Board will consider the information at its next regularly scheduled meeting, and will provide a written decision to the grievant within 21 calendar days of the meeting where the appeal is considered by the Board.

A grievant may file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights at any time before or during the grievance procedures. The regional office for the District of Columbia is located at 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202 and can be reached at (202) 453-6020 (ph), (202) 453-6021 (fax).

## **XIII. Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is a form of discriminatory harassment and will be treated in accordance with the discriminatory harassment policy outlined above. However, because it is the subject of a great deal of controversy and misunderstanding, we have chosen to define it in more detail in this handbook.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature when any of the following is true.

- submission to such conduct is made (explicitly or implicitly) a term or condition of the individual's employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or
- the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's job performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples of some of the kinds of conduct that violate our Sexual Harassment Policy include:

1. Sexual assaults, including rape and molestation, and attempts or threats to commit these assaults
2. Unwanted intentional contact of a sexual or suggestive nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, kissing, brushing against, or poking a person's body
3. Unwanted sexual advances, propositions or comments, including sexually oriented gestures, jokes, or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience
4. Preferential treatment or the promise of preferential treatment to an employee for engaging in sexual conduct
5. Displaying or publicizing pictures, posters, reading materials, calendars, objects, etc. that are sexually suggestive, sexually demeaning, or pornographic
6. Disciplining or retaliating against an employee in any way because s/he has resisted, reported, or complained about sexual harassment

If you feel that you have been sexually harassed during the course of your employment, or if you believe you have witnessed another employee being sexually harassed, report your concerns immediately to the Human Resource Manager, as described in Section XI above, Discriminatory Harassment. The procedures outlined in that section will apply.

#### Harassment Arising from Other Protected Characteristics

Harassment on the basis of other protected characteristics, including race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family responsibilities, genetic information, disability, matriculation, political affiliation, or any other basis prohibited by applicable federal, state or local law is also prohibited. Prohibited harassment involves conduct relating to a person's protected characteristics, such as epithets, slurs, derogatory comments or jokes, intimidation, negative stereotyping, threats, and other conduct that the individual might reasonably find to be offensive. Harassment may also include written or graphic material placed on walls, e-mail, bulletin boards or elsewhere on the Firm's premises, or circulated in the workplace that denigrates, shows hostility or aversion towards an individual or group because of the characteristics identified above.

## Non-Retaliation

Retaliation against an individual who in good faith brings a discrimination or harassment complaint is **strictly forbidden** and will not be tolerated. Also, we will not tolerate retaliation against an individual who assists someone with making his or her complaint or who cooperates in a discrimination or harassment investigation. If an individual feels s/he is being retaliated against, please report the acts of retaliation to the human resource manager.

## **XIV. Non-smoking Policy**

Because we wish to provide a healthy environment for all of our staff, volunteers and students, smoking and vaping is prohibited on school property. Any employee who smokes or vapes in the confines of the school property will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal. Moreover, under District of Columbia law, people who smoke in areas where smoking is prohibited under a workplace smoking policy are subject to fines.

## **XV. Drug-Free Workplace**

IDEA Public Charter School is committed to the well-being of our employees, to the safety of the workplace, and to provision of high-quality educational services to our students. For all of these reasons, we cannot tolerate the unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, or dispensation of controlled substances in the workplace or during work time. Moreover, employees must come to work free from the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, and unlawfully used prescription medications.

If an employee suffers from a substance abuse problem and wishes to seek help, the employee should take advantage of the school's confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP). For information or to access EAP benefits, please call Mutual of Omaha at (800) 316-2796.

Any employee who violates this drug-free workplace policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Legal consequences may follow as well.

Under federal law, any employee who is convicted of a criminal drug statute violation occurring in the workplace must notify his or her employer of the conviction within five days.

## **XVI. Outside Employment**

Employees of IDEA Public Charter School must obtain the prior consent of their supervisor before accepting other work to be performed concurrently with their work here (i.e. a moonlighting job). This requirement serves two purposes: to ensure that the employee does not become involved in a conflict of interest and to ensure that the employee is able to devote sufficient time and effort to perform effectively his or her work with IDEA.

## **XVII. Electronic Mail (email)**

Any computer files or electronic mail (email) messages maintained, stored, received, or transmitted on or from IDEA Public Charter School's computer systems are and shall remain

the property of IDEA and are subject to being monitored and/or disclosed at any time by IDEA. Employees of IDEA have no privacy interests in e-mail messages or passwords, are deemed to consent to IDEA monitoring and disclosure of e-mail messages, and will make no claim against IDEA for monitoring email, for disclosing email, or for any other issues relative to the IDEA email system.

The email system has been installed by IDEA Public Charter School for use in the conduct of its business. IDEA recognizes, however, that employees may desire to use the e-mail system occasionally for personal purposes. IDEA will permit such occasional, personal use of the e-mail system, provided that employees understand (and are hereby informed) that **all** messages transmitted or received on the e-mail system, of whatever nature, remain fully subject to all of the provisions of this email policy (thus, for example, even personal messages on the e-mail system constitute IDEA's property in which employees have no right of privacy and which may be stored, monitored, or disclosed at any time by IDEA).

The email system shall not be used to transmit messages, either within the school or in communications transmitted outside IDEA, that might reflect poorly on the organization, including language or material of a sexual or otherwise inappropriate nature.

Violation of this e-mail policy may result in discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

## **XVIII. IDEA Textbooks and Control of School Equipment**

Teachers will be issued sufficient textbooks at the beginning of the semester to conduct their classes. Teachers are to ensure students sign for the textbooks so that the students become personally responsible for their own textbooks. At the end of the course, semester, or year, teachers will collect the textbooks and account for them. For students who do not return their textbooks, teachers must contact the parent/guardian and inform them that the student must either return the textbook or pay for it. If the student still does not return the book, the teacher notifies the main office of the missing textbook, the textbook number, the student's name, and the parent/guardian contacted. At that time, the teacher is relieved of financial responsibility for the textbook and the main office will attempt to recover the book. If a teacher maintains a classroom set of textbooks, the teacher is personally and financially responsible for the textbooks.

At the end of the semester or year, teachers must account for all textbooks they were responsible for and must reimburse the school for any textbooks they cannot account for. Additionally, teachers are responsible for other classroom equipment such as TI-83 calculators. Other equipment must be treated like textbooks and returned to the school in same manner as textbooks.

## **XX. TRAVEL POLICY**

### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of IDEA's Travel Policy is to facilitate travel of faculty, staff, and students by the most expedient means and at the most reasonable cost. A travel request is mandatory for all

travel to ensure proper accountability. This procedure is to be followed whether or not reimbursement is expected. The travel request will be the first order of business for anyone traveling on behalf of IDEA Public Charter School.

## **B. Basic Policy**

With prior approval, IDEA will pay all or a prearranged portion of reimbursable expenses for travel to represent IDEA on official business or professional development.

### **XXI. CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST POLICY**

Any trustee, officer, key employee, staff and faculty, or committee member having an interest in a contract or other transaction presented to IDEA Public Charter School or a committee thereof for authorization, approval, or ratification shall make a prompt, firm and frank disclosure of his or her interest to the school or committee prior to any action being taken on such contract or transaction. Such disclosure shall include all relevant and material facts known to such person about the contract or transaction, which might reasonably be construed to be adverse to the school's interest. This disclosure shall be made to the representative accepting such contract and further addressed with the executive committee of the IDEA Board of Trustees. The executive committee will determine, by majority vote, whether the disclosure shows that a conflict of interest exists or can reasonably be construed to exist. If a conflict is deemed to exist, the affected person shall not vote on, nor use his or her personal influences on, nor participate (other than to present factual information or to respond to questions) in the discussion or deliberations with respect to, such contract or transaction. The executive committee will report to the full board the results of said discussions and the results will be placed in the minutes of the next Board of Trustees meeting. The Board of Trustees may impose appropriate disciplinary action against anyone who violates this policy

For the purpose of this section, a person shall be deemed to have an "interest" in a contract or other transaction if he or she is the party (or one of the parties) contracting or dealing with the school or is a board member, key employee, or officer and has a significant financial or influential interest in the entity contracting or dealing with the school.

Appendix A

**Acknowledgment of Receipt and Understanding of Sexual Abuse Policy**

I acknowledge that I have received and read the sexual abuse policy and/or have had it explained to me. I understand that IDEA PCS will not tolerate any employee, volunteer, board member, or third party who commits sexual abuse or who retaliates against any employee or volunteer exercising his or her rights under the policy. I understand that any sexual offenses or violations of these rights to IDEA students and staff members must be reported and documented immediately to the human resources manager. I also understand how to report incidents of sexual abuse as set forth in the abuse policy.

I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by all rules contained in the policy. Upon receipt of a violation, the Board of Trustees of IDEA Public Charter School will follow the guidelines established by District of Columbia law for reporting the incident to all appropriate agencies and authorities.

A staff person suspected of violating individual rights through sexual abuse and/or any other violation of rights will be suspended immediately and an investigation conducted by the appropriate authorities and officials of IDEA Public Charter School. Disciplinary actions will be taken against those who are found to have committed sexual abuse.

A finding of guilty may result in immediate termination and/or other actions taken by the District of Columbia.

I have read, understand, and agree to the above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix B

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

I have received a copy of IDEA Public Charter School Employee Handbook. I will review it and become familiar with the policies described in the Handbook and agree to abide by them.

**I understand that this handbook does not represent a contract of employment, but rather serves as a guideline, and that I am employed at-will.**

I acknowledge that only the Executive Director is authorized to provide me an offer of employment, and that such offer/promise must be in writing signed by the Executive Director. e. I understand that as an employee at will of IDEA Public Charter School, either I or IDEA Public Charter School may terminate my employment at any time, with or without cause and without or without notice.

I understand that this handbook, and the policies and benefits described in it, may be changed from time to time, with or without advance notice, at the discretion of IDEA Public Charter School.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C**

**DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Name of Person on Whose Behalf Complaint is Being Brought: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Bringing Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Alleged Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Alleged Actions: \_\_\_\_\_

II. SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT (attached additional pages, as needed to fully describe facts related to complaint):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If others are affected by the possible violation, please give their names and/or positions: \_\_\_\_\_

III. Please describe your suggestions for resolving the complaint and any corrective action you wish to see taken if a violation is identified. You may also provide other information relevant to this complaint.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Grievant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Receiving Grievance

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date