



# **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

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## 100 INTRODUCTION

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### 101 *Welcome Message*

Welcome to Global Educational Excellence (GEE) hereafter referred to throughout this employee handbook as “GEE” or the “Academy.” We are pleased to have you as a member of the GEE team and we believe you can make an important contribution to our future. As an employee of GEE, your professional contribution is significantly important and cannot be overstated. Each employee directly influences the reputation of GEE and its respective charter academies. Our goal is to provide consistent, quality education for our students by reliably meeting student needs. Our academic communities are continuing to grow, allowing us to broaden our educational influence and positively impacting tomorrow’s future. The last few years have shown that satisfied families refer other families to our academies thereby expanding the amount of students and families we serve.

We believe that by choosing to work with GEE you have chosen a career path with a great deal of potential for personal and professional growth. We look forward to working with you to foster a dynamic and motivated community of educators and are pleased to have you on board!

Sincerely,

Mohamad Issa, Director &  
Dr. Said Issa, Associate Director

### 102 *History of Academy*

GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE (GEE) is an educational management company that was founded in 1998 by Mohamad Issa and Dr. Said Issa. GEE was established as a vehicle for developing educational environments where all children are offered quality educational opportunities. Since 1998, the GEE family of schools has grown to include eleven campuses in the following cities; Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Dearborn Heights, Dearborn, Hamtramck, Detroit, as well as a campus in Toledo, Ohio. Housed within these campuses are three early childhood centers, eight elementary schools, five middle schools, and three high schools.

### 103 *What is a Charter Academy?*

Charter academies are independent public schools that operate under a performance contract with an overseeing institute of higher education. This contract is known as a charter. The authorizing institution, in this case GEE, oversees all aspects of the schools and their functioning.

Fundamentally, charter public academies are:

- Public academies governed by publicly nominated officials
- Tuition Free – Academies are prohibited from charging tuition
- Open to all – if over-enrolled, an official random selection drawing is conducted
- Required to employ certified, highly-qualified teachers
- Required to administer state standardized tests
- Subject to the same health and safety codes as all other public academies
- Priority to enroll is given to students with currently enrolled siblings

Mohamad Issa and Dr. Said Issa both have extensive experience in educational management and leadership. Mohamad Issa has worked with start-up academies for over twenty years, providing business and management expertise to enable academies to maximize resources while maintaining an excellent educational environment. Dr. Said Issa’s medical training has given him a unique perspective on child development and intellectual growth.

Board members are individuals from the community nominated and approved by the charter academy authorizer. The Board holds monthly meetings at which academy business is conducted. These meetings are open to the public, academy staff, and students are encouraged to attend.

#### **104 *Mission Statement and Philosophy***

Our Mission is to implement and enhance comprehensive educational systems for institutions to develop global citizens, learners and innovators.

##### **Core Beliefs/Philosophy**

We are committed to fostering the best possible climate for all employees to achieve maximum development and goal oriented achievement. Our practice is to treat each employee as an individual. We seek to develop a spirit of teamwork – individuals working together to attain a common goal.

In order to maintain an atmosphere where such goals can be accomplished, we provide a comfortable and progressive workplace. Most importantly, we have a workplace where communication is open and problems can be discussed and resolved in a mutually respectful environment. We take into account individual circumstances and the individual employee.

We firmly believe that with direct communication, we can continue to resolve difficult situations that may arise.

#### **105 *Employee Relations Philosophy***

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We firmly believe that with direct communication, we can continue to resolve difficult situations that may arise.

#### **106 *Employee Handbook Definitions***

For the purpose of this employee handbook, the following terms are defined as follows:

*Hire/Anniversary Date* - The date of an employee's first day of employment with GEE. This date is used to compute certain employee benefits.

*Employee* - An individual who is employed by GEE as a full-time, part-time, or temporary worker as defined in *200 Employment Classifications*. Independent contractors and individuals employed by temporary employment agencies who are assigned to work at GEE on a short-term basis are not considered employees.

*Management* - An individual who has been designated by the Academy to direct a division or department.

*Supervisor* - An individual who has been designated by the Academy to assign, direct, and/or appraise the work of a designated group of employees.

## 107 *Employee Handbook Disclaimer*

**Employment Contract** - The policies, procedures, and rules set forth in this employee handbook are not intended to be all-inclusive. The employee handbook should therefore not be interpreted as forming an express or implied contract of employment.

**Policy Exceptions** - The employee handbook should not be interpreted as a guarantee that the policies discussed in it will be applied in all cases. At its sole discretion, the Academy may make exceptions to its policies from time to time.

**Policy Interpretation** - The Academy reserves the right to make the final decision as to the interpretation of all information presented in this employee handbook.

**Compliance with Government Regulations** – GEE has made every effort to ensure the policies in this Handbook are in compliance with all federal, state, and local employment laws and regulations. In the event that a federal, state, or local regulation conflicts with any provision contained in this employee handbook, the appropriate law or regulation shall prevail and the provision deemed amended to the extent necessary to comply with said law or regulation.

## 108 *Purpose of Employee Handbook*

**Purpose** - The purpose of this employee handbook is to familiarize employees with the Academy and to communicate important information about many of the personnel policies that affect employment and guide daily operations. The employee handbook provides an overview of the Academy's policies and procedures and sets expectations for performance, communication and conduct, as well as outlining specific employee benefits. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies and procedures described. The handbook is also available on-line under the “Staff Resources” tab.

**Previous Employee Handbook** - Unless otherwise notified, this employee handbook supersedes and replaces any and all previous employee handbooks issued by the Academy concerning all policies contained herein.

**Employee Responsibility** - The employee handbook answers many questions about employment with GEE. Each employee is therefore expected to read, understand, and comply with all provisions of this employee handbook. Because the employee handbook serves as an excellent source of information, it should be retained for future reference.

**Questions** - An employee is encouraged to contact their supervisor regarding any questions regarding the information provided in this employee handbook.

## 109 *Employee Handbook Revisions*

**Policy Statement** - The Academy reserves the right, at its sole discretion to interpret, change, modify or rescind any section of this handbook at any time with or without cause or notice, with the exception of the employment-at-will policy.

**Employee Handbook Updates** - Every effort is made to keep the information in this employee handbook up-to-date. From time to time, however, policies may be added, revised, or revoked before a written revision is made to the employee handbook.

An employee is responsible for updating his or her own employee handbook with any new and revised policies that are issued by the Academy.

## **200 EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS**

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**Policy Statement** - Each employee is classified as full-time, part-time, or temporary. Each position is also designated as exempt or non-exempt from minimum wage and overtime requirements in accordance with federal and state regulations. Employees are notified of their employment classification and exempt/non-exempt status at the time of hire and if changed during the course of employment. For the purpose of this employee handbook, the following terms are defined as follows:

### **201 Full-Time Employees**

A full-time employee is an employee who is hired for a continuing, unspecified period and is regularly scheduled to work 40 hours or more per week.

### **202 Part-Time Employees**

A part-time employee is an employee who is hired for a continuing, unspecified period and is regularly scheduled to work 29.5 hours per week based on the assessed needs for the assigned position.

### **203 Temporary/Summer/Short-Term Employees**

A temporary, summer or short-term employee is an employee who is hired to supplement GEE's workforce on a short-term basis. A temporary employee may work full- or part-time hours/varying hours each day/week based on business needs. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not imply a change in employment classification nor does the Academy guarantee employment for any set period of time.

### **204 Interns**

An intern is a student, enrolled in an educational program, who participates in a field placement and/or work experience program with the Academy. This experience is not a guarantee of future employment with the Academy, but rather a platform for a work-related learning experience.

### **205 Exempt Employees**

An exempt employee is an employee who qualifies for an exemption from federal and state minimum wage and overtime provisions. In accordance with these regulations, an exempt employee is not eligible for overtime compensation.

### **206 Non-Exempt Employees**

A non-exempt employee is an employee who is subject to federal and state minimum wage and overtime provisions. In accordance with such regulations, a non-exempt employee is paid the current statutory minimum wage or higher and overtime compensation when more than 40 hours are worked during a workweek.



## 300 EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

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### 301 *Employment-at-Will*

**Policy Statement** - GEE follows the practice of employment-at-will. The Academy does not promise or guarantee employment for any specified period of time. Either an employee or the Academy may end the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice.

**Employment Contract** - A supervisor does not have the authority to enter into a verbal or written employment contract with an applicant or employee. The Human Resources Director is the only Academy representative that has the authority to enter into a binding employment contract. Any such employment contract must be in writing and signed by both the Human Resources Director and the employee. No other oral or written statements or representations can limit GEE's right to terminate employment-at-will. None of the information provided in our policies signifies a contractual agreement or should be interpreted to conflict with, eliminate or modify in any way your employment status with GEE.

### 302 *Hiring Practices*

**Policy Statement** - GEE has implemented policies and procedures to select and hire the most qualified candidates for open positions within the Academy.

**Selection Process** - GEE selects and hires individuals on the basis of many factors including, but not limited to, their ability, experience, education, skills, and cooperative spirit. The selection process includes written application, personal interviews, verification of applicant information, drug screening, criminal background check and reference checks.

**Employment Application** - All applicants are required to complete an *Employment Application*. Applicants must provide complete and accurate information regarding their qualifications on this form. Misrepresentations or omissions on an *Employment Application* may remove an applicant from consideration for employment, or if already hired, subject the employee to termination of employment.

**Background Screening** - To ensure a safe and secure workplace for all students and employees, it is the policy of GEE to conduct background checks on all employees. Background investigations may include, but not be limited to a criminal history check, sexual offender register review, fingerprinting, prior employment verification, and personal and professional reference checks. A criminal conviction does not necessarily bar an applicant from employment. Employment decisions based on a conviction take into consideration the extent to which the offense relates to the functions of the particular job, the seriousness of the offense, rehabilitation, and length of time since the conviction. GEE will not knowingly hire any one that is convicted of a criminal offense related to childcare or a person who cannot function in the capacity for which they are hired. Employees are not permitted to work until the background screening process is completed and documentation is submitted to GEE.

**Certification, Licensing and Other Requirements** - You will be informed by GEE if there are any licensing, certifications or testing requirements for your job. Failure to qualify for, maintain a certification, or produce an acceptable copy of a current license/certification is sufficient cause for discharge. Teaching contracts for next year will only be renewed if a current teaching certificate is on file with Human Resources by June 30. If the contract expires during the school year and is not renewed, the termination will be automatic.

**I-9 Immigration Policy** – GEE complies with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 by employing only U.S. citizens and non-citizens who are authorized to work in the United States. All employees are asked during hiring to provide original documents verifying their right to work in the United States and to sign a verification form as required by Federal Law (INS form I-9). If an employee cannot verify his or her right to work within three days of hire, then GEE must terminate employment.

**Former Employees** - A former employee may be considered for re-employment with GEE based on the reason for the previous separation and the Academy's current business needs. An employee who resigns

without submitting or fulfilling the requested notice or who is terminated for misconduct is generally not considered for re-employment.

Re-employment is subject to the following:

- The re-hired individual is considered a new employee effective on the date of re-employment and a new orientation period must be completed;
- Eligibility for group insurance programs is the same as for all new hires;
- Prior service under the retirement plan is restored in accordance with government regulations and the terms of the plan; and
- With the exception of the retirement plan, there is no credit for prior service for purposes of seniority or paid leave benefits.

**Relatives** - A member of an employee's family may be considered for employment if the individual possesses the qualifications required for the position. The Academy reserves the right to review potential conflicts of interest based on reporting relationships. Generally, an individual may not be hired if he or she would be directly or indirectly supervised by an immediate family member. This policy is also considered when transferring or promoting an employee. Refer to the *Employee Handbook Definitions* policy for the definition of an immediate family member. No advantage or disadvantage will be given to anyone because of the employment of an immediate family member.

### **303 New Employee Orientation**

**Policy Statement** - All new employees participate in an orientation period that is conducted by the employee's supervisor and the Human Resource Department. The purpose of the orientation period is to welcome new employees and familiarize them with the Academy. All trainings and professional development sessions are mandatory.

**Topics Covered** - Topics normally covered during the orientation period include, but are not limited to, a tour of the academy, distribution and review of this employee handbook, and enrollment in Academy-sponsored benefits, if applicable. In addition, the employee's supervisor is responsible for introducing the employee to coworkers, scheduling on-the-job training, and reviewing the job description and performance requirements of the position.

**Employment Contract** - The orientation period is not a contract of employment for any set period of time nor does completion of the orientation period change an employee's status as an at-will employee.

### **304 Performance Appraisals**

**Policy Statement** - Each and every employee contributes to the success or failure of our Academy. We expect everyone to perform to the highest level possible. Poor job performance can lead to discipline, up to and including termination. GEE has implemented a performance review program to evaluate each employee's job performance. We hope that, through these reviews, our employees will learn what we expect of them, and we will learn what they expect of us.

The purpose of the performance appraisal program is to recognize an employee's achievement of established performance standards and development goals, address any areas where the employee may not be meeting performance standards, encourage career development, and set goals for the next appraisal period. Another important component of the performance appraisal program is the opportunity for an employee to address any questions, concerns, or suggestions about the job or the Academy with the employee's supervisor.

**Employment Decisions** - An employee's performance appraisal is normally a factor in decisions affecting transfer, promotion, compensation, layoff, and disciplinary action.

**Wage Adjustments** - An employee does not automatically receive a pay increase at the time of a formal appraisal. Any pay increase received is based on merit and financial capability of the Academy.

**Frequency** - Performance appraisals are generally conducted once each year on a date determined by the academy leader. Appraisals may occur more or less frequently at the discretion of the academy leader.

### 305 ***Promotions and Transfers***

**Policy Statement** - GEE encourages the career development and growth of employees through promotions and lateral transfers to other positions within the Academy for which they are qualified.

**Job Vacancies** - When there are job vacancies, management will consider any current employees who possess the minimum qualifications required for the position. An employee who is interested in being considered for a job vacancy should notify their supervisor and submit a letter of interest and notify the hiring supervisor. In order to ensure the most qualified person is hired, the Academy reserves the right to recruit external applicants for any job vacancy at any time.

**Unsatisfactory Performance** - If an employee does not perform satisfactorily in the new position, the employee may be returned to the original job held, if a vacancy exists, or is subject to termination, at the Academy's sole discretion.

### 306 ***Separation from Employment***

**Policy Statement** - GEE strives to provide long-term employment for all employees. Nevertheless, the academy reserves the right to terminate employees for conduct or performance reasons, or to lay off employees on a temporary or permanent basis when the financial conditions or operational needs of the Academy so require. In the event that financial conditions or operational needs necessitate a layoff, GEE will consider the positions or disciplines being eliminated in making these decisions. Usually, within any department, the last hired will be the first laid off if performance and qualifications are equal as determined by management.

**Notice of Resignation** - An employee who elects to resign or retire from employment with GEE is asked to submit a written notice to the employee's supervisor at least two workweeks before the date of resignation/retirement is to be effective. The resignation letter should include the reason for resigning and the date the resignation is to take effect. If an employee provides more notice than requested, the Academy will determine whether the additional notice is necessary for efficient operations. An employee is generally not allowed to rescind a verbal or written notice of resignation once it has been submitted to the employee's supervisor.

**Healthcare Benefits** – If an employee gives two work weeks' notice then the healthcare will continue through the end of the month, if an employee gives less than two weeks or during a non-active contract period, the healthcare ends on the date the employee resigns.

**Email Policy** - E-mail account access will be terminated immediately upon termination; a personal email account address must be given to Human Resources so paycheck and tax information can be distributed without delay.

**Completion of Notice Period** - When a resignation notice is submitted, the Academy reserves the right to waive some or all of the notice period.

**Use of Paid Benefits** - An employee will not normally receive authorization to use credited, unused vacation, PTO, or personal leave during the notice period unless the time off was approved before the notice of resignation was submitted. To receive paid sick leave during the notice period, an employee may be required to provide verification of the illness from the employee's health care provider.

**Exit Interviews** - Exit interviews are generally conducted by the Principal in order to discuss cancellation of employee benefits, COBRA eligibility, return of Academy property, and/or GEE's policy regarding

employment references. The exit interview also provides an employee the opportunity to ask any employment-related questions and give suggestions, concerns, and constructive recommendations about the Academy and its policies.

**Return of Academy Property** - All Academy property in the employee's possession, such as, but not limited to, student and Academy files (e.g., electronic and paper files), equipment, computers, printers, laptops, iPads, tablet, name badge, cell phones, parking cards, building passes, Academy credit card, remote gate clickers, smart board items and office keys must be returned to the employee's supervisor in good working order when requested, but no later than the employee's last day of work. If an employee fails to return any School property, the School may initiate legal proceedings.

**Credited Benefits** - Refer to the *Employee Benefits Section* to review the PTO and sick leave policies for information regarding payment for benefits at the time of separation from the Academy.

**Final Paycheck** - An employee's final paycheck for all hours worked is provided on the next regularly scheduled payday after the employee's last day of work. Payment for credited, unused vacation, PTO, sick, and/or personal leave is provided within 30 days, if applicable.

## 400 ACADEMY AND EMPLOYEE RECORDS

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### 401 *Confidentiality of Academy and Employee Records*

**Policy Statement** - All Academy, student and parent information is to be treated with discretion and confidentiality. An employee is prohibited from discussing, photocopying, duplicating, recording, or otherwise revealing GEE information or student information that is not generally known to the public in any form to anyone outside the Academy. Disclosure of confidential or sensitive information via any software application or text message is prohibited – this includes taking or sending pictures of such information. The proper use and disclosure of sensitive information applies to both current and former employees.

**Confidential Information** - All records and files maintained by the Academy are confidential and remain the property of GEE. This includes, but is not limited to: personnel and payroll records regarding current and former employees, medical information, students' academic files, test scores, donor information, and confidential information relating to students, test data, marketing data, financial records, business plans and strategies, training materials, negotiations and any other proprietary information on parents, students, vendors, techniques, and processes. Records and files are not to be disclosed to any outside party without the express permission of the HR department.

Confidential information may be in physical form or may be learned through conversations with others regarding GEE or its students. Information obtained as a result of employment with GEE and from contact with students is considered proprietary and can only be used in the course of employment with the Academy.

Nothing should ever be discussed in a public place. At all times we must remain conscious of and sensitive to our surroundings when having "academy discussions;" whether in or outside of our academy building. When in doubt as to whether information should be divulged, err on the side of caution and refrain from divulging the information and first discuss the situation with the Academy Leader.

All Academy information, whether generated through a personal or corporate device, belongs to the employer, not to the employee, and is subject to Academy policies limiting use and disclosure of such information. Confidential information should only be shared with other employees within the Academy who have a business need to receive such information. Confidential information should not be disclosed to external parties, including students, family members, and friends, except as authorized by GEE or as required or allowed by government regulation.

**Academy Property** - All confidential information and products developed by an employee, such as, but not limited to, computer programs, designs, or inventions, remain the sole property of GEE.

**Personal Identifying Information** - The Academy does not publicly post, display, or share an employee's personal identifying information with the general public nor are employees allowed to divulge such information. For the purpose of this policy, personal identifying information includes, but is not limited to, social security number, home address or telephone number, personal e-mail address, Internet name or password, parent's surname prior to marriage, or drivers' license number.

**Security and Removal of Confidential Information** - An employee is responsible for properly securing and maintaining confidential and proprietary material obtained or learned during employment. This includes Academy information stored on smart phones, flash drives, wireless devices, and laptops, as well as home computers that are used to conduct GEE business. An employee should exercise caution when using a wireless device for business purposes in public areas to ensure that confidential information cannot be viewed by others or that equipment is not stolen. Unauthorized removal of confidential or proprietary information from Academy premises is prohibited.

**Confidentiality/Non-Disclosure Agreement** - As a condition of employment, all employees are required to sign a confidentiality/non-disclosure agreement at the time of hire.

**Confidentiality Breach** - An employee is responsible for immediately reporting any breach of confidential Academy or employee information to the Principal.

## 402 *Intellectual Property*

All tangible materials and documents (whether original, duplicates, or electronic) including but not limited to, file, or database materials, books, manuals, training materials, student records, business files, correspondence, documents, contracts, orders, messages, memoranda, notes, agreements, invoices, receipts, lists, software listings or printouts, specifications, models, computer programs, and records of any kind in employees possession or control which in any way related or pertain to GEE's business, whether furnished to employee by GEE or prepared, compiled or acquired employee during his/her employment with GEE, shall be the sole property of GEE. At any time upon request of GEE, and in any event promptly upon termination of this Agreement, employee shall deliver all such materials to GEE. Employee's obligations under this Paragraph shall not apply to any compensation records provided to employee by GEE in the ordinary course of his/her employment.

During the term of this Agreement or at any timer thereafter, employee will not, without express written consent of the President of GEE, directly or indirectly communicated or divulge to, or use for employee own benefit or for the benefit of any other person, firm, association or corporation, any of GEE's trade secrets, proprietary data, confidential information, which trade secrets, proprietary data and other confidential information were communicated to or otherwise learned or acquired by employee during his/her employment with GEE or during the course of this Agreement, except that employee may disclose such matters to the extent that disclosure is required by a court or other governmental agency of competent jurisdiction. As long as such matters remain trade secrets, proprietary data or other confidential information, employee will not use such trade secrets, proprietary data or other confidential information in any way or in a capacity other than as an employee of GEE and to further GEE's interests.

Due to the responsibility of the Academy Board for the education of the students, the Academy Board (through its CAO, GEE) has the right to the materials that teachers produce as part of their job. These materials are deemed "works for hire" under the federal Copyright Act of 1976 and unless the parties agree otherwise in writing, GEE has the license to freely use the materials. In deciding whether particular materials are "works for hire" created in the scope of employment, GEE will consider these factors:

- Did the assigned job duties include creating the materials?
- Did the employee create the materials on the job or with GEE/Academy equipment?
- Did the employee create the materials to "aid" or "serve" GEE/Academy?

## 403 *Personnel Records*

**Policy Statement** - GEE maintains records and/or confidential personnel files on employees, former employees, and applicants in accordance with government recordkeeping and reporting requirements. Each employee is responsible for completing any employment-related forms that are required by government regulation or that are necessary for efficient Academy operations.

**Control and Review of Personnel Files** - Employee personnel records are confidential and are maintained and controlled by Human Resources. Access to personnel files is limited. A supervisor may only review an employee's personnel file if there is a business reason to review the record. A current employee must submit a written request to review his or her own personnel file to Human Resources. Michigan employers with 4 or more employees must provide an employee or former employee with an opportunity to review the employee's personnel record upon written request. The employee may not review the personnel record more than twice a year. The review must take place reasonably near the employee's place of employment and during normal office hours. After the review, the employee may obtain a copy of the personnel record, the cost of which may be charged to the employee.

In addition, a former employee is allowed to review his or her personnel record only once within one year after separation from employment. Employers are required to provide access to the employee's written file no later than 7 days after receipt of the request if the personnel record is located in Michigan, and no more than 14 working days after receipt of the request if the personnel record is located outside the state.

If the employee wishes to change information contained in the personnel record and the employee and the employer cannot agree on the change or removal of the information, the employee may submit a written statement explaining his/her position on the disputed information. That statement must be included with the record and given to any person that receives a copy of the record.

**Control of Medical Records** - A separate confidential medical file is maintained on all employees by Human Resources. Any protected health information (PHI) that is maintained by the Academy is confidential, and only Academy officials who have a business need to know have access to these medical records. Information can only be released to others with the expressed, written authorization of the employee or if the Academy receives a court order to do so.

**Employment Eligibility Verification** - GEE does not knowingly hire or continue to employ undocumented persons who are not authorized to work in the United States. All employees must complete and sign Section 1 of Form I-9 and provide documents to prove the employee's identity and eligibility to work in the United States on the first day of work. Documentation is subject to verification. I-9 Forms are confidential and are maintained separately from employee personnel files in a secure location.

**Changes in Status** - An employee is responsible for ensuring that GEE receives all information needed to maintain up-to-date personnel records. Changes in name, address, telephone number, emergency contact, insurance beneficiary, insurance enrollees, tax withholding status, or marital/dependent status should be emailed to [hr@gee.edu](mailto:hr@gee.edu). This list is not all-inclusive. The Academy is not responsible for any errors that result from an employee's failure to inform the Academy of changes in this information in a timely manner.

#### **404    *Electronic Documents Retention***

**Policy Statement** – It is Academy policy that employees properly retain electronic documents that are needed for business purposes and/or to comply with government regulations.

**Potential Litigation** - An employee is responsible for saving any electronic documents that may be needed for legal and/or business reasons. If an employee believes that documents may be relevant to potential litigation or the employee has been notified of pending litigation, all applicable electronic documents must be saved until informed by management that they are no longer needed.

**Retention Period** - The retention period for electronic documents depends on the subject matter and must be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

**Method of Retention** - E-mails that are to be retained should be printed and saved in the appropriate file or copied into a Word document. Instant messages should be saved using the logging function on Instant Messenger or by copying the message into a Word document. If any electronic documents that are stored on laptops, wireless devices, and/or home computers are to be retained, they should be forwarded to an employee's business e-mail so that they can be saved on the Academy's network server.

#### **405    *Records Disposal***

**Policy Statement** - The security of all confidential Academy, employee, and student information is a top priority of GEE. Documents that no longer need to be retained for business or legal purposes are to be disposed of in accordance with government regulations and Academy policy.

**Disposal of Paper Documents** - Any paper document containing personally identifiable information regarding an employee or student must be shredded, destroyed, and/or modified to make it unreadable prior to its disposal.

**Disposal of Electronic Documents** – An employee should destroy or erase electronic files or media containing employee information and routinely delete outdated or otherwise unnecessary e-mails and computer files that no longer need to be retained.

**Definition of Personally Identifiable Information** - Personally identifiable information includes any information regarding an individual which, because of name, number, personal mark, or other identifier, can be used to identify said person in combination with any one or more of the following: social security number, driver's license number, non-driver identification card number, mother's maiden name, home address or telephone number, personal e-mail address, financial services or banking account number or code, electronic serial number, or personal identification number.

#### **406    *Outside Requests for Information***

**Reference Requests** - All requests for information regarding current and former employees that are received from individuals outside the Academy must be referred to the HR Department. No other supervisor or employee is authorized to provide information to any outside source or to "recommend" or comment on the job performance of a former employee via LinkedIn or other social media. GEE is not responsible for information provided by an unauthorized employee.

The HR Department will verify dates of employment and position(s) held with the signed consent of the individual.

GEE does not guarantee that it will release employment-related information to an outside source even with written consent. Exceptions to this policy are made only if the Academy is legally required to provide the information by court order or subpoena.



501 *Equal Employment Opportunity*

**Policy Statement** - GEE is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Academy does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of a person's race, religion, creed, color, sex, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender status, gender dysphoria, marital or family status, pregnancy, military status, veteran status, predisposing genetic characteristics or carrier status, arrest or conviction record, domestic violence victim status, Child or spousal support withholding, or any other legally protected class or status.

GEE will not discharge or discriminate against employees or applicants who inquire about, discuss, or disclose their own compensation or the compensation of other employees or applicants. An exception exists where the employee or applicant makes the disclosure based on information obtained in the course of performing his or her essential job functions.

This policy applies to all aspects of the employment relationship, including, but not limited to, recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, transfer, leave of absence, compensation, benefits, training, working conditions, and social and recreational programs.

Additionally, the state of Michigan prohibits discrimination based on the following:

- Use of lawful consumable products off the premises and outside of work hours
- Non-conviction criminal records
- Height or weight
- AIDS/HIV
- Wage garnishment for consumer debt

**Diversity and Fair Treatment** - GEE recognizes the rich diversity of its employees and the varying cultures, backgrounds, and experiences they each bring to the workplace. The Academy is committed to maintaining and promoting a work environment where employees' and students' similarities and differences are respected and valued. An employee is expected to treat coworkers, students, vendors, suppliers, and other non-employees that the employee comes in contact with on the job with fairness, dignity, and respect. The Academy prohibits an employee from engaging in any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or other offensive behavior targeted towards another individual based on any of the protected classes or groups listed above.

**Discrimination by Others** - The Academy prohibits employees, vendors, suppliers, visitors, students, and any other individual that an employee comes in contact with during the course of employment from harassing or discriminating against GEE employees based on any protected class or status.

**Americans with Disabilities Act** – GEE complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and New York State Human Rights law and related regulations by providing an equal employment opportunity to qualified applicants and employees with disabilities in regards to all terms and conditions of employment. The Academy does not discriminate against qualified applicants and employees who have a physical or mental impairment or a record of such impairment. In addition, the Academy does not discriminate based on a person's relationship or association with an individual with a disability.

**Reasonable Accommodation** – GEE does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position held or desired. GEE will provide a reasonable accommodation to an employee or applicant with a disability, unless it imposes an undue hardship on the Academy. Any employee with a disability and any pregnant employee who believes an accommodation is needed to perform the essential functions of the employee's job should contact the Academy Leader or Human Resources Department. If the need for accommodation is not obvious, the Academy may require medical documentation verifying the existence of a disability and the reason(s) why the requested reasonable accommodation is needed. When more than one reasonable accommodation would benefit an employee, the Academy reserves the right to choose the accommodation.

**Complaint Procedure** - An employee who believes that the actions or words of an employee or non-employee have violated this policy is required to report the behavior to the Academy immediately. Refer to the *Complaint Procedure and Investigations* policy for information on filing a complaint and the Academy's investigation procedures.

**Policy Violations** - Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Any vendor, supplier, visitor, student, or other non-employee who violates this policy will be subject to remedial action, as determined by management.

## 502 ***Anti-Harassment and Sexual Harassment***

**Policy Statement** - GEE is an equal opportunity employer with a tradition of dedication, high performance, personal development and professional demeanor. The Academy expects that every faculty/staff member will treat every other faculty/staff member with respect, courtesy, supportiveness and professionalism.

It is also expected that no faculty/staff member will interfere with any other faculty/staff member's ability to work. This includes, but is not limited to, any form of harassment, including racist behavior, sexual harassment, physical abuse, and verbal abuse, which include making professionally damaging statements about others and harassment based on any of the protected classes or groups listed in the Equal Employment Opportunity policy. The Academy takes all necessary measures to prevent harassment in the workplace or, in the event it occurs, to stop the conduct immediately. Failure to meet this expectation is among grounds for suspension or dismissal. Ordinarily, issues of this kind are dealt with through the regular supervisory relationship, but where that is not feasible, every faculty/staff member has recourse to the next highest supervisor and/or to the Head of School.

**Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972** - Pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." It is a violation of policy for any student, teacher, administrator, academy personnel, agents, volunteers, or third parties, subject to supervision and control of the Academy Board, to harass or discriminate against a student based upon their gender.

**Definition of Workplace** - For the purpose of this policy, the workplace includes the academy, student locations, social functions sponsored by GEE both on and off Academy premises, business meetings, business-related travel, and/or any location while representing the Academy.

**Sexual Harassment Definition** - The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature to an individual of the same or opposite gender when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; or
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions (e.g., promotion, termination, pay increase) affecting that individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

**Prohibited Behavior** - Unprofessional, inappropriate, or offensive conduct committed by a supervisor, coworker, vendor, supplier, visitor, student, or any other non-employee is prohibited, even if the conduct is welcome by the recipient(s). Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Insulting, lewd, or sexually oriented comments, jokes, racial slurs, epithets, innuendoes, or stories. This includes verbal harassment as well as written, recorded, and electronically transmitted material;
- Demeaning, insulting, or sexually suggestive comments used to describe an individual or the individual's appearance or body;
- Leering, ogling, obscene gestures or sounds, or whistling;

- Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, propositions, or demands for sexual favors;
- Unwelcome physical contact, including touching, groping, grabbing, hugging, massaging, fondling, petting, pinching, hitting, pushing, or intentionally rubbing up against a person's body;
- Viewing, displaying, storing, or transmitting sexually oriented or pornographic pictures, posters, cartoons, or other materials;
- Sending sexually suggestive or obscene letters, gifts, or invitations;
- A supervisor threatening or implying that a subordinate's acceptance or refusal of the supervisor's sexual advances will affect the subordinate's terms or conditions of employment (e.g., promotion, demotion, pay increase, termination).

*Note:* Any administrator, teacher, coach, or other GEE employee including and academy staff member, or academy volunteer, who engages in sexual or other inappropriate physical contact with a student is guilty of criminal "child abuse" as defined by state and federal regulations and will be subject to discipline in accordance with the law.

Other prohibited conduct includes that which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, discriminatory, or offensive environment on the basis of gender, religion, race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, height, weight, marital status, and/or any other legally protected characteristic. Our harassment policy is extended to third party students, and staff members (e.g. guest speaker, athletic team member, volunteer, parent, etc.)

**Staff Member Responsibility** - A staff member is responsible for providing a work environment that is free from unsolicited, unwelcome, and intimidating behavior, including behavior of a sexual nature. A staff member is required to take immediate and appropriate corrective action in the event he or she is a witness to, or becomes aware of, any violations of this policy. The staff member is also responsible for immediately notifying the Academy Leader of any policy violations.

**Complaint Procedure** - An employee or intern who believes that he or she is the victim of harassment is required to report this behavior to the Academy immediately. Refer to the *Complaint Procedure and Investigations* policy for information regarding how to file a complaint and the Academy's investigation procedures.

**Policy Violations** – Any employee or intern who violates this policy or who retaliates against a coworker or non-employee, or knowingly files or supports a claim they know to be false, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **503 Continuation of Insurance Benefits**

**Policy Statement** - The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, commonly referred to as COBRA, give employees and covered dependents the opportunity to continue their group health coverage at group rates after coverage would normally be lost due to any of the following qualifying events:

- Employee's separation from employment for reasons other than gross misconduct;
- Employee's reduction in work hours;
- Employee's legal separation or divorce;
- Employee's entitlement to Medicare;
- A dependent's loss of dependent child status under the plan; or
- Death of the employee.

**Eligibility** - An individual who meets the definition of a "qualified beneficiary" is eligible for insurance continuation coverage. A "qualified beneficiary" is an individual who was covered under a group health plan on the day before a qualifying event as either a covered employee, the spouse of a covered employee (this includes same-sex spouses for medical insurance), or a dependent child of a covered employee. A child who is born to, or placed for adoption with, the covered employee during a period of continuation coverage is also a qualified beneficiary.

**Cost** - A qualified beneficiary who elects continuation coverage is responsible for 100% of the cost of the insurance premiums. The Academy may also charge a 2% administrative fee.

**Marketplace Options** – Instead of enrolling in COBRA continuation coverage, other health coverage alternatives may be available to you through the Health Insurance Marketplace where you may be able to get coverage that costs less than COBRA continuation coverage. For more information about health insurance options available through a Health Insurance Marketplace, visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) or call 1-800-318-2596.

**Maximum Continuation Period** - Each qualified beneficiary has the option of electing health insurance continuation coverage for up to 18 or 36 months, depending on the specific qualifying event.

**Change in Status** - A covered employee or qualified beneficiary must provide written notice to Human Resources when there is a legal separation, divorce, the employee becomes covered by Medicare, or a child's loss of dependent status. Human Resources must also be notified of a second qualifying event or a Social Security Disability determination which could extend the continuation coverage period from 18 to 29 months. Notification must generally be provided to Human Resources no later than 60 days from the date of the qualifying event.

The Academy is not responsible for errors in coverage that are the result of an employee's failure to provide timely notification to the Plan Administrator of such an event.

**Questions** - Full details regarding insurance continuation coverage is available in the plan's Summary Plan Description (SPD) or by contacting the Plan Administrator.

#### **504 Complaint Procedure and Investigations**

**Policy Statement** - GEE takes all complaints of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, unfair treatment, and retaliation seriously. A comprehensive complaint procedure has been developed to address any concerns or complaints received from employees and non-employees.

**Reporting Policy Violations** - An employee, student, or intern who believes that the actions or words of a supervisor, coworker, vendor, supplier, visitor, student, or any other non-employee has violated the Academy's Equal Employment Opportunity and/or Anti-Harassment Policies is required to report the behavior to your supervisor, Human Resources or the Academy Leader immediately. Any supervisor, manager, or Academy officer who receives a complaint about, hears of, or witnesses any inappropriate conduct is required to immediately notify the Academy Leader. If the complaint is about your supervisor or the Academy Leader, staff may report the incident directly to GEE at 734-369-9500. Every staff member is required to report any situation that they believe to be harassment of a student. It is imperative that staff members familiarize themselves with the procedures for reporting abuse, located in the Administrative Guidelines Manual in the academy office.

**Investigation of Complaint** - All complaints received are investigated promptly, thoroughly, and in as impartial a manner as possible. An investigation generally involves talking with the parties involved as well as any witnesses. All employees are required to cooperate in an investigation.

**Confidentiality** - An employee's confidentiality will be protected to the greatest extent possible, consistent with conducting a full investigation. However, the Academy cannot guarantee complete confidentiality.

**Retaliation by the Academy** - GEE will not retaliate, intimidate, threaten, discriminate, or otherwise take any adverse employment action against an employee or intern who files a complaint, testifies, or assists in any complaint made under this policy or with a court or government agency. In addition, the Academy will not retaliate against an employee or intern for opposing any practices that are prohibited under any federal or state employment regulation.

**Retaliation by Employees** - The Academy prohibits an employee from intimidating, threatening, or retaliating against any person for filing a complaint and/or participating in an investigation.

**Policy Violations** - Any employee who violates the Academy's Equal Employment Opportunity or Anti-Harassment policies or who retaliates against a coworker or non-employee, or knowingly files or supports a claim they know to be false, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Remedial Action** - If the investigation findings confirm that harassment has in fact occurred, the result will be a prompt and appropriate corrective action. This action may also result in discharge of the employee(s), short-term or long-term suspension for students, and exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors. This policy is not intended to create legal rights or obligations beyond those established by federal, state, or local laws (please see the Board Policy Manual for the complete text of this and any policy).

## 600 OPERATIONAL POLICIES

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### 601 *Business Hours*

**Business Hours** - Because of the nature of our business, your work schedule may vary depending on your job duties. Staff is expected to report 15 minutes before the school starts and 15 minutes after the students leave. Exceptions will be on days of staff meetings and other events in which staff is required to attend. Check with your supervisor if you have questions about your hours of work.

### 602 *Assessments*

**Policy Statement** - Teachers are required to assist with national, state and local assessments as administered in their building.

### 603 *Meal/Break Periods*

**Meal Periods for Faculty/Staff** - Full-time employees receive a half hour meal period between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

**Meal Periods for Part-Time Staff & Engineering** – The engineering and cafeteria staff are paid for hours they work while the academies are closed. Hourly staff are entitled to a half-hour (1/2) to one (1) hour unpaid lunch break. Employees working a shift of more than six hours will be given at least 30 unpaid minutes for a meal between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Your supervisor is responsible for approving the scheduling of this time. The break time must be set with the GEE Facilities Manager and cannot be changed without prior approval.

**Lactation Breaks** - A female employee will be granted time off to express milk during the workday for up to one year after the birth of a child. The Academy will make a reasonable effort to provide the employee with a private room or other location in close proximity to the work area. An employee may use her authorized break and/or meal period to express milk, whenever possible. The Academy will allow an employee to extend her authorized break or meal period or will grant an additional break period, if needed, to express milk. Any break period of less than 30 minutes will be paid. An employee who chooses to express breast milk in the workplace will not be discriminated against in any way.

**Nursing Mothers Policy** – Nursing employees will be provided with reasonable break time to express breast milk during the workday. Nursing mothers returning from maternity leave should speak with their manager or supervisor regarding their needs. Supervisors will work with nursing employees to develop a break schedule that is reasonable, accounts for needs that may vary from day to day and creates the least amount of disruption to the Company's operations.

**Staff Lounge** - A staff lounge is available for employees to use during their meal periods. Although each respective academy provides general custodial care, you are expected to clean up after yourself. Please wash your own dishes and please do not leave dirty dishes in the sink for others to wash or to wash at a later time. Staff is required to pay for food when ordering from the cafeteria.

### 604 *Emergency Closings/Severe Weather*

**Policy Statement** – Severe weather is to be expected during certain months of the year. Although driving may be difficult at times, when caution is exercised the roads are normally passable. Except in the case of a snow day, we are all expected to work our regular hours.

**Inclement Weather** - When GEE has not officially closed, an employee who does not report to work or requests to arrive at work late or leave work early must obtain prior authorization from the employee's supervisor in accordance with the Academy's notification policy. Time taken off due to poor weather conditions or arriving at work after the scheduled opening time while the Academy remains open will be unpaid. Credited, unused paid time off leave must be taken, if available. If an exempt employee has no paid leave benefits available, the employee will only be docked if a full workday is taken.

**Notification** - Snow days are announced on all the major television stations, some radio stations and on the Internet. Employees will be notified via email or the information will appear on the Academy's website if there is a snow day. When a local academy district is closed it does not automatically mean that your academy is also closed. The decision to close your academy is made strictly by the GEE Administration.

**Compensation for Exempt Employees** - Exempt employees receive their regular salaries when the Academy officially opens late, shuts down early, or closes for any partial workweeks due to emergency operating conditions. Exempt employees are not paid if the Academy is closed for an entire workweek or longer.

**Compensation for Non-Exempt Employees** - When the Academy officially opens late, closes early, or remains closed for an entire workday due to emergency operating conditions, full-time and part-time employees are paid for their normally scheduled work hours at the employee's base rate of pay. Such paid time is not included as time worked for the purpose of computing overtime.

**Compensation for Employees On Scheduled Leave** - An employee who is out of work on sick, PTO, or personal leave during an emergency closing will be charged such leave as scheduled or will not be paid for those days if they do not have PTO left in their bank.

## 605 *Time Records*

**Policy Statement** - Federal and state employment regulations require GEE to maintain accurate records of employee work hours. Accurate time records allow the Academy to calculate each employee's compensation for time worked and authorized paid leave taken in a given workweek.

**Working Time** - Generally, time worked is considered all time an employee is on duty performing assigned tasks as well all time an employee is required to be on the Academy's premises or at a designated work site.

**Procedures for Non-Exempt Employees** – Depending on your academy location, a computerized time clock or time sheet is used to track the work hours of non-exempt employees. A non-exempt employee must punch in and out at the beginning and end of each work shift and for all unpaid meal periods. During regular work hours, an employee must punch out when leaving Academy premises for non-work related reasons.

Employees who are responsible for recording their work hours on a time sheet must indicate the daily number of hours worked and all paid and unpaid absences. To ensure accuracy, time sheets should be filled out on a daily basis.

**Performing Work Before/After Scheduled Work Hours** - A non-exempt employee is not permitted to perform any unauthorized work before or after the employee's scheduled work shift. If the hours worked are not pre-approved by the Human Resources then the employee will not be paid for the hours.

**Procedures for Exempt Employees** - Exempt employees are not required to record daily attendance but must account for authorized paid leave taken by completing the appropriate time off form.

**Arriving at Work Before or After Scheduled Work Hours** - Arriving at work before the scheduled starting time or leaving work after the scheduled ending time for an employee's own convenience when no work is performed for the Academy is not to be included in working time.

**Correction of Errors** - Any errors on time sheets should be brought to the attention of the employee's supervisor immediately. The supervisor shall investigate the matter and make and initial the correction once the error is verified.

**Submission of Time Sheets** - Time sheets should be verified and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor at the end of each pay period and turned in to the payroll office on Friday before payroll week.

**Falsification of Time Records** - Altering, falsifying, or tampering with an employee's own time record or a coworker's time record is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment for both employees.

## **606 Business Expenses**

**Policy Statement** - GEE reimburses employees for pre-authorized business expenses. These expenses include, but are not limited to, mileage, tolls, parking fees, meals, lodging, and training and membership fees. All business expenses should be limited to reasonable amounts.

**Mileage** - Mileage reimbursement is meant to cover only those miles incurred above and beyond the employee's normal commute to his/her place of business. For example, if the normal commuting round trip is 20 miles, and the employee goes on a trip that covers 75 miles, only the incremental 55 miles are reimbursable.

**Reimbursement** – All expense reimbursement requests must be submitted within 5 business days after travel has concluded or the expense has been incurred and should indicate all points of travel and the miles eligible for reimbursement based on the difference between commuting time and trip time. Mileage reimbursement requests must be submitted through the EZPT System.

The mileage rate is .25 a mile; the remaining difference can be deducted by the individual on their personal IRS taxes.

**Authorization** - All business expense requests are to be submitted via the EZPT System at least two workdays in advance.

The Academy reserves the right to deny reimbursement for any business-related expense that was not pre-authorized or that is considered unreasonable under the circumstances.



## 700 ABSENCE FROM WORK POLICIES

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### 701 Attendance

**Policy Statement** –In order to maintain a productive work environment, employees are expected to work all scheduled work hours and to keep unscheduled absences and tardiness to a minimum. Poor attendance, tardiness, and early departures place a burden on the Academy, other employees, and students. Persons who are consistently tardy will be asked to re-evaluate their commitment to Academy's mission and core beliefs.

**Tardiness and Unscheduled Absences** - An employee is expected to be on time and ready to begin work at the start of the employee's scheduled work day. If you are going to be late for work or absent, notify the Academy Leader as far in advance as is possible under the circumstances, but no later than 6:30 AM on the day of your absence. *If you are a teacher, you should call both the number provided by your academy administration, as well as the number to request a substitute. It is your responsibility to schedule a substitute for your absence.*

Under no circumstances should you rely solely on leaving a recorded message on your respective academy's answering machine to report an absence or tardiness; you must speak directly with school administration.

Personal issues requiring time away from your work, such as doctor appointments or other matters, should be scheduled during your non-working hours if possible.

Asking a relative, friend, or another person to call in on the employee's behalf is not permitted nor is leaving a message on the answering machine or with a coworker. Texting may not be used for notification. Notification requirements may be waived in cases of emergency.

**Signing In and Out** - A daily sign-in/sign-out sheet is used to maintain an accurate record of who is in the building. Please sign in and out whenever you enter or leave GEE academy buildings. It is the shared responsibility of all employees' to sign in and out at every building.

**Time Off for Domestic Violence** - We understand that domestic violence can affect performance and attendance. An employee who needs time off because he or she is a victim of domestic violence will be treated the same as any other employee who needs time off from work for other reasons. If the need for time off is to receive medical or mental health care, the employee will be granted the time off unless it would create an undue hardship on the Academy.

**Unexcused Absences** - Notification of an absence to an employee's supervisor does not automatically mean the absence is authorized. Any time off from work that is without supervisory approval is considered an unexcused absence. An unexcused absence is without pay for non-exempt employees.

**Daily Notification** - If an employee is unable to report to work for more than one workday, the employee must personally notify the supervisor each day of the absence, unless the absence was pre-authorized or the employee is on an approved leave of absence (e.g., FMLA, jury duty, military leave).

**Failure to Call in or Report to Work** - An employee who does not report for work or notify the supervisor of the employee's absence for three consecutive workdays will be considered job abandonment and voluntarily resigned their position with the Academy.

**Documentation of Absences** - An employee who demonstrates a pattern of frequent absences may be required to provide documentation of the reason for any future absences.

**Medical Verification** - An employee who is absent from work for more than three consecutive workdays due to personal illness or injury will be required to provide medical verification of the employee's absence. Failure to produce the medical verification may result in an employee receiving the time off without pay and/or jeopardize continued employment with the Academy. The employee may also be required to provide a medical statement from the employee's health care provider releasing the employee to return-to-work. In the event the medical statement indicates there are work restrictions, the Academy reserves the right to evaluate

if the restrictions can be reasonably accommodated (See the *Equal Employment Opportunity* policy for additional information). An employee is not allowed to return to work until an adequate medical statement is provided to the employee's supervisor.

**Leaving the Premises** - An employee must notify and obtain approval from the employee's supervisor before leaving Academy premises during working time for personal reasons. An employee who leaves Academy premises during the workday due to business reasons must notify the employee's supervisor in accordance with department policy. Non-exempt employees leaving the premises for personal reasons must record the time on their time sheet.

**Time Off Without Pay** - An employee must use all credited, unused vacation leave before requesting time off without pay. Sick leave must also be used for any time off due to illness of the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family. Supervisors, at their discretion, may deny requests for unpaid time off except for time off taken under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

A non-exempt employee may be allowed to make up lost work time during the current workweek with prior supervisory approval. Authorization is granted only if work is available and only at a time that is mutually convenient for the employee and the employee's supervisor. A non-exempt employee is generally not allowed to make up lost work time due to tardiness, unauthorized absence, or early departure.

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), if an exempt employee has no paid leave benefits available, the employee's pay will be docked only if a full workday off is taken due to sickness or personal reasons. Exempt employees are generally not docked for partial day absences, except for leave taken under the FMLA.

**Policy Violations** - Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. This includes falsification of the reason for absence, unexcused absence(s), a record of excessive absences or early departures, or a pattern of absenteeism, even if excused.

## **702 *Committee Requirement and After Academy Event Attendance***

**Policy Statement** - All teaching staff are expected to attend all after/before school staff meetings and professional development unless excused in advance. The School Improvement Committee will consist of teachers who have been teaching in the building for more than three years and one new teacher.

## **703 *Jury and Witness Duty Leave***

**Policy Statement** - Employees are encouraged to fulfill their civic responsibilities and will be granted time off to serve on jury duty or to appear as a witness in a criminal proceeding. An employee will not be subject to any adverse action as a result of taking time off to serve as a juror or witness.

**Paid Time Off** - Time will be deducted from your Paid Time Off and when the employee submits the jury duty check to GEE the Paid Time Off will be returned.

**Notification Requirements** - When an employee receives notice to report for jury duty or a subpoena to testify as a witness, a copy of the notice/subpoena should be submitted to their supervisor.

**Compensation for Exempt Employees** - In accordance with federal regulations, an exempt employee who serves as a juror or witness is paid the employee's regular salary for any workweeks in which he or she performs any work but is not paid for any workweeks in which no work is performed for the Academy. An employee is entitled to any stipend paid by the court.

**Compensation for Non-Exempt Employees** - Time will be deducted from your Paid Time Off and when an employee submits the jury duty check to GEE, the paid Time Off will be returned.

**Verification of Service** - An employee must provide written verification from the court noting the date(s) and time(s) served as a juror or witness in order to receive compensation from the Academy.

**Return to Work** - An employee who is excused from court for the entire day should report to work if it is a normally scheduled workday. If an employee is released early from jury or witness duty on a given day, he or she should contact the employee's supervisor to discuss reporting requirements if there are two or more hours left in the employee's scheduled work shift. An employee will not be required to work on any days when he or she is not normally scheduled to work in order to make up for any time lost due to jury duty service.

**Accrual of Benefits** - GEE will continue to provide insurance benefits for an eligible employee during the time spent as a juror or witness. All employee contributions, if any, must be paid on a timely basis in order to maintain the continuous coverage of benefits. PTO, sick, and personal leave and holiday benefits also continue to accrue.

**Rescheduling of Jury Duty** - GEE may request that an employee seek to have the jury duty rescheduled.

## **704 Military and Reserve Leaves**

**Policy Statement** - GEE recognizes the importance of military service and complies with all federal and state regulations relating to military leaves of absence, encampment, and temporary military duty. The Academy shall grant an employee time off to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces, including the military reserves, Army National Guard, and Air National Guard.

**Notification** - An employee is required to give advance notice to the employee's supervisor of the dates of military service unless unable to do so because of military necessity or if it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable to do so. An employee is asked to give as much notice as possible.

**Benefits during Leave** - An employee retains and accrues any Academy-sponsored benefits that are tied to seniority during a military leave. The employee is also allowed to participate in the medical insurance plan and other Academy-sponsored benefits that are not determined by seniority to the same extent as an employee who is granted a FMLA leave or leave of absence, so long as the employee meets the eligibility requirements of each benefit plan. During a military leave of 30 days or less, the Academy will make its normal contribution towards an employee's insurance benefits. If your leave lasts longer than 30 days, you will have to pay the entire premium to continue your benefits.

**Return from Leave** - An employee retains certain rights relating to reinstatement, seniority, status, length of service promotions, and compensation upon return from military duty, as long as the employee is not separated with a dishonorable or bad conduct discharge and the employee's cumulative military leave with the Academy does not exceed five years. Certain types of uniformed service do not count against an employee's five-year maximum, including service during war or call-ups during national emergencies, reserve drills, and annually scheduled active duty for training.

If an employee terminated coverage in GEE's medical insurance plan or elected COBRA while on a military leave of absence, the employee will be reinstated in the group medical plan upon return to work without a waiting period or any pre-existing exclusions.

**Compensation for Exempt Employees** - In accordance with federal regulations, an exempt employee who is on military or reserve leave for any partial workweeks is paid the employee's regular salary for those workweeks. Any military pay received is deducted from the employee's salary. An exempt employee is not paid for any workweeks in which no work is performed for the Academy. An employee may request to use credited, unused PTO leave during any portions of the leave that are unpaid.

**Compensation for Non-Exempt Employees** - Military and reserve leave is without pay for a non-exempt employee. An employee may request to use credited, unused PTO leave during the leave.

**Family and Medical Leave** - An employee may be eligible for time off in accordance with the FMLA due to a covered family member's active or impending military duty or if a covered family member suffers a serious injury or illness while on active duty (See the *Family and Medical Leave* policy for additional information).

#### **705 Bereavement Leave**

**Allowance** - Employees are allowed two bereavement days in addition to their accrued paid time off for the death of an immediate family member. An immediate family member is a spouse, parent, grandparent, child or sibling.

**Verification of Need for Leave** - The Academy reserves the right to request verification of the need for bereavement leave.

**Immediate Family Member** - For the purpose of this policy, an immediate family member is defined as an employee's spouse (includes same or opposite sex spouse), domestic or same-sex partner, parent, grandparent, child, or sibling.

**Extension of Bereavement Leave** - An employee may request to use credited, unused PTO leave to extend bereavement leave. If an employee has no paid leave available, unpaid leave may be granted with prior supervisory approval.

#### **706 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

**Policy Statement** - In compliance with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), GEE will grant an eligible employee unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family, medical, and military reasons as described in this policy.

**Eligibility** - To be eligible for leave under the FMLA, an employee must meet the following requirements:

- Completion of at least 12 months of service with GEE before the leave begins (the 12 months need not be consecutive);
- Worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12 months\* prior to the date the leave begins; and
- Work at, or report to, a work site where at least 50 employees are employed within 75 miles.

**\*Special hours of service eligibility requirements apply to airline flight crew employees.**

**Basic FMLA Entitlements** - An eligible employee shall be granted up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave under any of the following circumstances:

- Incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or child birth (includes fathers who take leave for their spouses' prenatal care and appointments);
- To provide care for the employee's child after birth; or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
- To provide care for the employee's spouse (includes same-sex spouse), child (includes son or daughter of the same-sex spouse), or parent who has a serious health condition; or
- A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job.

**Serious Health Condition** - The FMLA defines a serious health condition as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Continuing treatment by a health care provider includes:

- A period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider; or
- One visit to a health care provider and a regimen of continuing treatment; or
- Incapacity due to pregnancy; or
- Incapacity due to a chronic health condition.

Other conditions may also meet the definition of continuing treatment.

**Twelve-Month Period** - The 12-month period is a rolling period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave. Each time FMLA leave is taken, the Academy will compute the amount of FMLA leave that has been used in the last 12 months and subtract it from the 12 (or 26) weeks of available leave. The balance remaining is the maximum amount of FMLA leave still available.

### **Military Family Leave**

**Qualifying Exigency Leave** - Eligible employees whose spouse (includes same-sex spouse), son, daughter or parent is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies are non-medical, non-routine activities. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings. GEE and the employee can agree to consider any other event that may arise out of active duty or a call to active duty status as a qualified exigency.

**Military Caregiver Leave** - FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 workweeks (eligible airline flight crew employees are entitled to 156 days) of FMLA leave in a "single 12-month period" to care for a "covered service member" with a "serious injury or illness" if the employee is the covered service member's spouse (includes same-sex spouse), parent, son, daughter, or next of kin.

A covered service member is:

- (1) a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness\*;or
- (2) a veteran who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable at any time during the five-year period prior to the first date the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for the covered veteran, and who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness.\*

\* **Serious Injury or Illness for a Current Service Member** - FMLA defines a serious injury or illness for a current service member as:

- (i) an injury or illness incurred by a covered service member in the line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces that may render the service member medically unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank, or rating; or
- (ii) An injury or illness that existed before the beginning of the service member's active duty and was aggravated by service in the line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces.

**Serious Injury or Illness for a Covered Veteran** - A serious injury or illness for a covered veteran means an injury or illness incurred that was incurred or aggravated by the covered veteran in the line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces and manifested itself before or after the service member became a veteran, and is:

- (i) a continuation of a serious injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated when the covered veteran was a member of the Armed Forces and rendered the service member unable to perform the duties of the service member's office, grade, rank, or rating; or
- (ii) a physical or mental condition for which the veteran has received a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Service-Related Disability Rating (VASRD) of 50 percent or greater, and the need for military caregiver leave is related to that condition; or
- (iii) a physical or mental condition that substantially impairs the veteran's ability to work because of a disability or disabilities related to military service, or would do so absent treatment; or
- (iv) an injury, including a psychological injury that is the basis for the veteran's enrollment in the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

**Notification Requirements** - When the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable, an employee must submit a completed *FMLA Request Form* to Human Resources at least 30-calendar days prior to the requested start date of the leave. Failure to give the required notice with no reasonable excuse may result in the FMLA leave being delayed until 30 days from the date of notice. If unable to provide 30 days advance notice, an employee must request leave as soon as he or she becomes aware of the need for leave. Such notice must normally comply with the Academy's call-in procedures (See the *Attendance* policy for additional information).

The employee must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. In addition, the employee must also inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. An employee also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

GEE will determine if the employee is eligible for FMLA leave and will notify the employee within five business days of receiving the employee's *FMLA Request Form* or verbal leave request. If approved, the employee will be notified if the leave will be designated as FMLA-protected, any additional information required by the Academy, the employee's rights and responsibilities, and the amount of leave that will be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. If ineligible for FMLA leave, the reason for the denial will be provided.

**Certification** - Proper documentation may be required to support an employee's leave request. Medical certification from a health care provider is required for leave requests due to an employee's or family member's serious health condition or the birth of a child. Documentation from the appropriate agency is required to support a leave request due to the adoption or foster placement of a child.

**Use of Leave** - An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. An employee is responsible for making reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt business operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

**Status Reports** - If the medical certification indicates a minimum duration for the period of incapacity, the Academy will generally not request recertification until such period has expired. If the medical certification indicates the condition is expected to last for an extended period, medical recertification must be provided every six months. The Academy reserves the right to request medical recertification more frequently if an employee requests a leave extension, circumstances have changed significantly, or the Academy receives information that casts doubt on the reason for the absence.

**Workers' Compensation and Disability** - Leaves taken under workers' compensation or disability may run concurrently with FMLA if an employee meets the FMLA eligibility criteria outlined above and the Academy appropriately designates the leave as FMLA.

**Benefits during Leave** - For the purpose of this policy, the following applies to employee benefits during a FMLA leave:

- **Use of Paid Leave** - The Academy requires you to substitute vacation days according to the schedule below. You may also choose to substitute additional paid or unpaid leave that you have accrued. Once all of an employee's paid time off benefits have been exhausted, the remainder of the leave will be unpaid.

When you substitute vacation days or other paid leave, the absence will be counted against your entitlement to FMLA leave under this policy and will not extend your leave. In other words, you are using your paid leave concurrently with your FMLA leave.

Eligible Vacation Remaining	Required Substitution
Less than 5 days	None
5-8 days	3 days
9-12 days	5 days
13-16 days	7 days
17-20 days	9 days

When FMLA leave is running concurrently with workers' compensation or disability, an employee's available paid time off benefits must be used at the beginning of the FMLA leave to cover any statutory waiting period that may be applicable. For the remainder of the leave, the employee may supplement his or her workers' compensation or disability benefits with any available paid time off benefits if mutually agreed to by the Academy and the employee and as allowed by state regulation. The combination of all benefits paid to the employee may not exceed the employee's regular weekly earnings.

In either case, the use of paid time off benefits does not extend the 12 or 26-week leave period.

- **Accrual of Paid Leave Benefits** - An employee will not lose any employment benefit that he or she accrued prior to the start of the FMLA leave. An employee continues to accrue PTO and sick leave and receive holiday pay during any portion of a FMLA leave that is paid. After all such paid time off benefits are exhausted, the remaining portion of the FMLA leave is unpaid. An employee does not accrue PTO, or sick or receive holiday pay during any portion of a FMLA leave that is unpaid.
- **Insurance Benefits** – During FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work.

**Employment Restrictions** - While on FMLA leave, an employee may not work for another employer during the same work hours that he or she is normally scheduled to work for GEE.

**Early Return or Extension of Leave** - If an employee intends to return to work earlier than anticipated or extend the leave beyond the time originally requested, Human Resources must be notified at least two business days from the date the employee became aware of the need to shorten/extend the leave.

**Return-to-Work** - At the conclusion of a FMLA leave, the following conditions apply:

- **Return Date** - If the employee's leave request indicated a specific return-to-work date, he or she should contact Human Resources at least two weeks prior to this date. If the return-to-work date was not known at the time leave was granted, the Human Resources must be notified as soon as a return-to-work date has been established. Failure to return to work when scheduled may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination due to misconduct;

- **Fitness-for-Duty Certification** - If the FMLA leave was due to the employee's own serious health condition, a fitness-for-duty certification from the employee's health care provider is required prior to returning to work. The certification must address the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job, indicate any work restrictions, and release the employee to return to work. In the event work restrictions are indicated, the Academy reserves the right to evaluate if the restrictions can be reasonably accommodated (See the *Equal Employment Opportunity* policy); and
- **Job Restoration** - An employee shall be restored to the position held when the leave began or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment, provided he or she returns to work within the time period allowed under the FMLA regulations.

## 707 **Medical and Personal Leaves of Absence**

**Policy Statement** - An employee who does not meet the FMLA eligibility requirements (See the *Family and Medical Leave Act* policy) or who has exhausted his or her leave entitlement under the FMLA may request a non-FMLA leave of absence due to medical, family, or personal reasons. The granting and duration of each leave of absence is determined by the Academy and is not guaranteed.

**Eligibility** - To be eligible for a leave of absence, an employee must have completed at least 1,000 hours of continuous service.

**Workers' Compensation and Disability** - An employee who is eligible for - or receiving - workers' compensation or disability benefits will be placed on workers' compensation/disability and a medical leave of absence concurrently. The employee is responsible for complying with both the requirements of workers' compensation/disability and this leave of absence policy.

**Notification Requirements** - An employee must submit a written leave of absence request to Human Resources at least 30-calendar days prior to the requested start date of the leave. When the need for leave is unforeseen, notice must be provided as soon as the need for leave is known. Permission or denial of the leave will normally be communicated to the employee in writing within five business days after the Academy receives the request.

**Medical Certification** - Proper documentation may be required to support an employee's leave request. Medical certification from a health care provider is required for leave requests due to an employee's or family member's serious health condition or the birth of a child.

**Benefits during Leave** - For the purpose of this policy, the following applies to employee benefits during the leave:

- **Use of Paid Leave** - An employee's available paid time off benefits (e.g., vacation, sick, and/or personal leave) must be used at the beginning of the leave, so long as the terms and conditions set forth in the applicable time off policy are met. Once all of an employee's paid time off benefits have been exhausted, the remainder of the leave will be unpaid.

When leave is running concurrently with workers' compensation or disability, an employee may use any available time off benefits to supplement his or her wages as allowed by state regulation. The combination of all benefits paid to the employee may not exceed the employee's regular weekly earnings.

When credited, unused sick leave is used to supplement the employee's wages during any portion of the leave, the insurance carrier will normally send the benefit payments directly to the Academy. The Academy will then pay the employee the employee's normal wages, and will make a pro rata restoration to the employee's sick leave account after it receives payment from the insurance carrier.

During any period of the leave when credited, unused vacation, PTO, and/or personal leave is used to supplement the employee's normal wages, the insurance carrier will normally send the benefit payments directly to the employee. The Academy will pay the employee the difference between the employee's normal wages and the workers' compensation/disability benefit, and a pro rata deduction will be taken from the employee's applicable time off account.



- **Accrual of Paid Leave Benefits** - An employee continues to be credited with paid vacation, PTO, personal, and sick leave and receive holiday pay during any portion of a leave that is paid. For the purpose of this policy, paid leave is defined as leave during which the employee is using credited, unused vacation, personal, and/or sick leave. After all such paid leave is exhausted, the remaining portion of the leave is unpaid. An employee will not accrue vacation, PTO, personal, or sick leave or receive holiday pay during any portion of a leave that is unpaid
- **Insurance Benefits** - The Academy will continue its contribution towards an employee's medical, dental, and life insurance premiums for the first 12 weeks of a leave of absence. Contributions are at the same level as if the employee was working. After 12 weeks, the employee is responsible for 100% of the insurance premiums.

All employee contributions, if any, must be paid on a timely basis in order to maintain the continuous coverage of benefits. Coverage will be cancelled if the employee's premium payments are not made within a 30-calendar day grace period of the due date. Premium payments and policy coverage are subject to change.

- **Insurance Continuation Coverage** - After 12 weeks of a medical or personal leave of absence, an employee will be given the opportunity to elect COBRA continuation coverage for the medical and dental insurance. If continuation coverage is elected, the employee will be responsible for up to 102% of the insurance premiums.

**Status Reports** - If an employee's request for a leave of absence does not indicate a specific return to work date or if an employee requests a leave extension, the employee must update Human Resources as to the employee's status and intent to return to work every two weeks.

**Extension of Leave** - An employee may request an extension of a leave by submitting a written request to Human Resources at least two weeks prior to the end of the scheduled return-to-work date. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, GEE may grant a leave extension if it does not impose an undue hardship on the Academy. The Academy reserves the right to deny any leave extension request.

**Employment Restrictions** - While on an approved leave of absence, an employee may not work for another employer during the same work hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work for GEE.

**Return-to-Work** - At the conclusion of the leave, the following conditions apply:

- **Return Date** - If the employee's leave request indicates a specific return-to-work date, the employee should contact the employee's supervisor at least ten days prior to this date. If the ending date of the leave was not known at the time leave was granted, the employee must immediately notify the supervisor when a return-to-work date is established. If the Academy determines that a position is available, the employee must report to work when scheduled;
- **Fitness-for-Duty Certification** - If the leave was due to the employee's own serious health condition, a fitness-for-duty certification from the employee's health care provider is required prior to returning to work. The certification must address the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job, indicate any work restrictions, and release the employee to return to work. In the event work restrictions are indicated, the Academy reserves the right to evaluate if the restrictions can be reasonably accommodated (See the *Equal Employment Opportunity* policy); and
- **Job Restoration** - When a leave of absence is granted, GEE cannot guarantee return to employment or the position held. When an employee is able to return to work, the Academy will attempt to return the employee to a position based on business needs and the availability of a position for which the employee is qualified.

## 708 **Maternity/Paternity Leave**

**Policy Statement** - Maternity/paternity leave is arranged on an individual basis after negotiations between the employee and the Academy Leader. Part time staff is not eligible for maternity/paternity leave. Those eligible for this must also qualify for FMLA.

**Amount of Leave** - The Academy will provide up to two (2) consecutive weeks of paid leave for a maternity leave and 3 days for paternity with the following explanation. If the leave begins during a scheduled school break (not including the summer break) the employee will continue to be paid their normally scheduled pay and the paid time off will start the first scheduled day back to school. If the leave starts prior to the scheduled school break the two (2) week leave will continue as scheduled and the employee will not be paid for the school break after the two week leave expires, unless the employee has opted to use other paid time off after maternity pay expires. There is no stopping and restarting the two-week paid maternity leave once the leave has started. Maternity leave days cannot be held over to the following year.

When a married couple is employed by GEE, the spouses of those recovering from childbirth shall be entitled to three days of paid leave. In addition, an employee may elect to use accrued paid leave or apply for unpaid FMLA leave.

**Requesting Maternity/Paternity Leave** - Forms must be filled out with the GEE office 3 months prior to expected due date to be eligible for maternity leave. The form will be completed by GEE stating the dates that you will be on maternity leave. If the forms are not submitted 3 months prior, the employee does not qualify for maternity/paternity leave but can qualify for FMLA.

## 709 **Time Off to Vote**

**Policy Statement** – GEE encourages all employees to vote. An employee who is a registered voter and does not have four consecutive nonworking hours to vote when the polls are open will be given up to two hours off with pay during the workday to vote. Any additional time off needed to vote is without pay for non-exempt employees unless credited, unused vacation, PTO, or personal leave is used. Generally, the time off will be granted either at the start or the end of the employee's work shift.

**Time Off Requests** - An employee must submit a written time off request to the employee's supervisor no more than 10 nor less than two workdays before an election.

## 800 COMPENSATION

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### 801 *Pay Rates and Pay Increases*

**Policy Statement** - GEE's goal is to compensate each employee based on merit and consistent with the employee's job duties and responsibilities. The wages being paid for similar work in the community and industry is also taken into account. All compensation policy decisions take into consideration the Academy's overall financial condition.

### 802 *Certified Teacher Pay Scale*

The starting salaries for teaching staff are:

- Elementary Academy K-5 Teacher \$32,000/annually
- Middle Academy 6-8 Teacher \$33,000/annually
- High academy 9-12 Teacher \$34,000/annually
- Specialists \$35,000-\$40,000/annually (based on number of students and job responsibilities)

The base pay can be increased if the applicant has a Master's Degree in an education field (extra \$1,500.00 added to the annual base pay).

Also the applicant can receive credit for up to 5 years of previous work in education. This credit would add \$500.00/year(s) of experience, with maximum amount for this credit being \$2500.00 added to the annual base salary.

### 803 *Degree Bonus Guidelines*

Full-time certified teachers who complete a degree from any accredited institution of higher education will be granted a bonus to their annual base salary of \$1,500 for a Master's Degree. Degrees must be completed while employed full-time with GEE and the degree must be received in the area of education.

The award will be made at the beginning of the new fiscal year following receipt of the degree. The procedure is as follows:

- In order to receive the bonus, the eligible employee must complete the Request for Award for Completion of Degree form and attach the final transcript stating the date of the degree conferral and submit it to the Human Resources Department by August 1st of each year.

Forms are available both online at [www.gee-edu.com](http://www.gee-edu.com) under the "Staff Resources" tab and from the Human Resources Department. Human Resources will receive the necessary forms, such as official transcripts; they will then endorse the forms and forward it to the Payroll office. The Payroll office will then update the salary, which goes into effect the next fiscal year.

If an employee terminates employment with GEE, or if their employment is terminated by GEE before the degree bonus is issued, regardless if such person has completed the degree, the employee will not receive the bonus.

A dual-area or combined degree will be considered. One award amount will be received upon completion of one degree.

## 804 *Overtime*

**Policy Statement** - To meet operational requirements, an employee may be required to work beyond the employee's normally scheduled work hours and/or on a normally scheduled day off.

**Authorization** - A non-exempt employee must receive authorization from the employee's supervisor before working beyond the employee's scheduled work hours. Working overtime without permission violates Academy policy and may result in disciplinary action. It is expected that an exempt employee may need to work beyond the employee's scheduled work hours on an as needed basis. An exempt employee does not need prior supervisory approval to work overtime hours.

**Compensation for Non-Exempt Employees** - A non-exempt employee who works beyond the employee's normally scheduled work hours receives the employee's base rate of pay for each additional hour worked, up to 40 hours during the workweek. Overtime compensation is provided for all hours worked in excess of 40 during a workweek at 1½ times the employee's regular rate of pay.

**Credit for Paid Leave** - Only actual hours physically worked are used to compute an employee's overtime hours. Paid holidays and PTO, sick, personal, bereavement, and jury duty leave are not considered time worked for the purpose of determining overtime hours.

**Compensation for Exempt Employees** - In accordance with federal and state regulations, an exempt employee is not eligible to receive additional or overtime compensation for any hours worked in excess of the employee's normal workday or workweek, including any hours worked over 40 during the workweek.

**Mandatory Overtime** - Employees are expected to work additional hours as needed to maintain optimal business operations. An employee's failure to work overtime hours that have been requested by the employee's supervisor may result in disciplinary action.

## 805 *Payroll Period and Payday*

**Payroll Period** - The payroll period begins on Saturday and ends 14 calendar days later on Friday.

**Payday** - Employees are biweekly on Fridays for the hours worked during the previous pay period for 12 months. If a payday falls on a designated holiday, paychecks are normally distributed on the preceding workday. The Academy will notify employees in advance of any changes in pay days.

**Direct Deposit** - An employee may elect to have all or part of the employee's paycheck deposited directly into a checking and/or savings account at the employee's designated financial institution each payday. An employee must submit a signed, written authorization to the Academy to initiate or change direct deposit. Your paystub will be emailed to your school email address.

**Authorized Check Release** - An employee's supervisor shall not release a paycheck to anyone other than the employee unless the employee has provided a signed, written authorization to the Academy.

**Pay Advances and Employee Loans** - GEE does not give pay advances or employee loans nor does it distribute paychecks earlier than the scheduled payday.

**Questions** - All payroll related questions are to be presented within 2 days of the paystubs being emailed to GEE email. Any adjustments that may be required must be recorded on the next timesheet and approved by the School Leader prior to submitting to GEE for payment. Sick hours may not be requested for a previous pay period.

## 806 *Payroll Deductions*

**Statutory and Voluntary Deductions** - In compliance with government regulations, GEE deducts the required portion of an employee's wages for federal, state, and social security and medicare taxes. Depending on the state and city in which you are employed and the benefits you choose, there may be additional deductions. An employee may voluntarily authorize payroll deductions for items that are for the benefit of the employee, such as insurance benefits and the retirement plan, by submitting a written authorization to the Academy. All statutory and voluntary payroll deductions are indicated on an employee's pay stub. All deductions are listed on your pay stub. These deductions are totaled each year on a Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement, to be mailed to your address on file on or before January 31st.

**Deductions from Exempt Employees' Pay** - In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, exempt employees are generally paid on a salary or fee basis. Exempt employees generally receive a predetermined amount each pay period that is not reduced because of variations in the quality or quantity of their work.

The Academy may make deductions from an exempt employee's pay under the following, limited circumstances:

- When an employee is absent from work for one or more full days for personal reasons other than sickness or disability;
- For absences of one or more full days due to sickness or disability if the deduction is made in accordance with a bona fide plan, policy or practice of providing compensation for salary lost due to illness;
- To offset jury and witness fees or military pay;
- Unpaid suspensions of one or more full days for violations of workplace conduct rules;
- Penalties imposed for violation of safety rules of major significance;
- Weeks in which unpaid FMLA leave is taken; or
- During the initial or last week of employment if the employee does not work the entire workweek.

**Improper Payroll Deductions** - The Academy prohibits any deductions from an employee's paycheck that are in violation of federal or state regulations. An employee who believes that an improper paycheck deduction has been made should contact the Academy Administration immediately. If it is determined that an improper deduction was made, the employee will be promptly reimbursed.

**Garnishments** - An employee is notified as soon as possible if the Academy is required to deduct any garnishments from the employee's wages.

**Questions** - Questions concerning paycheck deductions or how they were calculated should be directed to the Payroll Department @ [payroll@gee-edu.com](mailto:payroll@gee-edu.com) or 734-369-9476.

**807 Coaching Pay**

**Policy Statement** - The following sports receive a coaching stipend; the amount listed below is to be split among all of the coaches and assistants for a particular sport.

<b>Sports</b>	<b>Girls Middle</b>	<b>Girls High</b>	<b>Boys Middle</b>	<b>Boys High JV</b>	<b>Boys High V</b>
Basketball	1500	2000	1500	2500	3500
Cross Country	500	500	500	500	500
Flag Football	750	750	750	750	750
Soccer	750	750	750	750	750

The Athletic Director is responsible for reporting to the person responsible for payroll submission at the Academy when the coaching season is complete and the coach has met all requirements to receive stipend.

## 900 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

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### 901 *Employee Benefits Administration*

**Policy Statement** - GEE has developed a comprehensive employee benefits package to supplement your regular wages. This employee Handbook describes the current benefit plans offered by GEE. Refer to the actual benefit plan documents and summary plan descriptions if you have specific questions regarding the benefit plan. Those documents are controlling. GEE reserves the right to modify its benefits at any time and will keep employees informed of any changes.

**Plan Documents** - Detailed information about insurance benefits is covered in greater detail in the applicable benefit plan documents. Employee benefits are administered according to applicable government regulation, insurance contract, certificate of coverage, plan document, and/or Academy policy. In the event of a discrepancy between the information presented in this employee handbook and the applicable government regulation or insurance document, the government regulation or insurance document will take precedent.

In addition, the Academy has discretionary authority to determine eligibility for benefits and to interpret the terms of each benefit plan.

**Changes in Benefits** - The Academy reserves the right to add, modify, or terminate benefits for all current and former employees, to change carriers, and/or offer alternative insurance plans at any time. Further, all Academy contributions are subject to change.

**Plan Administrator** - The Human Resource Manager is the Plan Administrator of the Academy's benefit plans. The Plan Administrator is responsible for all employee communications and disclosures concerning Academy benefits and is available to answer any questions.

**Enrollment Information** - An employee must complete the applicable insurance enrollment forms and payroll deduction authorization forms in order to receive insurance benefits.

**Waiver of Benefits** - An employee who is eligible to participate in an insurance plan but who declines coverage must sign a waiver declining such coverage.

**Change in Employment Classification** - If an employee's employment classification changes or the number of hours normally worked per week falls below eligibility requirements for a particular benefit, the employee will be notified of any changes in Academy benefits. This notification includes information regarding insurance continuation coverage, if applicable.

*The following is a brief overview of the benefits available to eligible employees. It is intended as a source of general information only. More detailed information on insurance benefits is available in the applicable plan document or government regulation.*

### 902 *Health/Dental/Vision and Life Insurance*

**Policy Statement** - GEE offers its full-time employees health insurance, dental, and optional life and vision insurance. Part-time and temporary employees are not eligible for medical insurance coverage but have the option of purchasing health insurance available through the Health Insurance Marketplace at their own expense. We reserve the right to evaluate each benefit package on a case-by-case basis and determine the most cost effective benefits allocation.

**Eligibility** - Qualified employees are employees whose offer letter states that they are eligible for benefits. If a contract is not renewed, health insurance will terminate on June 30. Employees will be eligible for these benefits depending on their terms of employment on the following dates:

- 12 month employees on September 1
- 11 month employees on October 1
- 10 month employees on November 1

Any staff member eligible for insurance benefits who is hired between the 2nd day of the month and the end of the month will have their benefits start 60 days after the first of the following month.

**Coverage** - Individual, two person, employee and spouse (includes same-sex spouses), employee and dependents, and family coverage are available. Other health coverage alternatives may be available to you through the Health Insurance Marketplace. For more information about health insurance options available through a Health Insurance Marketplace, visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

**Cash In-Lieu of Insurance** - Employees that qualify who elect not to enroll in the GEE Health and Dental plan will be reimbursed \$3,000 at the end of the academic school year, if the entire year was worked and if a waiver and proof of other health insurance is on file with the GEE. If a married couple works for GEE, the one who does not enroll in the medical coverage does not qualify for reimbursement under this policy. Also when a married couple both work for GEE, both spouses must opt out of the benefits program to qualify for the reimbursement. In this case, both spouses would qualify for \$3,000/each. If you do not elect the GEE Health you will be reimbursed \$2,000. If you are a GEE employee AND you are a dependent on another GEE employee's benefits program, you do not qualify for the opt-out reimbursement.

**Qualifying Event** - In the case of a life-changing event, such as the birth of a child or marriage, in order for insurance to cover the event, it must be reported to the benefits department within 30 days.

**Premium Payment** - GEE contributes a specified dollar amount per month towards the premium for each eligible employee. Employees are responsible for the remaining portion of the insurance premium for the plan selected.

**Cancellation of Coverage** - An employee may elect to cancel the medical insurance coverage at any time. The appropriate insurance cancellation form may be obtained from the Human Resources.

**Continuation of Coverage** - If a covered employee, spouse, and/or dependents lose their group medical insurance coverage due to certain qualifying events, they may be eligible to temporarily continue such coverage at their own expense (See *503 Continuation of Benefits*).

**Information** - Information and enrollment forms may be obtained from the Benefits Office by contacting [benefits@gee-edu.com](mailto:benefits@gee-edu.com) or 734-369-9472.

### 903 **Retirement Plan**

**Policy Statement** - GEE administers a 401(k) plan that allows eligible employees to save towards their retirement.

**Eligibility** - Employees who work at least 1,000 hours per year are eligible to participate in the plan upon completion of one year of service. 401(k) Qualified Retirement Plan Employees will automatically be enrolled for 3% deferral into the 401K plan. If an employee wants to reduce the deferral amount or decline the 401k benefit then a form will have to be filled out with the Benefits Office prior to the eligible date (one year of service and 1000 hours or more of employment).

**Contributions** - An employee may contribute a percentage or specified dollar amount of the employee's eligible compensation to the plan, subject to limitations set by the IRS and may change from year to year. GEE will match up to 3% of the employee's contribution. This means that if an employee contributes less than 3%, GEE, will match no more than the amount contributed. If an employee contributes more than three percent (3%) of his or her income to his retirement then GEE will only match three percent (3%) of the



contribution. The Academy's contribution is subject to change. Any change in contribution level is normally announced in advance.

#### **904 Paid Time Off (PTO)**

**Policy Statement** – GEE grants “paid time off” (PTO) to eligible employees to be used for any reason of the employee's choosing, including vacation, illness, medical and dental appointments, religious observances, and/or personal reasons. PTO may be used for both scheduled and unscheduled absences, provided the Academy's notification policy is followed and authorization is obtained for the time off.

**Eligibility** - Full-time and part-time employees are eligible for PTO from work during the academic year, accrued every pay period based on hours worked. Temporary, summer and short-term employees are not eligible for PTO but are allowed unpaid time off with prior supervisory approval.

PTO is credited based on the number of hours an employee is normally scheduled to work, up to a maximum of eight hours per day and 40 hours per workweek for a full-time employee.

PTO is credited on after each paycheck. PTO cannot be used beyond the service dates of the employee, for example, the summer months.

**Benefit Year** - The benefit year is the period commencing and ending on an employee's annual anniversary date.

**PTO Pay** - A non-exempt employee is compensated at the employee's current base rate of pay for each hour of PTO taken. An exempt employee receives the employee's regular salary for the PTO period.

**Scheduling** - PTO requests must be submitted as far in advance as possible but no later than 10 business days to the Academy Leader. Every effort is made to authorize PTO in accordance with employee requests, taking the date the request is received, operating requirements, and length of employment into account. In addition, the Academy reserves the right to designate when some or all of an employee's PTO is taken.

GEE prefers that PTO not be used during the last three weeks of the academic school year. The final weeks that wrap up an academic semester are imperative and attendance is necessary to handle any and all end-of-year issues that tend to accumulate during that time period. For any exceptions needed, the person making the request is required to get prior approval from the GEE Human Resources Department.

Depending on the Academy budget, when a school building is closed part time office employees are not paid.

**Use of PTO** - PTO may be used in 8 hour increments.

**Accumulation** - No cash payouts of accrued paid time off will be made to any employee on a yearly basis. Accrued time stops at 240 hours. Once 240 hours has been accrued by the employee, the employee must cash out 40 hours of paid time off.

**Holiday During Scheduled Paid Time Off** - If an Academy-observed holiday falls on an employee's normally scheduled workday and the employee is on an authorized PTO leave, the day is counted as a paid holiday and not a PTO day. No allowance is made for sickness or other paid absence occurring during a scheduled PTO.

**Separation from Employment** - If an employee resigns from their position and gives two-week notice to hr@gee-edu.com then said employee would receive one-time cash out of their accrued paid time off. If an employee's contract is not renewed then that employee will receive one-time cash out of their accrued paid time off. If an employee resigns during a non-active contract period or gives less than two week notice while under active contract or is terminated (with cause by GEE HR Department) that employee will not receive a cash payout of their accrued time. All pay outs are at 50% of current rate.

## 905 *Holidays*

**Observed Holidays** - The Academy is closed for business to observe the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

**Pay for Independence Day is only for staff with July 1 to June 30 service days.**

**Eligibility** – Full-time and part-time employees are eligible for paid holidays upon hire. Pay can extend to six holidays that are nationally recognized depending on the employee agreement period.

**Holiday Pay Requirements** - Employees eligible for pay during holiday breaks are required to work the full academy day before the break and the full academy day after the break in order to qualify for the holiday pay. If an employee cannot work either of the two days as listed above, the employee is required to get prior approval from GEE by e-mailing: [hr@gee-edu.com](mailto:hr@gee-edu.com) the academy name and dates absent. If the employee does not get prior approval, sick time will be used or the salary will be prorated. An exempt employee's pay will not be docked for failure to follow the required procedure but may be subject to disciplinary action.

Documents need to be provided after the absence is approved, such as a doctor note or other verification of the absence. If there is an emergency matter that causes the employee to be absent the documentation must be provided prior to end of pay period. These documents are to be attached to the payroll timesheets that are submitted to GEE office. All documents must be provided with the applicable timesheet (i.e. within the same pay period of the absence).

**Holiday Pay** - A non-exempt employee is eligible for holiday pay at the employee's current base rate of pay. An exempt employee receives the employee's regular salary for each Academy-observed holiday.

**Leave of Absence** - An employee who is on a paid leave of absence (including paid FMLA leave) is eligible to receive compensation for any Academy-observed holidays that occur during the leave. For the purpose of this policy, paid leave is defined as leave during which the employee is using credited, unused PTO leave. An employee who is on an unpaid leave of absence is not eligible for any paid holidays that occur during the leave.

**Holiday Occurs during Vacation** - If an Academy-observed holiday falls on an employee's normal workday and the employee is on paid PTO, the day is counted as a paid holiday and not a PTO day.

**Holidays Not Designated by the Academy** - GEE respects the individual beliefs of all employees. The Academy will provide one day of paid leave annually to employees who, for religious reasons, must be away from the office on days of operation. Beyond this, we must reconcile employees' religious obligations with the requirements of running a business and serving customers. Time off is generally granted so long as it does not create an undue hardship on the Academy. A non-exempt employee has the option of using credited, unused vacation or personal leave or taking the time off without pay.

Any requests for religious accommodation must be submitted in writing to Human Resources at least two weeks in advance. Time off is granted only with prior approval, but will not be unreasonably withheld. The request must note what the religious conflict is and offer a suggestion to the Academy on how to remedy that conflict. The employee will meet with Human Resources to discuss the request and whether it is being approved or denied. All questions should be directed to Human Resources.

## 906 **Workers' Compensation**

**Policy Statement** - Workers' compensation benefits for lost wages and medical care are provided to eligible employees who suffer a job-related injury or illness.

**Eligibility** – All employees are covered by GEE's workers' compensation plan, as governed by the laws of the State of Michigan upon hire.

**Coverage** - The Workers' Compensation Board determines an employee's eligibility for benefits. If deemed eligible, an employee is covered for the period of disability specified by the employee's health care provider and the Workers' Compensation Board.

**Benefits** - Coverage is normally provided for all necessary medical care that is directly related to the original injury or illness and the recovery from such disability. Under Michigan law, the first seven days of injury are not covered and the employee will be paid to the extent of sick days available to the employee. After seven days the employee will be eligible for cash benefits starting with the eight day of disability. Employees with available sick time may supplement the worker's compensation benefits from their sick and/or personal days to maintain their salary.

If the disability extends beyond 14 days, cash benefits are paid retroactively for the first seven days of the disability. Cash benefits are normally calculated based on two-thirds of an employee's average weekly wages during the previous year multiplied by the percentage of disability, up to a specified maximum.

**Voluntary, Off-Duty Conduct** - Neither GEE or its insurance carrier is liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by the Academy.

**Leave of Absence** - The Family and Medical Leave Act policy or the Academy's Leave of Absence policy normally applies to an employee who is receiving workers' compensation benefits. Please refer to these policies for information regarding leave requests, benefit continuation, job restoration, etc.

**Premium Payment** - The cost of workers' compensation insurance is paid entirely by the Academy.

## 907 **Unemployment Insurance**

**Policy Statement** - Unemployment insurance benefits provide short-term financial assistance to individuals who have lost their jobs due to no fault of their own and are ready, willing, and able to work.

**Eligibility** - Eligibility for unemployment insurance is determined by the State Department of Labor.

**Cost** - The cost of unemployment insurance coverage is paid entirely by the Academy.

**Lack of Work** - The Michigan Employment Securities Act (MESA) states that if a worker files for unemployment benefits and has worked in any job for an academy, benefits will not be payable based on the lack of work at the academy during an Academy holiday or recess period, or the summer period between academy years, if the worker has reasonable assurance (offer letter) from the academy of a similar job being held for him following the period of unemployment.

**908    *Social Security and Medicare***

**Policy Statement** - Social Security and Medicare benefits are available for retirement, survivor's benefits, and medical costs under qualifying conditions as determined by the Federal Social Security Administration Office.

**Cost** - The Academy matches employee contributions to Social Security (FICA) and Medicare.

**909    *GEE Sponsored Professional Development***

**Policy Statement** - Teachers and the administrative team are required to attend professional development workshops at their academy, as set by the Charter Contract. For the GRSP programs; staff is required to be in attendance for the full Friday as required by the grant. Professional development is an integral part of the academy mission; it helps to foster an atmosphere of teamwork, and works to make us better educators.

This time is to be spent either meeting in grade level/content area teams, mapping the curriculum, or participating in academy-wide training conducted by an Academy staff member or GEE team member. There may also be special opportunities for an outside expert to train during this professional development period. Staff members are required to sign out if they leave during this period and time will be deducted from sick/personal time.

**910    *On The Job Training for Engineering Staff***

**Policy Statement** - Participation in off-site, safety, and continuing education training is necessary to develop job safety, professional development, and to improve work performance. Training will be conducted during regular working hours whenever possible, but due to varying shifts, training may unavoidably occur during your off hours.

**Questions** - If you have any questions regarding training, please see your supervisor.

## 1000 PERSONAL CONDUCT

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### 1001 *Personal Appearance*

**Policy Statement** - Employees are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal cleanliness and present a neat, professional appearance at all times. Our impression on the students represents one of the most important and challenging aspect of our business. Whether or not your job responsibilities place you in direct student contact, you represent GEE and your respective academy with your appearance as well as your actions. A properly attired individual helps to create a favorable image for GEE and a professional atmosphere at in your respective school building. Therefore, acceptable personal appearance is a requirement of employment with the Academy.

**Dress Standards** - The following are guidelines for choosing appropriate attire both on typical days as well as dress-down days:

- Students are not allowed to wear jeans, so we ask that teachers do not wear jeans.
- Refrain from wearing V-neck or scooped neck, low-cut tops unless you have a higher cut shirt underneath.
- Skirts/dress hemlines should be below the knee when sitting.
- Sleeveless shirts or tanks tops worn alone are not appropriate. Tank tops may be worn under a jacket or another shirt so long as the neckline is higher cut to cover the chest area.
- Graphic or logo t-shirts or sweatshirts are not appropriate; with the exception of GEE issued shirts.
- Button down shirts may not be unbuttoned past the first (top) button.
- Pants that are jogging, yoga, sweat or legging style are not appropriate.
- The Academy Leader must first approve dress down days.

**Inappropriate Attire** - If a staff member is not appropriately dressed, the Academy Leader has the authority to send staff member home to change. The Academy Leader may do so at his/her own discretion as to what may be considered 'appropriate attire'. If sent home to change, the inappropriately dressed staff member pay will be deducted for the time away from the Academy.

**Dress-down Day** - On these days, employees are allowed to dress in a more casual fashion. This policy does not apply to employees who wear uniforms or other types of special clothing. On dress-down days, an employee's attire must still reflect professionalism and good taste for an office environment. The Academy reserves the right to cancel dress-down day for some or all employees when business circumstances warrant a professional appearance, such as for student meetings or appointments.

**Grooming Standards** - An employee's hair, sideburns, mustache, and/or beard should be clean, combed, and well-groomed. Employees who have regular contact with students and/or the public are not allowed to have visible tattoos and/or body piercings (other than earlobes). At the discretion of management, an employee may be required to fully cover a large tattoo.

Radical departures from conventional dress (e.g., excessive body piercings or tattoos) or grooming and hygiene standards (e.g., excessive perfume or cologne, body odor) are not permitted. GEE reserves the right to require employees to conform to its standards of personal presentation and appearance.

**Fragrances** - Please be considerate of your co-workers and students who may experience sensitivity to strong scents, by not applying excessive amounts of cologne or scented lotion.

**Reasonable Accommodation** - The Academy will generally make an exception to its clothing, hairstyle, and/or grooming standards in order to reasonably accommodate an employee's disability or sincerely-held religious practice, unless it creates a safety concern or imposes an undue hardship on the Academy. An employee should contact their supervisor to request an accommodation.

**Policy Violations** - An employee who reports to work inappropriately dressed or groomed may be sent home to change. A non-exempt employee is not compensated for any time lost from work to comply with this policy.

## **1002 Misrepresentation**

**Policy Statement** - GEE is committed to operating the Academy honestly, with integrity, and in compliance with government regulations. All employees are expected to share this commitment.

**Prohibited Conduct** - Employees must refrain from any illegal, fraudulent, or dishonest business activity. Examples of conduct that is prohibited include, but are not limited to, violations of government or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) regulations, preparing fraudulent accounting records or financial reports, and billing students for services not performed or goods not delivered or over/undercharging them. It also includes misrepresenting an Academy product or service to our students or intentionally giving false information.

**Reporting Policy Violations** – An employee is required to report any conduct that he or she reasonably believes violates this policy by notifying the Principal immediately.

## **1003 Substance-Free Workplace**

**Substance-Free Workplace** - It is GEE's goal to provide a drug- and alcohol-free, healthy, and safe workplace. Employees are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner. Engineering staff must do random drug testing as set by state law.

**Prohibited Behavior** - An employee is prohibited from possessing, using, selling, purchasing, storing, distributing, or manufacturing alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or narcotics on Academy premises, at work sites, or at any location while representing the Academy. An employee is also prohibited from having alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or narcotics that may impair an employee's ability to safely perform the duties of his/her job present in the employee's system when reporting to work, during working time, or at any time while conducting business-related activities. Drug paraphernalia, such as pipes and needles, is prohibited on Academy premises, at work sites, and in vehicles being used for Academy business, unless the employee is able to provide a prescription showing medical necessity for health reasons.

The Academy prohibits the off-premises abuse of alcohol and controlled substances, as well as the possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs, when these activities adversely affect job performance, job safety, and/or the Academy's reputation in the community.

**Business Functions** - At certain times, GEE may designate that alcohol can be consumed on Academy premises or during business activities that are conducted in a social setting (e.g., dinner meetings with students, Academy-sponsored office parties). Employees are expected to exercise moderation and good judgment at all times, and will be held to the same standards of behavior as otherwise required, regardless of the circumstances. An employee who becomes intoxicated, acts inappropriately, and/or violates one or more Academy policies (e.g., anti-harassment/sexual harassment, attendance, driving on Academy business) during these activities may be subject to disciplinary action.

**Use of Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs** - Prescription drugs must be in the possession of the individual to whom the prescription was written, taken in the dosage prescribed, and maintained in their original containers. An employee is not allowed to use prescription drugs that have not been legally obtained or in a manner or for a purpose other than as prescribed. An employee must inform the employee's supervisor of any prescription or legal, nonprescription (e.g., over-the-counter) drugs including medical marijuana that are currently being taken if they could in any way affect or impair the employee's ability to perform the job safely. The legal use of prescribed and over-the-counter drugs is only permitted on the job if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the job safely and it does not affect the safety or well being of other individuals in the workplace.

An employee should not drive on Academy business if the employee's ability to drive safely has been impaired by illness, fatigue, injury, prescription medication, illegal drugs, or alcohol.

**Reporting of Problems** - Any observation or knowledge of an employee who is in a condition that impairs the employee's ability to perform job duties, presents a hazard to the safety and welfare of others, or appears to otherwise be in violation of the Academy's substance-free workplace policy should be reported to the Academy Leader immediately.

**Screening for Drug or Alcohol Use** - An employee may be tested for alcohol or illegal drugs where there is a reasonable suspicion that abuse, impairment, or a violation of this policy exists. Testing will be conducted in accordance with applicable state or municipal regulations and will generally follow Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations. An employee who is instructed to take a drug test must comply with all procedures at the testing facility. Failure to take a test or follow procedures will result in termination. Drug and alcohol tests are paid for by the Academy, and are the property of the Academy.

An employee who tests positive to a confirmed test for alcohol or controlled substances will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. In the event an employee is not immediately discharged for testing positive or for some other violation of this policy, the Academy, in its sole discretion, may allow the employee to return to work pursuant to the employee executing a written agreement acknowledging that:

- 1) The employee tested positive or otherwise violated this policy; and
- 2) In exchange for the Academy not discharging the employee for this instance of testing positive or otherwise violating this policy, the employee agrees to:
  - a) Undergo rehabilitation, counseling or other activities prescribed by a licensed medical professional;
  - b) Periodic, unannounced drug and/or alcohol testing for a set time period; and
  - c) Be subject to discharge for any future violation of this policy.

An employee's participation in a treatment program does not prevent GEE from disciplining the employee for violations of this or other Academy policies.

An employee who tests positive, admits to illegal drug use or related misconduct, or who voluntarily seeks assistance, and is not discharged, will not be allowed to return to work or continue working until the employee has been evaluated by a health care professional of GEE's choice to determine if the employee can safely return to work.

**Policy Violations** - Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The possession, use, sale, purchase, distribution, or manufacture of illegal drugs shall also be brought to the attention of the appropriate law enforcement agency.

## **1004 Outside Employment**

**Policy Statement** - An employee is generally permitted to hold a second job as long as it does not interfere with the employee's job performance, pose an actual or potential conflict of interest, or compromise the interests of the Academy. Outside employment that does or may constitute a conflict of interest is prohibited.

**Performance and Work Schedule Requirements** - An employee must meet all scheduling requirements of the Academy, including business travel and overtime hours, and shall not receive authorization to report to work late or to leave work early in order to accommodate a second job.

**Use of Paid Leave Benefits** - An employee is not allowed to use paid sick or PTO leave or to take time off without pay to work at another employer.

**Restrictions** - An employee may not work for another employer or be self-employed if such work is in direct competition with GEE. An employee is not permitted to perform any work for the Academy's students during non-working time if these services are normally available from and/or performed by GEE. Further, an employee is prohibited from soliciting or performing any work for another employer, for the employee's own personal business, or for any other personal gain during working time. No Academy-owned equipment,

supplies, or confidential trade information or techniques may be used for furtherance of an employee's personal business or for another employer.

**Notification of Outside Employment** - An employee who is interested in obtaining outside employment must discuss the matter with the employee's supervisor prior to accepting the job to ensure that the above guidelines are maintained. Newly hired employees who are employed by another employer, own their own business, or partake in other work activities must disclose this information on their *Application for Employment Form*.

## **1005 Driving on Academy Business**

**Policy Statement** - Employees in certain positions may be required to drive Academy or personal vehicles to conduct business on behalf of GEE. Employees who drive on Academy business must operate vehicles in a safe and responsible manner, and in compliance with all applicable motor vehicle and traffic regulations.

**Driver's License** - An employee who drives on Academy business must possess a valid driver's license free from major infractions at the time of hire and throughout employment. The driving records of final applicants and employees who apply for positions that involve driving are checked following a conditional offer of employment. Thereafter, the Academy conducts motor vehicle record checks on a regular basis in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).

**Driving While Impaired** - An employee is prohibited from driving on Academy business if the employee's ability to drive safely has been impaired by illness, fatigue, injury, prescription medication, illegal drugs, or alcohol.

**Change in Status or Loss of Driver's License** - An employee who drives on Academy business must immediately notify the employee's supervisor if a ticket is received while driving an Academy vehicle or if a conviction is received for any traffic violation (except parking) during working or non-working time. The employee's supervisor must also be notified immediately if the employee's driver's license is suspended, revoked, or cancelled, or if the employee becomes disqualified from operating or loses the right to operate a motor vehicle, including a commercial motor vehicle, for any period. An employee is not allowed to drive on Academy business with a suspended or revoked license.

**Suspension of Driving Privileges** - An employee's Academy driving privileges may be suspended for receiving an excessive number of traffic citations, regardless of whether the citations were received while driving on Academy business. If an employee's Academy driving privileges are suspended and the employee's position requires regular use of a vehicle, the employee may be reassigned to another position, if available, or terminated for inability to perform the duties of the job.

**Traffic Violation** - The employee is responsible for paying the cost of any traffic or parking tickets, moving violations, or fines that result from driving on Academy business.

**Use of Personal Vehicle for Academy Business** - An employee who drives a personal vehicle to conduct Academy business must have auto liability insurance (for both bodily injury and property damage) and proof of a minimum policy for liability coverage of \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per accident. Proof of such insurance is required upon hire and on an annual basis thereafter. If an employee's liability insurance lapses, the employee's supervisor must be notified immediately.

**Academy Liability** - The Academy does not assume any liability for injury to members of the public caused by the negligence of an employee who is driving a personally owned vehicle in the course of Academy business. In addition, the Academy is not responsible for any damage to an employee's personal vehicle or loss or damage to personal property contained within the vehicle.

**Cell Phones/Wireless Devices** - An employee is not allowed to make or receive calls on a cell phone and/or wireless device while driving unless a headset or hands-free device is used. In addition, an employee is prohibited from reading, writing, or sending text messages while driving. Attention to the road should always be a driver's number one priority.



**Accident** - An employee must notify Human Resources immediately in the event of an accident, theft, or damage involving a vehicle being used for Academy business, regardless of the lack of damage or injuries. A law enforcement officer should be summoned to the scene of any accident involving an employee or vehicle being used for Academy business and an ambulance should be summoned if anyone appears injured. A copy of the Accident Report should be obtained from the police for submittal to the Human Recourses Department.

**Use of Academy Vehicles** - Academy-provided vehicles may be assigned to employees for the purpose of conducting Academy business. Only authorized employees are allowed to drive Academy vehicles. Academy vehicles should only be used for authorized Academy business and may not be used for the personal use or private gain of an employee or to transport unauthorized individuals or materials. No unauthorized passengers are allowed in Academy vehicles.

**Academy Vehicle Maintenance** - Employees are responsible for maintaining Academy vehicles in a neat and clean condition at all times. Papers and garbage are to be removed from the vehicle at the end of each trip. Vehicles should be maintained in a safe and secure condition when not in use. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the Human Recourses Department when an Academy vehicle is in need of maintenance or repair work.

## **1006 Standards of Conduct**

**Policy Statement** - For the benefit and safety of employees, students, and the Academy, an employee must comply with GEE's standards of behavior and performance. GEE expects all employees to maintain high standards of professionalism in their working relationships and in the performance of their professional duties. Conduct that interferes with business operations, discredits GEE, or is offensive to coworkers, students, or the public is not tolerated.

**Employee Responsibilities** - Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to treat coworkers, students, vendors, and visitors with courtesy and respect. Appropriate employee conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Recognizing the basic dignity of all individuals with whom one is to interact with in the performance of duties.
- Accurately represent their qualifications.
- Exercising appropriate care to protect the mental and physical safety of students, colleagues, and subordinates.
- Seeking and applying the knowledge and skills suitable to assigned responsibilities.
- Keeping in confidence any legally confidential information they are privy to.
- Ensuring that their actions or those of another on their behalf are not made with the specific intent of advancing private economic interests.
- Avoiding accepting gifts valued over \$5.00 or anything of value offered by another for the purpose of influencing judgment.
- Refraining from using position or public property, or permitting another person to use position or public property, for partisan political or religious purposes. This will in no way limit constitutionally or legally protect rights as a citizen.
- Performing all assigned job duties efficiently, to the best of the employee's abilities, and in accordance with established performance standards;
- Being fair, considerate, and honest with supervisors, coworkers, students, vendors, and members of the public;
- Reporting any suspicious, unethical, potentially violent, or illegal conduct by coworkers or any other persons with whom the employee conducts business on behalf of the Academy; and
- Cooperating with any GEE investigation.

In accordance with the ethical responsibilities stipulated in the Administrative Guidelines, GEE requires that staff not engage in any romantic or sexual relationship of any kind with students regardless of age, unless the staff member and student are legally married to one another. It is also forbidden for professional staff to provide alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, or any other contraband to a student.

**Prohibited Conduct** - The rules governing staff conduct are intended to promote the orderly and efficient operation of GEE academies, as well as to protect the rights of all staff members and students. Other types of conduct that may jeopardize the personal safety, security, or welfare of students under the umbrella of GEE or its employees are also prohibited (see the Board Policy Manual for entire Weapons Policy). An employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for a violation of a policy, procedure, or rule outlined in this employee handbook or otherwise established by the employee's supervisor. In addition, an employee may be subject to disciplinary action for engaging in any of the following:

- Consuming, possessing, reporting to work under the influence of, working under the influence of, or distributing “controlled substances” or alcoholic beverages or other narcotics. Engineering staff is subject to random drug and alcohol testing and searches.
- Theft of any kind of the Academy or the property of any other GEE employee or Academy student.
- Deliberate destruction of any property of the Academy or the property of any employee or student.
- Unauthorized use of property, equipment, or facilities of the Academy.
- Unauthorized use of telephones for personal use during work hours.
- Use or possession of the personal equipment or possessions of another employee without their consent.
- Removal of any property or records from the premises of the Academy without the permission of the Academy Leader or GEE.
- Insubordination or refusal to obey, or willful failure to carry out verbal or written instructions of supervisory personnel.
- Provoking a fight or fighting during work hours with anyone or at any time on the property of the Academy.
- Carrying firearms or any other dangerous weapons at any time on Academy premises. Staff members are prohibited from possessing, storing, making, or using a weapon in any setting that is under the control and supervision of the academy (see BP Manual for full Weapons Policy).
- Engaging in criminal conduct, whether or not related to job performance.
- Falsifying records or revealing confidential information to unauthorized persons.
- Unlawful harassment of any kind.
- Failure to observe the working schedule, including lunch and rest periods.
- Abuse of paid sick leave.
- Abuse of paid emergency leave.
- Failure to provide a physician’s certificate when requested or required.
- Tobacco usage on academy premises, in academy vehicles, or in any buildings operated by the academy.
- Offensive or unprofessional conduct;
- Improper performance of job duties or repeated failure to perform assigned duties and responsibilities;
- Unauthorized expenditure of Academy funds;
- Insubordination or refusal to obey a supervisor's instructions;
- Refusing to sign a corrective discipline notice or any other requested acknowledgement form;

- The use of foul or abusive language, including racial slurs and epithets;
- Sabotaging the work of a coworker;
- Illegal gambling while on duty; and
- Sleeping on the job.

The above list is illustrative only and is not intended to limit the Academy's right to impose discipline in other appropriate situations.

**Security Devices** - GEE has been authorized to install video surveillance equipment, metal detectors, and other security devices in schools and facilities to detect guns, dangerous weapons, or any other form of contraband in and around academy buildings. Security procedures are detailed in the Administrative Guidelines Manual.

**Reporting** - When appropriate, complaints under this policy will be reported to the local law enforcement agencies by administrative representatives. All reports or complaints under this policy will be investigated and include confidentiality where appropriate.

Once an investigation is complete, a formal recommendation will be administered to provide guidelines on how to handle the complaint. The recommendation document is submitted to GEE for disposition and execution. Behaviors prohibited under criminal law shall be reported to proper authorities and to the GEE Board.

**Disciplinary Action** - Whenever it becomes necessary to discipline a member of the staff, GEE has been authorized by the School Board to use "due process" procedures, which can include mandatory and unpaid leaves of absence.

## **1007 Progressive Discipline**

**Policy Statement** - Our progressive discipline policy and procedure is designed to provide a structured corrective action process to improve and prevent a recurrence of undesirable behavior and/or performance issues. The Academy strives to impose corrective discipline fairly, consistently, and in relation to the seriousness of the offense.

**Company Rules and Regulations** - GEE stresses quality in team cooperation, performance, attendance, and punctuality. For this reason, it is important that you acquaint yourself with GEE policies, rules, and regulations. Human experience has clearly shown that whenever individuals are joined together in a common enterprise, their conduct must be governed by rules. These rules are necessary to product the welfare of the entire group and the interests of each and every member of that group. The intent and purpose of GEE rules and regulations are to protect the rights of every employee and to ensure their safety, well-being, and the right to work in an atmosphere conducive to good work practices. By accepting employment with us, you have a responsibility to GEE and to your fellow employees to adhere to certain rules of behavior and conduct. To ensure impartiality and consistency, GEE categorizes infractions into two classes, each of which will be subject to different levels of discipline. The two classes of infractions are outlined below.

### **Class 1**

1. Any deliberate falsification of employment application, personnel records, payroll records, information, or other Company records.
2. Deliberate destruction of theft of Company property, a customer's property, expense reports, or another employee's property.
3. Becoming involved in a fight on Company property or on Company time or any other demonstration of violence.
4. Excessive absenteeism, unexcused absences or unexcused tardiness in reporting for work.
5. Possession, use, or being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances on GEE premises or on GEE time. Reporting to work intoxicated or under the influence of any illegal or controlled substance.

6. Insubordination, such as refusal to perform work requirements as assigned by the employee's coordinator/supervisor.
7. Careless behavior that results in any bodily injury to a fellow employee.
8. Carrying firearms or other dangerous weapons on GEE property, except where otherwise permitted by law.
9. The unauthorized use of equipment on GEE property.
10. Unauthorized use of, repair of, or attempt to repair machines, tools, equipment, or merchandise.
11. The use of abusive, vulgar, or threatening language or gestures to any fellow employee, customer, or guest.
12. Refusal to cooperate in an investigation, including one requiring alcohol and/or drug testing.
13. Harassment of another employee, as defined by GEE harassment policy. Threatening, intimidating or coercing fellow employees on or off the premises at any time, for any purpose.
14. Severe breach of security rules or procedures.
15. Sleeping while on duty.
16. Conducting any illegal activity with the use of Company equipment or while on duty.
17. Failure to report any on-the-job accident or injury promptly.
18. Unauthorized access to records or information.
19. Unauthorized use of disclosure or confidential information.

## **Class II**

1. Failure to report anticipated absence from work prior to the start of the shift or failure to report a late arrival.
2. Unexcused absence. Unexcused absences are unscheduled, unapproved absences.
3. Failure to clock in/out correctly.
4. Negligence, carelessness, or conduct that adversely affects quality or quantity of your work or another employee's work, equipment, or merchandise.
5. Solicitations on working time or in working areas.
6. Unexcused tardiness in reporting for work.
7. Smoking in designated No Smoking areas.
8. Violation of Company credit card policy, failure to submit expense reports monthly.
9. Failure to report mechanical defects in equipment.
10. Discourtesy to the Customer, management representatives, other employees, or visitors.
11. Unexcused failure to start or complete a job assignment in the required time.
12. Failure to observe security procedures or rules.
13. Leaving GEE property during working hours without prior permission from the coordinator/supervisor.
14. Failure to complete documents accurately and completely per GEE specifications.
15. Failure to observe safety rules.
16. Circulation or distribution of literature, pledges, petitions, subscriptions, or other written or printed materials on work time or in work areas.
17. Working unauthorized overtime.
18. Failure to complete training on time.

The above list of potential violations is not intended to be all-inclusive of possible violations that may demand immediate attention and disciplinary action. GEE reserves the right to respond properly to any illegal or inappropriate behavior.

**Class I Violations** - For infractions occurring within the group of Class I Rules, an employee may be subject to immediate discharge without warning.

**Class II Violations** - For any infractions occurring with the group of Class II Rules, a written warning or letter will be given to the employee. A copy will be retained in the employee's personnel folder. Accumulation of three letters during a one-year period of the most recent letter, may result at the discretion of management, result in termination of your employment. All letters are kept as a permanent record in your personnel file. Notwithstanding the foregoing, GEE reserves the right to issue discipline appropriate to the severity of a particular offense which could justify discipline up to and including termination under some circumstances.

## **Procedure**

GEE will try to exercise the progressive nature of this policy by first providing warnings, final written warning and/or suspension from the workplace before proceeding to a recommendation to terminate employment. Supervisor recommendations to terminate employment must be approved by Human Resources. Final approval is required from top administrators at GEE.

**Appeal Process** - Employees will have the opportunity to present information that may challenge information management has used to issue disciplinary action. The purpose of this process is to provide insight into extenuating circumstances that may have contributed to the employee performance and/or conduct issues while allowing for an equitable solution.

**Performance and Conduct Issues Not Subject to Progressive Discipline** - Behavior that is illegal is not subject to progressive discipline and may be reported to local law enforcement. Theft, intoxication at work, fighting and other acts of violence, are also not subject to progressive discipline and may be grounds for immediate termination and will entail legal recourse.

**Documentation** - The employee will be provided copies of all progressive discipline documentation including all performance improvement plans. The employee will be asked to sign copies of this documentation attesting to their receipt and understanding of the corrective action outlined in these documents. Copies of these documents will be placed in the employee's official personnel file.

**Termination Policy** - Since the relationship between GEE and its employees is at-will, either GEE or the employee can terminate the relationship with or without notice or with or without just cause. This relationship can only be modified by an agreement in writing between GEE and the employee. There are varying degrees of seriousness which pertain to performance and/or infractions of policies and there are certain instances where conduct and/or performance is of such a serious nature that immediate termination, without prior warning or consultation, may be a justified course of action.

GEE is responsible for suspension and termination of employees. Employees and those under individual contract to work regularly and continuously in the academy, whether part-time or full-time, may not continue employment with GEE if a criminal history records check or other authoritative source reveals a conviction of a "listed" offense under MCL 28.722. Individuals convicted of a non-listed felony may not continue to work unless both GEE and the Board gives written approval. Such conviction(s) may subject professional staff to discharge or demotion. The State Board of Education will be notified of the report of conviction(s) as required by law.

**Grievance** - An employee written grievance concerning job issues should be brought to the Academy Leader within one week of the occurrence. The grievance should state the concerns underlying the said grievance. The Academy Leader will meet with all parties involved within seven days of the notice. If the problem cannot be resolved by the Academy Leader, an appeal may be made to GEE. If the problem cannot be resolved by GEE, the grievance can be appealed to the Academy Board of Directors. If there is a grievance against the academy leaders, the employee may file the written grievance with the GEE Human Resources department, after attempting to resolve the dispute between the parties.

If the employer leaves in good standing, he or she may be considered for reemployment.

Upon resigning or upon termination from GEE, please continue to provide GEE with an accurate address for at least one year for tax purposes.

## **1008 Fraternization**

**Policy Statement** - GEE wants to preserve a working environment that has clear boundaries between personal and professional relationships. This is believed to be the best practice for conducting business in a professional manner. This policy establishes clear boundaries with regard to how relationships develop at work and within the confines of the work area.

- During working hours and in work areas, employees are expected to keep all personal interactions limited and at a professional level to avoid distracting or offending others.

- Employees are prohibited from engaging in any physical interactions that would be seen as inappropriate in the work area. What constitutes inappropriate conduct is in the discretion of the Academy.
- Employees who engage in personal relationships with others and allow these relationships to negatively affect the working environment will be subject to disciplinary action. If said employees fail to change their behavior after disciplinary action takes place, they may be subject to termination.
- Romantic relationships between supervising, managing or executive employees and subordinates are strictly prohibited. If a relationship does develop between a supervising employee and his or her subordinate, management should be notified immediately so that a department transfer may be considered.

## 1009 **Ethics**

**Policy Statement** –GEE’s integrity and reputation are its most valuable asset, as such, maintaining a principled code of ethics is of utmost importance. GEE expects all employees to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and integrity in the performance of their job duties and while representing the Academy. All work must be performed in an ethical manner and in accordance with government regulations and Academy policy. An employee should never use their position at their respective GEE academy or any of its students for private gain, to advance personal interests, to obtain favors, or benefits.

GEE adheres to the highest legal and ethical standards. Daily business at the GEE main office and its respective academies is conducted with strict observance of both the letter and the spirit of all applicable laws. Therefore, the integrity of each employee is of utmost importance.

Employees of GEE shall conduct their personal affairs such that their duties and responsibilities to GEE and their respective charter school are not jeopardized. Furthermore, employees must be vigilant so legal and ethical questions do not arise with respect to their association or work with GEE and their respective academy. If a GEE employee is working for or providing consultation to other local public schools, charter academies, universities, or community colleges while still working for GEE, that information must be disclosed to [hr@gee-edu.com](mailto:hr@gee-edu.com) within two weeks of employment with the other institution.

**Prohibited Conduct** - An employee is expected to refrain from any illegal, unethical, and/or dishonest business activity. Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Directly or indirectly soliciting or accepting a bribe, kickback, loan, gift, service, entertainment, or preferential treatment from a current or prospective vendor, supplier, student, or competitor for the employee's personal gain in return for being influenced in connection with GEE business;
- Directly or indirectly giving a bribe, kickback, loan, gift, service, entertainment, or preferential treatment to a current or prospective vendor, supplier, student, or competitor in return for influencing that individual or organization in connection with GEE business;
- Having a direct or indirect financial interest or a personal business relationship with any business or person that does business with GEE without disclosure to and approval of the Academy; and
- Investing in the stocks, bonds, or securities of a vendor, supplier, student, or competitor if such transactions are based on any “inside information.”

**Employee Guidance** - Because the Academy is unable to list every example of conduct that may violate this policy, an employee should use good judgment and seek guidance and assistance from the employee's supervisor, if needed.

**Gifts** - An employee who is offered a gift, money, service, travel, entertainment, or other special consideration from any current or prospective vendor, supplier, or student must politely refuse the gift, advising the giver of GEE's policy that prohibits its acceptance.

## **1010 Student and Parent Relations**

**Policy Statement** - The opinions and attitudes that both students and parents have toward GEE are often determined by the actions of one employee. Therefore, employee behavior and professionalism influences GEE's long-term image in the communities we serve. Our success depends on treating our populations we serve with dignity and respect. We must attend to parent questions promptly and professionally. If you need assistance, please contact the Academy Leader or another employee who you know will be able to assist and advise.

Each employee must be sensitive to the importance of providing courteous treatment in all working relationships.

## **1011 Conviction Notification**

**Policy Statement** - An employee must, as a condition of employment, inform GEE of all criminal convictions. An employee is responsible for notifying Human Resources within three days of receiving a misdemeanor or felony conviction.

**Employment Decisions Based on Conviction** - A criminal conviction does not necessarily disqualify an applicant from employment consideration or result in termination of a current employee. Employment decisions based on a conviction take into consideration the extent to which the offense relates to the functions of the particular job, the seriousness of the offense, rehabilitation, and length of time since the conviction.

## 1100 ACADEMY PREMISES AND WORK AREAS

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### 1101 *Academy Property*

**Policy Statement** - The purpose of GEE's property is for the smooth and efficient operations of the Academy.

**Employee Responsibility** - An employee is responsible for any items issued by the Academy that are in the employee's possession and/or control. All equipment must be used appropriately, handled carefully, and maintained in good condition. In addition, all operating and maintenance instructions must be followed. Supplies should be used efficiently and not wasted in order to save money and resources.

**Prohibited Uses of Academy Property** - An employee should not deliberately destroy, deface, or misuse Academy property. The theft or unauthorized removal or possession of Academy property is prohibited.

**Damage to Academy Property** - An employee must immediately stop using any damaged, defective, or malfunctioning Academy property and notify their supervisor.

**GEE Academy Property Loaned to Employees** - Property such as technological devices, textbooks, teacher manuals, phones are the property of GEE and are to be returned upon the employee leaving the organization and for the summer period. Should a staff member keep any property loaned to them, 100% of the manufacturing market value of the item will be deducted from your bank account. Damaged property is the responsibility of the person to whom the device is assigned to and the person is responsible for all repair or replacement costs.

**Key Cards** - Key cards and access to the buildings are a privilege staff must handle with care. Employees must be vigilant to not lose or lend out their key card. Should a staff member abuse their key card privileges by lending their key card to another individual (staff members, students, or otherwise), it will result in immediate loss of key card privileges. More than one incident of a lost or misplaced key card may also result in privileges being revoked.

**Office Supplies** - Your academy maintains a stock of basic office supplies such as pens, paper clips, staples, notepads, etc. Your supervisor will provide all office supplies to you. All office supplies are for business use only and should not be removed from the office for non-business use. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

**Personal Use of Academy Facilities and Equipment** - Employees and private individuals are prohibited from conducting any type of personal business, entertainment or non-business related activity on Academy premises. No property may be removed from the premises without the proper authorization of management.

**Definition of Academy Property** - For the purpose of this policy, GEE's property is defined as equipment, tools, technological devices, textbooks, manuals, keys, and this employee handbook. This list is not all-inclusive.

### 1102 *Personal Belongings*

**Policy Statement** - The Academy discourages an employee from bringing valuable, unnecessary, or inappropriate personal property to work. Personal property that is brought onto Academy premises must be appropriate for a business environment, should not be offensive to others, disrupt work, or pose a safety risk to other employees, students, or visitors.

**Personal Liability** - GEE is not responsible for the personal belongings of employees. The Academy will not repair, replace, or reimburse an employee for any damage to, or loss of, an employee's personal property. This includes personal items in Academy or personal vehicles.



**Music** - Radios, CD players, and other music players are allowed in work areas as long as the volume is kept low so that other employees are not disturbed or distracted. Violation of this rule will result in an employee's forfeiture of this privilege.

### **1103 Maintenance of Work Area**

**Policy Statement** - GEE is dedicated to providing a safe, clean, and pleasant work environment for employees, students, and visitors. Work areas are to be kept clean and orderly. Equipment and supplies should be returned to their proper location after use. Coats and other personal items should be stored in designated locations.

**Food and Beverages** - Employees should use caution when taking food and beverages in work areas. Beverages should be in covered containers and any spills or crumbs should be wiped up immediately.

**Work Areas** - Good work habits and a neat place to work are essential for job safety and efficiency. You are expected to keep your place of work organized, clean and clear of clutter, and materials in good order at all times. Report anything that needs repair or replacement to your supervisor. We encourage teachers to help students participate in maintaining a clean and responsible classroom environment. A good example of teaching classroom responsibility would be to turn the lights off when the room is not in use in order to help reduce the cost of the electricity bill. Reducing these types of costs will allow for the saved funds to be applied to the education of the students.

**Housekeeping** - It is the responsibility of employees to keep the lounge, cafeteria, meeting rooms, restrooms and the entire premises clean at all times. Please put items in their proper location after each use, dispose of garbage in the appropriate trash cans, and wash and put away dishes. Office paper, cardboard, newspapers, and other items that can be recycled should be placed in the designated containers.

### **1104 Parking**

**Designated Parking** - Employee parking is available in the designated academy lots. Employees should not park in designated handicapped, reserved, or visitor parking areas. When off-site, employees must follow the parking guidelines established by the student.

**Damage to Vehicles** - GEE is not responsible for the security of, or damage to, employees' vehicles or their contents while parked on the premises or while on Academy business. Human Resources must be notified immediately of any accident, theft, or damage to a vehicle that occurs while on Academy premises, regardless of the severity, so that the proper authorities may be notified.

### **1105 Smoke-Free Workplace**

**Policy Statement** - GEE is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for employees, students, and visitors. The Academy maintains a smoke-free work environment. The smoking or chewing of tobacco products is not permitted on GEE property. This policy covers the use of all tobacco and tobacco-like products, including but not limited to, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, cigars, pipes, herbal tobacco products, chewing tobacco and the use of smokeless or "spit" tobacco, and vaping, and applies to both employees, students, and non-employee visitors.

**Smoking Breaks** - An employee is not allowed additional or special breaks for smoking purposes.

**Policy Violations** - Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to, and including termination.

## **1106 Charitable Solicitation and Distribution**

**Policy Statement** - The Academy is supportive of charitable causes in the community. However, so as not to interfere with normal business operations, employees are not allowed to use work email, voicemail, or other resources to distribute literature, including handbills, or solicit coworkers, students, vendors, and/or visitors on Academy premises or at any location while representing the Academy. This includes advertising, promoting, or soliciting for an employee's outside business ventures, personal parties, membership in any organization, or other matters not connected to GEE's business. The only exceptions to this policy are charitable and community activities supported by GEE.

**Non-Employees** - In an effort to ensure a productive and harmonious work environment, the Academy prohibits non-employees from soliciting, posting, distributing literature, or engaging in similar activity on Academy premises at any time for any purpose.

## 1200 SAFETY AND SECURITY

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### 1201 *Safety Program*

**Policy Statement** - GEE is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for employees, students, and visitors. The objective of the Academy's safety program is to reduce the number of workplace injuries and illnesses to zero. Accidents can often be prevented through the use of reasonable precautions and the practice of safe working habits. Safety can only be achieved through teamwork at GEE charter school sites. Each employee, supervisor and manager must practice safety awareness by thinking defensively, anticipating unsafe situations and reporting unsafe conditions immediately.

**Employee Suggestions** - Some of the best safety improvements come from employees. Employees with ideas, concerns, or suggestions for improved safety in the workplace are encouraged to contact their supervisor or the Safety Officer.

**Safety Hazards** - Any suspected safety hazard must be brought to the attention of a supervisor or the Safety Officer immediately. Examples of potential safety hazards include, but are not limited to, damaged or broken machinery or equipment, slippery floors, torn carpet, cords in aisles, and boxes located in walkways or blocking exit doors. Reports about workplace safety issues may be made anonymously. An employee will not be retaliated against for making a report.

**Investigations** - The Safety Officer conducts an investigation of all job-related injuries, illnesses, and near misses to determine the cause and attempt to prevent a recurrence.

### 1202 *Accidents, Injuries and Illnesses*

**Policy Statement** – Notify your supervisor of any emergency situation. If you are injured or become sick at work, no matter how slightly, you must inform your supervisor immediately (before you leave academy).

**Accident Procedures** - In the event of a workplace accident or injury, take the following steps:

1. Stop work;
2. Eliminate or isolate the immediate cause of the accident to prevent further injury;
3. Obtain aid for the injured person and summon assistance. If the injury appears serious, dial 9-1-1;
4. Call a supervisor immediately;
5. Take appropriate steps to prevent any additional accidents; and
6. Any injury, no matter how minor the accident or injury may appear and even if no one was hurt, must be reported to the Academy Leader and GEE within 24 hours of the incident. The school leader and employee must complete the forms and should the employee need to see a doctor the employee must go to a Concentra location and bring the required forms and photo ID. Forms and information are in Academy office. An incident report is required to be taken to the physician by the employee for the physician's completion.

First aid kits are located in designated locations throughout the building.

### 1203 **Safety Precautions**

**Policy Statement** - Please observe the following precautions:

- The use of alcoholic beverages or illegal substances during working hours will not be tolerated. The possession of alcoholic beverages or illegal substances on GEE property is forbidden.
- Use, adjust and repair machines and equipment only if you are trained and qualified. Please check with the administration first.
- Know the proper lifting procedures. Get help when lifting or pushing heavy objects.
- Understand your job fully and follow instructions. If you are not sure of the safe procedure, do not guess; just ask your supervisor.
- Know the locations, contents and use of first aid and fire-fighting equipment.
- Wear personal protective equipment in accordance with the job you are performing.

**Disciplinary Action** - Violating of a safety precaution is in itself, an unsafe act. A violation may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

### 1204 **Emergency Situations**

**Policy Statement** - The Academy Leader or a school administrator should be notified immediately when an emergency occurs. Emergencies include all accidents, medical situations, bomb threats, other threats of violence, and the smell of smoke. If the Director is unavailable, contact the nearest GEE official.

Should an emergency result in the need to communicate information to employees outside of business hours; the academy leader will contact you. Therefore, it is important that employees keep their personal emergency contact information up to date. Notify the Human Resources Department when this information changes.

**Evacuation** - When events warrant an evacuation of the building, you should follow the instructions of the Administration or any other member of the GEE team. You should leave the building in a quick and orderly manner. You should assemble at the pre-determined location as communicated to you by the Academy Leader to await further instructions or information.

**Questions** - Please direct questions you may have about academy emergency procedure to your Academy Leader.

### 1205 **Tornados, Lockdown and Fire Drills**

**Policy Statement** - These drills are an important aspect in employee safety. We expect your complete cooperation during these drills. If you have any questions concerning evacuation procedures, see the GEE administration.

**Fire Drills** – Announced and unannounced fire drills are conducted throughout the school year, including at least one winter-day fire drill. Adults should familiarize themselves with the Emergency Response Guidelines found in each classroom. All students and employees evacuate during drills. In the event of an actual fire, faculty may be called upon to lead students to safety via an alternate route. Please review the secondary evacuation routes found in each classroom and be aware of exits in locations other than classrooms (gym, dining room, theatre, Learning Commons, Health Office).

**Lockdown Drills** – Lockdown drills are coordinated with the Police. Lockdown procedures are also outlined in the Emergency Response Guidelines. *Two lockdown drills are planned each academic year, both of which are announced and communicated to parents in advance.*

**Fire Extinguishers** - Fire extinguishers are located in each classroom and throughout the building. Employees should be familiar with the location and operation of fire extinguishers. A fire extinguisher should only be used by an individual who has received training in its use and only if the fire is containable (e.g., wastepaper basket, garbage bin). In the event of a containable fire, a coworker should be instructed to dial 9-1-1 simultaneously. Leave the building immediately if the fire does not go out; never attempt to use a second extinguisher or take other measures to try and contain the fire.

## **1206 Building Evacuation**

**Evacuation Procedures** - An employee should be familiar with all exits in the building. In the event of a fire or other emergency that requires the building to be evacuated, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Escort all children out of the building by walking rapidly but calmly to the nearest exit door (do not run or push others);
2. Immediately notify a supervisor or other designated person if anyone is having trouble leaving the building;
3. Do *not* take time to gather any Academy property or personal belongings;
4. Once outside, assemble at the pre-determined location at a safe distance from the building; and
5. Do not re-enter the building until a supervisor or other designated person gives authorization to do so.

Supervisors are responsible for the orderly exit of all employees within their department. Each supervisor should be the last one out of the department and should make sure that all doors are closed. Once outside, the supervisor should account for all department employees.

**Fire Extinguishers** - Fire extinguishers are located throughout the building. Employees should be familiar with the location and operation of fire extinguishers. A fire extinguisher should only be used by an individual who has received training in its use and only if the fire is containable (e.g., wastepaper basket, garbage bin). In the event of a containable fire, a coworker should be instructed to dial 9-1-1 simultaneously. Leave the building immediately if the fire does not go out; never attempt to use a second extinguisher or take other measures to try and contain the fire.

## **1207 Building Security**

**Policy Statement** - All entry doors to the office are to remain locked all day with the exception of the main entry door to each suite. Main entries to each suite are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. All employees will receive a key to these doors. Employees have access to all floors during working hours. Outside of working hours, employees have access to the floor on which they work. The main entryway to the building is open Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.

**Safety Precautions** - In order to ensure employee safety, prevent theft, and reduce accidents, an employee who enters or remains in the building before or after normal business hours must exercise reasonable care for the employee's protection.

**Video Recording** - Video surveillance equipment is used for safety and security purposes. The Academy prohibits video recording in bathrooms, locker rooms, and designated changing rooms.

**Security System** - The building is equipped with a security system. Employees who are authorized to enter or remain in the building before or after normal business hours are assigned a key card.

**Securing the Premises** - The last person to leave the building at the end of the workday is responsible for making sure all exterior doors are locked.

## **1208 Key Cards**

**Policy Statement** - Key cards and access to the buildings are a privilege staff must handle with care. Employees must be vigilant to not lose or lend out their key card. Should a staff member abuse their key card privileges by lending their key card to another individual (staff members, students, or otherwise), it will result in immediate loss of key card privileges. More than one incident of a lost or misplaced key card may also result in privileges being revoked.

## **1209 Visitors**

**Normal Business Hours** - All visitors that enter the GEE academy properties require Academy Leader approval and are obliged to sign in at the front desk and complete a visitors form that includes a copy of their driver's license. No children under five (5) years of age will be allowed to visit classrooms or to be left unattended anywhere on academy property. Employees who see visitors without ID badges should direct the visitor to the front office. If the visitor refuses to comply, their presence should be reported to the Academy Leader at once.

## **1210 Restricted Areas**

**Restricted Areas** - Due to safety and security reasons, an employee is prohibited from entering the IT/Server Rooms, Employee Records/File Room, Boiler/Hvac Room, Electric Room and Kitchen unless assigned to work in this area.

## **1211 Workplace Violence**

**Policy Statement** - GEE considers the safety of its students, employees, or any individual on Academy property to be of paramount importance. The Academy has zero tolerance for any type of workplace violence committed by, or against, an employee, supervisor, member of management or student. This includes, but is not limited to, threatening, intimidating, or inferring violence against any person or property associated with the Academy.

**Notification of Threatening Behavior** - An employee who is a victim of, witness to, or becomes aware of any potentially dangerous situation, aggressive, bullying, or hostile behavior, or threats or acts of violence, must inform the academy leader or another member of management immediately. Any suspicious individuals or activity must also be reported. 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 or visitor to our premises, contact an emergency agency (such as 911) immediately.

**Workplace Bullying Policy** – GEE is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. As such, the Company prohibits bullying of any kind and will deal with complaints accordingly. This policy applies to employees while working, at work functions and while travelling on business.

Bullying is defined as unwelcome or unreasonable behavior that demeans, intimidates or humiliates an individual or a group of individuals.

Bullying can be:

- An isolated incident or persistent incidents

- Carried out by a group or an individual

- Either direct or indirect

- Verbal or physical

Some examples of bullying include:

- Abusive or offensive language
- Unwelcome behavior
- Unreasonable insults or criticism (especially in public)
- Teasing and/or spreading rumors
- Trivializing work or achievements
- Exclusion or isolation

Bullying can have devastating results. If you witness bullying or suspect bullying is taking place, report it to your supervisor and/or to Human Resources immediately. All suspected incidents of bullying will be thoroughly investigated and disciplinary measures will be taken accordingly.

**Retaliation** - An employee will not be subject to retaliation or any adverse employment action that could affect the employee's job security or potential advancement because of bringing a complaint or concern to management's attention. An employee who believes that he or she has been retaliated against for filing a complaint should contact Human Resources immediately.

**Investigations** - GEE treats any threat of violence as legitimate, and will take immediate appropriate action, including an investigation of the matter and the involvement of the police department. All reports of work-related threats 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.

**Prohibited Conduct** - The following conduct is prohibited at all times while on Academy property or at any location while representing the Academy:

- Fighting, provoking a fight, or threatening violence;
- Horseplay;
- Hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of harm to others or property; and
- Intentionally damaging Academy or coworker property.

**Firearms and Weapons** – GEE prohibits the possession, use or sale of weapons, firearms, or any other lethal weapon on Academy property, in a vehicle being used on Academy business, in any Academy-owned or leased parking facility or at a work-related function. This applies to all employees, visitors and customers on Academy property, even those who are licensed to carry weapons.

Some examples of prohibited weapons include, but are not limited to:

- Firearms (pistols, revolvers, shotguns, rifles and bb guns)
- Knives (switchblades, gravity knives or any knife with a blade longer than three inches)
- Metal knuckles
- Bows and arrows
- Tasers

Employees who are aware of violations or threats of violations of this policy are required to report such violations or threats of violations to their supervisor immediately.

**Policy Violations** - Violations of this policy, including failure to report or fully cooperate in GEE investigations will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination and/or legal action.

## 1212 *Security Inspections*

**Policy Statement** - To protect GEE property and to ensure the safety of all employees, and students, GEE reserves the right to conduct personal searches consistent with state law, and to inspect any packages, parcels, purses, handbags, brief cases, lunch boxes or any other possessions or articles carried to and from the Academy's property. Additionally, GEE reserves the right to search any employee's office, desk, files, locker, equipment or any other area or article on our premises. In this regard, it should be noted that all offices, desks, files, lockers, equipment, etc. is the property of GEE, and are issued for the use of employees only during their employment. Inspection may be conducted at any time at the discretion of GEE.

**Policy Violations** - Persons entering the premises who refuse to cooperate in an inspection conducted pursuant to this policy may not be permitted to enter the premises. Employees working on or entering or leaving the premises who refuse to cooperate in an inspection, as well as employees who after the inspection are believed to be in possession of stolen property or illegal substances, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, if upon investigation they are found to be in violation of the GEE's security procedures or any other GEE rules and regulations.



## 1300 COMMUNICATION POLICIES

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### 1301 *Employee Questions and Concerns*

**Policy Statement** - We want to maintain a positive and pleasant environment for all of our employees. To help us meet this goal, our Academy has an open-door policy, by which employees are encouraged to report work-related concerns. . It is GEE's intent to be responsive to employees' questions and concerns.

**Complaint Procedure** - An employee is required to bring any concerns to the attention of the employee's supervisor. Normally, employee issues can be resolved through conversations with the employee's supervisor. In the event that the supervisor does not resolve the issue to the employee's satisfaction or the concern involves the supervisor, the employee may contact Human Resources or the Academy Leader.

**Complaint Procedure for Compliance Policies** - If an employee's complaint involves one of the Academy's compliance policies relating to harassment, sexual harassment, and/or discrimination, the employee must follow the complaint procedure outlined in *505 Complaint Procedure and Investigations*.

**Retaliation** - An employee will not be subject to retaliation or any adverse employment action that could affect the employee's job security or potential advancement because of bringing any work-related questions, concerns, or complaints to management's attention. An employee who believes that he or she has been retaliated against for filing a complaint should contact the Principal immediately.

### 1302 *Employee Communications*

**Policy Statement** - Academy and job-related information is communicated to employees via a variety of communication channels, including memos, e-mails, voice mail, staff meetings, and bulletin board postings.

**Staff Meetings** - Mandatory staff meetings are held periodically to update employees on Academy and department matters.

**Bulletin Board** - A bulletin board is located in the lunch room for the posting of Academy announcements and information of general interest. An employee should review the bulletin board on a regular basis to stay up-to-date regarding Academy news.

An employee is prohibited from defacing or removing any items posted on the Academy bulletin board.

**Employee Postings** - Understanding that employees may occasionally wish to communicate with their co-workers to advertise personal items for sale or to participate in fundraisers for non-profit organizations, children's schools and other non-work events, we allow use of lunch rooms and electronic bulletin boards to distribute such information.

An employee must receive prior approval from the Principal to post personal messages (e.g., for sale signs, garage sale notices) on the bulletin board.

## 1303 *Use of Communications Systems*

**Policy Statement** - GEE's communication systems and equipment are an integral part of the Academy's business, and are provided to employees to aid them in the performance of their job duties and to promote efficient operations.

**Definition of Communications Systems and Equipment** - For the purpose of this employee handbook, the Academy's communications systems and equipment include, but are not limited to, telephones, voice mail system, pagers, wireless devices, photocopiers, fax machines, incoming/outgoing mail, video and audio taping devices, and computer systems (e.g., networks, laptops, iPads, hardware, software, Internet, intranet, e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, and computer files). It also includes GEE's web site, corporate blog, and Academy-sponsored and maintained social media sites.

**Academy Property** - All Academy communications systems and equipment are the sole property of GEE. This includes all information and documents created, transmitted, received, stored, and downloaded on such systems and equipment. GEE expects all employees to use reasonable care when using Academy-provided electronic communication equipment, such as not eating food or drinking beverages near equipment to avoid damaging equipment.

**Passwords** - For security purposes, some of GEE's communications systems require a password. Passwords are issued to employees by the IT Department. An employee may not use a password that has not been issued to the employee or that is unknown to the Academy. Passwords are confidential and should not be disclosed to anyone other than the employee's supervisor or the IT Department. If it is suspected that a password has become known to others, it must be changed immediately and the IT Department must be notified.

**Access to Information** - The academy asks you to keep in mind that when using academy computers you are creating academy documents using GEE assets. The academy respects the individual privacy of its employees; however, that privacy does not extend to employee work-related conduct or to the use of academy-provided technical resources or supplies.

The academy computers, voice mail, e-mail, or telephone systems, and the data stored on them are and remain at all times the property of the Academy. 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 academy computer system and other technical resources, your work may be subject to the investigation, search, and review of others in accordance with this policy.

**Prohibited Uses** - GEE technical resources should not be used for personal gain or the advancement of individual views. Employees who wish to express personal opinions on the Internet are encouraged to obtain a personal account with a commercial Internet service provider and to access the Internet without using academy resources, or during working hours. The following uses of GEE's communications systems and equipment are prohibited. This list is meant to be illustrative and not exhaustive:

- Employee postings are not permitted on the academy intranet or electronic bulletin board.
- It is prohibited to play computer games during regular work hours.
- Posting of any videos of students, staff and GEE employees on the Internet, without prior approval of the GEE administration, violates student privacy and can be cause for dismissal.
- Engaging in any illegal activity that violates copyright or other United States regulations, including the copying or distributing of copyrighted materials without the express permission of the author;
- Transmitting confidential, proprietary, or trade secret information;
- Engaging in any form of slander or defamation;
- Using verbal or written obscenities, vulgarities, or threats;
- Making verbal or written remarks that are discriminatory, offensive, demeaning, intimidating, insulting, or harassing;

- Distributing chain letters;
- Displaying, writing, transferring, e-mailing, sending, or storing obscene or sexually suggestive messages or graphic images;
- Accessing, or attempting to access, the computer files or e-mail, text, instant, or voicemail messages of a coworker without appropriate authorization from the coworker or a supervisor;
- Reading, copying, modifying, or deleting a coworker's computer files or e-mail, text, instant, or voicemail messages without authorization from the coworker or a supervisor;
- Using or aiding in the unauthorized use of another person's password, account or identity;
- Soliciting or proselytizing for commercial ventures, other employers, religious or political causes;
- Transmitting messages under an assumed name or attempting to obscure the origin of any message;
- Attempting to remove or modify computer network equipment or software without proper authorization;
- Downloading or using non-business and entertainment software, such as games, puzzles, wallpaper, screen savers, and videos on Academy computers or wireless devices;
- Harming or destroying software, data, files, or messages (other than editing or deleting information in the normal course of job duties); and
- Intentionally tampering with, obstructing, or impairing the availability of any computer system, anti-virus software, network, or security feature, or circumventing any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user.

**Academy's Right to Monitor Communications Systems and Equipment** - There is no guarantee of privacy when using Academy-owned communications systems and equipment. To the extent allowed by regulation, management reserves the right to access, search, and monitor the Academy's communications equipment and files at any time in the normal course of business, with or without advance notice or consent of the employee and/or in the employee's absence. This applies to all information, messages, and files that an employee creates, transmits, downloads, receives, views, stores, or deletes on such systems, including items that are password protected. The Academy has the ability to monitor sites visited by an employee on the Internet, chat rooms, newsgroups, all voice mail messages, telephone calls and every e-mail message and file transfer into and out of the Academy's network as well as any information created or discussed on social media sites, blogs, or personal websites. 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.

**Use of Audio and Video Recording Devices** - Due to confidentiality and personal privacy concerns, the use of cameras, wireless devices, tape recorders, and other audio and video recording devices are prohibited in the workplace unless specifically permitted by the Academy. Video recording devices and cameras are specifically prohibited in restrooms, locker rooms, restricted access areas, or in any other location where personal privacy is expected.

An employee is not allowed to photograph, audiotape, or videotape any Academy property, coworker, student, or anyone affiliated with the Academy without prior authorization from the employee's supervisor except as otherwise provided by law. Advance authorization from the individual(s) being photographed or taped is also required.

**Policy Violations** - Any employee found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action and may also be subject to prosecution to the fullest extent permitted under the law.

## 1304 *Use of Technology and the Internet*

**Policy Statement** - The Internet is a powerful communications tool and a valuable source of information. However, an employee's improper use of Academy-provided Internet services can waste time and resources and create legal liability and embarrassment for both GEE and the employee. GEE technical resources are provided for the benefit of the academy, its students, and volunteers. These resources are provided for use in the pursuit of academy business and are to be reviewed, monitored, and used only in that pursuit; except as otherwise provided in this policy.

This policy pertains to all technical resources owned or leased by GEE, all technological resources used on, or accessed from, GEE premises, or used for GEE business. This policy also applies to all activities using any Academy-paid accounts, subscriptions, or other technical services, such as Internet and World Wide Web access, voice mail, and e-mail, whether or not the activities are conducted from GEE premises.

**Confidential Information** - E-mail and Internet access are not entirely secure. Others outside the GEE system may also be able to monitor your e-mail and Internet history. For example, Internet sites maintain logs of visits from users; these logs identify which Academy, and even which particular person, accessed the service. If your work using these resources requires a higher level of security, please ask the Academy Leader for guidance on securely exchanging e-mails or gathering information from sources such as the Internet or World Wide Web.

All employees are responsible for safeguarding GEE confidential information, as well as that of students and others, from disclosure. Do not access new voice mail or e-mail messages with others present. Messages containing confidential information should not be left visible while you are away from your work area. 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.”

**Security of Information** - Although you may have passwords to access computer, voice mail, and e-mail systems, these technical resources belong to GEE, are accessible at all times by GEE, and are subject to inspections by the GEE administration with or without notice. The academy may override any applicable passwords or codes to inspect, investigate or search an employee's files and messages. All passwords must be made available to the School Leader upon request. You should not provide a password to other employees or to anyone outside the academy and should never access any technical resources using another employee's password.

In order to facilitate GEE access to information using 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 GEE systems without the express prior written permission from the Academy Leader.

**Software Policy** - If you want to install software on GEE computers, you must contact the Academy Leader, and the systems administrator will install the requested software. Employees are prohibited from installing any software on any GEE technical resource without the express prior written permission from the Academy Leader.

Following these procedures ensures that GEE can manage the software on technological systems, prevent the introduction of computer viruses, and meet its obligations under any applicable software licenses and copyright laws. Computer software is protected from unauthorized copying and use by federal and state law; unauthorized copying or use of computer software exposes the Academy and the individual employee to substantial fines and exposes the individual employee to imprisonment. Therefore, employees may not load personal software onto the Academy's computer system and may not copy software from the Academy for personal use.

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

**Electronic Mail and Monitoring** - We recognize your need to be able to communicate efficiently with fellow employees and students. Therefore, we have an external electronic mail (e-mail) system to facilitate the transmittal of business-related information within the Academy and with our students.

The e-mail system is intended for business use only. The use of the Academy's e-mail system to solicit fellow employees or distribute non job-related information to fellow employees is prohibited to the extent allowed by applicable law.

Academy policies against sexual and other types of harassment apply fully to the e-mail system. Violations of those policies are not permitted and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Therefore, employees are strictly prohibited from the display or transmission of sexually-explicit images, messages, ethnic slurs, racial epithets or anything that could be construed as harassment or disparaging to others.

Employees shall not use unauthorized codes or passwords to gain access to other user files. Upon termination of employment the email address will be deactivated immediately.

**Computer Hardware and Software** - All computer software must be licensed and registered to the Academy. No unauthorized or unlicensed hardware or software may be used or installed on any Academy-owned computer, laptop, or wireless device. An employee may not reproduce, transfer, download, modify, or share licensed or non-licensed software with any coworker, business, student, or for the employee's personal use.

**User IDs and Passwords** - An employee is responsible for all computer transactions made with the employee's user ID and password. When leaving a workstation for an extended period of time, an employee should log off of the computer. IDs and passwords should not be shared with anyone except an employee's supervisor or the IT Department.

**Virus Detection** - Files obtained from sources outside of the Academy, including disks brought from home; files downloaded from the Internet, newsgroups, bulletin boards, or other online services; e-mail attachments; and files provided by students or vendors may contain dangerous computer viruses that may damage the Academy's computer network. An employee should not download files from the Internet, accept e-mail attachments from outsiders, or use disks from non-Academy sources, without first scanning the material with anti-virus software. The IT Department should be contacted immediately if an employee receives a suspicious e-mail attachment or believes there is a virus on the employee's computer or laptop.

**Professional Messages** - All business e-mail, text, and instant messages should be written in a professional manner that reflects positively on both the Academy and the employee.

**Personal Use** - The Academy's computers, laptops, and the Internet are generally reserved for business purposes. However, personal use is allowed during non-working time (e.g., authorized meal and break periods) so long as it does not cause harm, violate any Academy policies, disrupt operations, or interfere with productivity. Personal use during working time is prohibited.

**Inappropriate Web Sites and Computer Files** - Sending, saving, or viewing inappropriate material is prohibited. An employee should not intentionally log on to any inappropriate or sexually explicit web sites. The Academy will delete any inappropriate files or material on Academy-owned computers without notification to the employee.

**Policy Violations** - Violations of any guidelines in this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. In addition, GEE may advise appropriate legal officials of any illegal violations.

### **1305 Staff Website/Social Sites**

**Social Websites** - Staff members should be aware that communications with students on social sites might be considered grounds for termination.

Solicitation for any non-educational related business or activities using Academy resources is strictly prohibited. Use of GEE technical resources must not interfere with your productivity, the productivity of any other employee, or the operation of GEE technical resources.

You should not send e-mail or other communications to disguise your identity or to indicate that you were sent or instructed by someone else. You should never access any technical resources using another employee's password. Similarly, you should only access the libraries, files, data, programs, 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 GEE, or improper use of information obtained by unauthorized means, is strictly prohibited.

Sending, saving, or viewing offensive material is also 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 to any employee. Offensive material includes, but is not limited to, sexual comments, offensive 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, cancer, as well as any other category protected by federal, state, or local laws. Any use of the Internet/World Wide Web, Internet, or electronic bulletin board to harass or discriminate is unlawful and strictly prohibited by GEE. Violators will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

**Policy Violations** - GEE considers 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, GEE reserves the right not to provide a defense or pay damages assessed against employees for conduct in violation of this policy.

### **1306 Social Media**

**Social Media** –For the purpose of this employee handbook, the term “social media” refers to any Internet-based media that facilitate activities such as professional or social networking, posting comments or opinions, and sharing photos, audio, video, or other content. Examples include, but are not limited to: Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, MySpace, Twitter, personal websites, blogs, podcasts, chat rooms, RSS feeds, and Wikis.

#### **Guidelines**

- All GEE policies, including its discrimination, sexual/anti-harassment, equal employment opportunity (EEO), anti-bullying, ethics, and confidentiality policies, apply to the use of social media.
- An employee is prohibited from disclosing any trade secrets, products, processes, proprietary information, strategic business plans, or any other private or confidential information about the Academy or students via social media. Respect copyright, trademark, fair use and financial disclosure laws.
- Do not post any information or engage in any online activity that violates applicable local, state or federal laws, or professional rules of conduct.
- If an employee indicates on any social media that he or she is a GEE employee, he or she must clearly state that the views expressed are solely the personal views of the employee and that they do not represent those of the Academy, students or suppliers. This applies to posts, blogs, and videos occurring on any computer during both working and non-working time.

- Do not use GEE email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use. In addition, the Academy's logo and trademark should not be added to an employee's personal blog or profile.

**Using Social Media At Work** - An employee must receive prior authorization to develop, post to, or maintain a corporate blog or use social networking sites to conduct GEE business. An employee who has received such authorization may post or blog during working time for business purposes only. Engaging in social networking at work for personal use is strictly prohibited.

**Using Social Media During Non-Working Time** - GEE respects an employee's right to self-expression, especially when using social media during non-working time. However, because students and the public may have access to employees' posts and videos, employees are expected to use good judgment and to use social media in a responsible manner that does not violate GEE's policies. An employee should not make false statements about the Academy, students, vendors, or competitors.

**Retaliation** - The Academy will not retaliate against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Policy Violations** - Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated. Employees are solely responsible for what they post online. Keep in mind that any conduct that adversely affects job performance, the performance of coworkers or otherwise adversely affects members, students, suppliers, or the legitimate business interests of GEE may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **1307 Copyright Policy**

**Policy Statement** - GEE and the Academy Board acknowledge that federal law states that it is illegal to duplicate copyrighted materials without authorization of the holder of the copyright, except for certain exempt purposes. Penalties may be imposed for unauthorized copying of audiovisual or printed materials and computer software, unless the copying or using conforms to the "fair use" doctrine. GEE and the Academy Board encourage academy staff members to share learning by making proper use of supplementary materials. Copyright and the notion of intellectual property were written into the Constitution of the United States to promote learning and the useful arts and were designed to be supportive of the work of educators. It is the responsibility of the employees of GEE to abide by the copying procedures and obey the requirements as set by law. Copyright requirements should not be violated in order for employees to perform their duties.

**Acceptable Practices** - Examples of acceptable practices include:

- Copying a single copy of a chapter from a book
- Copying an article from a periodical or newspaper
- Copying a short story, short essay, or short poem, even if it is contained in a collection
- Copying a chart, graph, diagram, drawing, cartoon, or picture from a book, periodical, or newspaper

**Prohibited Practices** - Examples of unacceptable practices include:

- Anthologies or collections may not be made from clips/excerpts
- The work may not be transferred to another medium such as video or DVD/disk.
- Videos may not be shown as a reward at academy
- Admission for videos shown at academy may not be charged
- Videos may not be used as entertainment on academy grounds or at an Academy-sanctioned events unless licensing has been purchased. (i.e., after-academy day care programs, field trips on buses, etc.).
- Teachers may not tune in and watch videos on video distribution systems without face-to-face teaching occurring.

- Downloading, uploading, and making software available for downloading or transmitting software files without the permission of the copyright owner.
- Purchasing a single-user copy of software and installing it on multiple machines or making additional copies.
- Installing CD dependent programs on more than one computer.
- Sharing out a copyrighted CD or program from a server on a network.

**Care of Equipment** – You are expected to demonstrate proper care when using GEE property and equipment. No property may be removed from the premises without the proper authorization of management. If you lose, break or damage any property, report it to your supervisor at once.

Personal equipment brought to the academy is the responsibility of the person who brought the personal equipment into the building or on the site; and the academy and management company is not responsible for any damage to any property.

**Computer Software Licensing** – GEE purchases or licenses the use of various computer software programs. Neither GEE nor do GEE employees have the right to duplicate this computer software or its related documentation. Unauthorized duplication of computer software is a federal offense, punishable by up to \$250,000 fine and up to five years in jail.

You must use the software in accordance with the license agreement. This policy applies not only to individual desktop computers and laptops but to local area networks as well.

Employees aware of any misuse of software or related documentation shall notify a member of management. Employees who reproduce, acquire or use unauthorized copies of computer software will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

### **1308 Telephone/Wireless Device Usage**

**Policy Statement** - Because personal telephone calls can negatively affect productivity and distract coworkers and students, employees are asked to limit personal phone calls during working time. This includes the use of both Academy issued phones, wireless devices and employees' personal cell phones. Long distance, personal calls should not result in charges to the Academy. Wireless devices include, but are not limited to, cell phones, smart phones, tablets, laptops, and mobile hotspots.

**Personal Wireless Devices** - Employees are expected to turn off all cell phones while working in the academy building and no use of the phone in the classroom or the hallway. This includes sending, receiving or viewing text messages and downloading of web content.

**Excessive Use** - If an employee's personal calls become excessive, affect the employee's job performance, and/or distract coworkers, the privilege of making personal phone calls during working time may be revoked.

### **1309 Mail**

**Personal Mail** - An employee is not allowed to use the Academy's mail system for personal use. **OR** An employee may place personal letters with the Academy's outgoing mail as long as the employee's own postage is used. Personal mail, including magazines and packages, should not be delivered to the workplace. The Academy reserves the right to review all incoming mail, including mail addressed to individual employees.

### **1310 Employee Suggestions**

**Policy Statement** - GEE values the suggestions and ideas of employees. Giving and receiving feedback is encouraged in order to promote a positive, productive, and cooperative atmosphere. We encourage you to bring your questions, suggestions, and complaints to our attention. We will carefully consider your thoughts and opinions in our continuing effort to improve operations. Your suggestions should be submitted in writing



to the Human Resources Department at [hr@gee-edu.com](mailto:hr@gee-edu.com). After we carefully consider your suggestion, you will be notified whether it is feasible to be put into practice.

### **1311 Public and Media Relations**

**Media Relations** - All media inquiries and information requests from outside agencies regarding the Academy and its operations must be referred to the Academy Leader, GEE, and/or the Academy Board. Only the Academy Leader, the Academy Board, or a person designated by the Leader/Board, is authorized to make or approve public statements pertaining to the GEE and the charter schools under its jurisdiction. No employees, unless specifically designated by the Leader/Board, are authorized to make those statements.

**Written Documents Released to the Media** - Any employee wishing to write and/or publish an article, paper, or other publication on behalf of the GEE must first obtain approval from the Director and/or Board of Trustees before publication.

**Contracts with Outside Agencies** - Employees may not enter a contract with an outside agency for field trips, fundraisers, presentations, or other academy business without the permission of the Academy Leader or Director of GEE.

**GEE**  
**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of GEE's employee handbook, which includes an overview of the policies, procedures, rules, and benefits of the Academy. I further acknowledge that I have on-line access to GEE's employee handbook under the "Staff Resources" tab. I also acknowledge that I can print-out a copy of the employee handbook at any time.

I further acknowledge that I have read or will read the contents of the employee handbook and I agree to abide by the policies contained therein. I am aware that if I have any questions regarding the contents of the employee handbook I should contact my supervisor.

I understand that GEE reserves the right to interpret, add, modify, or revoke any provision in the employee handbook with or without cause or notice. I also understand that the employee benefits, policies, procedures, and rules in this employee handbook will remain in effect until notified otherwise by the Academy. I agree to retain my copy of the employee handbook for future reference and to update it with any policy additions or revisions that the Academy issues.

I am aware that any GEE property in my possession must be returned to the Academy upon my separation from employment or when requested by the Academy.

I understand that I may be subject to reasonable suspicion substance testing as outlined in the Substance-Free Workplace Policy. I am aware that my refusal to consent to such a test or to test positive for alcohol or illegal drugs is a policy violation which will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employment at GEE is employment-at-will. Accordingly, this employee handbook is not intended to be a contract of employment, a warranty of benefits, or a limitation on the Academy's ability to terminate employees.

Failure to sign this employee handbook acknowledgement may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Manager or Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signature