

Charter Academy Employee Handbook



Rev.10/02/2023 The policies and procedures in this handbook may be revised from time to time. Any revisions will be communicated to employees in a timely manner. The printed version of the manual may not be updated regularly for immediate distribution; however, an updated copy will be posted on RCMA's intranet at all times.

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION AND RCMA CHARTER SCHOOLS HISTORY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This handbook is not a contract. It is a tool designed to acquaint you with general information about working conditions, benefits, and policies affecting your employment at RCMA Charter Schools. Some of the information applies only to instructional staff and other staff in certain administration-related positions and the specific sections will be pointed out through a note.

You are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the provisions of this handbook. Because it is impossible to anticipate every situation that may arise, you are encouraged to contact your school principal or Human Resources Department if you have any questions not addressed in this handbook.

1.2 RCMA CHARTER ACADEMIES HISTORY

Concerned about the problems faced by low-income children, particularly migrant children, who were English language learners, RCMA explored the potential of opening charter schools at which dual language, bicultural balance, and focused teaching would be the foundation. Convinced that being bilingual is a plus, RCMA planned a program that would deliver content in both Spanish and English, with strong parental involvement. Two schools were chartered in 2000, one in Immokalee and one in Wimauma. When the high-stakes testing of young children to determine school grades became the practice two years later, RCMA had to adjust our original design of a mixed elementary/middle school and focus on kindergarten through grade six. Our commitment to the parents to add a middle school in rural Hillsborough, however, was honored and it became our third school in 2012. The use of technology and focus on STEM has evolved as we grew, adding more value to our program. After-school programs and summer school opportunities have enabled the schools to operate year-round for many of the students attending. Working with partners in rural communities is key to our success. RCMA schools are warm, welcoming places in which parents are true partners and teachers care about all the children, not just those in their class. Developing leadership capabilities among our bilingual, bicultural students is a priority and fuels our passion to continue preparing them for the future.

1.3 RCMA CHARTER ACADEMIES MISSION

RCMA Community Schools are committed to excellence in education. Students will be educated to reach their potential as individuals, have life choices, and be provided with many opportunities for success.

SECTION II: EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

2.1 BACKGROUND SCREENING

All RCMA Charter School applicants selected for employment must submit to and pass a Level 2 background screening in compliance with regulations set forth by the Florida Department of Education and DCF, if applicable, before the first day of work.

Charter Academy employees that work in the After School Program are required to get DCF clearance in addition to the school district clearance before beginning to work with the only exception as indicated below.

The applicants that are going through DCF clearance and are pending out-of-state results and for which RCMA has already received the school district clearance and a provisional hire letter from DCF, can be employed on a provisional hire status for 45 days from the receipt of the provisional hire letter. During this period of 45 days, the applicant is permitted to work under the direct supervision of staff who have met all background screening requirements and are eligible for child care employment.

RCMA must receive clearance documentation from each charter school's sponsor to move forward with hiring a candidate. Selected applicants are fingerprinted and background checked through each school's corresponding district/sponsor. Each employee is also required to be rescreened every five (5) years as required by state law. Employment status is completely dependent on the results of a person's background check.

2.2 CERTIFICATIONS

If your position requires you to be certified in a certain field of work, including ESE and ELL endorsements, you must have these necessary qualifications before starting work and must continue to maintain such qualifications. If you do not possess a certification before starting, you will be asked to be on an education plan to complete these qualifications. All education plans must be followed and completed in the agreed-upon time frame. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to including termination.

2.3 NEW HIRE ORIENTATION

During the first few days of your employment, all new employees are required to attend an orientation session where information regarding RCMA workplace policies and any other state and federal law will be shared. These include the drug and alcohol policy, smoking policy, sexual harassment policy, benefits, safety guidelines, reporting requirements, blood-borne pathogens, and any other information necessary for an employee to succeed on the job.

2.4 PROBATIONARY PERIOD

If you are a new hire or rehire:

If you are a new or rehired hourly non-exempt employee, you will be on a 6-month probationary period starting on your first day of work. New or rehired exempt (salaried) employees will be on a 12-month probationary period.

Your 6-month probationary period could be extended to 12 months if your supervisor determines a need. However, the School administration may terminate your employment for any reason or no reason as long as it is not a termination in violation of Florida or federal laws, including after the conclusion of the probationary period.

If you are promoted or transferred to a new job:

If you are promoted or transferred to a new job, you will also begin your new assignment with a probationary period of 6 months or 12 months from the start date. The probationary period is important to ensure you can perform your new duties and responsibilities well. If you do not meet the expectations RCMA Charter School has of you, you may be transferred to another available position for which you have the required skills, demoted, or terminated.

2.5 WORK SCHEDULES

RCMA Charter Schools typically follow their corresponding School District calendar with some exceptions. Instructional and administrative staff work the days specified in their employment agreement.

RCMA Charter Schools encourage and support employees to continue their education. However, the main priority should be the safety and academic success of Charter School students.

Periods of time off for study purposes are to be negotiated and agreed upon between the employee and supervisor and should take into consideration the regularly scheduled Charter School operational hours.

EMPLOYEE CATEGORIES AND CLASSIFICATIONS ADMINISTRATIVE (FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME)

These employees are full-time or part-time and have Employment Agreements that may be renewed or non-renewed at the end of each school year.

2.6 INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF (FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME)

Professionals (exempt)

These employees are qualified to teach in accordance with the Florida Department of Education regulations and are hired for that purpose.

- Full-time exempt professionals have Employment Agreements that may be renewed or non-renewed at the end of each school year.
- Part-time exempt professionals have Employment Agreements that may be renewed or non-renewed at the end of each school year.

Para-professionals (non-exempt employees)

These employees are qualified to be teaching assistants. They may be full-time or part-time and have Letters of Appointment that may be renewed or non-renewed at the end of each school year.

2.7 NON-INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Full-time, non-exempt, or exempt employees are hired to work a minimum of 30 hours a week. They have a Letter of Appointment that may be renewed or non-renewed at the end of each school year. These employees are eligible for all benefits offered by RCMA.

Part-time, non-exempt, or exempt employees are hired to work fewer than 30 hours a week. These employees are not eligible for certain RCMA benefits but may participate in the 403B retirement plan.

2.8 NEPOTISM

It is the policy of RCMA not to hire individuals into positions that will cause the new employee to be within the supervisory chain of an immediate family member. Prohibited relationships include mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, or half-sister.

2.9 EMPLOYEE REFERRAL PROGRAM

RCMA Charter Schools will award \$400 (subject to change) if a current employee (excluding a Human Resources staff and employees at the management level and above) refers a Charter School Teacher who is hired and remains employed for at least 1 year.

Charter School employees must refer candidates by completing the Candidate Referral Form and following the Employee Referral Procedure. The employee will be paid after the referred employee has completed 1 year of employment.

2.10 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY

Employment practices at RCMA Charter Schools are consistent with state requirements outlined in the Florida Statutes and the State Board of Education Rules as well as federal employment laws. These include the Florida Educational Equity Act (FS §1000.05), FS Chapter 760, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – all of which prohibit discrimination based on race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital status, and other protected classifications.

As an employee of RCMA Charter Schools, we want you to feel that you have a place where you can work free of prejudices and sexual harassment.

With regard to prejudices, RCMA Charter Schools do not tolerate any discrimination because of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, religion, or disabilities. RCMA is fully committed to giving you a pleasant environment in which to work. We expect you to be dedicated to your work and to treat everyone with respect.

If everyone followed the guideline “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” we would never have any problems with how people are treated. Unfortunately, people need to be reminded or given examples of what could be offensive, rude, unpleasant, or nasty to others. The list below is only a guide.

Please remember that what may seem harmless fun to you may be offensive or irritating to others.

Please do not:

- criticize or make fun of a person's language
- criticize or make fun of how a person looks

- criticize or make fun of how a person dresses

If you believe you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, country of origin, religion, or disability please contact Human Resources.

RCMA Charter Schools prohibit retaliation against employees or any other individual because of a complaint filed alleging employment discrimination.

2.11 SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

RCMA follows the procedures set forth in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 for investigating and acting upon reports of sexual harassment and misconduct. All employees and volunteers must ensure that their workplace is free of sexual harassment. RCMA does not tolerate any conduct that is sexually offensive or inappropriate. All employees must avoid any action or behavior that may be perceived as sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes:

- Any instance of quid pro quo harassment by a school's employee;
- Any unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would find so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it denies a person equal educational access;
- Any instance of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking;

If an employee has a complaint regarding sexual harassment by anyone at work including supervisors, co-workers, volunteers, or visitors, the employee must follow these steps:

- First, inform the harasser that his/her behavior is offensive and unwelcome and ask him/her that he/she stop behaving in the same manner. Employees may skip this step if they do not feel comfortable addressing the behavior with the harasser.
- If the harasser's conduct continues, the employee must immediately contact the harasser's supervisor or administrator whom they feel comfortable approaching.
- If the immediate supervisor is the actual harasser, the employee may report the behavior to any administrator they feel comfortable approaching or the Director of Human Resources at the Rollason State Office in Immokalee at (800) 282-6540 or (239) 658-3560.

The immediate supervisor or the Director of Human Resources will meet with the complainant and offer the complainant supportive measures. Supportive measures are individualized services to restore or preserve equal access to education, protect student and employee safety, or deter sexual harassment. The complainant must be offered the opportunity to file a formal Title IX complaint. Even if the complainant declines to file a formal complaint, RCMA's Title IX Coordinator reserves the right to file a complaint. All formal complaints will be investigated following Title IX procedures. The complainant and the accused harasser must both be given written notice of the allegations, an equal opportunity to be represented, and an equal opportunity to submit and review evidence through the investigative process. All accused harassers are entitled to a presumption of innocence under Title IX regulations. However, the administration may place the accused harasser on administrative leave during the course of the investigation.

The final decision-maker may not be the same individual responsible for conducting the investigation. If the results of the investigation confirm the charges, the harasser will be disciplined up to and including termination. No person will be retaliated against for filing a complaint or participating in an investigation. However, if the charges made are found to have been made in bad faith, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

For RCMA to take action and correct any problems, it must be aware of discrimination, sexual harassment, or related retaliation. Therefore, if an employee believes that he or she has experienced or witnessed discrimination, sexual harassment, or related retaliation, the employee must report it to his/her direct supervisor or directly to the Director of the Human Resources Department at the Rollason State Office in Immokalee.

All complaints and information will be investigated and kept confidential to the extent allowable by law. For purposes of this policy, the Director of Human Resources shall be considered the Title IX Coordinator.

Instances of sexual harassment do have to be reported to the Law Enforcement if they involve one of the following: alcohol, drugs, gang activity, hate-crimes, hazing, serious injuries, and weapons. Reported to Law Enforcement is now defined as communicating with the School Resource Officer or other Law Enforcement Officer about the incident.

2.12 ADA, ADAA, AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

RCMA is committed to ensuring that a person with disabilities is not discriminated against and that they have equal opportunity and equal access to all the rights and privileges enjoyed by those who are not disabled. RCMA will comply with all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA).

RCMA will provide, upon request, reasonable accommodations to individuals who are qualified for a job, so that they may perform the essential job duties of the position unless doing so creates an undue hardship to RCMA. A reasonable accommodation request will not cancel any prior performance improvement plan or disciplinary action.

Individuals who are currently using illegal drugs are excluded from coverage under this policy.

Medical Documentation and Confidentiality

If the disability is not obvious and there is no other medical information already on record for the employee, RCMA will require the employee to provide documentation from a physician or other medical professional concerning the existence and extent of the disability.

The employee's medical information will be maintained in a separate confidential file. Any information regarding the employee's condition will only be made available on a need-to-know basis.

2.13 PROCEDURES IF A REQUEST FOR ACCOMMODATION IS MADE

1. The Director of Human Resources or a Human Resources representative should be notified about the request.
2. A Human Resources representative will meet with the requestor, document the information provided, and explain the process to the person requesting the accommodation as part of the interactive process. The Human Resources representative may ask the employee to provide supporting documentation from the employee's health care provider regarding the disability.
3. If there are financial considerations to the accommodation, the Human Resources Director will take the necessary steps to obtain quotes for the work.
4. After the quotes are received, the Director of Human Resources in conjunction with the Associate Executive Director of Business and Finance will meet to discuss the request and whether a reasonable accommodation can be made.
5. The Human Resources Director or other Human Resources representative will contact the requestor to inform them of the decision.

Complaints

Anyone who believes that they have been subjected to unequal treatment as prohibited by the ADA may file a written complaint with the Director of Human Resources in Immokalee within 90 days of the alleged occurrence.

2.14 DRUGS AND ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

RCMA is committed to protecting the safety, health, and well-being of all employees and other individuals in our workplace. We recognize that alcohol abuse and drug use pose a significant threat to our goals. We have established a drug-free workplace program that balances our respect for individuals with the need to maintain an alcohol and drug-free environment. This organization encourages employees to voluntarily seek help with drug and alcohol problems.

Covered Workers: Any individual who conducts business for the organization, is applying for a position, or is conducting business on the organization's property is covered by our drug-free workplace policy. Our policy includes, but is not limited to executive management, managers, supervisors, full-time employees, part-time employees, off-site employees, volunteers, applicants, contractors, and interns.

Applicability: Our drug-free workplace policy is intended to apply whenever anyone is representing or conducting business for the organization. Therefore, this policy applies during all working hours, whenever conducting business or representing the organization, while on call, while on organization property, and at company-sponsored events.

Prohibited Behavior: The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs/controlled substances or alcohol is prohibited at RCMA. Any of these actions is a serious violation of this drug-free workplace policy.

Notification of Convictions: Any employee who is convicted of a criminal drug violation in the workplace (including a plea of no contest) must notify the organization in writing within 48 hours of the conviction. If the employee does not notify the employer, disciplinary action up to and including termination may be imposed. Federal and/or contracting agencies including the School District or Office of Early Learning will be notified in writing, when appropriate, within 10 calendar days of receiving notice from an employee of his/her conviction of a violation of a criminal drug statute in the workplace or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction.

Searches: Entering the organization's property constitutes consent to searches and inspections. If an individual is suspected of violating the drug-free workplace policy, he or she may be asked to submit to a search or inspection at any time. Searches can be conducted of pockets and clothing, lockers, wallets, purses, briefcases, lunchboxes, desks, equipment, parking lots, and personal vehicles.

Drug Testing: To ensure the accuracy and fairness of our testing program, all testing will be conducted according to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) guidelines where applicable and will include a screening test; a confirmation test; the opportunity for a split sample; review by a Medical Review Officer, including the opportunity for employees who test positive to provide a legitimate medical explanation, such as a physician's prescription, for the positive result; and a documented chain of custody. All drug-testing information will be maintained in separate confidential records. As a condition of employment, you will be required to participate in pre-employment, random, post-accident, reasonable suspicion, return-to-duty, and follow-up testing upon selection or request of management.

You will be required to take a post-accident drug test on the day of the injury for any significant work-related injury or any on-the-job driving accident.

If your responsibilities require that you drive certain types of RCMA vehicles to carry a specific number of children, you must be tested in accordance with the United States Department of Transportation testing rules before you are allowed to drive an RCMA vehicle.

The substances that may be tested for include, but are not limited to: Amphetamines, Cannabinoids (THC), Cocaine, Opiates, and Phencyclidine (PCP). Testing for the presence of the metabolites of drugs will be conducted by the analysis of urine.

Any employee who tests positive may be terminated immediately. An employee will be subject to the same consequences of a positive test if he/she refuses the screening or the test.

Consequences: One of the goals of our drug-free workplace program is to encourage employees to voluntarily seek help with alcohol and/or drug problems. If, however, an individual violates the policy, the consequences are serious.

In the case of applicants, if he or she violates the drug-free workplace policy, the offer of employment can be withdrawn. The applicant may not reapply.

Resources: RCMA offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which has a substance abuse and awareness program. The EAP is discussed later in this handbook.

2.15 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

RCMA's Standards of Conduct require the Board of Directors and all RCMA employees and volunteers to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of RCMA, everyone must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws, regulations, as well as internal policies, and procedures. Board of Directors members and all RCMA employees and volunteers are responsible for complying with all published Standards of Conduct and reporting violations or suspected violations without fear of suffering harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequences. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith or participated in an investigation is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

Procedure: Employees may share questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints with their immediate supervisor. However, if an employee is not comfortable speaking with their supervisor or is not satisfied with the supervisor's response, the employee is encouraged to speak with the Director of Human Resources or anyone in management that he/she is comfortable approaching. Complaints may be submitted on a confidential basis or anonymously. Reports will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Acting in Good Faith: Employees filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Standards must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Standards. Any allegations that prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

2.16 PROMOTIONS AND DEMOTIONS

Promotions

RCMA is committed to all employees' career growth and will provide opportunities for promotion to qualified and deserving employees to positions with increased responsibilities and higher pay. The position must be advertised first so that everyone who is interested and has the necessary qualifications may apply.

Some promotions are automatic, based on the attainment of specific educational credentials. However, supervisors may, at their discretion, choose not to promote the employee when the employee's current performance does not meet the expectations of the higher-level position or when budgetary constraints exist.

Note: Certain positions do not require a credential or degree higher than the one specified in the job description. Therefore, no automatic promotions will take place.

Promotions based on skills or the attainment of specific credentials will result in a salary increase. The increase will typically bring your salary to the minimum of the new pay range or will receive a 5% of your current salary, whichever is higher.

Involuntary Demotions

RCMA recognizes two types of demotions:

Without prejudice:

This type of promotion is involuntary. It may take place when employees through no fault of their own, are moved to positions that have a lower pay range than that of the position they had before.

With prejudice:

A demotion with prejudice takes place when an employee who has been given the time and help to improve his/her performance still cannot perform the job as expected, or when an employee who has been allowed sufficient time to obtain a mandated requirement for the position fails to meet such requirement. When a demotion without or with prejudice is appropriate, but there is no lower position available, the employee may be terminated.

Voluntary Demotions

In addition to the two types of demotions described above, employees may choose to consider voluntary demotions and apply for available positions in lower pay ranges.

Reasons for voluntary demotions include the following:

- An employee feels that his/her skills do not align with his/her current position
- An employee feels he/she needs a different work-life balance
- An employee feels that his/her current position is too stressful, or
- An employee realizes that a lower-level position is more enjoyable

Demotions and Pay

Demotions Without Prejudice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No salary changes if the demotion is initiated by RCMA because it is beneficial to the organization.• Reduction to the new range maximum if the current rate of pay is higher than the maximum. This action will take place in situations when the employee's current position is eliminated and the only alternative to maintaining his/her employment is to offer a non-competitive position in a lower salary range
Demotions With Prejudice	5% reduction
Voluntary Demotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the employee's current salary aligns with the internal equity of the new pay grade, the employee's salary will not be impacted.• If the employee's current salary does not align with the internal equity of the new pay grade, the employee's salary will be decreased.

2.17 LATERAL TRANSFERS

A lateral transfer occurs when an existing employee is competitively (the position was advertised) selected as the most qualified candidate for an existing vacant position within the same pay grade as their current job.

RCMA understands employees' desire to transfer at certain times during their employment. Likewise, supervisors should be supportive of staff who have the desire to enhance their skills or develop new competencies to pursue different or greater responsibilities internally.

An employee must have completed their initial probationary period and be in good standing before he or she is eligible to apply for a transfer. The 6-month or 12-month waiting requirement may be waived by the employee's current supervisor, such as in cases of a position elimination or situations where the department may need the employee to fill a critical vacancy.

Employees may be eligible for a voluntary transfer if the employee does not have any disciplinary action beyond a verbal reprimand (#2) and/or has not been on a performance plan as a result of unsatisfactory performance, conduct, or behavior during the preceding annual review period. Exceptions to this eligibility restriction might be with the approval of the hiring manager.

All transfers are subject to a new probationary period.

Types of Lateral Transfers:

Voluntary: This type of lateral transfer occurs when an employee voluntarily elects to apply for a position advertised.

Involuntary: This type of transfer occurs when a supervisor determines that the move is beneficial to RCMA. The transfer may be within the same geographical area or to a different RCMA location.

Transfers and Pay:

Transfers to positions within the same salary range do not require a salary change.

2.18 ATTENDANCE POLICY

All RCMA Charter Schools employees are responsible for meeting the expected standards for attendance. Chronic, habitual, and/or excessive lateness or absenteeism affects the Charter Schools' ability to provide educational services. Additionally, it places an undue burden on co-workers who report for work as scheduled.

The instructional staff is expected to be on campus from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Times may vary based on location.

Under some circumstances, absence or tardiness may be excused, but employees are required to give supervisors proper notice.

"Proper notice" means that an employee must notify the immediate supervisor or another member of the school management team about the expected or necessary absence or tardiness, in advance, unless a verifiable emergency makes it impossible for the employee to do so.

When an employee is unable to attend work on the same day of an unexpected conflict or illness, the employee must contact his/her immediate supervisor (or another member of the school management team if the immediate supervisor is unavailable) not less than one hour before the employee's scheduled reporting time.

It is not sufficient for an employee to call in and leave a message with a coworker or anyone else who is not in a supervisory position or who has been authorized by a supervisor to receive attendance-related calls.

If an employee does not give proper notice of attendance problems in advance, as explained in this policy, he/she will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Excused Absences/Lateness: Excused absences and tardiness are typically granted for the following types of needs and will be deducted from your PTO balance:

- Illness and/or doctor appointments,
- Funerals of immediate family members.
- Unavoidable conflicts (automobile accident or breakdown, occasional work conflict, etc.).

Repeated requests for excused absences/lateness that interfere with Charter Schools' ability to conduct efficient operations may be denied at the discretion of the employee's supervisor.

Unexcused Absences/Lateness: Absences and tardiness are considered unexcused when:

- Employees do not obtain advanced approval or fail to follow the proper notification procedures
- Employees requested approval, but supervisors denied the request for valid reasons
- Unexcused absences and lateness will result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

Occurrences

An unexcused absence counts as one occurrence for the purposes of discipline under this policy in 12 months. All supervisors are advised to take disciplinary action as follows:

- up to 4 unexcused absences/lateness = first warning or next-level disciplinary action if one is already on file.
- 5 unexcused absences/lateness = second warning or next-level disciplinary action if one is already on file.
- 6 unexcused absences/lateness = 3-day suspension without pay
- 7 unexcused absences/lateness = termination

2.19 TIME-KEEPING

To receive their paychecks, employees are required to record time worked and personal leave taken on the E-time automated system. An employee cannot record time for another employee. Recording time for others will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

2.20 TERMINATION POLICY

VOLUNTARY TERMINATIONS

Voluntary terminations include resignations, retirement, and quitting without notice.

Resignations

A resignation is a voluntary termination from RCMA with a notice on the part of the employee.

Proper notice: An hourly paid employee is expected to give at least two (2) weeks' notice, and a salaried employee is expected to give at least four (4) weeks' notice. All resignations should be in writing.

It is the responsibility of the employee's supervisor to submit the resignation letter along with the proper termination form to the Human Resources Department.

Quitting Without Notice

An employee who fails to give proper notice of resignation or abandons the job is considered to have quit without notice. In addition, an employee who is absent for two (2) consecutive workdays without proper justification is also considered to have quit without notice.

INVOLUNTARY TERMINATIONS

Involuntary terminations include:

- Staff reductions or reorganizations due to lack of funds or lack of work. (In this type of situation, temporary and newly hired employees will be terminated before any regular employees.) Dismissal for unsatisfactory job performance
- Violations of Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida or RCMA's general standards of conduct and work rules and regulations.

It is the policy of RCMA not to release the reason for termination to anyone except when an employee is terminated for violating the childcare requirements of the State. In this case, the reason for dismissal may be released to other childcare organizations.

When job references are requested by individuals outside RCMA, the organization will only provide dates of employment and title and will also verify ending salaries if requested.

An employee who is terminated regardless if voluntary or involuntary is entitled to payment for any unused Paid Time Off, PTO. This does not include any banked leave balance at the time of termination. For non-instructional staff and para-professional staff, if the effective date of resignation is a holiday or falls during RCMA's December holiday break, the employee is not eligible for payment for the holiday(s) unless the staff member works the workday following the holiday or December break.

2.21 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

At RCMA Charter Schools, employees may carry cell, smartphones, or other signaling devices provided that such devices do not disrupt the instructional environment of the program.

All electronic devices must be turned off or set to vibrate during school and after-school program hours and used only while on break time. Employees are prohibited from using any device for texting, checking messages, going online, or otherwise using it while performing assigned job duties.

Taking pictures with personal electronic devices while on Charter School activity is strictly prohibited. Posting pictures of students on social network sites is not allowed. For emergency purposes, employees may request permission to use one of the school phones.

RCMA Charter Academies are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal electronic devices. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

2.22 PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

RCMA Charter Schools recognize that employees may wish to use social media in their personal lives. This policy does not intend to discourage nor limit personal expression or online activities. However, employees are expected to recognize that problems can arise when a personal posting identifies or appears to be associated with RCMA Charter Schools or when a personal posting is used in ways that violate RCMA's General Standards of Conduct and/or Work Rules and the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida

If you choose to express yourself by posting online on a social media network, you need to recognize the potential for damage that may be caused (either directly or indirectly) to RCMA, parents, children, volunteers, or other employees, in certain circumstances. Therefore, to ensure that the risk of such damage is minimized, RCMA requires that you follow these guidelines:

No Posting Using RCMA Resources

You may not use RCMA resources, including your RCMA email address, to create or maintain a personal social media account, upload content, or make personal postings online, nor may you do so during working hours. You also may not allow any students to utilize social media platforms during the school day or on equipment and networks of the RCMA Charter Academies except in cases when such a thing will serve for education purposes.

Online Posting

All RCMA policies apply to anything you write in a post or upload to the internet. You are legally responsible for the content you post on any social media network. You can be held personally liable for posting material that may be interpreted as offensive, obscene, profane, defamatory, embarrassing, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexually explicit, or unlawful. Unkind comments about an RCMA child, parent, volunteer, or employee are also inappropriate.

- If in the process of making a personal post or uploading to the internet, you identify yourself as an employee of RCMA, you must clearly state that the views expressed in your post are your own, and do not reflect the views of RCMA.
- You may not use RCMA logos or other RCMA-related images, nor may you make false or misleading statements about RCMA's philosophy.
- You are not authorized to post pictures of RCMA children, buildings, and classrooms on personal social media networks.

Additionally, when posting on social networking sites, blogs, wikis, or other forms of online communication, employees must consider the following guidelines:

- Does the post positively promote RCMA?
- Does the post conflict with RCMA's mission, culture, and values?
- Does the post reveal confidential information about one's work, students, families, or colleagues? Does the post reflect positively on the individual's co-workers/colleagues, school, or organization as a whole?
- Does the post portray transparent, accurate, valuable, and well-researched information? Does the post violate copyright, trademark, or fair use laws?

You need to keep in mind at all times that your personal postings may be read not only by your friends and family but also by your coworkers and supervisors as well as RCMA's donors, parents, or staff from other organizations associated with RCMA. Remember also that even if you post anonymously or under a pseudonym, your identity can be discovered relatively easily. Use your common sense when deciding what to include in a post. Failure to follow these guidelines is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

2.23 GRIEVANCE POLICY

You and any employee (except for new hires/rehires on their probation period, substitutes, temporary staff, and executive staff members) who feels that you have been subject to unfair treatment, disciplinary action, unequal working conditions, or work relationships have the right to present your grievance (complaint, a difference of opinion) to management by following the steps of the grievance process for prompt consideration and fair decision.

You have the right to express grievances without the fear of restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, reprisal, or retaliatory action. This also applies to any employee witness who may be taking part in the presentation of the grievance.

What you need to do if you have a grievance:

Step 1 Informal Discussion with Supervisor: You must FIRST try to resolve the issue with your immediate supervisor within 5 working days of the incident, concern, or event. Your immediate supervisor will have 5 working days to respond.

Step 2 Written Grievance: If your concern is not resolved informally at Step 1, you may file a written grievance with the next supervisor in the chain of command using the form HR 39 within 10 working days of receiving Step 1 response.

Step 3: The supervisor meets and responds directly to you in writing, within 15 working days of receiving the written grievance.

Step 4: If the concern is not resolved at Step 3, you may file a written appeal with the Executive Director (ED) or Associate Executive Director (AED) in Immokalee within 5 working days of receiving the STEP 3 response. The appeal should be sent to the Human Resources Department and an HR member will be sure to submit your appeal to the ED or AED. The Director will meet and respond directly to you, in writing, within 20 working days of receiving the written appeal.

Step 5: If not resolved, you may file an appeal with the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors of the Charter School. Your grievance should be sent to the Rollason Center in Immokalee within 10 working days of receiving a response from the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director. The Personnel Committee may choose by a vote whether or not to hear any appeal. If the Personnel Committee votes not to hear an appeal, the decision of the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director will become final. If the Committee chooses to hear the appeal, the hearing will be informally conducted and evidence shall be presented that is relevant to the case at hand. The Committee and the employee have the right to call their witnesses. The hearing will be held within a timely manner, not to exceed 90 days from the date the appeal is received. Following the hearing, a written response will be provided to the employee. This is the final response and the case will be closed.

If a supervisor in any of the steps listed above is incapacitated or the subject of the grievance, the grievance will be forwarded to the next supervisor in the chain of command.

NOTE: Individuals who are not RCMA employees do not have standing under this policy to pursue a grievance and the response of the Executive Director, Associate Executive Director, or Committee will be final.

2.24 SPECIAL MAGISTRATE FOR TEACHER EMPOWERMENT POLICY

This is the Special Magistrate for Teacher Empowerment Policy of RCMA Charter Academies (the "School"). This policy is implemented to comply with the requirements of Rule 6A-1.094127, Florida Administrative Code, Section 1015.06, F.S, Florida Statutes, and other relevant laws.

A teacher may now request that the commissioner appoint a Special Magistrate to address a teacher's dispute stemming from the teacher being directed by the school or district to violate general law or a State Board of Education rule. Initiating a Special Magistrate proceeding described in this rule does not affect an ongoing employment action against a teacher, nor does it prevent a school or school district from initiating employment action against a teacher. However, the Special Magistrate's Recommendation, if approved by the State Board, as well as the State Board's order on the Recommendation, can be used as evidence in an employment action if otherwise permitted by law.

The form used to request a Special Magistrate is provided by the Florida Department of Education.

Types of Concerns Covered. A Special Magistrate will only consider disputes where a classroom teacher alleges that he or she has been directed to violate general law or State Board of Education rule by the School or the School District.

Complaint Procedures. To request the appointment of a Special Magistrate, a teacher must follow these steps:

- Complete and return the form entitled "Teacher Request for Appointment of a Special Magistrate" which is available by request or online.
 - Describe the nature of the dispute, including the School procedure or practice in question and the general law(s) or State Board rule(s) the School is allegedly directing the teacher to violate through its procedures or practices;
 - Describe the resolution or relief previously sought at the School and School District level;
 - Describe the resolution sought from the Special Magistrate and the State Board of Education;

- Demonstrate that before filing for the appointment of a Special Magistrate, resolution of the dispute was sought by the teacher with the teacher's Principal, and subsequent to that, resolution was sought by the teacher at the School District level, all in accordance with any applicable grievance procedures of the School and the School District. In order to meet this requirement, the teacher must demonstrate that he or she has, in writing, pointed the Principal and School District personnel to the specific provision(s) of general law or State Board rule the teacher believes they are being directed to violate and how that act or omission would violate that specific provision of general law or State Board rule; and
- Provide and maintain accurate contact information such as an email address, telephone number, and mailing address.

The Department will provide the teacher and the School with written notice once a decision has been made. A Special Magistrate may not be appointed for a number of other reasons, such as the failure to fully utilize the appropriate grievance procedures for resolution, or where referral would interfere with an investigation or other administrative, civil, or criminal proceedings.

SECTION III: EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

3.1 PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR THE EDUCATION PROFESSION IN FLORIDA

Licensed professions frequently have standards of conduct to which their members are expected to adhere. In Florida, certified educators are held to Principles of Professional Conduct as outlined in Rule 6A-10.081, Florida Administrative Code. These requirements represent the guideposts of what professional educators and members of the community can and should expect from educators. RCMA Charter Schools and its personnel will comply with the Principles of Professional Conduct.

3.2 CHARTER ACADEMIES STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

An effective educational program requires the services of men and women of integrity, high ideals, and human understanding.

A. An instructional staff member shall:

- Make a reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety.
- Not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
- Not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
- Not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
- Not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
- Not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
- Not harass or discriminate against any student based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background, and shall make reasonable efforts to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
- Not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.

- Keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
- Take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated.
- Not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.
- Not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage.
- Accept no gratuity, gift, or favor that might influence professional judgment.
- Offer no gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special advantages.
- Maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
- Not based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background denied to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.
- Not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
- Not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct which unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance of professional or work responsibilities or with the orderly processes of education or which creates a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive environment; and, further, shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that each individual is protected from such harassment or discrimination.
- Do not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.
- Not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence the professional judgments of colleagues.
- Not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications.
- Not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities.
- Not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact in one's own or another's application for a professional position.
- Not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.
- Provide, upon the request of any employee, a written statement of the specific reason for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment.
- Not assist entry into or continuance in the profession of any person known to be unqualified in accordance with these standards of ethical conduct and other applicable Florida statutes and State Board of Education rules.
- Self-report within forty-eight (48) hours to appropriate authorities any arrests/charges other than a minor traffic offense (driving under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances is not considered a minor offense). Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt. In addition, an instructional staff member shall self-report any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion program, or entering of a plea of guilty or Nolo Contendere for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within forty-eight (48) hours after the final judgment. When handling sealed and expunged records disclosed under this rule, school districts shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of F.S. 943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c).

- Report to appropriate authorities any known allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in F.S. 1012.795(1).
- Seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported any allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in F.S. 1012.795(1).
- Comply with the conditions of an order of the District or the Education Practices Commission imposing probation, imposing a fine, or restricting the authorized scope of practice.
- Cooperate with the District and/or the Education Practices Commission in monitoring the probation of a subordinate.

All instructional staff members shall adhere to the principles enumerated above and will be required to complete training on the standards established herein upon employment and annually thereafter as defined in F.S. 112.313, 1001.42(6), 1012.23 F.A.C. 6B-1.001, 6B-1.006

3.3 GENERAL RCMA STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND WORK RULES

As an employee of RCMA Charter Schools, you are expected to behave properly and professionally on and off the job. You are expected to respect the rights and feelings of others at all times. You are never to behave in ways that might be harmful to the children/families served and co-workers or may have a negative impact on the mission or reputation of RCMA.

RCMA is supported by public funds and, therefore, has an obligation towards the general public, particularly migrant and seasonal farmworkers, the rural poor, and their families. You and all employees must be gracious, helpful, and considerate to all members of the public. You are expected to use good judgment with regard to your behavior and conduct and be sure that your behavior will not affect RCMA's credibility.

It is not possible to list all forms of unacceptable behavior at work. The rules and regulations listed below as well as others that may be established from time to time are just a guide to what is considered unacceptable conduct. In addition, you must always remember to follow the Standards of Conduct that you agreed to follow when you began your employment at RCMA. Specifically, you agreed to respect each family and child, and every RCMA staff regardless of their gender, race, culture, ethnicity, age, religion, or disability. You also signed and acknowledged your understanding that any information you have about anyone associated with RCMA such as children, families, and employees must remain confidential; and that you will treat children with respect by using positive ways to guide them.

3.4 DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION

RCMA is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culturally competent workforce that values diversity, equity, and inclusion. Diversity initiatives are applicable—but not limited—to our practices and policies on recruitment and selection; compensation and benefits; professional development and training; promotions; transfers; layoffs; terminations; and the ongoing development of a work environment built on the premise of cultural diversity equity that encourages and enforces:

- Respectful communication and cooperation between all employees.

- Teamwork and employee participation, permitting the representation of all groups and employee perspectives.
- Employer and employee contributions to the communities we serve to promote a greater understanding and respect for diversity.

All employees of RCMA have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect at all times. All employees are expected to exhibit conduct that reflects inclusion during work, at work functions on or off the work site, and all other RCMA-sponsored and participative events.

Any employee found to have exhibited any inappropriate conduct or behavior against others may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees who believe they have been subjected to any kind of discrimination that conflicts with this policy and related initiatives should contact the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee at AllDEICommittee@rcma.org

RCMA'S WORK RULES AND REGULATIONS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

3.5 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Employees shall not engage in any activity directly or indirectly that will contribute to their personal or financial benefit as a result of RCMA employment.

3.6 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Outside employment, which is employment performed by any employee in addition to that performed for RCMA, shall not interfere with the efficient job performance at RCMA. Such employment shall not present a conflict of interest, nor conflict with the employee's job duties with RCMA. Employees are required to notify supervisors prior to such employment. Employees are prohibited from providing tutoring or other services to students who are assigned to their class in exchange for compensation from the parent or student.

3.7 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Any work created by an employee in the course of employment shall be the property of RCMA and the employee is deemed to have waived all rights in favor of RCMA and its Charter Schools with respect to the intellectual property rights in such works. Works, for the purpose of this policy, may include written, educational, creative, or media works, along with any other works that may be created in the course of the employee's employment with RCMA. All source material used in presentation or written documents must be acknowledged.

In addition, when an employee leaves RCMA, the employee must return to RCMA Charter Schools all RCMA-related information and property that the employee has in his/her possession, including without limitation, documents, files, records, manuals, information stored on a personal computer or a computer disc, school supplies, and equipment and office supplies. Personal computers should have all content as created during employment. It is not permissible to erase any work-related content.

Violation of this policy is a serious offense and may result in appropriate legal action.

3.8 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

RCMA employees are encouraged to become registered voters, to participate in each election, and community affairs. However, employees may not use RCMA time for these purposes and may not involve RCMA in any political campaign or support of any candidate.

3.9 FIREARMS and other weapons or instruments capable of inflicting bodily harm:

Ensuring a safe work environment and the prevention of workplace violence is of paramount importance to RCMA. Firearms and other weapons or instruments capable of inflicting bodily harm inside the workplace pose a potential threat to the safety and security of our employees, and any of such items are strictly prohibited at all times inside our facilities, or while you are engaged in the work or business of the organization, whether on-site or off-site.

The carrying of firearms and other weapons or instruments capable of inflicting bodily harm while inside an RCMA building or leased space, on RCMA property, inside an RCMA-owned vehicle, or while conducting RCMA business, on or offsite, is strictly prohibited, is a violation of RCMA policy, and will subject an employee to discipline, up to and including termination.

3.10 CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

No controlled substances (alcohol or drugs), may be stored, made, used, distributed, or brought to any property used by or under the control of RCMA. This does not include controlled substances prescribed by a physician.

3.11 ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS, GRATUITIES, AND FEES

Employees are prohibited from personally soliciting or accepting gifts, gratuities, or fees for services rendered by parents. Employees are prohibited from receiving benefits from individuals or companies who have or are presently doing business with RCMA. It is acceptable to receive minor advertising giveaways or allow vendors or companies to provide sponsorships of RCMA events or activities after receiving the School Principal's consent.

3.12 GIFT GIVING

Employees are prohibited from giving, making a donation to, or asking for contributions for a gift to their supervisor or anyone above him/her in the chain of command.

3.13 CONFIDENTIALITY

Employees may have access to confidential information while employed at RCMA. Confidential information is a valuable and unique asset of individuals or families who have furnished this information to RCMA. Confidential information includes but is not limited to financial information, data,

agreements, education records, student contact information, medical information, personnel data, contact lists, and other information.

Confidential information will only be made known to employees in confidence and in connection to their job duties and on a “need-to-know” basis. Disclosure or use of confidential information by an employee other than for the sole benefit of RCMA is wrongful and would cause irreparable damage to students, families, and to RCMA’s ability to do their work. Employees may not disclose or use confidential information for any purpose other than in the performance of their duties.

3.14 CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA

All media inquiries regarding RCMA and its operation must be referred to the School Principal and Executive Director. Only the Executive Director is authorized to make or approve public statements pertaining to RCMA and its operations. No employee, unless specifically designated by the ED, is authorized to make these statements.

Additionally, any posts, comments, or other forms of communications on all social media sites, online newspapers, magazines, blogs, and other online material about RCMA should not be written by or responded to unless directed by the ED or the Director of Community Relations.

3.15 PERSONAL TELEPHONE CALLS

All school-based staff must turn their personal cell phones off or set to vibrate during school hours/when in the classroom with students. Staff are discouraged from making personal phone calls or text messaging during school hours or when in class with students.

3.16 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RCMA Charter Schools recognize the importance of supporting and encouraging employees in career and professional development activities that are related to their employment. Work-related professional development opportunities may include college coursework and books, attendance to job-related training, seminars, workshops, and conferences.

Partial Tuition and Textbook Reimbursement

RCMA pays up to 50% on tuition and books once you pass the class with a C or better.

Any training, technical, or financial assistance will be given provided that it will benefit the Charter Schools students and the employee in terms of increased knowledge, skills, and abilities. The provision of professional development assistance will be made available to eligible employees to the extent that funding and resources will allow and will be based upon organization priorities.

Periods of time off for study purposes are to be negotiated and agreed upon between employee and supervisor and should take into consideration the regularly scheduled Charter School operational hours.

Employees receiving assistance must complete the Tuition Reimbursement/Professional Development Plan Expenses Agreement and turn that in to their immediate supervisor for approval.

In addition, employees must agree to remain at RCMA Charter Schools for a minimum of two (2) years. If the employee voluntarily terminates employment before completing two (2) years of service after receiving the last reimbursement from RCMA, he/she must repay RCMA as follows:

Time elapsed from the last course tuition and textbook cost reimbursement to the termination date	Percentage of repayment applicable to course tuition and textbook cost reimbursements received during 24 months prior to termination
Six (6) months or less	100%
More than 6 months, but less than 12 months	75%
More than 12 months, but less than 18 months	50%
More than 18 months, but less than 24 months	25%

3.17 DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The purpose of disciplining employees is to provide a course of corrective action to improve and prevent a recurrence of undesirable employee behavior and performance issues. RCMA will adhere to a progressive disciplinary process when immediate termination is not warranted.

RCMA's progressive discipline process consists of the steps listed below; however, steps may be omitted upon review of the circumstances and the seriousness of the violation. Some violations may require immediate termination. Factors that will be considered are whether the offense is repeated despite coaching, counseling, or training and the impact the conduct and performance issues have on RCMA as well as its programs and services.

The employee will be asked to sign this document to demonstrate his or her understanding of the issues and the corrective action. Refusal to sign the document will not change the course of action and the disciplinary action will remain on file.

A completed copy of any disciplinary action form (HR31) must be placed in the employee file and another copy must be sent to the Human Resources Department. The form is available on the intranet under the Human Resources section.

Step #1: First Warning

The first warning is an opportunity for the employee's supervisor to bring attention to the undesirable performance, conduct, or other issues. The supervisor should discuss with the employee the nature of the problem or the violation of RCMA policies and procedures. The supervisor is expected to clearly

describe expectations and steps the employee must take to improve his or her performance or resolve the problem.

Step #2 – Second Written Reprimand

The second warning involves more formal documentation of the performance, conduct, or other issues and the consequences. During this step, the employee's supervisor will meet with the employee to review any additional incidents or information about the performance, conduct, or other issues. The supervisor will discuss the consequences for the employee of his continued failure to meet performance or conduct expectations.

Step #3 – Final Warning

The final warning is the next step as part of the normal sequence of the Progressive Disciplinary Action Policy when previous violations are repeated or new non-severe violations occur.

Step #4 - Termination

The last step in the progressive disciplinary action process is termination. Generally, an employee will first receive feedback, reprimands, warnings, or suspension as opportunities to correct performance or conduct. However, when feedback or previous disciplinary actions have failed, termination may be necessary.

Supervisors may omit the first three steps and terminate employees without prior notice depending on the circumstances of each situation and the severity of the violation.

3.18 RETENTION OF PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

It is the policy of RCMA to retain formal disciplinary action-related documents describing violations of RCMA's Standards of Conduct and policies and procedures as follows:

A verbal warning (#1) or a written reprimand (#2) resulting from any violation will be active in the employee file for five years from the date of the incident. Such documents will be retained in the employee file only as a reference to help supervisors determine the next course of action for any future misconduct, performance issues, or violation of existing policies and procedures.

Any violation that leads to a written warning (#3) or employment termination (#4) as part of the progressive disciplinary process will be active and retained for seven years from the date of the incident or from the date of the employment termination.

Any severe violation that leads to a written warning (#3) requiring disciplinary probation or immediate termination will remain in the employee file permanently. Disciplinary probation cases may be the result of the reinstatement of employment after termination.

In cases where an employee is alleged to have violated a policy and the investigation results in one adult's word against another's, a written record of the incident will be maintained in the employee's file.

3.19 APPEALS PROCESS

Employees will have an opportunity to present information to dispute information used for disciplinary actions. Refer to the “Grievances” section of this handbook for steps to follow.

3.20 INVESTIGATION LEAVE

A compulsory leave from work is appropriate when an investigation into an incident that may have violated RCMA policies or procedures or into a report of inappropriate employee conduct is required. It is best for RCMA and the employee if the investigation is done with the employee away from RCMA. The investigation may take some time and the work of RCMA continues with the daily care of children.

An investigation is not a disciplinary action. If the result of the investigation shows that no policies were violated, you will be asked to return to work and will be paid at the normal rate of pay for all the regularly scheduled hours missed during the investigation. If the results of the investigation show a policy was violated and results in corrective action, the employee will not be paid for missed time.

3.21 DISCIPLINARY SUSPENSION

Some violations may be so problematic or harmful that the most effective action may be a temporary disciplinary suspension of the employee from RCMA. Disruption of normal RCMA operations and extremely serious violations of rules, policies, or standards of conduct may require a disciplinary suspension. When immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of employees, children, or others, the supervisor may also suspend the employee. Disciplinary suspensions are without pay. Supervisors must complete the Disciplinary Suspension section on form HR80. The form is available on the intranet under the Human Resources section.

3.22 DISCIPLINARY PROBATION

When progressive discipline steps are skipped and an employee receives a written warning or disciplinary suspension for a serious violation, he or she will be immediately placed on disciplinary probation. The disciplinary probation period will be the same as the regular probation period, six (6) months for non-exempt employees and twelve (12) months for exempt employees.

3.23 VIOLATIONS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE TERMINATION

It is not possible to list or anticipate all possible severe violations, but the following are examples of those that would be subject to immediate termination:

Student related violations

Disregard of policies, procedures, and regulations that result in a threat to the safety and/or health of a child.

- Emotional abuse to include cruelty, harassment, humiliation, isolation, and denial of food or use of bathroom facilities or an opportunity to play
- Abusive, profane, or sarcastic language or verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks in front of the student or about the student or student’s family

- Physical abuse to include hitting, or spanking a student as a form of discipline and/or harshly grabbing or shaking a student
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment
- Extreme negligence in the provision of basic care to any student assigned to the employee. Basic care includes but is not limited to feeding and toiletry assistance as needed for exceptional education students or young kindergartners, comfort, first aid, and dispensing of medication.
- Cigarette or vapor/e-cigarette smoking on RCMA premises and/or surroundings where students are present
- Unauthorized absence from an assigned area or abandonment of responsibilities when adequate relief coverage is not available

General safety violations

- Possession of firearms or other weapons on RCMA property, including vehicles;
- Reporting for work under the influence of an illegal intoxicant, narcotics, or other drugs that may affect performance; consumption, distribution, possession, or use of illegal intoxicants, narcotics, or other drugs that may affect performance on RCMA premises and while driving an RCMA vehicle
- Refusal to take a drug/alcohol test

Other violations

- Felony charges
- Refusal to perform assigned work, follow assigned work schedule, or accept a change in responsibilities or classroom.
Absence for two (2) consecutive scheduled working days without notification to the supervisor or failure to return from an authorized leave of absence within two (2) working days after the expected return date.
- Theft
Physical fighting with another employee or parent
- Discrimination or sexual harassment

Violations of RCMA general policies, work rules, regulations, or Standards of Conduct

Being absent without proper notice (see Attendance Policy in a separate section of this handbook)

- Computer abuse, including but not limited to misuse of computer accounts, unauthorized destruction of files, and possession of unauthorized passwords (Policy 1.70)
- Conducting oneself in any manner that is offensive, abusive, or contrary to common decency or morality; carrying out any form of harassment including sexual harassment
- Displaying disrespectful and/or inappropriate behaviors toward a child, parent, co-worker, supervisor, volunteer, visitor, or any other individual associated with RCMA;
- Excessive absenteeism and tardiness (See Attendance Policy)

- Excessive personal calls
- Failure to comply with published policies or published procedures and standards;
- Failure to notify supervisor not less than one hour prior to scheduled reporting time when unable to report to work
- Falsification of records for personal or financial benefit
- Insubordination (refusal by an employee to carry out direct and proper instruction (verbal or written) from his/her supervisor.)
- Improper release of confidential or privileged information (see details in a separate section of this Handbook)
- Operating RCMA-owned vehicles or equipment without the proper license or operating any vehicle on RCMA property or RCMA business in an unsafe or improper manner
- Smoking where prohibited (see details in a separate section of this Handbook)
- Removing without authority any equipment, materials, or other RCMA property or attempting to remove them from the premises without appropriate approval or permission
- Taking RCMA equipment, time, or resources for personal use or gain
- Walking off the job without appropriate authorization
- Misusing, neglecting, or willfully damaging or destroying RCMA property

Amendments reflecting the new laws related to classroom instruction, gendered bathrooms, and pronoun use. Violations of the Principles of Professional Conducts below can result in revocation or suspension of an individual's educator's certificate.

- Intentionally provide classroom instruction to students in prekindergarten through grade 8 on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Intentionally provide classroom instruction to students in grades 9 through 12 on sexual orientation or gender identity unless such instruction is either expressly required by state academic standards, or is part of a reproductive health course or health lesson for which a student's parent has the option to have his or her student not attend.
- Violating s. 553.865(9)(b), F.S., which relates to entering restrooms and changing facilities designated for the opposite sex on the premises of an educational institution.
- Intentionally violate s. 1000.071, F.S., which relates to the use of personal titles and pronouns in educational institutions.

SECTION IV: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND LEAVES

4.1 General

Full-time employees are eligible for all benefits listed. Part-time employees are eligible for most benefits on a pro-rated basis but are ineligible for others that require a minimum number of work hours. Any part-time employee who previously worked full-time for 3 years or more and their scheduled hours reduced to at least 20 hours per week, would be eligible for long-term disability benefits.

Substitutes and temporary employees may be eligible for some RCMA-offered benefits including participation in the 403(b) or Roth plans, the Employee Assistance Program as well as medical coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

4.2 FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLAN

As an RCMA regular full-time or part-time employee, you may be eligible to participate in the RCMA benefit plans. The benefits plan is subject to change annually. Benefit Plan eligibility requirements and terms of coverage are described in detail on the plan documents published online and made available to all eligible employees each year.

- You may select any of the available coverage for you and/or your family including medical, dental, and vision insurance, short-term disability, and other coverage. Premiums are deducted from your paycheck in accordance with IRS regulations, but most are on a pre-tax basis. Specific details about medical, dental, vision, disability, life, and other benefits may be obtained by contacting the Human Resources Department.
- If you do not desire to participate, you must waive the election through the Employee Self-Service Portal.
- This handbook only summarizes the benefits RCMA offers. Details of the specific benefit plans can be found in Summary Plan Descriptions (SPDs) or other relevant plan documents. For information on how to obtain plan documents, you may contact the Human Resources Department.
- Benefits described in this handbook may be modified or discontinued at RCMA's discretion and proper notification will be provided to all employees.

4.3 CONTINUATION OF HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS

Under Federal law, you and your covered dependents have the opportunity for a temporary extension of medical coverage up for up to 18 months depending on the event. This type of coverage is called COBRA continuation coverage and is available at group rates in instances where coverage under the RCMA plan ends as a result of qualifying events such as divorce, reduction in hours, employment termination, death, etc. You may contact the Benefits Office to obtain detailed information.

4.4 EXIT INTERVIEW

When employees voluntarily leave our organization, they are given the opportunity to provide information pertaining to their work experience and the factors that contributed to their separation. Exit interviews are voluntary and kept confidential.

The exit interview can be completed through an online survey link from a third-party provider available on the Intranet. It also may be conducted over the telephone, in a video conference, or in person, depending on the preference of the departing employee

4.5 LONG TERM DISABILITY

RCMA provides long-term disability coverage to all qualified full-time employees after 60 days of employment. This coverage is effective if an employee is disabled for more than 90 days. Specific details about long-term disability can be obtained by contacting the Human Resources Department.

4.6 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

The EAP is available for all RCMA employees and their families. The EAP is a free, professional service that provides consultation and referral services to help you and your family cope with personal problems, crises, and other concerns. This twenty-four (24) hour Spanish and English language service is completely confidential. The number to call is 1-800-356-7089. The phone number is subject to change so contact Human Resources for updated information.

4.7 WORKERS' COMPENSATION

RCMA is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for its employees. Trained internal staff or insurance carrier staff will provide education and training that includes recognition, avoidance, and prevention of unsafe or unhealthy working conditions and practices and the prevention of on-the-job injuries, accidents, or illnesses. It is the employee's responsibility to act safely and reasonably at all times.

Unfortunately, regardless of the best safety efforts, job-related injuries and accidents may still happen. It is the policy of RCMA to provide workers' compensation insurance benefits at no cost to employees who sustain job-related injuries or illnesses while at work. Regardless, of when an employee obtains treatment, on the date of injury an employee will be drug tested.

Injured Employee Duties: If you suffer an accident or are injured while on the job, you must immediately report any injury or illness to your immediate supervisor regardless of how minor that may be. Depending on the severity of the accident or injury, you may be required to seek immediate treatment. Treatment must be provided by a doctor or facility authorized by the RCMA worker's compensation insurance carrier. Failure to see an approved doctor may result in denial of your worker's compensation benefits coverage.

If your injury is severe and results in an emergency, you may be taken or go to the nearest emergency room for treatment. Otherwise, you must go to an approved workers' compensation medical facility. This list is available within RCMA's Intranet.

Injured Employee Supervisor Duties:

Your supervisor must contact RCMA's Worker's Compensation Specialist at the Rollason State Office immediately upon receiving the injury or accident report from you. The Specialist will help arrange for appropriate medical treatment and will answer any technical questions that you or your employee may have.

Benefits: If you are unable to work for more than 7 days, you may be eligible to receive money to replace part of what you were not able to earn after the accident. The first 7 days lost from work are only paid by the insurance carrier if you lose more than 21 days of work.

If you cannot work at all, based on your doctor's instructions, you may receive a portion of your regular pay at the time of the accident/injury. That benefit will generally be paid starting with the 8th

day you lose time from work. You will have the option to use the remaining 33 1/3% of your PTO balance to receive 100% of your pay.

Return to Work

RCMA and Human Resources staff will help injured employees get back to productive work by identifying available light-duty assignments that can be done with temporary medical restrictions. Refusal to accept these assignments may result in denial of worker’s compensation insurance benefits.

Zero tolerance for fraud

Workers’ compensation fraud is a punishable crime. RCMA and our insurer have a “zero-tolerance” policy for fraud. If you think you see fraud happening, tell a supervisor or manager right away, or call the Worker’s Compensation Specialist at the Rollason State Office in Immokalee. Your tip will be investigated and kept strictly confidential.

4.8 EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

RCMA honors each long-service employee at a statewide annual service awards ceremony and presents him/her with a service award plaque and/or an appropriate gift. Employees who have completed fifteen years of service and each succeeding five years of service will be honored. Employees are also recognized after 1, 5, and 10 years of service.

4.9 HOLIDAYS

Non-Instructional (nonexempt employees)

If you are a regular employee, you have twelve (12) paid holidays a year. In order to be paid, you have to work a scheduled work day before and after the holiday. If you have an excused absence (**with pay only**) on the day prior or the day after a holiday, you will be eligible for the holiday pay. RCMA holidays are:

New Year’s Day	Thanksgiving Day
Martin Luther King Day	Friday after Thanksgiving
Good Friday	Christmas Eve
4 th of July	Christmas Day plus four (4) days after Christmas

Administrative and Instructional: (exempt employees)

Administrative and Instructional staff employees will observe the holidays based on the local school district calendar.

4.10 RETIREMENT PLAN

As an RCMA employee, you are eligible to save money by contributing to retirement plans through payroll deductions. Any contributions you make are automatically deducted from your paycheck. You can enroll in the pretax 403(b) Plan or the after-tax Roth Plan. There are no age or service requirements to participate. You may apply at any time during the year and choose to save from as little as 1% to the maximum percentage or dollar amount permitted by law.

4.11 RCMA MATCH

Administrative and Instructional Staff

As an RCMA full-time employee with an Employment Agreement, you are automatically enrolled in the RCMA 403B Retirement Plan as a 6% defined benefit. No employee contribution is required.

To receive the 6% defined benefit, you must be full-time. The benefit is based on your regular wages. (Any wages paid outside of this agreement are not eligible for the 6% defined benefit.)

Employees are vested after three (3) calendar years.

You may elect to contribute an additional non-matched contribution to the RCMA 403B Retirement Plan. The amount is not to exceed the maximum deferral amount allowed by the IRS.

Paraprofessionals, Non-Instructional, and Part-Time Staff

RCMA matches the contributions of employees who are at least 21 years old after their first year of employment and have worked a minimum of 1000 hours. The matching contribution percentage is based on an employee's years of service as follows:

- If you have worked for RCMA for 1-4 years: You will receive a 2% contribution
- If you have worked for RCMA for 5-9 years: You will receive a 3% contribution
- If you have worked for RCMA for 10+ years: You will receive a 5% contribution

Employees are vested after three (3) calendar years.

Additional details can be obtained by contacting the Benefits Office.

4.12 SCHOOL TIME

RCMA is strongly committed to parent involvement in the education of their children. If you are a parent, you are encouraged to make school visits to keep appointments made by the schools on matters concerning your children. You must keep in mind that in planning such visits, you should ask for appointment times that fit best into the RCMA center or office schedule. Time off for each visit should be limited to one hour, with no more than one and one half (1 ½) hours maximum each month.

4.13 NURSING MOTHERS

RCMA provides reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child. Breaks are provided for up to one (1) year following the child's birth each time the employee needs to express breast milk.

RCMA is not required to pay nursing mothers for breaks taken specifically for the purpose of expressing milk. However, an employee may use her regular paid employee breaks for that purpose. RCMA will provide a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.

Procedure

It is the employee's responsibility to advise her supervisor when breaks are needed to express milk.

A private space shall be designated by RCMA for employees to express milk. The employee should contact her supervisor or Human Resources to obtain the location of the private space.

The employee will be completely relieved from work duties during breaks taken for the purposes of expressing breast milk, and the employee will not be compensated for such breaks unless the employee uses her regularly scheduled, compensated break period for this purpose.

4.14 PAID TIME OFF, (PTO)

PERSONAL LEAVE YEARLY PAYOUT

Non-Instructional (nonexempt)

PTO is paid time off you earn based on how long you have worked at RCMA. If you are a substitute or a temporary employee, you do not earn PTO.

In order to take PTO, you must request it in advance and your supervisor must approve it. The only time you do not require advanced approval is when your leave is covered by the Family Leave Act (FMLA) described later. If no PTO is available, approval for unpaid time off is at the discretion of your supervisor.

Non-exempt employees earn PTO as follows:

Accrual of Hours Worked	The maximum earned in the 12-month FY
>2080	88 hours
>2080-10,401	136 hours
>10401+	200 hours

Personal Leave Yearly Payout

Every year on June 30, you have the following two options:

- To be paid up to 40 hours of accumulated Personal Leave

- To carry over any personal leave hours

Carried-Over Personal Leave

The fiscal year at RCMA begins July 1 and ends June 30. You may carry over up to 320 hours of accumulated Personal Leave into the next fiscal year.

Banked Leave

If you have any hours beyond 320 hours of personal leave at the end of the fiscal year, the hours will be banked. Banked leave may only be used when personal leave has been all used. The maximum number of hours that may be banked is 320. If you leave RCMA, any banked leave will be lost.

Instructional and Administrative (exempt employees)

Instructions and administrative employees will receive 7 days of personal leave, equivalent to 56 personal leave hours each year.

Employees are able to utilize their personal leave during the school year. As an exempt employee, you must take leave in full-day increments. Partial days are not allowed with the exception of intermittent FMLA.

Personal Leave Yearly Payout

At the end of the school year, you have the following two options:

- To be paid up to 40 hours of accumulated Personal Leave (Budget-permitting)
- To carry over any personal leave hours to banked leave.

Please note that exempt employees who do not have an agreement earn PTO as follows:

Years of Service	The maximum earned in the 12-month FY
1	88 hours
2, 3, 4	136 hours
5 and every year thereafter	200 hours

4.15 BANKED LEAVE

Banked leave may only be used when the current personal leave has been exhausted. The maximum number of hours that may be banked is 320 for nonexempt staff and 56 for instructional and administrative staff. If an employee leaves RCMA, any banked leave balance will be lost.

4.16 SHARED LEAVE CLUB

The Shared Leave Club provides temporary salary and benefits continuation for any eligible employee who is faced with a serious non-work-related health condition that requires him/her to be absent from work. The purpose of the Club is to allow RCMA employees the opportunity to help coworkers by making donations of personal leave (PTO) hours or banked leave to those employees in need. A serious non-work-related health condition is a catastrophic, unplanned illness, injury, or other major impairment of the employee or employee's immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent only) that creates a financial hardship because the employee has exhausted all available, accrued PTO or banked leave.

Definitions

Serious health condition – a condition involving a period of incapacity that is permanent or long-term for which treatment may be effective. Examples include:

- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Cancer treatment
- Car accident with serious injuries
- Domestic violence injury, a threat with shelter/counselor/advocate confirmation
- Traumatic injury to the employee-mother during childbirth
- Hip/knee joint replacement surgery

Non-qualifying condition – a non-catastrophic condition such as maternity/paternity leave, planned elective surgery, generally arthroscopic and/or outpatient, accidents causing mild to moderate injury, illness/hospitalization for acute or chronic infections such as pneumonia, urinary tract infection, influenza, or asthma even if worsened by an underlying chronic condition.

Eligible Donor – a full-time or part-time employee after being employed for one full season/program. Substitutes and temporary employees are not eligible donors.

Eligible Recipient – a full-time or part-time employee who is a member of the Club, and:

- Has exhausted all accrued PTO or banked hours
- Is not currently receiving Worker's Compensation payments

Immediate Family Member – a child, a spouse, or a parent

Shared Leave Club Committee – a diverse group made up of 5 RCMA employees from different areas, ethnicities, and positions who volunteer for a 2-year term to verify that Club requirements are met before approval.

Policy and Limitations

To join the Shared Leave Club and become an eligible donor or eligible recipient, an employee must donate four (4) hours of PTO or banked leave to the Club. To remain a Club member, each year, following the original enrollment, the same 4-hour donation will be automatically deducted

on each May 15 pay date and becomes effective July 1st of the current year through June 30th of the following year.

The policy allows Club members to donate extra hours in addition to the yearly, required 4-hour donation if they choose to do so.

- Participation in the Shared Leave Club is on a voluntary basis.
- A Club member who chooses not to continue membership must submit a resignation letter to Human Resources prior to the May 1
- Once processed, donations may not be reversed. Donated hours also remain in the Club when a Club member terminates voluntarily or involuntarily.
- A Club member is required to use any accrued PTO or banked leave prior to requesting and receiving donations through the Club.
- A Club member may receive up to 12 weeks in 12 months. When shared leave is requested to care for an immediate family member, the Club member may receive up to 6 weeks only.
- A Club member who has Short-Term Disability insurance may apply for Shared Leave equivalent to the balance not covered by the Short-Term Disability insurance.
- Donations are not tax-deductible.
- If the Club runs out of leave hours, requests for Shared Leave will not be accepted.
- The Shared Leave Club is NOT subject to RCMA's grievance procedure.

Procedure Requesting Shared Leave

- An eligible employee must complete form HR-84.
- HR-84 must be submitted to the Human Resources Department (HR) along with documentation from the health care provider, crisis shelter, or other verification of the need for the leave and the expected duration of the condition.
- HR will verify that the Club member has exhausted all PTO or banked leave.
- After verification, HR will forward the request to the Shared Leave Club Committee for a determination. The Club member's name will be removed to maintain his/her privacy.

Donating Shared Leave

- Employees who wish to become Shared Leave Club members must donate 4 hours of PTO or banked leave every May 15 (or through the last paycheck before lay-off). If an eligible employee wishes to donate more than the required 4-hour donation, he/she should contact the Payroll Department no later than May 1.
- First-time donors must complete form HR-49 and submit it to the Payroll Department no later than May 1.
- Forms submitted after that date will not be processed and the employee will not be eligible to participate in the Club or request Club benefits.
- To remain in the Club, Club members will be automatically deducted 4 hours of PTO or banked leave on each May 15 pay date, unless a written notification from the member resigning from

the Club is received prior to that date. The Payroll Department will verify that the donor has sufficient hours available to donate.

- An employee who does not have sufficient hours available to make the donation will not be eligible to participate in the Club or request Club benefits until the next enrollment.

Shared Leave Committee Review

Committee members will discuss and verify:

- whether the health condition meets the Serious Health Condition definition
- whether the documentation submitted is sufficient to support the request
- whether the amount of time requested is justifiable

After ensuring that all Club requirements are met, the Committee will approve the request and notify HR of their approval. Alternatively, if Club requirements are not met, the Committee will deny the request and notify HR of their denial.

4.17 FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

It is the policy of RCMA to provide family and medical leave to its eligible employees. This policy shall at all times be construed in compliance with the requirements of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") and its implementing regulations.

Eligible Employee. Any employee who has worked at RCMA for at least twelve (12) months or fifty-two (52) weeks is eligible for FMLA leave.

Reasons for Leave. To qualify as FMLA leave under this policy, the leave must be for one of the reasons listed below:

- The birth of a child and in order to care for that child (applies to both mothers and fathers).
- The placement of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child (applies to both mothers and fathers).
- To care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition.
- The serious health condition of the employee.
- Qualifying exigency leave for families of members of the National Guard or Reserve or of a regular component of the Armed Forces when the covered military member is on covered active duty or called to covered active duty.
- care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the covered servicemember.

Leave Entitlement. An eligible employee is entitled to take up to a total of twelve (12) weeks of unpaid FMLA leave in a 12-month period, to be measured backward from the commencement date the employee uses FMLA leave. An eligible employee taking leave under Section (2)(f) shall be permitted to take up to twenty-six (26) workweeks of leave in a twelve (12) month period. Employees may qualify for paid leave under Section 8 of this policy if they meet the criteria set forth therein and only for the period of time described therein.

Use of Leave. The employee may take FMLA leave consecutively, may use the leave intermittently

(take a day periodically when needed over the year) or, under certain circumstances, may use the leave to reduce the workweek or workday, resulting in a reduced hour schedule. In all cases, the leave may not exceed a total of twelve (12) workweeks (or twenty-six (26) workweeks to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness pursuant to Section (2)(f) above). When leave is needed for planned medical treatment, the employee must make a reasonable effort to schedule treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operation. Leave to care for or bond with a newborn child or for a newly placed adopted or foster child may only be taken intermittently with the employer's approval and must conclude within 12 months after the birth or placement.

Requesting FMLA Leave. Employees needing FMLA leave must attempt when reasonable to schedule their leave so as to minimize disruption to RCMA's operations. All employees requesting FMLA leave must provide verbal or written notice of the need for the leave to the Principal. When the need for the leave is foreseeable, the employee must provide the employer with at least thirty (30) days' notice. When an employee becomes aware of a need for FMLA leave less than thirty (30) days in advance, the employee must provide notice of the need for the leave either the same day the need for leave is discovered or the next business day.

Notice of Rights. Within five (5) business days after an employee requests leave that may qualify as FMLA leave, RCMA will provide the employee with the Department of Labor Notice of Eligibility and Rights.

Certification. RCMA may request that employees requesting FMLA leave pursuant to Sections (2)(c) through (2)(f) provide certification of the need for the FMLA leave using one of the proper Department of Labor certification forms. The employee must respond to a request for certification within fifteen (15) days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Within five (5) business days after the employee has submitted the appropriate certification form, RCMA will complete and provide the employee with a written response to the employee's request for FMLA leave using the Department of Labor Designation Notice.

Paid Leave. Employees are required to use any accrued paid sick and personal leave before any unpaid FMLA leave is taken. Any such paid sick or personal leave will be counted toward the total allowable twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave. The combined paid and unpaid FMLA leave time taken shall not exceed the total allowable twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave (or twenty-six (26) workweeks to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness pursuant to Section (2)(f) above).

Maintenance of Group Medical Insurance. While an employee is on leave, RCMA will continue the employee's health benefits during the leave period at the same level and under the same conditions as if the employee had continued to work. If the employee chooses not to return to work for reasons other than a continued serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member or a circumstance beyond the employee's control, the company will require the employee to reimburse the company the amount it paid for the employee's health insurance premium during the leave period. While on paid leave, the employer will continue to make payroll deductions to collect the employee's share of the premium. While on unpaid leave, the employee must continue to make this payment, either in person or by mail. The payment must be received by RCMA by the 1st day of each month. If the payment is more than thirty (30) days late, the employee's health care coverage may be dropped for the duration of the leave. The employer will provide fifteen (15) days' notifications prior to the employee's loss of coverage.

Job Restoration. Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee shall be restored to the same or an equivalent position. An equivalent position is one that is virtually identical as far as pay, benefits, and other working terms and conditions, and must involve the same or substantially similar duties and

responsibilities. An employee who takes leave under this policy may be asked to provide a fitness for duty clearance from a health care provider stating that the employee is able to resume work.

4.18 NON-FMLA MEDICAL LEAVE

If you do not meet the requirements of those mandated by federal and/or state laws such as FMLA and Workers' Compensation Leave, and you are unable to work during an extended period of time for your own severe medical, catastrophic, or life-threatening illness, you may be eligible to apply for Non-FMLA Medical Leave. Non-medically necessary, elective procedures or surgeries are not covered under RCMA's non-FMLA medical leave. Request for other non-medical related reasons cannot be approved. Reference PTO policy.

To be eligible for it, you must have been employed at RCMA for a minimum of two (2) years or two (2) consecutive seasons. You may take leave up to twelve (12) weeks and it is contingent upon medical certification. Intermittent leave under non-FMLA medical leave is not permitted.

If you take non-FMLA medical leave, you do not have job restoration rights. However, RCMA will generally reinstate you to the same position or a position with equivalent status, pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions. In the event RCMA is not able to reinstate you, you will receive notice from HR.

Your pay during Non-FMLA Medical Leave:

You may choose to be paid accrued PTO hours or banked leave hours. Once you have used up all your available PTO hours, the balance of the leave will be without pay.

Your benefits during Non-FMLA Medical Leave:

A non-FMLA medical leave will not affect your health insurance coverage during the leave period. RCMA will continue its contributions to maintain your health coverage. You will be responsible for your portion of the health coverage and any other employee-elected contributions.

Note: Non-FMLA medical leave does not extend family medical leave. Non-FMLA medical leave and Worker's Compensation can run concurrently.

4.19 UNPAID PERSONAL LEAVE

An unpaid personal leave of absence may be granted at the sole discretion of your supervisor. The approval would be dependent on current or anticipated center/office needs during the requested time of absence. A request for time during a mandatory training previously scheduled may also be denied. This type of leave is intended to be used for certain personal matters and may only be requested after you have exhausted your accrued PTO. If approved by your supervisor, you will be allowed to take up to 7 working days off.

Examples include:

- Religious holiday

- Family event
- Death of a loved one
- House move
- Failure to return

4.20 CIVIL LEAVE

If an employee is subpoenaed to serve on a jury or as a witness for the federal, state, or local government, the employee will be granted leave with regular pay minus the amount of compensation received as a juror or witness. The employee will also be granted Civil Leave if subpoenaed in work-related litigation. Civil Leave will not be deducted from an employee's accumulated personal Leave balance.

4.21 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

If an employee has worked for RCMA for three (3) months or longer, the employee is eligible for up to three (3) days' leave per year for a variety of activities connected with domestic violence issues. Time of absence during Domestic Violence Leave may be taken as personal leave or leave without pay. Specific activities connected with domestic violence include:

- Seeking an injunction for protection against domestic violence/repeat violence, or sexual violence;
- Obtaining medical care or mental health counseling or both for the employee or a family or household member to address injuries resulting from domestic violence;
- Obtaining services from victim's services organizations such as a domestic violence shelter or rape crisis center;
- Making the employee's home secure from the perpetrator of domestic violence or finding a new home to escape the perpetrator;
- Seeking legal assistance to address issues arising from domestic violence or attending or preparing for court-related proceedings arising from the act of domestic violence.

Notification requirement: When requesting domestic violence leave, you must provide your supervisor at least seven (7) days advance notice of the need for the leave unless prevented from doing so because of imminent danger to your health or safety or the health and safety of a family member. Proof of the situation may be required. Any information provided will be kept confidential.

SECTION V: GENERAL PRACTICES

5.1 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

RCMA Charter Schools are committed to providing employees with informal and formal feedback about their performance.

As a new employee, or as a current employee who is hired into a new position, has been promoted or transferred, you and your supervisor must agree on what the expectations are regarding your work. Both have to also be clear about what training or other help you may need to do your job well. You

need to make sure you understand your job description so that you are clear about what you need to do, why your work needs to be done, and how well it should be done.

You and your supervisor should meet regularly throughout the year so that he/she can provide feedback as to whether you are meeting performance expectations. When performance improvement is needed, a performance improvement plan (PIP) may be developed.

Once a year you will receive a written performance evaluation. You are encouraged to complete a self-evaluation and provide it to your supervisor. If you communicate with your supervisor about how you are doing throughout the year, there will be no surprises when you receive the written evaluation. Your overall job performance rating and current rate of pay will be taken into consideration to determine if you are eligible for a merit increase.

Performance evaluations will include a review of strengths, identification of areas needing improvement as well as goals and objectives that need to be achieved. Specific performance issues may be addressed outside the performance appraisal cycle through either informal discussions or formal disciplinary action.

A written evaluation must be signed by the employee to acknowledge its content. Signing does not necessarily mean that the employee agrees with the content. If the employee disagrees, he or she may file a supplement to the evaluation which will be retained in the employee's HR file.

PERFORMANCE RATINGS FOR CHARTER SCHOOL NON-INSTRUCTIONAL HOURLY EMPLOYEES

Promotion and Transfer Evaluations

If you are promoted or transferred into another position, you should receive a performance evaluation during the month in which you complete your probationary period in the new position. If you successfully complete your promotion or transfer probationary period, you will have your annual performance evaluation date adjusted to be conducted during the same month of each subsequent year of service in that position.

Merit Increase

A merit increase is defined as an increase in pay based on an employee's work performance during the performance evaluation period. Merit increases are generally issued 12 months from the previous merit. An employee whose pay is at the maximum of the salary range may not be granted an increase as it would cause the base salary to exceed the maximum of the range for that position.

There are five (5) performance rating categories for non - non-instructional hourly employees. These categories are in the Performance Evaluation form to evaluate you on different areas of your job performance. The description of each rating is listed below:

5	A "5" means that the employee <u>consistently</u> performs well above expectations (goes above and beyond). An employee who is given a "5" rating demonstrates exceptional knowledge of the job, works with little or no supervision and his/her performance is exceptionally high in quality, quantity, and timeliness. The employee also assumes a very high level of responsibility for his or her performance.
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4	A "4" means that the employee performs consistently above expectations, and shows that he/she has the desire and ability to perform his/her job at a level above average. He/she works with minimal supervision.
3	A "3" means that the employee consistently meets or to some extent exceeds expectations. This rating indicates that the employee is a competent, productive, and valued member of the team.
2	A "2" means that the employee <u>does not consistently meet</u> expectations <u>or</u> regularly meets expectations in some areas, but does not regularly meet expectations in others. However, there is potential for improvement which is needed to reach a fully successful level. When performance is at this level, corrective action is warranted.
1	A "1" means that the employee clearly and consistently fails to meet overall expectations. The employee shows either unwillingness or an inability to improve. When performance is at this level, disciplinary action will be taken.

5.2 COMPENSATION

RCMA Charter Schools use their local school district pay scale as a guide; however, years of service are not used as the rationale for automatic annual pay increases. Job performance is the dominating factor in arriving at pay increases, along with budgetary restraints. Any salary or hourly rate adjustments, if applicable, are at the sole and absolute discretion of RCMA.

5.3 E-TIME

If you are a non-instructional (nonexempt employee), you are required to clock in and clock out daily on E-time, RCMA's computerized time recording system. Regular hours worked, overtime, holidays, personal leave, and any other leaves are recorded in the system and your supervisor will show you how to use them properly. He/she must approve the information you enter at the end of each pay period.

If you are an administrative or instructional (exempt) employee, you must also record any personal leave taken within the E-time system, and approve your E-time at the end of each pay period.

5.4 OVERTIME COMPENSATION

If you are a non-exempt employee who is required to work more than forty (40) hours in a week, you are entitled to overtime compensation at a rate of one and one-half hours per each hour of work in excess of the regular forty (40) hours. Overtime is any hours worked in excess of 40 between Sunday and Saturday.

Your supervisor must approve any overtime work in advance.

5.5 NATURAL DISASTER PAY

RCMA may be required to temporarily close offices, centers, and schools due to threats of severe weather events such as major hurricanes or damage caused by hurricanes, tornados, or wildfires. Depending on the extent of the damage as well as resources, the Executive Director or designee will

determine the number of days the location will remain closed. During the closed period, all employees at the affected locations will be considered to be on administrative leave and will be paid their regular pay.

Once the administrative leave period ends, and if conditions allow, you will be expected to return to work your regular schedule. If conditions do not allow you to work your normal scheduled hours during the disaster recovery period, you will be expected to work at least 50% of your regular schedule to be eligible to receive your full, regular pay.

If you do not report to work beyond the administrative leave period, regardless of the reason for your absence, you will not be eligible for regular pay unless you contact your supervisor and request personal leave. If you do not have a personal leave balance available, you will not be paid. In such cases, your supervisor will choose the Unpaid Leave code when approving E-time.

If you fail to communicate with your supervisor or refuse to report to work immediately after the administrative leave period you may be disciplined up to and including termination. Discipline for attendance-related issues is described in Section V of the Employee Handbook, specifically under the Proper Notification policy section.

5.6 WAGE PAYMENT

RCMA requires that all employees elect how to receive their pay by completing the HR36 Direct Deposit form. You can elect to receive your pay via direct deposit to a bank account, to an ALINE card, or an ALINE check. The bank account where RCMA sends payments must be active at all times or the deposits made will be sent back to RCMA. If you close your account, you must notify the Payroll Office immediately.

All new employees will be issued an Aline Visa Pay Card for their first payroll earnings. After the first payroll earnings, your payment will be issued to the option you selected on the HR36 Direct Deposit form.

5.7 GARNISHMENT OF WAGES

RCMA honors any wage garnishments that are mandated by local courts or the federal government. You will be notified immediately upon their receipt through the Payroll Office. Mandated garnishments will be deducted from each of your paychecks until the amount owed is paid off.

5.8 EMPLOYEE FILES

All information in your file is confidential and will not be released to anyone unless subpoenaed by a court of law. Only your supervisor, certain administrative staff, and DCF licensing agents (if applicable) are authorized to have access to your employment records. The employee files are the property of RCMA, however, supervisors, at their discretion, may provide you with copies upon request. In accordance with the State of Florida's General Records Schedule GS1-SL, personnel records are retained for 50 years following the employee's separation or termination of employment.

SECTION VI: Safety and Security

6.1 SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

RCMA is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all its employees children and families served and visitors while respecting individual choices. Therefore, it prohibits smoking in any indoor facility, playground, RCMA entries, RCMA exits, and RCMA-owned vehicles. As an organization where services to children are provided, RCMA is also required to restrict smoking in such areas. Cigarette and vapor/e-cigarette smoking is strictly prohibited. Failure to comply with this policy is subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

6.2 DRESS CODE

RCMA allows employees to dress comfortably while projecting an acceptable, work-appropriate image to the parents of the children we serve as well as community visitors, donors, and funders' representatives. Clothing should be conservative and functionally appropriate to the employees' daily responsibilities.

Employees are expected to use good judgment in their choice of clothing. The following guidelines, however, should help them determine what is appropriate to wear to work:

Shoes:

To reduce the risk of on-the-job accidents, shoes with non-slip soles and a back strap must be worn at all times. If an employee wears heels, they must not exceed two (2) inches in height. Employees in direct contact with children in classrooms and playgrounds are strongly encouraged to wear closed-toe shoes at all times. Cooks must wear closed-toed and rubber sole shoes at all times.

Clothing:

- Skirts and dresses must be no more than six (6) inches above the knee when sitting.
- Shorts may be worn but must be no more than six (6) inches above the knees. Spandex shorts are not considered acceptable at work.
- No tube tops, halter tops, midriff blouses, spandex, or any other clothing that is appropriate at the beach or a gym may be worn.
- No clothing that has words, terms, or pictures that may be offensive to others may be worn.
- Employees attending conferences and meetings offsite (taking place away from RCMA sites) may wear sandals with no back strap. These must be appropriate for the event being attended. Beach flip-flops are not appropriate in a professional setting.
- Cooks must wear hairnets at all times.

Fingernail Length:

Employees whose jobs involve regular or occasional contact with children and their families should keep their fingernails length to no more than ¼ inch long and kept clean, trimmed, and filed to avoid unintentional scratches on children.

Cooks and other food-service-related professionals should have fingernails no longer than 1/8 inch long. Cooks are not allowed to have artificial nails as artificial nails are shown to have more germs than natural nails.

6.3 EMPLOYEE'S CHILDREN

RCMA Charter School employees may not bring their children or grandchildren to work while on duty unless they are enrolled at the school. This is to avoid possible accidents and to allow you and your co-workers to perform your job without the interruptions and distractions that may be caused by the children.

6.4 PERSONAL PROPERTY

RCMA Charter Schools do not assume responsibility for the loss of or damage to personal belongings that employees bring to or leave in schools or other RCMA property. Valuable personal items such as handbags, wallets, cell phones, personal electronic devices, money, or other valuables should not be left in areas where theft may occur. These should be locked securely in a desk drawer, cabinet, or other safe areas. Additionally, RCMA Charter Schools do not assume responsibility for any damage to personal vehicles while on RCMA property.

6.5 SAFETY AND CARE OF PREMISES, MATERIALS, AND EQUIPMENT

The safety and care of buildings occupied by RCMA and all property and materials belonging to RCMA are the responsibility of all employees. No employee shall take or use RCMA material or equipment for personal use without the permission of the School Principal. To use materials and equipment for service in another non-RCMA program, the permission of the School Principal is required.

6.6 BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Universal Precautions are the steps taken to reduce the spread of bloodborne diseases from one person to another. It is very important that these steps be fulfilled within RCMA Charter Schools to protect children, staff members, vendors, visitors, and others who have contact with the school facilities.

- It is a requirement to wear nitrile gloves when touching body fluid.
- Wash hands before and after all emergency procedures. If skin comes in contact with blood, wash the affected area immediately with soap and water.
- If your skin comes in contact with blood, report the incident at once to the School Principal or the Director of Charter Schools. Not all reported situations will automatically be considered "exposure incidents." Each situation will be handled on an individual basis, including the determination by OSHA standards whether or not the Hepatitis B vaccine will be offered
- Never recap, bend, or break needles. Dispose of needles/syringes in red "sharp" containers provided in restrooms and health rooms.

If an employee has any questions about the prevention of the spread of bloodborne pathogens, he or she may speak to the school principal or Director of Charter Schools.

6.7 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Any suspected abuse must be reported by calling 1(800)96-ABUSE or online at <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>. Any reports should also be communicated to the Director of Charter Schools and/or the School Principal. Any and all staff must report child abuse.

- Suspected child abuse and neglect
- Unusual fearfulness
- Lack of hygiene or inappropriate dress
- Delayed emotional, intellectual, or language development
- Frequent injuries
- Eating disorders
- Rocking, self-inflicted pain
- Sleep disorders
- Lack of eye contact, poor socialization
- Acting out in school
- Unexplained scars or bruises
- Malnutrition
- Many school absences

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CHARTER SCHOOL EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK RECEIPT

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the RCMA Charter School Handbook which outlines policies, practices, and other important employment information. This Handbook is not a contract and should not be construed to create a contract of employment or contract of any kind.

I agree to read the entire Handbook during my first three days of employment or within three days of receiving it. I agree to abide by all policies and procedures contained in the Handbook.

Printed Name

Signature

Date