

ACADEMIES OF



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Rev. August 2025. 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 1 - WELCOME

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This handbook is not a contract. It is a tool designed to acquaint employees with general information about working conditions, benefits, and policies affecting their employment at the Academies of RCMA. 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.

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

1.2 HISTORY OF RCMA'S ACADEMIES

Since 1965, RCMA has played a critical role in keeping the children of farmworkers safe and providing them with quality education and development opportunities while their parents work in the fields. 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.

RCMA saw a need to open another school in Polk County. Polk County's economy relies heavily on agriculture. For generations, agri-business has relied on laborers to prepare and harvest crops. Mulberry Community Academy opened in August 2023, with 80 kindergartners and first graders in a newly renovated space. In August 2024, 2nd Grade was added with an additional 40 children, temporarily occupying 2 modulars that have been renovated into classroom space. In August 2025, RCMA is adding 40 3rd Graders. An additional grade level will be added each year (total of 40 children in 2 classroom spaces) until the school is K-8th Grade and 350 total students. By opening an RCMA Community Academy, with proven success in farm working and rural families, school outcomes, high school graduation rates, and attendance at college or trade schools will be significantly improved. At 2,000 students, Polk County has one of the largest migrant student populations in the state of Florida.

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 MISSION OF RCMA'S ACADEMIES

RCMA's mission is to open doors to opportunity for students through high-quality childcare and education from cradle to career—and beyond. Since launching its first early education program in

1965, RCMA has served as a trusted educational partner for rural, underserved families, particularly those working in Florida's agricultural sector.

RCMA's charter schools were founded in direct response to families' desire for a community-rooted, Zero to 8th grade model offering continuity of programming for children transitioning from early childhood to school-age programs.

SECTION 2 – WORKPLACE COMMITMENTS

2.1 *OPEN DOOR POLICY*

RCMA's priority is to establish a positive work-life environment for all employees. To help us meet this goal, our organization has an open-door policy, by which employees are encouraged to report work-related concerns. If something about an employee's job is bothering him/her, or if an employee has a question, concern, idea, or problem related to their work, the employee should discuss it with the immediate supervisor as soon as possible. If for any reason an employee does not feel comfortable bringing the matter to his/her supervisor, the employee may reach out to Human Resources for further guidance at hr@rcma.org.

We encourage employees to come forward and make his/her concerns known to us. There will be no negative repercussions or retaliation for voicing a concern.

2.2 *EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY*

Employment practices at the Academies of RCMA 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.

We want all Academy employees to feel that he/she has a place where they can work free of prejudices and sexual harassment. With regard to prejudices, the Academies of RCMA 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 employees a pleasant environment in which to work. We expect employees to be dedicated to their 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. Employees should remember that what may seem harmless fun to someone may be offensive or irritating to others. Employees should 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 an employee believes he/she has been discriminated against because of his/her race, color, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, country of origin, religion, or disability, the employee should contact Human Resources.

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

2.3 *SEXUAL HARASSMENT*

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 an academy'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:

1. First, the employee should inform the harasser that his/her behavior is offensive and unwelcome and ask him/her to stop behaving in the same manner. An employee may skip this step if he/she does not feel comfortable addressing the behavior with the harasser.
2. If the harasser's conduct continues, the employee must immediately contact the harasser's supervisor or administrator whom they feel comfortable approaching.
3. 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.

2.4 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.

Procedures

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 healthcare provider regarding the disability.
3. If there are financial considerations for 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

If an employee believes that he/she has 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.

2.5 *DRUGS AND ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE*

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, employees 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.

All suitable candidates/employees will be directed to comply with pre-employee drug testing at one of our third-party, Vault-approved facilities and provided with the applicable drug testing form.

Pre-employment Drug Test

As a condition of employment and before the start of employment, candidates will be required to participate in and pass a pre-employment drug screening.

In the event an applicant does not pass the pre-employment testing, the offer of employment can be withdrawn. The applicant may not reapply.

Random Drug Test

Our drug testing program complies with and aligns with Federal US DOT regulations for professional drivers, also known as CDL drivers.

All drivers required to possess a CDL license to operate commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) (i.e., motor vehicles with a GVWR of 26,001 pounds or more; transporting 16 or more passengers, including the driver) on public roadways must be USDOT drug and alcohol tested. Furthermore, drivers are subject to unannounced random drug & alcohol testing. Random testing selection must be done using a scientifically valid method to make it truly random.

Procedure

Following our third-party administrator process, a quarterly selection of “random” individuals will be provided to RCMA for compliance with a random drug and/or alcohol screening.

Each quarter, HR, in conjunction with our third-party administrator, Vault Health, will review the current quarter's list of selected candidates. HR will notify the supervisor for each candidate to provide notice and guidance for sending the candidate for proper testing. Upon notification, the employee must proceed immediately to complete of screening.

Positive results will be managed confidentially, and all drug-testing information will be maintained within the employee's personnel file in their “Restricted” folder. RCMA will comply with the notification and reporting of all applicable outside government agencies as required by law.

Post-Accident Drug Test

Employees who are injured at work are required to report their injuries immediately to their supervisor. Guidelines have been put into place to ensure safe behaviors are followed to prevent incidents that can result in a serious injury or fatality at one of our locations.

Employees 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 an employee's responsibility requires that he/she drives certain types of RCMA vehicles to carry a specific number of students, the employee must be tested in accordance with the United States Department of Transportation testing rules before he/she is allowed to drive an RCMA vehicle.

Reasonable Suspicion

Should we suspect that someone in the workplace is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at work, the completion of the steps outlined below should be taken. All “Safety Sensitive Functions”¹

¹ A safety-sensitive position refers to a job where an employee's performance directly affects the safety of themselves or others, including roles where inadequate task performance or failure to perform could lead to safety incidents. Some common safety-sensitive positions include: Drivers, Medical care providers, Child care providers

should be suspended pending the completion of the steps outlined in the Reasonable Suspicion Procedures for Supervisors. The procedure covers:

1. **Complaint Intake:** All complaints made by co-workers, clients, and vendors should be taken seriously and responded to accordingly. Verify and document the following information from the complainant to properly assess and respond to the concern.
2. **Steps for Establishing Reasonable Suspicion:** The supervisor will observe the employee in question at their work area directly. The supervisor will use the guidelines outlined in RCMA's HR82 "Documentation of Reasonable Suspicion" form.
3. **Corrective Actions:** The supervisor will take the appropriate steps to send the employee for testing and work with HR for the management of results and return to work status.
4. **Pay:** If the test results are negative, the employee will be asked to return to work and will be paid for all hours of work missed.

Five-Panel Drug Test

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 who violate 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.

2.6 BACKGROUND SCREENING AND ARRESTS

All applicants of the Academies who are selected for employment must submit and pass a Level 2 background screening in compliance with regulations set forth by the Florida Department of Education (DOE) before the first day of work.

Employees at the Academies who work in the After-School Program are required to obtain DCF clearance in addition to the DOE clearance, before beginning to work, with only one exception as indicated below.

The applicants who are going through DCF clearance and are pending out-of-state results, and for whom RCMA has already received the DOE 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.

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.

Staff Arrest Reporting

Self-Reporting Required by Florida Law. In compliance with Senate Bill 1374 (2025) and §1012.799, F.S., instructional personnel and administrative personnel shall self-report within 48 hours to the charter school, any arrest for a felony offense or for a misdemeanor offense listed in §435.04(2) (see Appendix A). Such self-report is not considered an admission of guilt and is not admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory and adjudicatory. In addition, instructional personnel and administrative personnel 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 48 hours after the final judgment. When handling sealed and expunged records disclosed under this rule, the charter school shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of §§943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c), F.S.

Additional Self-Reporting Requirements. In addition to the above-stated legal obligation of instructional and administrative employees, the School requires all employees to notify the Principal (or, in the case of a Principal, to the Board Chair) in writing of any arrest or charge for any reason within 48 hours, whether or not such offense is related to the offenses listed in Appendix A.

Mandatory Removal. Pursuant to §1012.22 F.S., the School, upon notice of an instructional staff member having been arrested or charged with any felony offense or for a misdemeanor offense listed in §435.04(2) F.S. must remove such staff member from the classroom within 24 hours of notification by the staff member or law enforcement of the arrest or charge.

Removal may be accomplished by allowing an employee to perform non-instructional work away from the student population, allowing the employee to take an unpaid leave of absence during the pendency of the related investigation by law enforcement, or termination of employment. The School retains sole and absolute discretion to determine the removal option that is appropriate in each circumstance.

Discretionary Removal. In addition to the grounds for removal set forth in section IV, the School may, in its own discretion, remove an instructional staff member from the classroom based on any other offense reported to the School. Such removal may be accomplished by any of the methods described in section IV.

Violations. Failure to report any arrest or charge to the Principal (or Board Chair, as appropriate) within 48 hours of such arrest shall result in discipline up to and including termination.

Administration will review this policy and work with legal counsel to determine if Legislative updates require amendments to this policy.

Refer to the complete Background Screening Policy on the Intranet for more information.

SECTION 3 - EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION & CERTIFICATION

3.1 CLASSIFICATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

- **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.

- **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.

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.

3.2 CERTIFICATIONS

If a position requires an employee to be certified in a certain field of work, including ESE and ELL endorsements, the employee must have these necessary qualifications before starting work and must continue to maintain such qualifications. If an employee does not possess a certification before starting, the employee 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 and including termination.

Generally, Florida teachers must hold a valid Florida certificate in the subject they are teaching. Schools of Hope, as defined in Florida law, have some flexibility in this regard. Schools of Hope are exempt from many of the standard chapters of Florida's education code, including some related to teacher certification.

In Florida, Schools of Hope are allowed to employ teachers who may not meet the standard Florida Teacher Certification requirements as outlined in Florida Statute 1012.56, provided those teachers are not otherwise ineligible for employment. Specifically, Florida Statute 1002.333 states that a hope operator may employ school administrators and instructional personnel who don't meet the requirements of s. 1012.56, as long as they are not ineligible under s. 1012.315.

SECTION 4 - GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

4.1 *NEW HIRE ORIENTATION*

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

4.2 *PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR THE EDUCATION PROFESSION IN FLORIDA*

Licensed professionals frequently have standards of conduct to which their members are expected to adhere. In Florida, certified educators are held to the 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. The Academies of RCMA and its personnel will comply with the Principles of Professional Conduct.

4.3 *ACADEMIES OF RCMA STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT*

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

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.

4.4 *GENERAL RCMA STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND WORK RULES*

Employees of the Academies of RCMA are expected to behave properly and professionally **on and off** the job. Employees are expected to respect the rights and feelings of others at all times. Employees are never to behave in ways that might be harmful to the students/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. All employees must be gracious, helpful, and considerate to all members of the public. Employees are expected to use good judgment with regard to his/her behavior and conduct and be sure that their 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, employees must always remember to follow the Standards of Conduct that he/she agreed to follow when they began employment at RCMA. Specifically, employees agreed to respect each family and child, and every RCMA staff member regardless of their gender, race, culture, ethnicity, age, religion, or disability. Employees also signed and acknowledged his/her understanding that any information he/she has about anyone associated with RCMA, such as students, families, and employees, must remain confidential; and that employees will treat students with respect by using positive ways to guide them.

RCMA's work rules and regulations include, but are not limited to the following:

- **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.

Refer to the complete Conflict of Interest Policy on the Intranet.

- **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.
- **Political Activities:** RCMA employees are encouraged to become registered voters, to participate in each election, and in 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.
- **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 such items are strictly prohibited at all times inside our facilities or while an employee is 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 off-site, is strictly prohibited, is a violation of RCMA policy, and will subject an employee to discipline, up to and including termination.

- **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.

- **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 Principal's consent.
- **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.

4.5 *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.

4.6 *EMPLOYEE FILES*

The employee files are the property of RCMA; however, supervisors, at their discretion, may provide the employee 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.

Employee personnel files are the property of RCMA and may not be removed from RCMA premises without authorization from Human Resources. RCMA recognizes employees have certain privacy rights, and RCMA implements safeguards to help ensure that information in employee personnel files is kept in accordance with the law. As such, access to personnel files is restricted. Generally, only those who have a legitimate reason to review information in an employee's personnel file are allowed to do so, such as an employee's supervisor, certain administrative staff, human resources staff, and DCF licensing agents (if applicable). RCMA will comply with legal subpoenas, court orders, law enforcement orders, government agency orders, public records requests, and as otherwise legally required. While our policy is to ensure the confidentiality of an employee's employment records to the greatest extent possible, please be aware that employment records are considered public records under Florida's Public Records Act and are subject to disclosure to third parties that make a public records request, with limited exceptions.

4.7 *WHISTLEBLOWING*

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 whom they/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.

4.8 *SPECIAL MAGISTRATE FOR TEACHER EMPOWERMENT*

This is the Special Magistrate for Teacher Empowerment Policy of the Academies of RCMA (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.

4.9 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 Academies 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 presentations or written documents must be acknowledged.

In addition, when an employee leaves RCMA, the employee must return to the Academy 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.

4.10 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 with 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 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.

4.11 CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA

All media inquiries regarding RCMA and its operation must be referred to the Academy 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.

4.12 *PERSONAL CELLPHONE*

At the Academies of RCMA, employees may carry cellphones, 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 an Academy activity is strictly prohibited. Posting pictures of students on social network sites is not allowed. Staff are discouraged from making personal phone calls or text messaging during school hours or when in class with students. For emergency purposes, employees may request permission to use one of the school phones.

The Academies of RCMA 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.

4.13 *PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA*

The Academies of RCMA recognize that employees may wish to use social media in their personal lives. This policy does not intend to discourage or 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 the Academies 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 an employee chooses to express himself/herself by posting online on a social media network, the employee needs to recognize the potential for damage that may be caused (either directly or indirectly) to RCMA, parents, students, volunteers, or other employees, in certain circumstances. Therefore, to ensure that the risk of such damage is minimized, RCMA requires that employees follow these guidelines:

No Posting Using RCMA Resources

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

Online Posting

All RCMA policies apply to anything an employee writes in a post or uploads to the internet. Employees are legally responsible for the content they post on any social media network. Employees 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, an employee identifies himself/herself as an employee of RCMA, the employee must clearly state that the views expressed in the post are his/her own, and do not reflect the views of RCMA.

- Employees may not use RCMA logos or other RCMA-related images, nor may an employee make false or misleading statements about RCMA's philosophy.
- Employees are not authorized to post pictures of RCMA students, 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 align 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?

Employees need to keep in mind at all times that the employee's personal postings may be read not only by the employee's friends and family but also by the employee's coworkers and supervisors, as well as RCMA's donors, parents, or staff from other organizations associated with RCMA. Remember also that even if an employee posts anonymously or under a pseudonym, the employee's identity can be discovered relatively easily. Employees are encouraged to use 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.

4.14 PROBATIONARY PERIOD

If an employee is a new hire or rehire:

New or rehired non-exempt (hourly) employees will be on a 6-month probationary period starting on their first day of work. New or rehired exempt (salaried) employees will be on a 12-month probationary period.

The 6-month probationary period could be extended to 12 months if the supervisor determines a need. However, the administration may terminate 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 an employee is promoted or transferred to a new job:

If an employee is promoted or transferred to a new job, he/she will also begin their new assignment with a probationary period of 6 months or 12 months from the start date. The probationary period is important to ensure that an employee can perform their new duties and responsibilities well. If the employee does not meet the expectations that the Academies of RCMA have of him/her, the employee may be transferred to another available position for which he/she has the required skills, demoted, or terminated.

4.15 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: 1. 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. 2. A change in status for a substitute applying for an FT or PT position is not considered a promotion but a transfer.

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

Involuntary Demotions

RCMA recognizes two types of demotions:

Without Cause:

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 Cause:

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

NOTE: The change in status for an employee in FT or PT positions going into a substitute position is not considered demotion but rather a transfer.

Demotions and Pay

Involuntary Demotions Without Cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No salary change 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
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	eliminated and the only alternative to maintaining his/her employment is to offer a non-competitive position in a lower salary range.
Involuntary Demotions With Cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% reduction • Reduction to the new range maximum if the current rate of pay is higher than the maximum.
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. An internal equity analysis will be conducted to determine the appropriate pay rate.

4.16 TRANSFERS

Lateral Transfers

A lateral transfer occurs when an existing employee is competitively selected (the position was advertised) 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 they do not have any disciplinary action beyond a second warning (#2) and/or have 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 may be made with the approval of the hiring manager.

All transfers are subject to a new probationary period. See Section 4.14 for details on probationary periods.

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.

Temporary Transfer

A temporary transfer occurs when an existing employee is scheduled to be laid off or is on layoff, and RCMA identifies that there is a need to cover vacations, unforeseen leaves of absence, and/or the need to work on temporary projects, etc.

In addition to the lateral transfer described above, employees may choose to consider a temporary transfer and could apply for available positions in lower pay ranges if the position is advertised. For the positions that are not advertised, employees may communicate directly with the hiring supervisor.

If an exempt employee accepts a non-exempt position, the employee's status and salary will be adjusted to non-exempt and paid on the hours worked. The employees' benefits will not be impacted during this transition.

Transfers and Pay

Lateral Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfers to positions within the same salary range do not require a salary change.
Temporary Transfers	<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. An internal equity analysis will be conducted to determine the appropriate pay rate. If an employee temporarily transfers to a substitute teacher position, the employee will get paid at a substitute teacher's rate of pay.

4.17 GRIEVANCES

DEFINITION OF A GRIEVANCE: A grievance is a written request for the resolution of an issue.

ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES: All RCMA employees, with the exception of new hires/rehires on their probationary period, substitutes, temporary staff, directors, and executive staff members. Individuals who are not RCMA employees do not have standing under this policy to pursue a grievance.

GRIEVANCE PROCESS: All eligible employees who feel that they have been unfairly disciplined or terminated have the right to present a grievance to management by following the RCMA Grievance Steps on the next page for prompt consideration and a fair decision. Employees 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.

SOME EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS THAT ARE NOT GRIEVABLE

Employees shall not have the right to file grievances concerning the following:

- Performance evaluations
- Constructive feedback
- Performance Improvement Plan
- Administrative leave
- Voluntary reductions in pay
- Voluntary demotions
- Removal of pay additives
- Correction of overpayment

- Reduction of pay to the maximum of the pay range

Please note that RCMA has an Open-Door Policy by which employees are encouraged to report work-related concerns that are not covered by this Grievance Policy. For any issues related to harassment, discrimination, safety, workplace, and employment law violations, and hostile work environment, please follow the appropriate reporting policy for the particular issue or report the issue immediately to Human Resources at hr@rcma.org. RCMA has a zero-tolerance policy for harassment, safety violations, workplace and employment law violations, and a hostile work environment. RCMA will investigate such offenses in accordance with RCMA's applicable policies. Any crimes will be reported to law enforcement.

GRIEVANCE STEPS

Step 1	Employee		Immediate Supervisor (e.g., Manager, Director, Principal)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tries to resolve the issue informally with the immediate supervisor <u>within 5 working days</u> of incident, concern, or event. 	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets and informally responds to the employee <u>within 5 working days</u>.
Step 2	Employee		Next Level Supervisor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If concern is not resolved informally at Step 1, the employee may file a written grievance with the next supervisor in the chain of command using form HR39 <u>within 5 working days</u> of receiving Step 1 response. 	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets with the employee, <u>within 7 working days</u> of receiving the written grievance. • Responds to the employee, in writing, <u>within 5 working days</u> of meeting with the employee.
Step 3	Employee		Director of Department/Academies, and/or Principal's Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If concern is not resolved at Step 2, the employee may file a written appeal with the Regional Director (if applicable), Director of Department/Academies (if applicable), or Principal's Manager (if applicable) <u>within 5 working days</u> of receiving Step 2 response. 	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets with the employee, <u>within 7 working days</u> of receiving the written grievance. • Responds to the employee, in writing, <u>within 10 working days</u> of meeting with the employee.
Step 4	Employee		Executive Director or Associate Executive Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the concern is not resolved at Step 3, the employee may file a written appeal with the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director (AED)* using form HR 39 <u>within 5 working days</u> of receiving Step 3 response. 	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets with the employee <u>within 15 working days</u> of receiving the written grievance. • Responds to the employee, in writing, <u>within 7 working days</u> of meeting with the employee. • This is the final response, and the case will be closed.

*Executive Director or Associate Executive Director
Redlands Christian Migrant Association
402 West Main Street
Immokalee, FL 34142-3433

At the conclusion of the grievance process, the grievance will be forwarded to RCMA's Board Chair along with an explanation of the decision made or upheld.

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

CONFIDENTIALITY

All complaints and investigations are treated confidentially to the extent possible, and information is disclosed strictly on a need-to-know basis. The identity of the complainant is usually revealed only to the parties involved in the grievance process, and adequate steps will be taken to ensure that the complainant is protected from retaliation during and after the grievance process and/or investigation. All information about the grievance will be maintained in the employee-restricted file.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS, PAY, AND BENEFITS

During the grievance investigation, and while employed, the employee grieving will continue to receive a paycheck for any time worked.

During the grievance investigation, and if the employee was terminated as a result of the investigation, the former employee will not receive a paycheck unless for any time worked.

- If the result of the grievance investigation shows that no policies were violated or that the disciplinary action or termination should otherwise be overturned, employment will be reinstated, pay will be retroactive, and all benefits, including seniority, will be reinstated.
- If the result of the grievance investigation shows a policy was violated but that the disciplinary action should be lessened or the termination overturned, employment will be reinstated, the termination will change to a corrective action, and all benefits will be reinstated. The employee will receive retroactive pay only if the termination or the disciplinary action was reduced to a feedback; otherwise, the employee will not be compensated for missed time.

The employee will be responsible for any missed insurance premiums during the grievance process.

4.18 INVESTIGATION LEAVE

A 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. 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 must continue. An investigation is not a disciplinary action or a termination of employment.

During an investigation, the employee placed on leave may or may not be paid. The pay decision will be determined based on the nature of the incident or the seriousness of the situation being investigated.

If the result of the investigation shows that no policies were violated, the employee will be asked to return to work and will be paid for all regularly scheduled work missed during the investigation leave.

If the results of the investigation show a policy was violated and result in a corrective action, the

employee will not be paid for missed time.

The employee will be contacted within 5 working days with an update regarding the investigation or to inform him/her of the outcome of the investigation.

SECTION 5 - ATTENDANCE-RELATED POLICIES

5.1 WORK SCHEDULES

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

The Academies of RCMA encourage and support employees to continue their education. However, the main priority should be the safety and academic success of the Academies' students.

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

5.2 ATTENDANCE

All employees of the Academies of RCMA are responsible for meeting the expected standards for attendance. Chronic, habitual, and/or excessive lateness or absenteeism affects the Academies' 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 academy 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 academies' 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 an employee's 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 the Academies' 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

5.3 SCHOOL VISITS

RCMA is strongly committed to parent involvement in the education of their child(ren). This policy aims to support employees by providing paid time off to attend important school-related activities for their children and applies to all regular full-time and part-time employees of RCMA.

Each visit should be no more than one and a half (1 ½) hours maximum each month, regardless of the number of children. Additional time off may be requested using PTO or unpaid leave, subject to approval.

School-related activities include, but are not limited to:

- Parent-teacher conferences
- School enrollment or registration appointments
- School performances or assemblies
- Field trips or classroom volunteering
- Graduation ceremonies
- Special events (e.g., award presentations)

Employees must provide reasonable advance notice to their supervisors when requesting time off for school-related activities. Time off will not count against attendance or disciplinary actions when properly requested.

Supervisors should make every effort to accommodate these requests unless it creates undue hardship.

SECTION 6 - EMPLOYEE LEAVE POLICIES

6.1 PAID TIME OFF (PTO)

PTO (paid time off) is determined based on length of service and time worked. In order to take PTO, an employee must request it in advance, and his/her supervisor must approve it. The only time an employee does not require advanced approval is when a leave is covered by the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), described later. If no PTO is available, approval for unpaid time off is at the discretion of an employee's supervisor.

Instructional Para-Professionals (Non-Exempt) classified as Substitutes or Temporary employees are not eligible for PTO.

Explanation of Accruals Chart

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	HOURS EARNED	PTO YEARLY PAYOUT	BANKED PTO HOURS
Non-Instructional/ Administrative without an Agreement and Instructional Para- Professionals (Non-Exempt)	PTO is accrued based on an employee's length of service and hours worked (excluding overtime, PTO payout, shared leave, or intern hours).	Each payroll, an employee will accrue a specific number of hours based on eligible hours. Based on eligibility criteria, employees can earn up to 88 hours, or 136 hours or 200 hours per Fiscal Year.	Every year on pay date June 30, employees have the following two options: To be paid up to 40 hours of accumulated current PTO To carry over any PTO hours	The fiscal year at RCMA begins July 1 and ends June 30. If an employee has any PTO hours beyond 320 hours on pay date 7/15, the excess hours will be banked. Banked PTO hours may only be used when all current PTO hours have been exhausted. The maximum number of hours that may be banked is 320.
Instructional Para- Professionals (Exempt)	PTO (paid time off) is accrued based on an employee's length of service and regular (non-overtime) salary. If an employee works fewer hours than their scheduled salary in a given pay period and their pay is reduced, their PTO accrual will be prorated accordingly.	Each payroll, an employee will receive their accruals based on eligible hours paid. Employees may be eligible to receive up to 88 hours, 136 hours, or 200 hours of PTO.		If an employee leaves RCMA, any banked PTO will be lost.
Instructional And Administrative (Exempt)	Employees with an agreement will receive 7 days of personal leave, equivalent to 56 personal leave hours each year.		Every year on pay date, June 30, employees have the following two options: To be paid up to 40 hours of accumulated Personal Leave (Budget-permitting)	The fiscal year at RCMA begins July 1 and ends June 30. If an employee has any PTO hours beyond 56 hours on pay date 8/15, the excess hours will be banked. Banked PTO hours may only be used when all PTO hours have been used. The maximum number of hours that may be banked is 320. If an employee leaves RCMA, any banked PTO will be lost.

6.2 *FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE*

By law, RCMA will allow an employee to take leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for a serious health condition, for the birth and care of a newborn child or adoption (or foster care placement) of a child, and for the care of an immediate family member (parent, spouse, or child) who has a serious health condition.

If an employee takes family medical leave, the employee will be able to return to his/her same position or to an equivalent position unless the position has been eliminated based on business necessity or as a result of a reduction in force or a layoff. An equivalent position means a position that is virtually identical in terms of pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions. If an employee cannot perform the essential functions of his/her job or the equivalent position, the FMLA does not require reassignment to another job.

To be eligible for FMLA, an employee must have worked at RCMA for at least twelve (12) months (not required to be consecutive) and at least 1,250 hours in the twelve (12) month period before the beginning of the leave.

An employee is able to use up to a total of twelve (12) weeks of leave. Proper medical documentation will be required.

FMLA and Workers' Compensation run concurrently if the qualifying work injury or illness meets the definition of a serious health condition under FMLA.

Intermittent Leave: An employee may also take leave intermittently or reduce his/her hours if needed.

Pay during FMLA: Under the law, FMLA leave is unpaid. However, an employee may choose to be paid accrued PTO hours or banked leave hours. Once an employee has used up all his/her available PTO hours and banked leave hours, the balance of the leave will be without pay.

While on FMLA, an employee may also be eligible for short-term disability, shared leave benefits, and/or workers' compensation pay.

Pay after FMLA: Any request to take Paid Time Off or Unpaid Time Off following the protected leave may be denied based on the needs of the center/office/department.

Benefits during FMLA: FMLA will not affect an employee's health insurance coverage during the leave period. RCMA will continue its contributions to maintain his/her health coverage. The employee will be responsible for his/her portion of the health coverage and any other employee-elected contributions.

Holidays during FMLA: Employees will not be paid for holidays that fall during the FMLA leave period unless the holiday falls on a day covered by accrued PTO hours, banked leave, or shared leave.

Before Family Medical Leave begins:

- An employee must provide his/her supervisor and HR at least thirty (30) days' advance notice before the FMLA leave begins unless a verifiable emergency makes it impossible to do so. Failure to do so could result in a delay or denial of the employee's request.
- An employee must complete and sign a Leave Request Form (HR 52).
- An employee must also provide a medical certification completed in full (HR53 or HR53fm).

- An employee must return all RCMA equipment, car, credit cards, keys, badges, etc., unless approved by the immediate supervisor.

During Family Medical Leave:

- An employee must keep in contact with his/her immediate supervisor and/or HR Leaves Specialist and provide any updates related to his/her leave.
- An employee must refrain from entering any RCMA premises unless requested by his/her supervisor or Human Resources representative.
- An employee must refrain from doing any tasks related to RCMA business.
- An employee must not use the RCMA email to communicate while on leave.

After Family Medical Leave ends:

An employee will be required to have his/her doctor complete the Fitness for Duty Certification form stating that the employee may continue to work (with or without restrictions) at least 5 days before the day he/she is due to return to work. **If the employee does not return to work at the end of his/her FMLA leave and fails to inform his/her supervisor of the intention not to return, the employee will be considered to have quit without notice.**

Qualifying Exigency Leave under FMLA: Eligible employees are entitled to take up to 12 work weeks of FMLA leave in a 12-month period for a “qualifying exigency” related to the foreign deployment of the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent.

Military Caregiver Leave: Eligible employees who are the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member (current member or veteran of the National Guard, Reserves, or Regular Armed Forces) with a serious injury or illness incurred or aggravated in the line of duty to take up to 26-workweeks of FMLA leave during a single 12-month period to care for the employee’s family member.

6.3 *NON-FMLA MEDICAL LEAVE*

If an employee does not meet the requirements of those mandated by federal and/or state laws such as FMLA and Workers' Compensation Leave, and the employee is unable to work during an extended period of time for his/her own severe medical, catastrophic or life-threatening illness, the employee 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.

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

If an employee takes Non-FMLA medical leave, he/she does not have job restoration rights. However, RCMA will generally reinstate the employee 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 the employee, he/she will receive notice from HR.

Before Non-FMLA Medical Leave begins:

- An employee must provide his/her supervisor and HR at least thirty (30) days' advance notice before the Non-FMLA leave begins unless a verifiable emergency makes it

impossible to do so. Failure of the employee to notify his/her supervisor and HR could result in a delay or denial of the employee's request.

- An employee must complete and sign the Leave Request Form (HR 52).
- An employee must provide a Non-FMLA Medical Leave form (HR78).
- An employee must return all RCMA equipment, car, credit cards, keys, badges, etc., unless approved by the immediate supervisor.

During Non-FMLA Medical Leave:

- An employee must keep in contact with his/her supervisor and/or HR Leaves Specialist and provide any updates related to the leave.
- An employee must refrain from entering any RCMA premises unless requested by his/her supervisor or Human Resources representative.
- An employee must refrain from doing any tasks related to RCMA business.
- An employee must not use the RCMA email to communicate while on leave.

After Non-FMLA Medical Leave ends:

An employee will be required to have his/her doctor complete the Fitness for Duty Certification form stating that the employee may continue to work (with or without restrictions) at least 5 days before the day he/she is due to return to work. **If the employee does not return to work at the end of his/her non-FMLA leave and fails to inform his/her supervisor of the intention not to return, the employee will be considered to have quit without notice.**

Pay during Non-FMLA Medical Leave: Employees may choose to be paid accrued PTO hours or banked leave hours. Once an employee has used up all his/her available PTO hours or banked leave hours, the balance of the leave will be without pay.

While on Non-FMLA, an employee may also be eligible for short-term disability, shared leave benefits, and/or Workers' Compensation pay.

Pay after Non-FMLA Medical Leave: Any request to take Paid Time Off or Unpaid Time Off following the leave may be denied based on the needs of the academy/office.

Benefits during Non-FMLA Medical Leave: A Non-FMLA Medical Leave will not affect an employee's health insurance coverage during the leave period. RCMA will continue its contributions to maintain his/her health coverage. Employees will be responsible for his/her 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 Workers' Compensation can run concurrently.

6.4 EMPLOYEE SICKNESS

RCMA is committed to operating effectively while ensuring the safety of employees. We provide information about the nature and spread of contagious illnesses, including symptoms and the required steps to be taken.

DEFINITION

Contagious Illness: An illness that can be transmitted from one person to another.

Teleworking: Working remotely from home or another location outside the office.

1. Preventing the Spread of Infection and Other Contagious Illnesses:

- Ensure regular cleaning of frequently used objects and areas (ex., bathrooms, breakrooms, conference rooms, door handles, railings).
- Employees should frequently wash their hands with soap and water, cover their mouths when sneezing or coughing, and discard used tissues in wastebaskets.
- Wearing a mask is recommended when unsure about health status.
- When sick, obtain medical clearance through First Stop Health or another healthcare provider prior to returning to work in the office. First Stop Health offers free 24/7 virtual health services to all staff.

2. Sick Leave:

- Employees unable to work due to illness should submit a request for PTO. Normal attendance and leave policies remain in place unless otherwise notified.
- Employees who are out sick or who show symptoms of being ill for longer than three (3) days will need to provide a doctor's note to their direct supervisor to confirm their need to be absent and to determine when it is appropriate to return to work.
- RCMA expects employees who contract an infectious disease or who are exposed to infected family members or other persons to stay home and to seek medical attention if needed. RCMA also expects these employees to notify their supervisor as soon as possible of their exposure or illness.

3. Teleworking

- Telework requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Not all positions are eligible. Requests for temporary teleworking should be submitted to the supervisor for consideration.

4. Staying Home When Sick:

- Employees should not report to work while ill or while experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, etc.
- Employees who report to work ill may be sent home at the discretion of the supervisor, in accordance with health guidelines.
- Employees should follow the Stop the Spread of Respiratory Infections Guidance, which is available on the Intranet.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Human Resources: Collaborate with the Health & Mental Health Services Advisory Committee to monitor and coordinate events around an illness and to create work rules to promote safety through prevention and control.

Employees: Cooperate in taking steps to reduce transmission of contagious illnesses, use good judgment, and be considerate of others in the workplace.

Supervisors: Ensure absences are recorded, monitor patterns of absence, provide support, and potentially adjust workloads or schedules. They also need to ensure the employee understands company policies and procedures related to absences.

Confidentiality of Medical Information:

Medical information will be treated as a confidential medical record. Disclosure of medical information is limited to human resources, direct supervisors or managers, first aid and safety personnel, government officials (if required by law), and any disclosure required by law or by a lawful subpoena or court process.

Additional Protocols:

Emergency protocols may be implemented based on current events and guidelines from the CDC or government authorities.

6.5 UNPAID PERSONAL LEAVE

An unpaid personal leave of absence may be granted at the sole discretion of an employee's 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 an employee has exhausted his/her accrued PTO. If approved by the employee's supervisor, the employee 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

6.6 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 an employee receives as a juror or witness. Employees will also be granted Civil Leave if he/she is subpoenaed in litigation that is work-related. Civil Leave will not be deducted from an employee's accumulated PTO balance.

When subpoenaed in a private litigation that is not work-related, an employee may choose to be paid accrued PTO hours or banked PTO hours. Once an employee has used up all his/her available PTO hours, the balance of the leave will be without pay.

6.7 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 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, an employee must provide his/her supervisor at least seven (7) days' advance notice of the need for the leave, unless prevented from doing so because of imminent danger to an employee's 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 7 - PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

7.1 *PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS*

The Academies of RCMA are committed to providing employees with informal and formal feedback about their performance.

New employees, or current employees who are hired into a new position, have been promoted or transferred; the employee and his/her supervisor must agree on what the expectations are regarding the employee's work. Both have to also be clear about what training or other help the employee may need to do his/her job well. Employees need to make sure they understand the job description so that they are clear about what he/she needs to do, why the employee's work needs to be done, and how well it should be done.

The employee and his/her supervisor should meet regularly throughout the year so that the employee's supervisor can provide feedback as to whether the employee is meeting performance expectations. When performance improvement is needed, a performance improvement plan (PIP) may be developed.

Once a year, an employee will receive a written performance evaluation as long as the employee has been employed for a minimum of 6 months. Employees are encouraged to complete a self-evaluation and provide it to his/her supervisor. If an employee communicates with his/her supervisor about how the employee is doing throughout the year, there will be no surprises when the employee receives the written evaluation. An employee's overall job performance rating and current rate of pay will be taken into consideration to determine if the employee is 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/she may file a supplement to the evaluation, which will be retained in the employee's HR file.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL HOURLY EMPLOYEES

Promotion and Transfer Evaluations

If an employee is promoted or transferred into another position, the employee should receive a performance evaluation during the month in which he/she completed his/her probationary period in the new position. If an employee successfully completes his/her promotion or transfer probationary period, the employee will have his/her 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.

If an employee has been in a position for at least 12 months, the employee will be:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluated 12 months from the previous evaluation eligible for a merit 12 months from the previous merit
If an employee has changed position due to a promotion, the employee will be:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluated by all assigned supervisors 12 months from the previous evaluation or hire date evaluated before transferring to another position if the employee has been in the position for a minimum of six months (not eligible for a merit increase) eligible for a merit 12 months from the new position start date
If an employee has changed position due to a lateral transfer or has a dual position, the employee will be:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluated by all assigned supervisors 12 months from the previous evaluation or hire date evaluated before transferring to another position if the employee has been in the position for a minimum of six months (not eligible for a merit increase) eligible for a merit 12 months from the new position start date

7.2 PERFORMANCE RATINGS

There are five (5) performance rating categories for non-instructional hourly employees. These categories are in the Performance Evaluation form to evaluate an employee in different areas of his/her 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.
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 that 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.

SECTION 8 - DISCIPLINARY ACTION POLICIES

8.1 *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's 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/her performance or resolve the problem.

Step #2 – Second Warning

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.

Appeals Process

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

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, students, 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.

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.

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 second warning (#2)** resulting from any violation will be active in the employee's 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 final 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 final warning (#3)** requiring disciplinary probation or immediate termination will remain in the employee's 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.

8.2 VIOLATIONS SUBJECT TO PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINARY ACTION

It is not possible to list or anticipate all possible violations, but the following are examples of those that would be subject to Progressive Disciplinary Action:

- Knowingly violating school safety requirements.
- Knowingly allowing a classroom door or gate to remain unlocked, which might allow ingress

to or egress from the school campus.

- Sleeping while on duty.
- Failure to report accidents, injuries, or incidents involving self, students, or co-workers on any RCMA premises or vehicles includes failure to follow the unusual incident procedure.
- Failure to comply with federal regulations when preparing food.
- Fighting, or acting in any manner that may endanger the safety of oneself or others. This includes threats of violence.

Violations of RCMA General Policies, Work Rules, Regulations, or Standards of Conduct

- Computer abuse, including but not limited to misuse of computer accounts, unauthorized destruction of files, and possession of unauthorized passwords.
- Conducting oneself in any manner that is offensive, abusive, or contrary to common decency or morality.
- Displaying disrespectful and/or inappropriate behaviors toward a student, parent, co-worker, supervisor, volunteer, visitor, or any other individual associated with RCMA.
- Repeated absenteeism and tardiness that interfere with assigned responsibilities.
- Excessive personal calls that interfere with assigned responsibilities.
- Failure to comply with published policies or published procedures, and standards.
- Failure to notify the supervisor not less than one hour before the scheduled reporting time when unable to report to work.
- Insubordination (refusal by an employee to carry out a direct and proper instruction (verbal or written) from his/her supervisor).
- Improper release of confidential or privileged information.
- Operating RCMA-owned vehicles or equipment without a proper license or operating any vehicle on RCMA property or on RCMA business in an unsafe or improper manner;
- Smoking where prohibited (see details in Section 9 of this Handbook).
- Removing any equipment, materials, or other RCMA property or attempting to remove them from the premises without appropriate approval or permission.
- Negligence in performing duties.

8.3 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 the 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
- 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)
- 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 Conduct below can result in revocation or suspension of an individual's educator 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 9 - EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

9.1 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 Principal. To use materials and equipment for service in another non-RCMA program, the consent of the Principal is required.

9.2 SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE

RCMA is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all its employees, students, 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 students 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.

9.3 DRESS CODE

Employees are expected to use good judgment in their choice of clothing and/or footwear.

RCMA expects all employees to maintain a professional appearance, including appropriate clothing based on their position, personal hygiene, and overall presentation. These standards align with our commitment to providing a positive and professional environment for students, families, visitors, donors, funders' representatives, and colleagues.

Employees are expected to adhere to established hygiene requirements, which ensure that employees are presenting themselves appropriately and that the employer is being properly and professionally represented as an organization.

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 students in classrooms and playgrounds are strongly encouraged to wear closed-toe shoes at all times.
- Cooks must wear closed-toed and rubber-soled shoes at all times.
- All employees attending conferences, meetings offsite (taking place away from RCMA sites), and/or visiting the Rollason State Office may wear sandals with no back strap and heels may exceed two (2) inches. These must be appropriate for the event being attended.
- Beach flip-flops are not appropriate in a professional setting.

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 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.
- Cooks must wear hairnets at all times.
- Clothing must be clean and in good condition.
- Clothing must not interfere with the operation of any equipment and/or power tools.
- No dangling or large hoop jewelry that may create a safety hazard to students.
- Commonly accepted small, visible body piercings are allowable but must be appropriate and professional for the workspace.
- Tattoos that are offensive and hostile must be covered and not visible to staff, visitors, or students.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees are responsible for adhering to this dress code policy. Supervisors and managers are responsible for ensuring compliance and addressing any violations of the policy.

9.4 FINGERNAIL LENGTH

Employees whose jobs involve regular or occasional contact with students 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 students.

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.

9.5 EMPLOYEE'S CHILDREN

Employees of the Academies may not bring their children or grandchildren to work while on duty unless they are enrolled at the academy. This is to avoid possible accidents to them and to allow the employee and co-workers to perform their jobs without the interruptions and distractions that may be caused by the children.

9.6 PERSONAL PROPERTY

The Academies of RCMA 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, the Academies of RCMA do not assume responsibility for any damage to personal vehicles while on RCMA property.

9.7 CELL PHONE USE WHILE DRIVING

Employees must drive defensively and make safety their first priority on all occasions; refrain and/or limit the use of cell phones and/or other electronic smart devices while driving.

The use of any personal or RCMA-provided communication devices (cell phone, smart watches, etc.) to text or join virtual meetings while operating a vehicle to conduct RCMA business is prohibited. Safety must come before all other concerns.

Employees are required to use hands-free devices, such as Bluetooth, AUX ports, and/or adapters,

to answer or make limited phone calls while driving. Good judgment should be used so that the phone calls do not interfere with an employee's judgment to drive defensively.

Hand-free devices are not allowed to be used while driving through school zones, construction sites, or while transporting children, parents, and staff. Please note that this does not include using a device or system for navigation purposes and/or radio broadcasts.

All RCMA employees must follow all applicable laws while driving an RCMA vehicle and/or are on a business trip. For more information on drivers' responsibilities, please refer to the Motor Vehicle Drivers 1.29.

Procedures

Regardless of the circumstances, employees are instructed to proceed to a safe location and stop the vehicle before placing or accepting any calls, texts, etc., unless employees are using hand-free devices for limited phone calls. Under no circumstances are the employees allowed to place themselves at risk to fulfill business needs.

Employees must comply with all applicable federal, state, and/or local laws governing the use of communication devices while operating a motor vehicle. Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of communication devices while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions.

Consequences

Violations of this policy will be subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment and revocation of an employee's right to drive an RCMA-provided vehicle.

9.8 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 the Academies of RCMA to protect students, staff members, vendors, visitors, and others who have contact with the school facilities.

- It is a requirement to wear nitrile gloves when touching body fluids.
- 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 an employee's skin comes in contact with blood, report the incident at once to the Principal or the Director of the Academies. 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 Principal or Director of the Academies.

9.9 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 the RCMA Academies and/or the 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

SECTION 10 - EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

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 whose scheduled hours have been 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.

10.1 FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLAN

Regular full-time or part-time employees 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.

- Employees may select any of the available coverage for themselves and/or family including medical, dental, and vision insurance, short-term disability, and other coverage. Premiums are deducted from an employee's 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 an employee does not desire to participate, he/she 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, employees 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.

10.2 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.

10.3 EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PLANS

RCMA encourages all staff to prepare for retirement. RCMA employees are eligible to save money by contributing to retirement plans through payroll deductions. Any contributions an employee makes are automatically deducted from the employee's paycheck. Employees can enroll in the pretax 403(b) Plan or the after-tax Roth Plan. There are no age or service requirements to participate. Employees 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.

EMPLOYER MATCH

Administrative and Instructional Staff

RCMA full-time employees with an Employment Agreement 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, an employee must be full-time. The benefit is based on the employee's 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.

Employees 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 an employee has worked at RCMA	RCMA Match
1 – 4 years	2%
5 – 9 years	3%
10 years or more	5%

Employees are vested after three (3) calendar years. Additional details can be obtained by contacting the Benefits Office.

10.4 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 an employee and his/her 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 1-800-460-4374. The phone number is subject to change, so contact Human Resources for updated information.

10.5 EMPLOYEE REFERRAL PROGRAM

The Academies of RCMA will award \$500 (subject to change) if a current employee (excluding Human Resources staff and employees at the management level and above) refers an Academy teacher who is hired and remains employed for at least 1 year.

Academy 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.

10.6 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Academies of RCMA 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 an employee passes the class with a C or better.

Any training, technical, or financial assistance will be provided that will benefit the Academies' students and the employees 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 the employee and supervisor and should take into consideration the regularly scheduled Academies' operational hours.

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

In addition, employees must agree to remain at the Academies of RCMA 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 the 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%

10.7 WORKERS' COMPENSATION

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. All job-related injuries and accidents that require medical treatment require a drug test.

Reporting Accidents and Incidents

Employees are responsible for reporting all occurrences of accidents and injuries immediately to his/her supervisor. This will allow the completion of the appropriate reports prior to the end of the employee's shift. If an employee fails to immediately report accidents and injuries, it may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment as well as forfeiture of benefits. If an employee is hurt on the job, no matter how slight the injury, please perform the following:

1. Employees must immediately report the injury to the supervisor. If the employee's supervisor is

not available, then the employee must immediately report the injury to the Workers' Compensation Specialist at the Rollason State Office.

2. The employee's supervisor will report the accident to the Workers' Compensation Specialist and provide him/her with the Incident Report, including the date and time of injury, position, description of the accident, witnesses, etc.
3. Before any medical treatment or examination for all work-related injuries, an employee must get approval from the Workers' Compensation Specialist. If an employee fails to get prior approval from Human Resources for any medical treatment, the employee may be responsible for the expense.
4. Employees must keep the Workers' Compensation Specialist informed of the status of the injury. Employees are required to deliver the medical documentation they receive after every visit to the physician to the Workers' Compensation Specialist.
5. If an employee is out of work for one or more days because of a workplace injury, the employee must have a signed work release from a physician before the employee can return to work.
6. If the employee's injury was caused by an infraction of safety rules, the employee may be required to attend safety training and be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Please note that in the absence of the Workers' Compensation Specialist, all the required documentation or communication should be sent to the Human Resources Specialist at the Rollason State Office.

Modified Duty and Temporary Alternative Duty

If an employee is involved in a workplace accident and the authorized Workers' Compensation treating physician (Authorized Doctor) has released the employee to return to work, the employee must immediately notify his/her Supervisor and the Workers' Compensation Specialist. The employee should provide them with a copy of the employee's release from the Authorized Doctor and/or Form DWC-25, which is a two-page form that should be given to the employee by the Authorized Doctor at the end of each visit. If the employee is not given a written work release or Form DWC-25 by the Authorized Doctor, make sure to request it before the end of the medical appointment.

RCMA will help injured employees get back to productive work by identifying available light-duty assignments that can be done with temporary medical restrictions. If an employee is assigned restrictions or limitations by the Authorized Doctor, the Workers' Compensation Specialist, in collaboration with the Human Resources Generalist/Manager of the area/location, will review the restrictions and determine the best option for placement. Once the employee returns to work following a workplace accident, the employee will remain subject to all the same work rules and regulations.

Refusal to accept these assignments may result in the denial of Workers' Compensation insurance benefits.

Benefits: If an employee is unable to work for more than 7 days, the employee may be eligible to receive money to replace part of what he/she was not able to earn after the accident.

The first 7 days lost from work are only paid by the insurance carrier if an employee loses more than 22 days of work.

If an employee cannot work at all, based on the doctor's instructions, the employee may receive about 66 2/3% of the employee's regular pay at the time of the accident/injury. That benefit will be paid starting on the 8th day the employee loses time from work. The employee will have the option to use the remaining 33 1/3% from his/her PTO balance to receive 100% of the employee's pay.

Zero tolerance for fraud

Workers' compensation fraud is a punishable crime. RCMA and our insurer have a "zero tolerance" policy for fraud. If an employee thinks he/she sees fraud happening, tell a supervisor or manager right away, or call the Worker's Compensation Specialist at the Rollason Center in Immokalee. The employee's tip will be investigated and kept strictly confidential.

10.8 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 on an approved leave of absence. The purpose of the Club is to allow RCMA employees the opportunity to help coworkers by making donations of PTO hours or banked PTO 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 hours.

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 but are not limited to:

- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Cancer treatment
- Car accident with serious injuries
- Domestic violence injury, or threat, with shelter/counselor/advocate confirmation
- Life-threatening complications to the employee during childbirth
- Traumatic injury to the newborn during childbirth.
- Traumatic injury to the employee-mother during childbirth
- Hip/knee joint replacement surgery
- Amputations
- Attached to life support systems

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 year, prior to April 16, or a 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:

- a. Has exhausted all accrued PTO and banked PTO
- b. Is not currently receiving Workers' 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, beginning on July 1st, to verify that Club requirements are met before approval. Prior to starting the new term, all new committee members are required to attend an orientation to understand their duties and responsibilities. After completing their two-year term, outgoing committee members will have the opportunity to serve again on the Shared Leave Committee after two subsequent terms have concluded

POLICY AND LIMITATIONS

1. 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 PTO 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 an employee chooses to do so.

2. Participation in the Shared Leave Club is on a voluntary basis.
3. A Club member who chooses not to continue membership must submit a resignation letter to Payroll prior to May 1.
4. Once processed, donations may not be reversed. Donated hours also remain in the Club when a Club member terminates voluntarily or involuntarily.
5. A Club member is required to use any accrued PTO and banked PTO prior to receiving donations through the Club.
6. Shared leave benefits must be used in conjunction with an approved leave of absence, sections 6.2 and 6.3.
7. A Club member may receive a combination of up to 12 weeks in a 36-month period for themselves and/or a family member. When shared leave is requested to care for an immediate family member, the Club member may receive up to 6 weeks only.
8. A Club member who has been approved for Long-Term Disability benefits is not eligible to receive Shared Leave benefits.
9. Donations are not tax-deductible.
10. If the Club runs out of leave hours, requests for Shared Leave will not be accepted.
11. The Shared Leave Club is NOT subject to RCMA's grievance procedure.
12. A Club member who has Short-Term Disability insurance may apply for Shared Leave benefits based on the percentages mentioned below, only after we have received our carrier's final determination regarding the member's claim. Payment of benefits could also be delayed pending receipt of the completed medical certification.

In order to allow for fair and equitable distribution of shared leave hours for those employees who have been approved, benefits will be distributed as follows:

- For an employee that is currently enrolled in STD and also has PTO available, the employee will receive up to 40% of shared leave hours if approved for STD, for any days the employee went unpaid.
- For an employee that is currently enrolled in STD but has no PTO available, the employee will receive up to 40% of shared leave hours if approved for STD, for any days the employee went unpaid.
- For an employee that only has PTO available, the employee will receive up to 60% of shared leave hours for any days the employee went unpaid.
- For an employee who has no PTO available, the employee will receive up to 60% of shared leave hours for any days the employee went unpaid.

Because not all approved leave of absence requests will be eligible for Shared Leave benefits, enrollment in any of the short-term disability plans RCMA offers through Sun Life is highly encouraged. Not only do these plans provide a source of income during a medical leave of absence, but they are also affordable and provide the employee with peace of mind and the time to recover properly.

Submitting Shared Leave Request to the Committee

1. After the approval of the leave of absence, refer to sections 6.2 and 6.3, HR will send the request to the Shared Leave Club Committee for review and to determine benefits eligibility. The Club member's name will not be disclosed to maintain his/her privacy.
2. The Committee will notify the Leaves Specialist of approval or denial of the request.
3. If approved, the Leaves Specialist will notify Payroll. Payroll will then verify that the Club member has exhausted all PTO and banked PTO before the Shared Leave benefits will become effective.

Donating Shared Leave

1. Employees who donate 4 hours of PTO or banked leave will do so 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 complete form HR-49 and submit it to the Payroll Department no later than May 1.
2. 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.
3. 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 by May 1st. The Payroll Department will verify that the donor has sufficient hours available to make the donation.
4. The employees who are already receiving Shared Leave will be eligible to continue collecting benefits until the end of the fiscal year. If they are unable to donate for the upcoming fiscal year, their enrollment will be dropped automatically, and their benefits will end on June 30th. Those employees who were dropped automatically will have the opportunity to re-enroll during the annual enrollment month in April.

Shared Leave Committee Review

Committee members will discuss and verify:

- A. Whether the health condition meets the Serious Health Condition definition
- B. Whether the documentation submitted is sufficient to support the request
- C. Whether the amount of time requested is justifiable

After reviewing the request, the Committee will approve or deny the case and notify the HR Leaves Specialist of their decision.

10.9 HOLIDAYS

Non-Instructional (non-exempt employees)

Regular employees have twelve (12) paid holidays a year.

In order to be paid, an employee has to work a scheduled work day before and after the holiday. If an employee has an excused absence (**with PTO only**) on the day prior to or the day after a holiday, the employee will be eligible for the holiday pay. The employee is expected to use their full PTO amount. However, if the PTO balance is not enough to cover the employee's scheduled hours for the day(s) absent, the employee must have and use at least one (1) hour of PTO or their balance before and after the holiday.

In the event no program was scheduled before or after the holiday, the employee will not be required to use PTO before or after in order to receive holiday pay.

RCMA holidays are:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Good Friday
- 4th of July
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- 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.

10.10 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.

10.11 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.

SECTION 11 - COMPENSATION

RCMA pays salaries and wages based on the duties and responsibilities of each position. All employees are paid twice a month. Pay dates are generally the fifteenth (15th) and the last workday of the month. If a scheduled payday falls on a weekend, employees will be paid the Friday before. If the payday falls on a holiday, employees are usually paid on the day before the holiday. All required federal deductions and any voluntary deductions an employee authorized, such as health insurance contributions, are withheld automatically from the employee's paycheck.

The Academies of RCMA 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.

11.1 E-TIME

RCMA's official timekeeping system is E-TIME, a time and attendance system that collects actual time entered by employees.

To request any time off, employees must communicate with the supervisor in advance unless unforeseen circumstances do not allow that.

Non-Exempt Employees (Hourly)

Non-instructional (non-exempt) employees 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. At the end of each pay period, the employee's supervisor must approve the information the employee entered.

Exempt Employees (Salary)

Administrative or instructional (exempt) employees must also record any PTO within the E-time system.

At the end of each pay period, exempt employees are required to review their time cards for accuracy of hours worked and/or any PTO and/or unpaid PTO before approving them. Then, the supervisors are required to review their time cards for accuracy of hours worked and/or any PTO and/or unpaid PTO before approving them.

Misrepresenting hours worked and/or PTO hours in E-time will result in immediate termination.

11.2 OVERTIME COMPENSATION

An employee's job may periodically require overtime work. If so, the employee's supervisor will give him/her as much advance notice as possible. Employees should not work overtime hours without prior approval from his/her supervisor. Working overtime without prior approval will result in disciplinary action.

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

Unlike hourly non-exempt employees, exempt salaried employees are not eligible for extra

compensation for overtime under federal law.

11.3 WAGE PAYMENT

RCMA requires that all employees elect how to receive their pay by completing the HR36 Direct Deposit form. Employees can elect to receive his/her pay via direct deposit to a bank account, to a Wisely Pay card, or a Wisely Pay by ADP 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 an employee closes his/her account, the employee must notify the Payroll Office immediately.

All new employees will be issued a Wisely Pay Card for their first payroll earnings. After the first payroll earnings, payments will be issued to the option the employee selected on the HR36 Direct Deposit form.

11.4 GARNISHMENT OF WAGES

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

11.5 ADMIN PAY

The Admin Pay policy ensures that employees are compensated during temporary closures of RCMA offices and schools due to natural and non-natural disasters. This policy applies to all RCMA employees, including those in substitute capacities, during periods of temporary closure due to natural or non-natural disasters.

RCMA may temporarily close its offices and schools due to natural or non-natural disasters. During such closures, employees will be compensated with administrative pay for their scheduled work hours, subject to specific conditions outlined in this policy.

DEFINITION

Natural Disaster: Events such as major hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, or other severe weather events that pose a threat to safety.

Non-Natural Disaster: Events that disrupt regular business operations, such as utility outages (air conditioning, water, electricity), septic tank issues, gas leaks, etc.

1. Closure Determination:

- Depending on the extent of the damage, interruption of services, as well as resources, the Executive Director or designee will determine the number of days the location will remain closed.

2. Compensation During Closure:

- Employees will receive admin pay for all or the remainder of their scheduled work hours.
- Substitute employees will be compensated based on their scheduled hours.
- Employees on leave during the closure will not be eligible for administrative pay.

3. Post-Closure Expectations:

- Employees are expected to return to their regular schedule once the administrative period ends.
- If circumstances prevent an employee from working their usual scheduled hours during the

disaster recovery period, they are expected to work at least 50% of their regular schedule to qualify for their full, regular pay.

4. Absence Beyond Admin Period:

- Employees not reporting to work beyond the admin period, regardless of the reason for their absence, the employee will not be eligible for regular pay unless the employee contacts their supervisor and requests personal leave and it is approved.
- If an employee has no available PTO balance, they will not receive pay. In such cases, the employee's supervisor will apply the Unpaid Personal Leave code for each day in E-time.

5. Disciplinary Actions:

- If an employee fails to communicate with their supervisor or refuses to report to work immediately after the admin period, the employee may be disciplined up to and including termination.
- Refer to Section 5.2 of the Employee Handbook for details on attendance-related policies, specifically under the Proper Notification section.

Reference section 11.5 in the employee handbook for admin pay related to investigation leaves.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive Director/Designee: Determine the duration of closures and communicate decisions.

Supervisors: Ensure accurate application of administrative pay and manage employee attendance and leave requests.

Employees: Communicate with supervisors, adhere to post-closure work expectations, and request leave as necessary.

11.6 ACTING PAY

Acting pay may be awarded to an RCMA employee who temporarily assumes significant responsibilities of a higher-level job. These responsibilities are usually performed in addition to a staff member's primary duties. Employees who are placed on acting status for 30 consecutive days or longer are eligible to receive a 5% increase. The acting pay will automatically cease at the end of the temporary assignment. If the employee assumes full responsibilities for the new role, the employee will receive a 5% increase or the minimum of the new pay range, whichever is higher. If an hourly employee performs duties or responsibilities of an exempt position, he/she will remain an hourly employee and will be eligible for overtime.

Temporary responsibilities for a period shorter than 30 consecutive working days to cover while the regular employee attends meetings, takes personal time off, is out for medical treatment/appointments, or other temporary leaves are considered opportunities for professional development, and no additional pay should be awarded. However, recognition of the additional efforts should be made at the time of the employee's annual performance evaluation and salary review.

11.7 INTERIM PAY

The employee may be asked to serve in interim roles or assignments, assuming the duties of a higher-level position that is vacant. The interim pay is only meant to be for vacancies for the higher-level positions at a principal or director level and above.

If the position falls:

- Within the same pay band, the employee will receive an increase to base salary for the duration of the interim role or assignment. For example, if the employee's new role is at the same salary level and involves substantial additional work, RCMA will offer interim pay of 5%-15%, depending on the nature and amount of the additional work. The amount of interim pay may be based on whether the employee functions in both his or her current position as well as the vacant position, or only in the vacant position.
- Within a higher-level pay band, the employee will receive an increase to the base salary. The employer may pay the employee a salary appropriate to the level position for the duration of the assignment.

Once an interim assignment ends, the employee's salary will return to the original pay plus any other increase and/or adjustments (merit, COLA, etc.) warranted during this time.

During an interim assignment, the employee will be given a courtesy title, such as "interim," followed by the title of the position for which the employee is performing the duties and responsibilities.

SECTION 12 - TERMINATION POLICY

12.1 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.

12.2 INVOLUNTARY TERMINATIONS

Involuntary terminations include:

- End of approved leave
- End of temporary employment
- Failure to certify I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification
- Ineligibility for employment (such as MVR, drug testing, background screening)
- Lack of required credentials
- Termination during the probationary period
- Threat to the safety and/or health of students
- Unsatisfactory job performance
- Staff reductions or reorganizations due to a lack of funds or a lack of work.
- Violations of the 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 of whether it is voluntary or involuntary, the employee is entitled to payment for any unused 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 the 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.

12.3 CONTINUATION OF HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS

Under Federal law, an employee and his/her 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. Employees may contact the Benefits Office to obtain detailed information.

12.4 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.



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

This handbook has been prepared as a guide and sets forth general information that should assist you during your employment. The policies and benefits described in this handbook are not intended to be a contract and should not be construed to create a contract of employment of any kind.

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the *Academies of RCMA Employee Handbook* which outlines policies, practices, and other important employment information. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and become familiar with the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in the handbook during my first three (3) days of employment or within three (3) days of receiving it.

I understand and agree to abide by all policies and procedures contained in the handbook.

Print Employee Name

Employee Signature

Date