

Southwest Georgia Stem Charter School

Human Resources Handbook

2026-2027



Amended 05/28/2026

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This handbook has been designed for the faculty and staff at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School. Purposeful planning was the guiding principle behind deciding what was best to include in this document. Suggestions for changes in policy and procedures are welcomed and will be given careful consideration by Administration. All decisions will be made with a primary emphasis on what is best for our school.

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Welcome

Welcome to Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School. We are delighted that you have chosen to join our school and hope that you will enjoy a long and successful career with us. As you become familiar with our culture and mission, we hope you will take advantage of opportunities to enhance your career and further Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School's goals.

The purpose of this manual is to help guide you through our school's policies and procedures by communicating conditions of employment. This will allow all faculty and staff of Southwest Georgia Stem Charter School to be treated equally and fairly and to create a safe and healthy working environment.

This Human Resources Manual is not intended to create an employment agreement, expressed or implied. Nothing contained in this or any other document provided to the employee is intended to be, nor should it be, construed as a contract of employment or any benefit will continue for any period of time.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask your School Leader or Chief Financial Officer.

Equal Opportunity Statement

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School complies with all federal, state, and local laws, and provides an equal opportunity for all students and employees. The school prohibits discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), sex, disability, genetic information, nationality and/or citizenship in admission, grading, discipline, hiring, employment decisions or any other activity. For the purpose of this policy, religious discrimination includes antisemitism. The school complies with all requirements of Title VII, Title IX, EPA, ADEA, ADA, Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Civil Rights Act of 1991.

All decisions of the School Board and Administration will be administered without regard to any of the categories listed above or any other discriminatory criteria.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

SGSC does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational program and activities, as required by Title IX. The purpose of this policy and the administrative procedures that implement it is to secure prompt and equitable resolutions of complaints based on sex discrimination, including complaints of sexual harassment, in violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and violation of School policies that prohibit this type of discrimination. This policy and administrative procedures only applies to complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of sex as prohibited by Title IX as defined herein. This policy and the administrative procedures shall be available in the School administrative office, posted on the School website, and included in student and employee handbooks. Annually, the School will provide notice of its grievance procedures and grievance process, to applicants for admission and employment; students; parents or legal guardians of students; and employees. This notice shall include, at a minimum, the name and contact information for the School's Title IX Coordinator, and information on how to report or file a complaint of sexual discrimination or sexual harassment, how to report or file a formal complaint of sexual harassment, and how the School will respond.

SGSC prohibits all unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation in any employment decision, admissions determination,

education program or educational activity. This formal grievance process applies to all members of the SGSC community, including students, faculty, and staff. SGSC, through the Title IX Coordinators, has jurisdiction over and the authority to receive, investigate, hear and resolve reports and/or complaints brought by or against any member of the SGSC community that invoke Title IX.

The Title IX Coordinator is authorized to enact procedures that include specific instructions for reporting, investigating and resolving Title IX Complaints and Reports.

The School has appointed the following individual as its **TITLE IX COORDINATOR**, who shall be responsible for coordinating the School's response to all allegations involving possible sexual harassment. The Title IX Coordinator can be reached at:

Such requirement not to discriminate extends to admission and employment.

Ginger Almon
School Leader
185 Pecan Street, Shellman, GA 39886
229.345.3033
galmon@sowegastemcharter.org

The School has adopted a detailed grievance procedure that is available for review on the School website and can be provided by Ms. Almon by request.

Student Reporting of Alleged Sexually Inappropriate Behavior

This policy is adopted pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.7.

All students, parents, relatives and friends of students are encouraged to make an oral report of an incident when a student has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator, other school system employee, or volunteer affiliated with the school. This oral report may be made to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.

Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator, other employee, or volunteer affiliated with the school shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school leader, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the school leader is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Board Chair or the Board's designee.

The School Leader, upon receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 shall make an oral report to the appropriate authorities immediately, but in no later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, other employee, or volunteer not covered by O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 or O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school leader shall make an immediate written report to the Chair of the Board, the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division (if applicable) and any other outside authorities.

Hiring

The Governing Board is charged with oversight of hiring the School Leader and the Chief Financial Officer. The School Leader and CFO or his/her designees are charged with oversight and hiring for all other positions within Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School. All vacancies will be posted and/or advertised unless promoted from within.

When a position is created, becomes vacant, or when notice is given to leave a position, the direct supervisor of the position or school leader will draft/revise (if necessary) the following reference documents:

- a. job description
- b. criteria of eligibility
- c. schedule and protocol concerning the job posting
- d. text of the job posting

If the position is not filled internally, then it will be posted on various local and state media outlets. The direct supervisor will review complete applications and select the most qualified applicants for interview. Before an offer is extended to the candidate of choice, all references must be checked and determined to be satisfactory. New hires must submit to background check and fingerprinting within 30 days of offer and the employment offer will be contingent upon results of background check.

All hiring activities will be conducted in accordance with applicable Board Policies.

Employment

All employment is contingent upon adequate funding and programmatic need for the position.

Employment Documentation

You are responsible for delivering the following information to the Human Resources Director:

1. Completed Application
2. A copy of your teaching certificate(s)
3. Teacher experience verification, if appropriate
4. Teacher Retirement System number and name as carried by retirement system
5. Copy of Social Security Card
6. Copy of Driver's License
7. Birth date
8. Contact information (address and phone)
9. Fingerprinting process completed
10. SHBP Insurance information (if currently enrolled. Ex. transfer)

If your name has been changed you must:

1. Apply to Social Security office for a legal name change and new card
2. Apply for new teaching certificate
3. Notify the Teacher Retirement System
4. Notify SHBP

*Note: Your paycheck, benefits, and retirement documentation have to be issued as your SS card and Driver's License read—until a new driver's license and social security card are issued and presented, your name cannot be changed.

Employment Classification

In order to determine eligibility for benefits and to ensure compliance with State and Federal laws and regulations, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School classifies its employees as shown. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School may review or change employee classifications at any time. Certified workers are employees who hold a certificate in education.

Salary- Certified Full- time

Salary- Non Certified Full-Time

Salary- Certified Part-Time (49%)

Hourly

Daily

Salary- Certified employees can be a 10 month, 11 month, or 12 month employee, depending on the position held. Most certified teaching positions in the classroom are 10 month positions. This type of employment offers Teacher's Retirement Services, State Health Benefit Plan, and other benefit packages offered by our current insurance provider.

Salary- Non Certified employees can be a 10 month, 11 month, or 12 month employee. This also depends on the position held. This type of employment offers Teacher's Retirement Services, State Health Benefit Plan, and other benefit packages offered by our current insurance provider.

Salary- Certified Part-Time employees, also known as 49% are 10 month employees. No retirement or benefits are offered with any part time position of less than 30 hours per week.

Salary- Non Certified Part-Time employees are 10 month employees. No retirement or benefits are offered with any part time position of less than 30 hours per week.

Hourly- An hourly paid employee receives compensation based on an hourly rate. No retirement or benefits are offered with any part time position of less than 30 hours per week.

Daily- A daily paid employee receives compensation based on a daily rate. No retirement or benefits are offered with any part time position of less than 30 hours per week.

A 10 month employee is compensated for working 10 months (190) days. The salary cycle for a 10 month employee is September- August. Full Time, 10 month employees, accrue 1.25 sick days per month for 10 months and begin the salary cycle with an additional 3 personal days. Two of the 12.50 sick days may be used as personal days along with the additional 3 personal days for a total of 5 personal days per school year.

An 11 month employee is compensated for working 11 months (220) days. The salary cycle for an 11 month employee is September- August. Full Time, 11 month employees, accrue 1.25 sick days per month

for 11 months and begin the salary cycle with an additional 3 personal days. Two of the 13.75 sick days may be used as personal days along with the additional 3 personal days for a total of 5 personal days per school year.

A 12 month employee is compensated for working 12 months (240) days. The salary cycle for a 12 month employee is July-June. Full Time, 12 month employees, accrue 1.25 sick days per month for 12 months and begin the salary cycle with an additional 3 personal days. Two of the 15.00 sick days may be used as personal days along with the additional 3 personal days for a total of 5 personal days per school year.

Work Day/Hours of Duty

The minimum workday for teachers shall be eight hours, and the minimum work week shall be forty hours. The minimum work day shall entail the duties for which the teacher's base salary is paid, such as teaching and teacher preparation, staff meetings, conferences with students and parents, planning conferences, related school activities in the community, and extra-class responsibilities. A schedule designating the beginning and end of each workday for teachers and other employees will be set by the School Leader. Circumstances may sometimes necessitate a longer workday at the school or work site.

Meetings

All teachers and staff are expected to attend scheduled meetings unless they are prohibited from doing so by some cause beyond their control. Promptness is essential to the success of all meetings. Meetings and conferences will be scheduled in the afternoon when feasible, and at least a two-day notice will be given unless impossible. Requests to be excused from a meeting must be submitted to the School Leader. Personnel should plan appointments and responsibilities for days other than meeting dates.

School Event Attendance/After School Activities

The employee agrees to perform such duties as assigned, observe and implement such curriculum, standards and policy, and abide by such rules and regulations as may from time to time be put in force by appropriate lawful action either of the employer or the State Board of Education. In addition to standard teacher duties, the employee agrees to attend and supervise a limited number of after school activities of the school as assigned by the School Leader with advance notice of the dates to be given to the employee. After school activities include helping with the concession stand and/or gate entries at 2 athletic events. If the employee does not sign up for the after school event of their choosing, the School Leader will assign 2 events to an employee based on the after school activity need for attendance.

Maintaining Certification

Certified staff contracts are contingent upon the employee's securing and continuing to hold a valid certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission. If an employee is unable to be properly certified or maintain proper certification, the daily rate of pay may be adjusted to that of a substitute employee retroactive to the beginning date of employment under the current contract or to the date the certificate became invalid, whichever is more recent.

Employee Leave and Absences

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter Schools leave procedures are as follows. Exhibit 1.1 is the leave form to be completed.

- All employees must complete a leave form and submit it to the School Leader.
- Personal Leave Forms should be submitted to the School Leader 5 days prior to leave if possible. Sick Leave must be submitted at least 24 hours in advance.
- In the event of an emergency, the employee is responsible for reporting his/her illness or emergency to the School Leader and direct supervisor. Leave forms must be submitted as soon as the employee returns to work. If an employee has not submitted his or her leave form by the designated deadline, an employee may receive Leave Without Pay (LWOP).
- If an employee does not report to the School Leader within 2 days of being absent, the employee may be terminated for job abandonment.
- Leave is granted to employees as outlined in this policy. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School does not pay compensation for unused sick leave, personal leave, vacation leave, or compensatory leave.
- Full time employees accrue 1.25 sick days per month for the amount of months that they are contracted through the year. It is at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School's discretion to give the Staff all of their sick leave days at the beginning of the year or to disburse sick leave days on a monthly basis as accrued.

In accordance with state law, a person may request up to three days of personal leave or professional leave. This request must be made in writing to the School Leader. Completing follow-up paperwork is the employee's responsibility. If an employee does not submit a leave form and any required documentation to the School Leader, this may reflect negatively on annual evaluations and the employee may be subject to leave without pay.

Absence Call in Procedure

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School implements a "Call in Procedure." To adhere to the Call in Procedure, you must follow the instructions below for contacting the School Leader or your direct supervisor when expected or unexpected Leave occurs. If you have made previous arrangements for leave and it has been approved by the School Leader, it is not necessary to "Call in," unless you need to make a change in leave arrangements.

- If you have NOT made arrangements for leave, you must "Call in" to the School Leader and/or your direct supervisor before your designated arrival time begins.
- If you are on Short-term or Long-term leave, you must "Call in" to the School Leader on a weekly basis unless authorized differently.

* If an employee does not report to the School Leader within 2 days of being absent, the employee may be terminated by reason of job abandonment.

Leave Classifications

Personal Leave
Sick Leave
Professional Leave
Jury Duty

Bereavement
Leave without Pay (LWOP)
Parental Leave
Military Leave

* A submitted Leave Form is required for all types of leave. If a leave form is not received by the end of the pay period, the employee may receive Leave Without Pay.

Personal Leave

Personal leave is used for any time off that is granted for reasons including but not limited to specialized experiences, family issues, and extenuating personal needs. Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which personal leave is sought but are required to state that the absence is for “personal” reasons. Personal leave may not be used in conjunction with a School, State, or Federal Holiday. Any unused personal leave will be carried over from one year to the next in the form of local sick days. These days will not be included in TRS credit days. At the beginning of the fiscal year, you will be given 3 personal days to use over the course of the fiscal year. In addition to the 3 personal days, employees may use 2 sick days as personal leave for a total of 5 personal days per year. Personal leave may be used as sick leave if there are no sick leave days left for the employee to use.

Sick Leave

Sick leave can be used for personal illness, immediate family illnesses, medical appointments for self and family. You may be asked to provide medical documentation. Unused sick leave will be carried over to the next fiscal year. Two days of Sick Leave may be used as Personal Leave per year.

Professional Leave

Professional Leave is used for professional training, classes, workshops, or any other instructional time away from the school campus. Any professional leave must be approved by the School Leader in advance. Documentation is required to be submitted with the leave form.

Jury Duty Leave

Jury Duty is used for time off or reporting to jury selection or jury duty. Leave forms must be submitted to the school leader immediately after being notified about jury duty. You must also supply your summons notification document with your leave form. Jury Duty Leave is paid leave and does not count against your personal leave or sick leave. On occasion some jurors are dismissed after a short time for the rest of the day. In this event, school personnel should report to school. Any juror compensation received for Jury Duty may be retained by the employee.

Bereavement Leave

Bereavement Leave is leave that is taken by an employee due to the death of an Immediate Family Member. You may be required to submit documentation with a leave form. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School gives all full-time employees 5 paid bereavement days per year. Absences in excess of the maximum approved days due to death in the immediate family will be charged against sick leave. For these purposes, an immediate family member is defined as a spouse, child, sibling, parent, or parent of the spouse of a child, sibling, or parent. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School recognizes

grandparents of employees, grandparents of the spouse, and step relatives of the employee as immediate family.

Leave Without Pay (LWOP)

Leave without pay is a non-pay status and absence from duty. This could be a result from using a sick leave day without having any days accrued or using a personal leave day without having any personal days remaining for the year. LWOP must be approved by the School Leader before the absence takes place. If an employee is not covered by FMLA or PPL and has exceeded 3 days of LWOP, the employee may be terminated. Documentation may be required depending on the need to use the day. Please also see FMLA requirements.

Paid Parental Leave (PPL)

H.B 146 provides 240 hours of paid leave upon the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child. The six weeks of paid leave consists of 30 work days. The bill states that this leave has to be used in 8 hour increments. It applies to all employees with six months of creditable service regardless of the employee's gender. It is limited to once in any 12-month period. Eligible employees are entitled to PPL even if they are not eligible for leave under FMLA. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School requires PPL and FMLA to be used concurrently. The maximum amount of paid parental leave that may be taken by an eligible employee during a rolling 12-month period is 240 hours regardless of the number of qualifying life events that occur.

Maternal Birth Leave (MBL)

GA H.B 1118 establishes 120 hours of paid "maternal birth leave" for eligible state employees and full-time employees of local education agencies in Georgia who experience a "qualifying life event," defined as giving birth. This leave is intended for recuperation and must be taken within the three weeks immediately following the birth, before any other paid parental leave. Eligibility requires six continuous months of employment, or 700 hours worked in the preceding six months for hourly employees. Documentation from a physician will be required. If a paid holiday or school break occurs during the time the employee is on maternal birth leave, the holidays and/or break will run concurrently with the maternal birth leave days.

Military Leave

All employees are entitled to paid leave not to exceed eighteen days in any one federal fiscal year for the purpose of complying with ordered military duty with the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including duty as a voluntary member of the National Guard or any reserve component of the United States or State of Georgia. In the event the Governor declares an emergency that results in an employee being ordered to military duty as a member of the National Guard, the employee is entitled to leave not exceeding thirty days in any one federal fiscal year. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the Superintendent or designee annually, provide a copy of the official military orders, and cooperate to the extent possible in scheduling such leave so as to minimize the disruption in those employees' duties and the mission of the Board of Education. To the extent that any provision in this policy conflicts with or is superseded by the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA"), the regulations promulgated thereunder, or any other federal or state law, the provisions of the applicable law or its regulations, as the case may be, shall control.

Tardiness

An employee is deemed tardy when he/she fails to report for work at the assigned/scheduled work time.

Excessive tardiness is defined as being late to work and coming back late from breaks more than 6 times in a three-month period. This may reflect negatively on an employee's evaluation. An employee may be terminated for tardiness after they have been cautioned for the need for improvement.

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

It is the purpose of this policy to set out in summary form the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("Act") as adopted by the U. S. Congress. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Board does not intend by this policy to create any additional rights to leave not provided by the Act. Any portion of this policy inconsistent or contrary to the Act is unintentional and shall not be given effect.

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides eligible employees with job-protected leave for qualifying family and medical reasons. The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) enforces the FMLA for most employees.

To be eligible for FMLA leave, all of the following must apply:

1. Your work for a covered employer.
2. You have worked for your employer at least 12 months.
3. You have at least 1,250 hours of service for our employer during the 12 months before your leave.
4. Your employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of your work location.

Eligible employees can take up to 12 work weeks of FMLA leave in a 12-month period for:

1. The birth, adoption or foster placement of a child with you,
2. Your serious mental or physical health condition that makes you unable to work,
3. To care for your spouse, child or parent with a serious mental or physical health condition, and
4. Certain qualifying reasons related to the foreign deployment of your spouse, child, or parent who is a military service member.

An eligible employee who is the spouse, child, parent or next of kin of a covered service member with a serious injury or illness may take up to 26 workweeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member.

You have the right to use FMLA leave in one block of time. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, you may take FMLA leave intermittently in separate blocks of time, or on a reduced schedule by working less hours each day or week.

FMLA is not paid leave, but you may choose, or be required by your employer, to use any employer-provided paid leave if your employer's paid leave policy covers the reason for which you need FMLA leave.

If an employee is eligible for FMLA Leave, the employee is required to provide 30-day advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable and such notice is practicable. If advance notice is not practicable, the employee must give notice either the same or next business day. You do not

have to share a medical diagnosis but must provide enough information to your employer so they can determine whether the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. You must also inform your employer if FMLA leave was previously taken or approved for the same reason when requesting additional leave. SGSC will request certification from your health care provider to verify medical leave and may request certification of a qualifying exigency.

When using FMLA, an employee is required to complete the necessary documentation of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School and follow call-in procedures. The call-in procedure is satisfied by calling the School Leader on a once a week basis while on approved Family Medical Leave.

If FMLA is being used because of an employee's inability to work due to health conditions, an employee must submit a release from his/her physician releasing the employee to go back to work. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will NOT allow the employee to return to any duties at the school without clearance from the employee's physician.

Employees will be eligible to maintain health care benefits provided by the district while on FMLA leave. The School will pay the employer's portion, if any, of such benefits. The employee will pay the same portion, if any, of such benefits as the employee paid before beginning the leave.

If you are eligible, your employer must:

1. Allow you to take job-protected time off work for a qualifying reason.
2. Continue your group health plan coverage while you are on leave on the same basis if you had not taken leave.
3. Allow you to return to the same job, or a virtually identical job with the same pay, benefits, and other working conditions, including shift and location, at the end of your leave.
4. Your employer cannot interfere with your FMLA rights or threaten to punish you for exercising your rights under the law.
5. After becoming aware that your need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, your employer must confirm whether you are eligible or not eligible for FMLA leave. If your employer determines that you are eligible, your employer must notify you in writing.

FMLA leave runs concurrently with Paid Parental Leave if the leave is for a qualified reason under those laws.

For more information on FMLA, please go to dol.gov/fmla or call 1-866-487-9243.

Georgia Supporting Living Donor Educators Act (HB235)

It is the purpose of this policy to set out in summary form the provisions of the Georgia Supporting Living Donor Educators Act ("Act") as adopted by the U. S. Congress. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Board does not intend by this policy to create any additional rights to leave not provided by the Act. Any portion of this policy inconsistent or contrary to the Act is unintentional and shall not be given effect.

Georgia HB 235, also known as the "Georgia Supporting Living Donor Educators Act," allows public school and postsecondary education employees to take a leave of absence for organ or bone marrow donation. This leave is granted without loss of pay and does not count against their annual or sick leave. It also includes the donation time as service for retirement and pension benefits. The Act states that each public school teacher and public school employee shall be entitled to receive the following leaves of

absence, without loss of pay:

1. Not more than seven days for the purpose of bone marrow donation for transplanting.
2. Not more than 30 days for the purpose of organ donation for transplantation.
3. No individual shall be entitled to a leave of absence provided unless he or she furnishes a statement from a medical practitioner who is to perform such transplantation procedure or from a hospital administrator where such procedure is to be performed that such individual is making a bone marrow or organ donation.
4. Such statement shall be furnished to such individual's employer no less than seven days prior to any leave of absence to be scheduled.

Workers Compensation

Workers' compensation is an accident insurance program paid by your employer which may provide you with medical, rehabilitation and income benefits if you are injured on the job. These benefits are provided to help you return to work. If you are injured while working on the job at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School, you need to immediately contact the School Leader.

Failure to timely inform your employer may result in loss of worker's compensation benefits. To ensure safety and compliance, inform the School Leader immediately of any injury that takes place. You will then be informed on which physician is in contract with the school for your medical care should you need to seek medical attention.

Employees will be required to complete a drug and/or alcohol test upon arrival when seeking medical attention through Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School's worker's compensation insurance. If the test shows a positive result for illegal drugs, alcohol, or excessive amounts of prescription drugs outside of the prescription dosage amount, an employee may be denied worker's compensation coverage and the employee risks job termination.

Each injury is a case by case basis. If your injury results in qualifying benefits, you must file a claim to protect your rights within one year from the date of your accident. This is accomplished by filing Form WC-14 with the State Board of Workers' Compensation.

Payroll Deductions

Payroll deductions are wages withheld from an employee's total earnings for the purpose of paying taxes, garnishments and benefits. If an Employee makes any changes to benefits due to life changing circumstances and/or open enrollment, the Employee must send the CFO documentation for the plan and deduction changes in order for the payroll deductions to be correct. The Employee is responsible for ensuring that the CFO has the information needed to make any benefit changes. Any deduction discrepancies may result in the Employee being responsible for back paying benefits due or being reimbursed. If an Employee finds a discrepancy, they must immediately notify the CFO.

Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA)

In regards to HB 37, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School withholds Social Security Taxes. The employee portion of FICA will be deducted from the wages of all employees. FICA is a US federal payroll tax and the deduction is a requirement. 6.2% of this deduction is for Social Security. 1.45% of this deduction is for Medicare. All employees will be deducted 7.65% in total to pay their portion of FICA.

State & Federal Tax Withholding

While completing Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School's employment application, the employee will be given a W-4 form (federal) and a G-4 form (state) to complete. This will allow the employee to choose the correct amount of State and Federal taxes to be withheld from payroll. If you would like to make changes to your State and Federal withholding amounts, please contact the CFO. You will be required to complete new forms to reflect the changes that you want to make. It is recommended but not required that you speak with your CPA before making any changes.

State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP)

If an employee is eligible for health insurance, he or she will be able to enroll in their plan of choice within 31 days of their hire date. Employees transferring from another school system will continue to receive payroll deductions at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School for the coverage that they were previously enrolled in. The type of health coverage chosen by the employee will determine the State Health Benefit Plan Deduction. All eligible employees will be informed on a yearly basis when open enrollment is available. State Health Benefit Plan gives employees the ability to make changes outside of open enrollment for certain "Life Changes," or qualifying events.

For More information on State Health Benefit Plan, please go to <https://shbp.georgia.gov/>

Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS)

Teachers Retirement System is the State of Georgia's retirement plan. TRS benefits are administered and paid in accordance with laws enacted by the Georgia Legislature. An employee's TRS deduction equals 6.0% of his/her gross salary amount. This amount cannot be changed by an employee. Employees will not have to enroll into TRS, but they will need to access their account online to choose beneficiaries.

For More Information on Teachers Retirement System of Georgia, please go to <https://www.trsga.com/>

School Property

School property is equipment and supplies located at any area inside and outside of the school buildings controlled, managed, or owned by the school. All employees must respect school property. The position held by the school employee determines the type of school property that will be held in care of the employee. When abuse of school property is evident by an employee, the employee may be required to reimburse the school for the current cost of the property. The current cost of the property is the cost to replace the property. If an employee loses or misplaces a key to the school facilities, the employee will pay a replacement cost of \$200.

Termination Policy

The termination policy applies to all employees. When possible, employees will be warned and counseled on an involuntary termination. This is not a guarantee based on certain events or situations. The school will use progressive discipline when appropriate.

Voluntary Termination

If an employee initiates leaving the organization or leaves on their own accord, this is called Voluntary Termination.

Involuntary Termination

If an employee is terminated by board action or for any other reason beyond the employee's control, the termination is involuntary. This type of termination can be due to a layoff, doing away with a certain type of job position, as well as involvement in a certain situation that would warrant termination.

Certified Staff Termination of Contract

Certified staff contracts shall not be terminated by the employee without the written consent of the employer. In the event that the employee does terminate this contract whether by formal notice or by willful failure or refusal to continue duties without such written consent, the employer may recommend to the agency designated by state law to investigate complaints of ethics violations by educators, that action be taken against the employee's certificate or application for certification. Additionally, if employee terminates this contract without the prior written consent of the employer, the employee shall be obligated to pay the employer an early termination penalty of \$5,000.00 within five business days of the date the employee notifies the employer of his/her intent to terminate the contract. This contract shall not be terminated by the employer except as provided for in any law of the State of Georgia presently in force or hereafter enacted pertaining to the retention and dismissal of employees of charter schools approved by the State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia and as provided for in the regulations of the employer.

*** Certified employees that break their contract with Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School may run the risk of their certificate being negatively impacted. The infraction could potentially be reported to GA PSC.

- ALL Employees are requested to provide a minimum of two weeks' notice of their intention to separate employment. The employee should provide a written resignation notification to the School Leader. An exit interview will be scheduled for the employee, school leader, and possibly the Chairman of the Board to attend.
- Employees will receive a "separation date." This is the last day an employee will work for Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School. This date will be submitted to the Department of Labor.
- The CFO will review the employee's post-termination benefit status and make the information available for the terminated employee.
- Terminated Employees will be paid according to State and Federal laws. The employee will return all school property to the School Leader by the end of the separation date. After property and keys are returned, the employee must immediately exit the property.
- The terminated employee will notify the CFO if an address change is needed for receiving his/her W-2.

In accordance with the Georgia Court of Appeals' 2015 holding in Day v. Floyd County Board of Education, Southwest Georgia S.T.E.M. Charter School is exempt from the provisions of the Fair Dismissal Act, O.C.G.A. 20-2-940 et. Seq. Human Resources Manual.

Southwest Georgia S.T.E.M. Charter School

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Ginger Almon, School Leader
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EMPLOYEE LEAVE FORM

SOUTHWEST GEORGIA STEM CHARTER SCHOOL

Employee Name:			
Number of Days Absent:		Date(s) of Absence(s):	

I, an employee of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School, do certify that the following is the reason for applying for leave (check the reason that applies):

- ☐ Sick Leave/Medical Appointment: (You may be asked to provide an excuse from the appointment.)
- ☐ Personal Leave: (Submit at least 5 Days in Advance) O Approved or O Not Approved
- ☐ Professional Learning Leave: (Attach documentation related to Professional Learning.)
- ☐ Jury Duty: (Attach Jury Summons letter.)
- ☐ Leave Without Pay (LWOP): Please Provide an explanation:

- ☐ Other: _____

Signature of Employee

Date

Signature of Supervisor

Date

Personal Leave must be requested at least 5 days in advance. Sick leave must be requested at least 24 hours in advance. If an employee is unexpectedly sick or has a medical emergency, a leave form must be submitted the day that the employee returns to work. The employee leave form must be submitted on time per the SGSC Human Resources Policy or the employee may receive leave without pay. By signing the employee leave form, the employee understands SGSC's employee leave policies.

