



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

BENEFIT INFORMATION

School Year
2021-2022

OUR MISSION

“To bring the best of public education to our community by providing innovation and choice within a continuous pre-school through postsecondary curriculum so that each child recognizes the benefits of life- long learning, constructive citizenship and personal happiness.”

The information provided in this handbook is intended to advise employees of Lake Wales Charter Schools, Inc., of the various policies, procedures, benefits, and services available to them. It is not an employment contract. This handbook will be revised as needed and at the discretion of LWCS Administration.

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Section 1 Opening

Lake Wales Charter Schools, Inc Commitment Statement

1. Lake Wales Charter Schools, Inc. (LWCS) is committed to recruiting and selecting highly qualified and innovative employees.
2. LWCS will provide a working environment and leadership which unites employees and generates enthusiasm for the education and enrichment of the children of the Lake Wales Community.
3. LWCS is committed to maintaining the highest educational standards.
4. LWCS understands the importance of its employees in the educational success of its students.
5. LWCS is committed to providing training and advancement opportunities for its employees, parents and students.
6. The LWCS's Superintendent is committed to an "open door" policy for employees, parents and students.
7. LWCS is committed to keeping its employees informed about his or her job responsibilities and any changes which will impact those responsibilities.
8. LWCS is committed to providing a safe and orderly environment for its employees to work and its students to learn.

Section II

State & Federal Statue & Policies

Education Standards Commission / Code of Ethics Domestic
Violence Statement
Discrimination Policy Statement
Drug Free Workplace Harassment of Employees
Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act - HIPAA
Toxic Substance

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EDUCATION STANDARDS COMMISSION

The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida and the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida

Rulemaking Authority 1001.02, 1012.795(1)(j) FS. Law Implemented 1012.795 FS. History—New 7-6-82, Amended 12-20-83, Formerly 6B-1.06, Amended 8-10-92, 12-29-98, Formerly 6B-1.006, Amended 3-23-16.

Rule 6A-10.081, Florida Administrative Code, Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida.

(1) Florida educators shall be guided by the following ethical principles:

(a) The educator values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all.

(b) The educator's primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student's potential. The educator will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.

(c) Aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of other members of the community, the educator strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

(2) Florida educators shall comply with the following disciplinary principles. Violation of any of these principles shall subject the individual to revocation or suspension of the individual educator's certificate, or the other penalties as provided by law.

(a) Obligation to the student requires that the individual:

1. Shall make 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.

2. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.

3. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.

4. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.

5. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.

6. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.

7. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of 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 effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.

8. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.

9. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

(b) Obligation to the public requires that the individual:

1. Shall take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated.

2. Shall not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.

3. Shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage.

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4. Shall accept no gratuity, gift, or favor that might influence professional judgment.

5. Shall offer no gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special advantages.

(c) Obligation to the profession of education requires that the individual:

1. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.

2. Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.

3. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.

4. Shall 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 effort to assure that each individual is protected from such harassment or discrimination.

5. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

6. Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgments of colleagues.

7. Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications.

8. Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities.

9. Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact in one's own or another's application for a professional position.

10. Shall not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.

11. Shall provide upon the request of the certificated individual a written statement of specific reason for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment.

12. Shall not assist entry into or continuance in the profession of any person known to be unqualified in accordance with these Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida and other applicable Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules.

13. Shall self-report within forty-eight (48) hours to appropriate authorities (as determined by district) any arrests/charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. In addition, 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 Sections 943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c), F.S.

14. Shall report to appropriate authorities any known allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 1012.795(1), F.S.

15. Shall 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 Section 1012.795(1), F.S.

16. Shall comply with the conditions of an order of the Education Practices Commission imposing probation, imposing a fine, or restricting the authorized scope of practice.

17. Shall, as the supervising administrator, cooperate with the Education Practices Commission in monitoring the probation of a subordinate.

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATEMENT

Florida Statute 741.313 requires an employer who employs 50+ employees to permit an employee who has been employed for 3 months or more to take up to three working days of leave in any 12-month period to deal with domestic violence-related issues. This applies not only in situations where the employee is the victim of domestic violence, but also when a member of the employee's family or household is the victim of domestic violence.

DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

No employee, student, or applicant shall on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, marital status, age, religion, or any other basis prohibited by law be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity or in any employment conditions or practices, conducted by the Lake Wales Charter Schools, Inc.

Statutory Authority: Section 230.22(2), Florida Statutes Law Implemented: Section 228.2001, Florida Statutes

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the LWCS publishes an annual statement notifying employees that unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by employees is prohibited. This includes any school-related activities away from or on LWCS premises.

To facilitate enforcement of Policy, following an offer of employment by Lake Wales Charter Schools, all job applicants will be required to take and pass a drug test. Current employees will be tested for drugs and/or alcohol for any of the following: 1) reasonable, suspicion/cause; 2) post-accident/injury – all employees involved in any way, in any accident whether bodily injury has occurred or not will be tested; 3) random testing for employees under the Federal Department of Transportation of Drug-Free Workplace Program may be done; 4) follow-up after an employee returns from a drug treatment or counseling program; and, 5) as part of a routine fitness of duty examination if required by the Lake Wales

Charter Schools. Refusal to submit to testing upon request, for any of the reasons authorized, shall subject the employee to the same disciplinary consequences as would result from a positive test result including termination for cause, denial of Unemployment and Worker's Compensation, and medical and indemnity benefits.

Any employee violating the policy shall be immediately suspended by the Superintendent of LWCS, and the Superintendent will report any violation to the Board of Trustees. Upon completion of investigation further action could result in termination of employment.

Failure by any LWCS employee to report a known violation of this policy will constitute an act of insubordination and willful neglect of duty. Employees need to be aware that compliance with the LWCS Policy is mandatory and violators will be referred for prosecution.

Employee Assistance Care 24 Program is available for all LWCS employees. United Health Care is the provider of these services and can be reached via telephone at 888-887-4114 or access the URL at www.myuhc.com.

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

The Lake Wales Charter Schools, Inc. forbids the discrimination against any employee, applicant for employment, or student on the basis of sex or race. The Board will not tolerate sexual/racial harassment activity by any of its employees. This policy also applies to non-employee volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities.

Senate Bill 1712 titled "Ethics in Education Act" was created and signed by Florida Governor Crist on July 1, 2008. One of the sections within this bill speaks to "work place harassment" either sexual or racial harassment. The provisions within this bill provide for strict compliance within a school organization. To provide compliance with this new law the LWCS Trustees, Superintendent and School Administration will take these matters seriously and on September 15, 2008 set the following into policy: Any LWCS employee found to be guilty of such crimes will be terminated immediately and the proper procedures for forfeiture of teaching credentials will be initiated by the LWCS Superintendent with the Florida Department of Education. Any staff member or administrator who is aware of such actions by another LWCS employee and does not inform his or her immediate supervisor/principal or the Superintendent will be immediately terminated.

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Sexual harassment consists of unwelcomed sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal, nonverbal, graphic, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of employment or of an individual's education.
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for an employment or academic decision affecting that individual; or
- such conduct substantially interferes with an employee's work performance or student's academic performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or school environment.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to the following:

- verbal, non-verbal, graphic, and written harassment or abuse;
- pressure for sexual activity;
- repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications;
- unwelcome or inappropriate touching;
- suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's employment.

Racial harassment consists of verbal, nonverbal, graphic, written, or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward any employee based upon race when such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or employment opportunities. Racial harassment as defined above may include but is not limited to the following conduct which is based upon race:

- epithets and slurs;
- written or graphic material that shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group;
- negative stereotyping;
- threatening, intimidating or hostile acts.

SPECIFIC PROHIBITIONS

It is sexual harassment for a LWCS employee or non-employee volunteer to use his or her authority to solicit sexual favors or attention from subordinates or students, including but not limited to incidents when the subordinate's or student's failure to submit will result in adverse treatment, or when the subordinate's or student's acquiescence will result in preferential treatment. It is racial harassment for a LWCS school system employee or non-employee volunteer to create or be responsible for a racially hostile environment i.e., harassing conduct that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so far as to interfere with or limit the ability of an employee or student to participate in or benefit from services, activities, or privileges provided by the system.

PROCEDURES

Any person who alleges sexual/racial harassment by any staff member may use the Education Equity Complaint/Grievance procedure or may complain directly to his/her supervisor or LWCS Superintendent. If the direct administrator or supervisor is the offending person, the report should be made to the next higher level of administration or supervision or the LWCS Superintendent. Filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting sexual/racial harassment will not affect the individual's status, future employment, future promotion, extracurricular activities or work assignments.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected, consistent with the Board's legal obligations, and with the necessity to investigate allegation of misconduct and take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

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In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual/racial harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated. The Superintendent or designee has the responsibility of investigating and resolving complaints of sexual/racial harassment.

A substantiated charge against a Board employee shall subject such employee to disciplinary action, including but not limited to warning, suspension, or termination, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

Any employee, applicant for employment, student, or applicant for admission who believes he/she has been discriminated against or harassed is encouraged to contact his/her supervisor or building principal or the Office of the Superintendent at 863-679-6560.

(Note: The term "racial harassment" in this policy refers to all forms of discrimination prohibited by Title VI-race, color, and national origin.)

Senate Bill #1712 Signed into Law on July 1, 2008

Statutory Authority: Section 230.22(2), Florida Statutes

Law Implemented: Section 231.28(5), Florida Statute

HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA)

HIPAA

- Federal law – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Purpose – Health Insurance Reform
- Provides Portability for Employees and their families when they change or lose their jobs
- Provides Security and Privacy for Health Data
- Provides Criminal & Civil Penalties for Violations

COMPLIANCE

- The Lake Wales Charter Schools will comply with HIPAA to the extent required by law.

PRIVACY – PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)

- PHI is confidential health information that contains student or employee "identifiers" in any form: electronic, paper-based or oral.
- Individual Identifiable Health Information (IIHI) is information about the physical or mental health of any individual that identifies or can reasonably identify the individual, i.e. name, social security number, date of birth, etc.
- PHI shall not be shared or discussed with persons not having appropriate authority to receive confidential information either at work or away from work.
- Employee records and information that include PHI are confidential.
- Student records and information that include PHI are confidential.
- Student records and information are confidential and are covered by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- If in doubt, do not discuss or distribute any PHI or confidential student records and information to third parties. Ask your supervisor before making any decisions to discuss or disclose sensitive information.

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

- Notice of Privacy Practices

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- Right to Restrict Use and Disclosure of PHI
- Right of Access / Right to Inspect and Copy your PHI
- Right to Amend PHI
- Right to file Complaints with the Lake Wales Charter Schools of Lake Wales, Florida and/or the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

DISCLOSURES AND VIOLATIONS

- Penalties for disclosure may include fines of \$50,000 - \$250,000 and imprisonment for up to 10 years.
- Penalties for noncompliance may include fines up to \$1,000 per occurrence: maximum fines up to \$25,000 per year.
- Violations may result in discipline action, up to and including termination of employment. In addition, violations may be prosecuted under state and/or federal law.

TOXIC SUBSTANCES AT WORK

Employees have a right to know about exposures to toxic substances in the workplace. Under the Florida Right-to-Know Law, Chapter 442, Florida Statutes, employers must provide employees with information about the toxic substances with which they work and train employees in safe handling practices and emergency procedures. A list of toxic substances is listed at each school or hiring location.

SECTION III

Policies and Procedures

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ARRESTS

Any employee, who is arrested or charged with any crime, including driving under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances, must notify his or her department director or principal of the alleged charges/allegations. Instructional personnel must self-report within 48 hours to their supervisor, principal or Superintendent any arrest/charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance. Failure to self-report may result in disciplinary action.

ATTENDANCE AND PROMPTNESS

Because we serve the public, getting to work on time and being present every day are most important. The public expects and has a right to demand prompt and efficient service. If you must be absent, it is your responsibility to notify your principal or supervisor at once. This allows him/her to reassign your work and maintain a high standard of service. Excessive absenteeism may be grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal. We cannot operate as effectively when an employee is absent.

CERTIFICATION

Florida Law requires all teachers to possess a valid Florida Educator's Certificate for full-time teaching. There are two types of certificates issued by Florida for full-time teaching: the five-year Professional Certificate and the three-year non-renewable temporary certificate. Securing and updating a certificate is the responsibility of each teacher. The state certification office processes applications for initial certification, certain add-ons, and all other services for non-employees. The state certification office approves all coursework for certification purposes. Teachers must call the toll free number 1800-445- 6739 with the following information: the name of the institution; the course prefix, number and title; the certification requirement they are attempting to satisfy by completing the course. This line is extremely busy during registration periods, so be sure to plan ahead. Also, you can e-mail the Dept. of Education at edcert@fldoe.org. Please include your name and social security number in your e-mail.

You may access the Florida Department of Education website: <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/> for the following services: Certification Lookup, Application Status Lookup and Request Materials. If you click on Application Status Lookup, you will be prompted to create a Login I.D. and Password. Once you are on this site, you will be able to access the following information about your certification file: the status/progress of your valid application and Statements of Status of Eligibility; a record of any valid Florida educator's certificate that you hold; the official transcripts, score report and information received from the district within the last calendar year.

Teachers who hold three-year non-renewable temporary certificates must follow their Statement of Status of Eligibility. This document is an individualized listing of all the deficiencies that you must satisfy in order to be issued a Professional Certificate. State law requires that you submit a passing score on all sections of the General Knowledge exam within the first twelve months of employment. Passing scores earned on the CLAST prior to 7/1/02 are acceptable. If your Statement of Status of Eligibility reflects that you have specific testing requirements to meet the district certification office has the registration bulletins and test information you need. For more information about the requirements listed on your Statement of Status of Eligibility, you may visit the Department of Education's website: http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/cert_types.asp. If a prospective employee previously worked at another school district and transfers to LWCS with a temporary teaching certificate and has taught school at least one or more years with that temporary teaching certificate, the employee must also provide LWCS with a copy of his/her score sheet stating that (s)he has passed the General Knowledge Exam, and a copy of the Official Statement of Eligibility, outlining the required college course work, and/or in-service points needed, or passing of the subject area exam, or any other requirements which must be met before a Professional Teaching Certificate can be issued. (Administrative Directive established 10/23/2008)

For reappointment purposes, all of the deficiencies outlined on your Statement of Status of Eligibility must be completed and documented with the principal and the LWCS Central Office Human Resources no later than April 1 of the year of expiration of your temporary certificate.

Teachers who hold five-year Professional certificates must renew their certificates every five years. During the validity period of this certificate, you are required to earn either 120 in-service points or six semester hours of college credit. Information pertaining to renewal requirements is available on the Florida Department of Education's website: <http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/renew.asp>.

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If you are teaching out-of-field, proof of six semester hours of coursework earned must be submitted to the LWCS Office by your anniversary date each year. If you are in an area that can be added to your certificate with a passing score on a subject area examination, it is expected that you earn a passing score on the appropriate subject area examination and apply to have that subject area added to your certificate before the end of your first year in that out-of-field assignment. A passing score on the appropriate subject area test will satisfy all the content area coursework. However, if you did not major in education, you will still need to complete the Professional Preparation Coursework as outlined on your Statement of Status of Eligibility.

When you earn a higher degree from an accredited institution, you must submit an official transcript with the higher degree conferred to the LWCS Human Resource Services Division.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

To receive a Form W-2 and other necessary payroll and retirement related information, it is necessary for your correct name and address to be on file with the LWCS Central Office. Should you marry, divorce, or move, please submit, a new W-4 with the appropriate box marked, name change and/or address change, along with a copy of your new changed social security card if applicable, to the LWCS Central Office, Payroll Office at P. O. Box 3309, Lake Wales, Florida 33859-3309 or fax to (863) 679-6565 attention HR.

CLASSROOM SECURITY

When leaving the classroom, locker room or other work areas between classes or at the end of the day, teachers are expected to turn out the lights and secure all doors. Windows should also be secured at the end of the day.

All staff is asked to refrain from keeping personal items of value in or about their desks. Purses should never be left unsecured. Students should be instructed to leave valuables at home. The LWCS will not be responsible for the loss of or damage to, personal property due to such causes as fire, theft, accident or vandalism.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Any LWCS employee who also works for an organization doing business with LWCS must reveal such a contractual agreement, in writing, to the Superintendent. The Superintendent may approve such an arrangement; however, if the Superintendent determines the relationship to be a conflict of interest, he/she will request that the employee terminate his/her employment with either the organization or the LWCS.

COURIER MAIL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Interdepartmental mail is delivered to school district related facilities via the Polk County School Board courier service. The couriers handle only district mail for LWCS. U. S. Mail is taken care of by individual schools and the LWCS Central Office. It is important to note that the courier service provided by the district is intended for business related mail only, and employees should not use the courier to send mail or packages of a personal nature.

Please adhere to the following tips when using the PCSB courier service.

- Envelopes or packages should be clearly marked with the recipient's name, work location, and Courier Route designation, along with the sender's name and work location. Packages or envelopes not clearly marked cannot be delivered.
- When using overnight services (FedEx, UPS, or the U.S. Postal Service), please evaluate the necessity of using overnight air express. Sending a package or letter overnight air express to cities in Florida typically is not necessary and is very expensive. Letters and packages can be delivered via overnight ground transportation at a significantly lower cost.
- Packages in excess of 50 pounds cannot be delivered by the courier service.
- Couriers cannot wait at stops for mail to be processed. The outgoing mail must be in the designated location prior to the courier's arrival.
- Courier routes are published annually and are provided at the beginning of each school year.
- For additional information or assistance call the PCSB courier office at 534-0702 or 51500.

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DIRECT DEPOSIT

Direct Deposit Authorization forms must be completed at the time of hire to have their semi-monthly pay directed to a checking or savings account of their choice. Direct Deposit Authorization forms are included in the new employee packet, available at the LWCS Payroll office, and on the LWCS Website under staff/forms. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the Payroll office if the individual's bank account changes. This is accomplished through the Direct Deposit Authorization Form.

Please note that to insure accuracy of the employee's depository account information, the first pay after submission of a Direct Deposit Authorization Form will be a physical payroll check. After the pre-note cycle all future pay will be electronically deposited with employees receiving a pay advice on payday that details pay information.

LWCS is not responsible for service fees assessed by a bank when employees make transactions on their account prior to direct deposit funds being credited to their account. A replacement payroll check for any reason may be subject to a processing fee.

DRESS CODE

Lake Wales Charter Schools recognizes that teachers are role models and teaching as a profession demands setting a good example for students in every possible way. As adults and professionals LWCS staff is expected to be guided in their grooming habits by what is most generally acceptable in the business and professional world, i.e. no short shorts, mini-skirts, "sagging" pants, showing midriffs or revealing cleavage or clothing. Neatness and cleanliness are also important. Each school principal may set guidelines for their staff to adhere to.

EVALUATIONS

Lake Wales Charter Schools expects high performance of all its employees. Evaluations help employees identify their strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities for professional growth and development. Yearly evaluation will be conducted for all LWCS staff. Teachers will be evaluated by their principal or assistant principal. Other school or central office staff could be evaluated by the principal, assistant principal, or their immediate supervisor.

FINGERPRINTING AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

All new employees will be fingerprinted and receive a Level II criminal background check before employment is confirmed. A new fingerprint check will be conducted on all existing employees every five (5) years or sooner should the Board of Trustees deem it necessary.

All employees operating a LWCS vehicle will have their driving records reviewed every year.

GIFTS TO EMPLOYEES

Employees of Lake Wales Charter Schools should be able to perform their duties without risking any appearance of impropriety, such that they are not placed in a position of compromise or conflict of interest, real or potential. To prevent such situations from occurring for our employees, it is the policy of LWCS that our employees not accept gifts from contractors or suppliers, or potential contractors or suppliers, of LWCS or any of its schools or programs that are directed to them individually. Examples would be gift certificates or personal items of value. Excluded are items of minimal monetary value which are directed to a school, office or program as a whole and are shared equally among employees. Examples would be baked goods, fruit or flowers.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Purposes: To set forth an orderly method for processing grievances to a resolution and to secure, at the lowest level possible, solutions to complaints or grievances.

Definitions: A grievance is defined as a claim by a grievant that there has been a violation, misinterpretation, misapplication, or inequitable application of the terms of a contract, Board policy, rule or regulation. A grievance concerning Board policy, rule or regulation, may only be carried through Steps I, II, and III.

A grievant may be an employee or a group of employees.

The employer is the Lake Wales Charter Schools, or those in the role of management for The School Board of Polk County, Florida.

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Days mean working days excluding Saturday, Sunday, and holidays.

Immediate supervisor is that individual in the role of management for the Board. Each teacher shall have only one immediate supervisor at a particular school or department.

Procedures

1. It is important that grievances be handled as rapidly as possible. The number of days indicated at each level should be considered a maximum. If the grievant fails to initiate a grievance or submit to the next step within the time limits as provided, the problem will be deemed to have been resolved. If the immediate supervisor fails to respond to the grievance within the time limits as provided, the grievance may be carried to the next step immediately. However, time limits may be extended by mutual agreement by either party upon one day's written notice to the other party. Such extension shall not exceed ten (10) working days, except in cases of emergency.
2. When grievance meetings and conferences are held during school hours, all employees whose presence is required by either party to provide information with regard to the grievance shall be excused from their regular duties without loss of pay. All meetings shall be by mutual agreement.
3. When illness or other incapacity of the grievant or managerial representative of the Board prevents his/her presence at a grievance meeting, as soon after the originally rescheduled date as is possible for both parties. The time limits shall be extended to such time that the grievant or representative of the Board can be present.
4. All documents, communications and records dealing with the processing of a grievance shall be filed separately from personnel files of the participants, and this information shall not be transmitted outside the Lake Wales Charter Schools, except as is required by lawful parties in court cases or subpoenas.
5. In the event a grievance is filed on or after June 1, time limits for the informal procedure, Steps I and II shall consist of a total of seven (7) days so that the grievance may be resolved before June 30. If the grievance is continued to Step III, the Board shall consider this grievance within fifteen (15) days following the Conclusion of Step II.
6. During the informal procedure, if there are administrators present in addition to the principal and a member of his/her managerial staff, the teacher shall be entitled to have additional assistance available.

Resolution Procedure

Informal Procedure: If an employee believes he/she has a grievance, he/she shall first discuss the matter in good faith with his/her immediate supervisor in an effort to resolve the problem informally. Should the grievance be with the employee's immediate supervisor, the employee would address the grievance with the supervisor next in line in the formal chain-of-command. This action shall take place within fifteen (15) days after the grievant knew or could reasonably have been expected to know of the event giving rise to the grievance.

At the informal procedure, the grievant may request additional assistance. The immediate supervisor or principal may have a member of his managerial staff, or if none exists, an assistant principal from another school at the meeting in the event the grievant has additional assistance. In this informal action, the grievant shall advise his/her supervisor of the particular incident resulting in the grievance. No record shall be maintained except for a dated and signed statement verifying the fact that an informal discussion has been held. The immediate supervisor will respond to the grievance within two (2) days after the informal meeting.

Step I

If as a result of the informal discussion with the immediate supervisor a grievance still exists, the grievant shall, within ten (10) days after the informal discussion, submit to the superintendent a completed copy of the grievance form (Appendix A). This time limit shall not apply in cases where the nature of the grievance is continuous, or when the resolution agreed to at the informal level has not been or cannot be implemented. Within ten (10) days after the receipt of the written grievance, the superintendent or his designee shall arrange and meet with the grievant in an effort to resolve the grievance. The superintendent shall indicate his/her disposition of the grievance in writing at the appropriate place on the grievance form within five (5) days after such meeting and send copies thereof to the grievant.

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Step II

In the event the grievant is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance made by the superintendent, or if no disposition has been made within five (5) days of such meeting, then within ten (10) days thereafter, the grievance shall be transmitted to the Board by filing a copy with the chairman of the Board. The Board shall within fifteen (15) days meet publicly for the purpose of listening to any oral arguments presented by the grievant and the superintendent. The grievant and the superintendent shall simultaneously exchange briefs outlining their positions and related documents without oral testimony. The disposition by the Board shall be made and announced within three (3) days of the public hearing. A copy of such disposition shall be furnished to the grievant, the immediate supervisor, and the superintendent.

Step III

In the event the grievant is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance by the Board, the grievance may be submitted to arbitration before an impartial arbitrator. Notice of such submission shall be given in writing to the superintendent within five (5) days after the grievant has received a written disposition from the Board. The arbitrator shall be selected from the American Arbitration Association in accord with its rules, which likewise govern the arbitration proceedings.

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

1. The arbitrator shall have no power to alter, add to, or subtract from the terms of this agreement.
2. The Board and the grievant shall not be permitted to assert in such arbitration proceeding any ground or rely on any evidence not previously disclosed to the other party. Both parties agree that the award of the arbitrator shall be final and binding.
3. If the Board refuses to arbitrate a grievance arising under this agreement, the arbitrator appointed according to the above grievance procedure shall proceed on an ex parte basis.
4. No reprisals of any kind shall be taken against any party in interest participating in the grievance procedure.
5. Any teacher for whom a grievance is sustained shall be reimbursed in accordance with the award of the arbitrator.
6. Should either party request a transcript of the proceedings at Step IV, then the party shall bear the full costs of the transcript. If each party requests a transcript, the cost of the two transcripts will be divided equally between the parties.
7. Each party shall bear the full cost of its representation at all steps of the grievance procedure.

MONEY COLLECTION

All money collected from any source must be recorded. This serves as a record of students' payments for fees, textbooks, yearbooks, rentals, uniforms, etc. Check with your school finance secretary for proper forms and procedures. No monies are to be kept in any teacher's desk or classroom overnight.

NEPOTISIM (EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES)

Charter School personnel may not appoint, employ, promote, or advance, or advocate for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement, in or to a position in the charter school in which the personnel are serving or over which the personnel exercises jurisdiction or control any individual who is a relative. An individual may not be appointed, employed, promoted, or advanced in or to a position in a charter school if such appointment, employment promotion, or advancement has been advocated by a relative of the individual or if such appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement is made by the governing board of which a relative of the individual is a member.

Definitions for Clarity "Charter school personnel: means a charter school owner, president, chairperson of the governing board of directors, superintendent, governing board member, principal, assistant principal, or any other person employed by the charter school who has equivalent decision making authority and in whom is vested the authority, or to whom the authority has been delegated, to appoint, employ, promote, or advance individuals or to recommend individuals for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement in connection with employment in a charter school, including the authority as a

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member of a governing body of a charter school to vote on the appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement of individuals.

“Relative” means, father, 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, half sister.

History: Florida Statute 1002.33 Charter Schools Established: June 21, 2010, LWCS Board of Trustees

NETWORK USE AND INTERNET ACCESS POLICY

Internet usage is a privilege granted to LWCS employees and students. The use of the network and the Internet must be in support of educational and professional activities that are consistent with the educational goals and policies of the LWCS. The user is responsible at all times for its proper use. Behavior that is inconsistent with these policies and guidelines may result in disciplinary and/or legal action.

GENERAL NETWORK USE

The network includes all computers and other peripheral devices on school district property that are interconnected to the local/wide area network. It is provided for users to conduct research, complete assignments, print assignments, use instructional programs, and use media center electronic catalog.

ELECTRONIC MAIL

Accounts shall be used to enhance communication for work-related duties. The use of e-mail accounts must be in support of education and/or research that is consistent with the educational goals and policies of the Lake Wales Charter Schools. The employee in whose name the account is issued is responsible at all times for its proper use. Behavior that is inconsistent with this policy may result in disciplinary action which may include possible termination or legal action.

LWCS Policies:

- Unauthorized use includes, but is not limited to:
- The creation and exchange of messages that is offensive, harassing, obscene, or threatening
- The exchange of privileged, confidential, or sensitive information outside of the organization or outside the defined privileged group.
- The creation and exchange of advertisements, solicitations, chain letters, and other unsolicited e-mail.
- The creation, storage, or exchange of information in violation of copyright laws
- Reading or sending messages from another user’s account, except under proper delegated arrangements.
- Altering or copying a message or attachment belonging to another user without the permission of the originator
- The installation and use of Hotbars application and similar third party email enhancements are prohibited.
- Stationary must be limited to what is currently available in Microsoft Outlook.
- Using email in ways that violates School Board policies or district procedures.
- Activities which cause congestion of the network or otherwise interfere with the work of others.
- Representing personal views as those of the Lake Wales Charter Schools.
- The principal/supervisor must be notified immediately of any unauthorized use of your account or any other breach of security. LWCS is not liable for any loss you may incur as a result of someone else using your password or account, either with or without your knowledge.
- Users must not compromise the privacy of their password by giving it to others or exposing it to public services. Passwords should be changed at least every 90 days.
- All communications may be subject to public disclosure under the Public Records Law.

INTERNET ACCESS

The Internet (“World Wide Web”) encompasses a multitude of libraries, databases and resources beyond the school district local/wide area network. It is provided for users to access educational resources to conduct research, complete assignments, use instructional programs and use media center on-line catalogs.

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GENERAL NETWORK AND INTERNET ACCESS POLICIES

Unauthorized use includes, but is not limited to:

- Violations of laws and regulations regarding: Copyrighted and trademark material, Threatening, obscene or profane material, Licensing agreements and Plagiarism.
- Vandalism, which is defined as malicious attempt to harm or destroy network resources, data of other user, the Internet or other networks. This includes the creation of, or uploading of, computer viruses on the Internet or host site.
- Use of the Internet or network for financial gain or illegal activity
- Use of another individual's network access including use of another individual's network username and password.
- Congestion of network by consuming large amounts of bandwidth, including but not limited to: Network/Internet games, Streaming video and audio Teleconferencing, Downloading very large files without prior approval of technology staff
- Hacking or any attempt to gain access to networks, Browsing networks to obtain IP addresses and other network information Accessing the networks without prior authorization, Use network resources or other resources with the intent of preventing or interfering with the transmission of voice, data, pictures, or anything that can be transmitted over the network. Trespass on other's work, files or folders, and attempt to, or take action to, access, modify, harm or destroy data of another user.
- Circumventing proxy servers, firewalls or other filtering software.
- Using unauthorized telephone services, including long distance calls.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

The Lake Wales Charter Schools (LWCS) respects the rights of employees to utilize social media, such as Face book, Twitter, or other electronic communications. However, activities in or outside of work that affect an employee's job performance, the performance of other employees, or activities that might affect the image and reputation of individual schools and/or LWCS are an area of interest for LWCS as an employer. LWCS takes these interests very seriously. Employees should be mindful of these interests, should not use social media when on duty, and should be mindful of these considerations when using such media on personal time. See the below Policy and Procedure detailed guidelines.

Definitions:

Blog: is an online type of journal or newsletter that is readily accessible to the general public on a website. Blogs are typically used by individuals to share personal thoughts, ideas, opinions, videos, pictures, etc.

Electronic Communications: is a system of world-wide electronic communication in which a user can compose a message on a computer, cell phone, or other electronic devices that allows the user to send a written message to one or more persons.

Profile: is an individual account posted on social media websites that may include personal information, viewpoints/opinions and/or communications with others.

Social Media: is a term that defines the various activities that integrate on-line technologies and practices that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives.

Social Networking: is the practice of expanding the number of one's business and/or social contacts by making connections through on-line technologies or electronic devices.

Policy:

1. Employees are expected to follow the guidelines outlined in this policy and provide a clear distinction between their views as individuals and their LWCS employment.
2. When using social media, employees should have no expectation of privacy and must apply good judgment for every activity related to LWCS.
3. If information is posted in the public domain, LWCS reserves the right to monitor compliance with this and other LWCS policies. Any public information employees create, transmit, download, exchange or discuss on any social media may be accessed at any time without prior notice.

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4. Social networking is not permitted while working at LWCS or on LWCS equipment, unless the employee's immediate supervisor has approved for employee's business-related use.
5. Employees are prohibited from listing their LWCS e-mail address unless the social networking site is used purely for business or professional purposes. If you list your work affiliation on a social network, then you should regard all communication on that network as you would in a professional network.
6. It is the right and duty of LWCS to protect itself, its students and employees from unauthorized disclosure of proprietary and/or confidential information and the discussion, commentary or other dissemination of potentially untrue, inflammatory, derogatory, defaming, and/or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate commentary concerning LWCS.
7. In public settings, employees must remain respectful of LWCS business operations, co-workers, students, etc. Anything obscene, vulgar, defamatory, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, abusive, hateful, or embarrassing to a fellow employee, student or business partner is prohibited.
8. In general, what employees do on their own time is their business. However, activities in or outside of work that affect an employee's job performance, the performance of others, or the image and reputation of LWCS are a proper focus for LWCS policy.
9. Employees who participate in social networking or electronic communications deemed not to be in the best interest of LWCS will be subject to corrective action up to and including termination.

Guidelines for Employees:

1. You are personally responsible for the content you publish on profiles, blogs, or any other form of user-generated social media or electronic communications.
2. Seek input from your immediate supervisor, Human Resources or Community Outreach department prior to publishing anything questionable or that you wouldn't say in person to avoid potential violation of this policy.
3. Be thoughtful and respectful about what you say or publish. When participating in social networking, you should always protect your privacy and the privacy of others.
4. Social media is not the appropriate place for addressing work-related concerns or business matters and accordingly you should refer these types of employment-related concerns to your immediate supervisor or Human Resources.
5. Use good judgment when participating in social networking activities. Do not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, reveal confidential or private information, defame or disparage LWCS students or co-workers or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the LWCS workplace.
6. If you list LWCS as your place of employment or publish content to any website outside of LWCS and it has something to do with work you do or information associated with LWCS, use a disclaimer such as this: "The information or postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of LWCS."
7. For your protection as well as LWCS do not post any privileged, confidential, copyrighted information or LWCS-issued documents.
8. Before you engage in any social networking or electronic communications, remember that you should have no expectation of privacy and when you compose a message, read it over before sending it and ask yourself if the content is appropriate based on the guidelines in this policy.

Social Networking Policy Developed: May 17, 2010 Board Approved: May 17, 2010

OPERATION OF LWCS VEHICLES

Some employees may operate LWCS owned or leased vehicles. These vehicles are to be used for LWCS business only. Safety belts must be worn at all times. Any employee who is assigned a LWCS vehicle and acquires excessive at-fault traffic citations is subject to disciplinary action and may have his/her driving privileges canceled. This could cause termination of employment.

PERSONAL MAIL AND TELEPHONE CALLS

Please have all personal mail delivered to your residence. While occasional personal telephone calls may be made during work hours, such calls should not interfere with performance of job responsibilities, emergencies excepted. Preferably, such calls should be made during planning time, break time, before and after the official workday, or during lunch. Employees should remember that the school's telephone system, including long distance telephone calls, and the various school telephone systems, is not to be used for personal long distance telephone calls, unless the calls are billed to a personal credit card or a personal telephone number. Please refrain from using personal cell phones during school hours unless it is an emergency or directly necessary for the flow of daily school operations, or during your planning period or lunch break.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK & BENEFIT INFORMATION

PERSONNEL RECORDS

Personnel/employment records are processed and maintained in the LWCS Human Resource Services Office. All personnel files are public records and as such are available for public inspection. If you would like to review your personnel file, please feel free to contact the Human Resource Services Department for an appointment.

The LWCS automatically exempts some confidential and sensitive personal information, such as medical records and social security numbers from your personnel file before public disclosure in accordance with the Public Records Law. An agency that is the custodian of the personal information specified shall maintain the exempt status of the personal information only if the officer, employee, justice, judge, or other person, or employing agency of the designated employee, submits a written request for maintenance of the exemption to the custodial agency. If you are a current LWCS employee who is either an active or former employee in one of the above categories, and/or you are the spouse or a child of an active or former employee, you may exercise your right of exemption from certain Public Records laws. If you elect to exempt your address and telephone number from all LWCS public lists, please fill out the Personnel File Request for Exemption

form and return it to your principal/Supervisor for submission to the Human Resource Services section of the LWCS Central Office. For more information about this written exemption or to see if you qualify, please refer to Florida Statute

119.071. If you qualify, you will need to complete in writing the Personnel File Request for Exemption Form; it is maintained on our website at <https://content.schoolinsites.com/api/documents/e7ad40ba1e9d477bbbe855e85f339a3b.pdf> or by contacting the Human Resources office of the LWCS Central Office at 863-679-6560.

The LWCS Human Resource office should be notified in writing of any changes in personal status such as change in name, address or marital status. Please notify the LWCS HR Department regarding any changes in beneficiary for life insurance purposes and/or changes in the number of dependents.

REASSIGNMENTS

In the event that the administration determines that an involuntary transfer to another school or hiring location must occur, the employee shall be notified of the decision in writing.

RESIGNATIONS

When an employee leaves a position, proper notice should be given. A letter of resignation indicating the date you plan to leave and the reasons should be submitted to your supervisor. Please give at least two weeks' notice to ensure you leave in good standing. It is important that you leave the district in good standing to protect your eligibility for rehiring. If you are absent from work without permission from your supervisor, this may be considered as your having resigned and could result in the forfeiting of all rights to reemployment. The Personnel Action Form should be signed and submitted with the letter of resignation and exit interview attached. For more information, contact the LWCS Human Resource Office. For further information regarding health, life and disability insurance upon resignation or retirement please see section IV.

The employee will need to contact his/her deferred compensation provider(s) to ensure timely processing of distributions or payout options, as well as to arrange for tax deferment of any pending annual and/or sick leave payments, if desired. If you are transferring to the Polk County School Board, include the date of transfer in the letter of resignation. The LWCS Payroll department and/or the Human Resource office can be contacted to answer questions regarding last payday and benefit continuation.

It is the responsibility of the employee to return all charter/school board property, (i.e., cell phones, laptop, computer, printers, credit cards, school/office keys, ID badges, etc.) which may have been issued to you. Failure to comply could result in legal action. It is also important for you to contact the credit union or any other banking or financial institution about the settlement of any savings and/or loan accounts you have established through payroll deduction.

STAFF/STUDENT RELATIONS

Staff members shall maintain professional relationships with students at all times and develop wholesome and constructive relationships with them. Staff members shall be expected to regard each student as an individual and to accord each student the rights and respect that is due him or her.

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Staff members shall promote a learning environment that encourages fulfillment of each student's potential in regard to his/her program, consistent with LWCS goals and with optimal opportunities for students. This goal may be reached by adapting instruction to individual needs, by:

1. Insisting on reasonable standards of scholastic accomplishment for all students.
2. Creating a positive atmosphere in and out of the classroom.
3. Extending the same courtesy and respect that is expected of students; and
4. Treating all students with consistent fairness.

Staff members shall use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the school setting and shall avoid excessive informal and social involvement with individual students. Any appearance of impropriety shall be avoided. Inappropriate relationships between employees and students shall be prohibited and will be grounds for immediate dismissal.

SUSPENSIONS/DISMISSALS

Under certain conditions, a supervisor may recommend to the Superintendent the suspension or dismissal of an employee. The grounds for immediate suspension or dismissal have been outlined throughout this employee handbook.

TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Tobacco use is prohibited in all LWCS buildings. Smoking and tobacco use is permitted in outdoor designated smoking areas only. Employees at each school site will be responsible for providing the designated smoking and tobacco use areas at no expense to the LWCS. Compliance is expected and required. Violations of this policy will result in appropriate action being taken, the same as a violation of any other LWCS policy.

Tobacco use is defined as the carrying or smoking of any kind of lighted pipe, cigar, cigarette or any other smoking equipment or material or the chewing or sniffing of a tobacco product.

TEMPORARY DUTY LEAVE

Temporary duty leave is authorized for all Employees who are assigned by the Principal and/or Superintendent to be on duty at such a place or places removed from their regular place of duty. The Principal and/or Superintendent are authorized under these policies to reassign Employees to temporary duty as deemed necessary and to execute payment for reimbursement of expenses. Temporary duty requests should be submitted to the Principal and/or Superintendent at least 4 weeks prior to the date of the leave in order to have prior approval. With proper prior approval from an employee's supervisor, overnight stays are permitted for out of county travel (including Tampa and Orlando) and will be reimbursed according to policy.

TRANSFERS

Employees may request transfers based on advertised vacancies. Employees who wish to transfer to a different work site during the school session shall submit a transfer request to principal for the specific vacancy being advertised. For a list of vacancies you can check the LWCS website at www.lwcharterschools.com or call LWCS Central Office Human Resources.

USE OF LWCS PROPERTY

The LWCS provides you with necessary equipment, and materials to carry out the job assigned to you. If you are assigned any equipment, it becomes your responsibility to exercise care in its operation. Personal use of materials, supplies, tools, or other equipment is not permitted. Violation could result in disciplinary action up to dismissal, criminal prosecution, or both.

VACANCIES/PROMOTION PROCEDURES

The LWCS maintains a website to provide employees with knowledge of all vacancies. Information is updated on a daily basis. The vacancy notice remains on the LWCS website for a minimum of five (5) days. An employee seeking a new or vacant position within the LWCS is encouraged to access the website on a consistent basis. Current employees are given priority consideration for all promotion opportunities and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, marital status, age, religion, or any other basis prohibited by law.

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VOLUNTEERS

The Lake Wales Charter Schools encourages the use of community volunteers to accomplish our goals. Staff members must provide adequate supervision, space and materials for volunteers. Volunteers must complete the application online and be approved before serving. The LWCS will pay for volunteers who are parents and/or legal guardians of students within their school families. Volunteers are required to sign in at their site of service, wear appropriate identification while on site, and be a positive role model in manner, dress and appearance. No sagging pants, short shorts, mini-skirts, or revealing clothing.

When working with students, **volunteers may NOT:**

- Handle confidential information about students.
- Be placed in charge of a classroom of students in the absence of a teacher.
- Discipline students.
- Give medication to students.

Volunteer privileges can be revoked if LWCS policies are violated. Any concerns should be reported to your immediate supervisor or to the Human Resources office at (863) 679-6560.

WEAPONS/FIREARMS

It is the expressed policy of the LWCS that no weapons/firearms shall be taken upon school property by anyone other than law enforcement personnel and certified guardians. All persons, including school personnel, violating the provisions of this policy, while on LWCS property or while attending school activities, wherever located, shall be immediately reported to the proper law enforcement authority. Employees violating the above provisions shall also be reported to the Superintendent of LWCS and to the Professional Practice Commission. The Superintendent shall report any employee violation of the provisions hereof to the LWCS Board of Trustees and shall also include a recommendation for disciplinary action, which may include suspension or dismissal. Authorized school programs requiring the usage of firearms shall be exceptions.

Wellness Policy

Was developed and revised in accordance with the Child Nutrition and WIC Authorization Act, Public law 108.265 Section 204 and adopted by Lake Wales Charter Schools Board of Trustees in 2014.

Lake Wales Charter Schools continue to seek and implement strategies for improvement of health, nutrition, and physical activity within the school environment for students and staff.

WORK HOURS

Because of the diversity of the school system, an employee's work hours will be determined by the principal/supervisor. Be sure to discuss this with your principal/supervisor before you begin work.

Section IV

Insurance & Benefits

Employee Assistance Program
Insurance Benefits & Policies
Injury & Illness in the Line of Duty
Leaves of Absence (Types of)
Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
Sick/Personal Leave
Sick Leave Gifting Policy
Unpaid Leave & Employee Benefits
Bereavement
Vacation
Workers' Compensation
Retirement & DROP Program

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EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Lake Wales Charter Schools is committed to helping its employees maintain an optimum quality of life. Our insurance carrier, United Health Care provides two comprehensive services called Care24 and/or Member Assistance Program (MAP) that give employees access to a wide range of resources that go far beyond the ordinary telephonic health information line. The toll-free number (Care24 1-888-887-4114 or MAP 1-877-660-3806) puts you in touch with nurses, counselors, financial consultants, and attorneys, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These services can lead to higher employee productivity, lower absenteeism, reduced health care expenses, and improved morale.

INSURANCE BENEFITS AND POLICIES

ACCIDENTAL DEATH AND DISMEMBERMENT INSURANCE

Accidental death and dismemberment insurance is available for all employees of LWCS through their life insurance which is provided by LWCS. Upon termination or retirement, you have 31 days from the date of your termination of employment with the LWCS to convert to an individual policy. For more information contact the LWCS Human Resource office at (863) 679-6560 for the appropriate conversion form.

DISABILITY INSURANCE

LWCS employees may purchase a short-term disability policy. This policy cannot be converted into an individual policy. Coverage ends the day you stop active work.

LWCS provides long-term disability insurance for all LWCS employees at no cost to them. This disability policy cannot be converted into an individual policy once employment ends. Coverage ends the day you stop active work with the LWCS.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Health Insurance is provided to all LWCS employees. The coverage will include medical, prescriptions, dental, and long-term disability. You may purchase coverage, with the exception of long-term care insurance, for your spouse and child(ren). The insurance carriers are United Health Care Insurance for medical and Mutual of Omaha for dental, vision and disability. If you have any questions about your health insurance coverage, please contact the LWCS Central Office at (863) 679-6560. If you have enrolled in the LWCS health and dental insurance plan, your coverage will continue until the end of the month in which you terminate employment. According to federal law (COBRA), you have the option to extend continuous coverage for as long as 18 months at your own expense and without a Lake Wales Charter Schools contribution.

FLEXIBLE REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNTS

Flexible reimbursement accounts are available to all LWCS employees. If you participate in the Dependent Care or Medical Flexible Spending Accounts, you have three (3) options when you terminate your employment with the LWCS;

(1) deduct the remaining contributions from your last paycheck and continue participation until the end of the month in which you terminate employment; (2) deduct your regular monthly contribution from your last paycheck and continue participation until the date on which you terminate employment; or, (3) continue participation until the end of the Plan Year as a COBRA participant. If you choose option 3, you will be responsible for paying your current election, your current account administrative fee, and the COBRA administrative fee of two percent on a monthly basis. This monthly payment will be due on or before the first of each month through the end of the current Plan Year. Please contact the LWCS Human Resource office at (863) 679-6560 for more information about each of these options.

LIFE INSURANCE

LWCS furnishes each employee with \$20,000 of life insurance at no cost to them. You have 31 days from the date of your termination of employment with the LWCS to convert your life insurance coverage to an individual policy. A medical examination is not required. The life insurance carrier determines the cost of your converted policy. If you wish to convert your life insurance, please contact the LWCS Human Resource Office at (863) 679-6560 for the appropriate conversion form.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK & BENEFIT INFORMATION

SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS

LWCS offers supplemental benefits (accident and critical illness) that you may wish to purchase during open enrollment. For additional information, please contact Human Resources office at 863-679-6560.

INJURY AND ILLNESS IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Leave for Injury/Illness in the Line of Duty is granted for up to 10 days per year when an employee (eligible for benefits) is absent because of personal injury that occurred while working or because of illness from a contagious or infectious disease contracted while working. Contagious or infectious disease refers to those normally related to children, such as measles, chicken pox, mumps, etc.

In order to be eligible for this protection, the injury must be reported to the Workers' Compensation carrier. Treatment must be provided by an approved Workers' Compensation doctor. Whenever possible, doctor appointments are expected to be coordinated between the employee, Workers' Compensation Carrier and the doctor's office to be the least disruptive to the normal working day.

The Illness/Injury in the Line of Duty form should be filed within 24 hours or as soon thereafter as possible. The employee must provide documentation from the Workers' Compensation doctor in order for time to be approved.

Post Accident/injury must be followed up with a drug/alcohol screening within a 24 hour period.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE – Types of:

Unless otherwise specified by law, leave is granted at the discretion of the LWCS. Policies about leave are designed to protect school operation from unnecessary interruption due to absences. When employees apply for leave, they must complete the appropriate form and include the reason for requesting the leave in writing. The Principal or Superintendent of LWCS may cancel the leave if it is used for a different purpose or cause.

Leave must be preapproved, at least 48 hours, in advance. However, emergencies that cannot be anticipated are considered "granted" in advance if they are promptly reported. Except for military leave, leave cannot be granted beyond July 1 of the next fiscal year. However, a new application may be filed at the expiration of leave, with new leave granted at the discretion of the Principal and/or Superintendent of LWCS. The person on leave is responsible for requesting a renewal; it is not automatic. If a renewal is not requested, employment will be terminated.

Effective August 11, 2008 in order to be compensated for a contractual paid holiday an employee on leave must be in full pay status or have enough accrued time (sick/personal/vacation) or gifted time available to cover the day before and after said holiday to receive payment for that holiday

Types of Leave

- Professional
- Illness-in-the-Line-of-Duty
- Military
- Temporary Duty
- Jury Duty
- Personal Without Pay
- Maternity
- Personal with Pay Extended Illness
- Family Medical Leave
- Extended Sick with Pay, Thirty days or more (If sick leave is available)
- Vacation

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)

Basic Leave Entitlement:

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that allows employees who have been employed by a covered employer for at least 12 months and have worked for at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding

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the commencement of leave, to take up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave, for one or more of the following reasons ("FMLA-qualifying events"):

- (1) For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- (2) To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- (3) To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- (4) For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

Definition of Serious Health Condition

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

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirements may be met by a period of incapacity of more than three (3) consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

Benefits and Protections

During FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's group health insurance coverage under any "group health plan on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Eligibility Requirements

Employees are eligible for FMLA if they have worked for the LWCS for at least one year, for at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months and if at least 50 employees are employed by said employer within 75 miles. The LWCS will utilize a rolling year in determining the start of the FMLA leave entitlement period. This means that if you are approved for 12 weeks of FMLA leave in March, you will not be entitled to another twelve weeks of FMLA leave until December 1st the following year.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees must meet with the Human Resources Office. Employee must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures.

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

An employee needing leave for an FMLA-qualifying event must submit medical documentation and a written request to his/her school principal/secretary, stating the date the leave will commence; the anticipated return to work date; and whether the employee intends to use accrued paid leave to cover all or part of the FMLA leave of absence, and comply with all other requirements contained herein.

Effective August 11, 2008 in order to be compensated for a contractual paid holiday an employee on leave must have enough accrued time (sick/personal/vacation) or gifted time available to cover the day before and after said holiday to receive payment for that holiday.

Use of Leave

An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment

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so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave

LWCS employees are required to use any accrued paid leave first, while taking FMLA leave. The FMLA paid leave must be requested using the same procedure as required by the agency when requesting paid sick or vacation leave, and will count towards satisfying the completion of the twelve weeks of FMLA leave allowed by the agency. If you go on official unpaid leave, for as long as you are on leave, to the extent permitted by law, you will be responsible for payroll deductions that you would have paid if you were still on active status. If you fail to pay your bill, the LWCS Human Resource Office may cancel the coverage.

Military Family Leave Entitlements

Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

SICK/PERSONAL LEAVE

All LWCS employees will be allowed to use six (6) days (maximum of 48hours) of their accrued sick days for "personal" use during the fiscal year. The remaining sick days earned will be designated for "sick" use only. At the close of business each school year (June 30th) all remaining days will be designated as sick only. There will be no carryover of unused "personal" sick days into the next fiscal year. Employees must advise the principal/administrator of the need to take leave and complete a sick/personal leave form. Instructional personnel must use the SmartFind Express System to make arrangements for a substitute.

LWCS employees will earn sick leave at a rate of 8 hours per month, based on the monthly provision of their annual contract in accordance to the schedule listed below:

Contractual Service Hours Earned Monthly		Total Days Earned Yearly
10-month employees	8	10
11-month employees	8	11
12-month employees	8	12

For extended sick leave a school administrator or the employee's immediate supervisor may request documentation from the employee's physician that the employee is fit to return to work. After three (3) workdays or partial workdays of absence in any 30-calendar day period, the principal/administrator may require a medical certification before any further approval of sick leave will be granted. Medical certification is required after ten (10) consecutive days of absence in any 30-day period. Medical certification must indicate that the employee is unable to perform regularly assigned duties if further sick leave is to be authorization and may be required for each additional 30 consecutive days of absence.

Sick leave earned will be credited to the employee's leave balance at the close of business on the last day of the pay period of each semi-monthly payroll ending date, and is not available for use, nor can it be taken prior to being earned or posted, or in the case of separation, the last day that the employee is on the payroll. There is no limit to the number of sick leave hours an employee may accrue. Sick leave credits are earned on a pro-rated basis for employees who work less than a full pay period due to initial employment, separation, or leave of absence without pay. If an employee terminates prior to the posting date of the semi-monthly sick leave accrual hours, the hours earned for the pay period will be pro-rated and will be added to the employee's leave balance on the last day of the pay period that the employee is in pay status.

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Personal leave must be approved by the Principal or Superintendent or his/her designee and should be planned so that normal operation of the school or department is not affected.

The following require prior approval of at least 48 hours from the principal/administrator:

1. Leave prior to or immediately following a holiday
2. Summer school leave
3. Partial day
4. Leave without pay

Effective August 11, 2008 in order to be compensated for a contractual paid holiday an employee on leave must be in full pay status or have enough accrued time (sick/personal/vacation) or gifted time available to cover the day before and after said holiday to receive payment for that holiday.

The following do not require use of sick/personal leave days:

1. Military Duty
 - a. Up to 240 working hours leave with pay
2. Jury Duty (Not related to personal litigation) leave with pay
3. Illness/injury in the line of duty
 - a. Up to 10 days leave with pay
4. Leave of absence without pay for the following:
 - a. Family/Medical Leave
 - b. Maternity/Parental Leave
 - c. Extended Personal Leave
 - d. Extended Military Duty Leave (beyond 17 paid days)

An employee on leave from the School Board of Polk County who has accumulated sick leave with the School Board may have access to that leave under the following "long term illness" provisions:

- The employee has a "long term illness" that will require him/her to be absent from work for more than 10 workdays.
- The employee has exhausted his/her sick/personal days accrued with LWCS. The employee completes a form requesting use of the School Board sick leave days.
- Definition of "long term illness":
 - Personal illness (including pregnancy)
 - Illness or death of father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, child, other close relative or member of own household

Payment of Unused Sick Leave Upon Separation

While there is no cap on the number of days an employee can accrue, an employee will only be paid out for up to 30 days (240 hours) sick leave up to a maximum of 50% of their current daily rate of pay. Employees must have completed at least 12 months of continuous creditable service with the Lake Wales Charter Schools to be eligible to receive payment of unused sick leave upon separation/termination from the LWCS, and will be paid according to the schedule listed below. If your employment is terminated prior to the end of the month, your sick leave balance will be pro-rated to the amount of leave you would have actually earned during the month. Calculations will be made as follows:

1. First thru Third Years of Service – 35% the daily rate of pay at termination times the number of days of unused sick days accumulated.
2. Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Years of Service – 40% of the daily rate of pay at termination times the number of unused sick days accumulated.
3. Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Years of Service – 45% the daily rate of pay at termination times the number of unused sick days accumulated.
4. Ten Years or more of Service – 50% the daily rate of pay at termination times the number of unused sick days accumulated.

Board Approved Policy June 21, 2021

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SICK LEAVE GIFTING POLICY

Lake Wales Charter Schools employees may, in the case of an emergency, irrevocably gift a portion of their accumulated sick leave days to other LWCS employees. The employee making the donation is responsible for filling out the “gifting” form found on the LWCS website at <http://lwcharterschools.com/files/2014/05/SICK-LEAVE-Request-To-Donate-Form.pdf> and forwarding it to the LWCS Central Office Payroll Department. This form will denote the number of days the employee is “gifting” and the name and location of the receiving employee. This information is kept in-house and through the payroll system at the LWCS Central Office. The employee who is donating the sick days must have remaining in their sick leave account a total of 80 hours after the donation takes place.

Sick Leave Transfer/Donation Plan

Participating employees of the LWCS may voluntarily donate sick leave credits to an eligible employee of the agency by utilizing the sick leave transfer/donation form.

- A. In order to participate in the sick leave transfer plan, the donating employee must:
 - 1. Have a personal sick leave balance of at least 80 hours after the sick leave is donated.
 - 2. Be a full-time employee with benefits of the LWCS.
 - 3. Donate a minimum of eight (8) hours at any one time.
 - 4. Donate a maximum of 40 hours in a school year.
 - 4. Executed transfers non-rescindable by the donor.
- B. For an employee to be eligible to receive and use sick leave credits transferred under the sick leave transfer plan, the receiving employee must meet the following conditions:
 - 1. Must have utilized all sick leave, compensatory leave, and annual leave. Personal illness shall include disability caused or contributed by pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, childbirth, and recovery there from.
 - 2. Employee, spouse, son, daughter, or parent must have suffered a documented personal illness, death, accident, or injury which requires a period of incapacity or treatment in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; requiring absence for a minimum of five consecutive workdays. This means sick leave credits shall be used for absences no sooner than the sixth missed day (41st hour).
 - 3. Must not be eligible for or receiving disability leave with pay.
- C. Sick leave credits shall not be transferred from an employee’s individual sick leave balance at the time of his or her retirement or termination from the LWCS.
- D. Hours may only be transferred on an “as-needed” basis to bring the employee up to the normal rate of pay for the pay period. In no case may an employee “bank” donated hours.
- E. An eligible employee may receive a maximum of 480 hours of donated sick leave in a consecutive 12 month period.

The LWCS must receive a properly completed Request to Donate/Use form prior to the end of the bi-monthly payroll period during which the donated leave credits are to be applied. The plan covers only the personal illness/injury of an employee and does not extend to the family members. Donated sick leave credits are not subject to payment upon separation.

Board Approved Policy October 25, 2021

UNPAID LEAVE AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

If you go on official unpaid leave, you are entitled to any and all of your benefits. However, for as long as you are on unpaid leave, to the extent permitted by law, the LWCS does not contribute to your health or life insurance coverage’s. You will be responsible for payroll deductions that you would have paid if you were still on active status, plus the amount the LWCS would have contributed. If you fail to pay your bill, the LWCS Human Resource Office may cancel the coverage. Employees on leave are entitled to the same annual enrollment that active employees have.

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For additional information on Leave of Absence requirement and procedures, please contact the LWCS Central Office Payroll department.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Lake Wales Charter Schools (LWCS) may be granted up to two (2) additional paid days of bereavement leave for the death of an immediate family member defined as father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, child, or member of the employee's household. Bereavement leave is also available for the following extended family members: grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law or sister-in-law.

Bereavement leave is not transferable or accruable and must be used within thirty (30) calendar days of the death. Application shall be made to the immediate supervisor in advance whenever possible. The employee will not be paid Bereavement Leave during non-scheduled workdays. Employees must provide a copy of the obituary, funeral notice, or other satisfactory documentation attached to the Employee Application for Leave Form. Details about the family member's relationship may be required.

Board Approved Policy June 21,2021

VACATION

Vacation leave is granted to all twelve-month employees for periods of rest, relaxation, vacation, and for conducting personal business. Prior to taking vacation leave, the employee must have requested the leave (48 hours) in advance and must have the leave approved by the principal or the administrator of the school. Vacation leave may be denied if the employee's absence would adversely affect the work unit. Vacation leave may be taken only in increments of fifteen (15) minutes or more, rounded to the nearest quarter hour.

Full-time (12 month) LWCS employees earn vacation leave as follows:

Creditable Service	Hours Earned Monthly	Total Days Earned Yearly
Up to 5 years (0 through 59 months)	9	13 ½
5 to 10 years (60 through 119 months)	11	16 ½
Over 10 years (120 months or more)	13	19 ½

The number of years credited for vacation must have been spent in LWCS. Only years when the employee was on a 10-month basis or longer will be used. Any service break of more than three days without leave will break continuity, and the employee must start at zero years if re-employed. The exception to this policy is those employees who began with the charter system in 2003-2004 by transferring over from the PCSB. Those individuals accrue vacation at the same rate as when they were employed with the PCSB, based on their number of years with the PCSB.

LWCS employees may not carry more than over 400 hours (50 days) of vacation leave balances into the next contract year. However, at the close of business on June 30 of each fiscal year, all employees with a vacation balance in excess of 400 hours will be allowed to transfer hours above 400 into the employee's sick leave balance. The effective date of this change was approved by the board of trustees on 11/17/2014.

Vacation time must be approved by the Principal or Superintendent or his/her designee and should be planned so that normal operation of the school or department is not affected.

Payment of Vacation Leave upon Separation

Payment for vacation shall be at the employee's current daily rate of pay. The number of sick and vacation days an individual has accrued is listed on each paycheck stub and is converted into hours according to the number of hours worked per day.

Employees must have completed at least 12 months of continuous creditable service with the LWCS to be eligible to receive payment of unused vacation leave upon separation/termination from the LWCS, and can be paid up to a maximum of 400 hours. Accumulated vacation days will be paid at 100% at the employee's regular hourly rate of pay at the time of separation.

Payment for unused vacation leave shall be made to the employee at the time of termination of employment, transfer out of a vacation-earning position, entering the Florida Retirement System DROP Program, or to the employee's beneficiary or estate at the employee's death, or as otherwise provided by law. Board Approved Policy June 21,2021

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WORKERS' COMPENSATION

If you are injured on the job, you are protected by the Florida Workers' Compensation Law. If you are hurt on the job, regardless of how slight an injury, report it to your supervisor or principal. You may think the injury insignificant at the time, but it could develop into something that requires medical care, and a report should be on file for you to receive treatment.

This benefit is provided by state statute, and there are rules and procedures both you, as the employee, and your employer must follow. Further, there are stiff penalties for fraud.

The LWCS provides safety equipment that must be used when engaging in certain activities. Be sure to use this protection because you could be penalized if you are injured while not doing so. A good example is a car seat belt. Using it not only protects you against injury but protects your rights under Workers' Compensation and your ability to recover from the responsible party.

Should you be involved in an accident while under LWCS employment a drug test may will be conducted this includes any and all job injuries.

RETIREMENT

Social Security contributions are automatically deducted from your salary and matched by the LWCS on your behalf. Effective July 1, 2011, the FRS changes from a noncontributory system to a contributory system and requires each active member of the Florida Retirement System (FRS) to contribute 3 percent of pre-tax gross salary to fund retirement benefits for all FRS members, and eliminates the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for service earned on or after July 1, 2011. DROP participants are not required to pay employee contributions.

There are two plans available under the Florida Retirement System ~ the Defined Benefit (Pension) Plan and the Defined Contribution (Investment) Plan.

1. The Defined Benefit (Pension) Plan

Under the Defined Benefit (Pension) Plan, employees initially enrolled in the FRS Plan prior to July 1, 2011, the following guidelines apply:

- Employees are vested after completing six (6) years of creditable service, or 30 years of service regardless of age.
- If you have at least six years of creditable service, but have not reached your normal retirement age as described above, you can take early retirement.
- The amount of your benefit is reduced 5% for each year you are under age 62.
- Normal retirement is 62 years of age and completion of six (6) years of creditable service, or the completion of 30 years of creditable service at any age.
- The definition of "average final compensation" continues to be the average of the 5 highest fiscal years of compensation for creditable service prior to retirement, for the purpose of calculating retirement benefits.

For employees initially enrolled on or after July 1, 2011, the following changes apply: Normal retirement age increases from 62 to 65 years of age.

The years of creditable service increase from 30 to 33 years.

The definition of "average final compensation" means the average of the 8 highest fiscal years of compensation for creditable service prior to retirement, for the purposes of calculating retirement benefits.

2. The Defined Contribution (Investment) Plan

Under the Defined Contribution (Investment) Plan, employees initially enrolled prior to July 1, 2011, are vested after completing one (1) year of creditable service. This benefit is based on return of investments or progress. It is more portable and is better for employees who are short term.

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If you are preparing to retire, certain steps should be taken to ensure that there will be no loss of benefits to you. The following is a description of steps you may wish to follow:

DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PROGRAM (DROP)

The Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) is a program which became effective July 1, 1998, and allows employees to retire and begin accumulating retirement benefits while delaying terminating employment for up to 60 months from the date you first reach normal retirement (age 62 or 30 years of service), for those who initially enrolled prior to July 1, 2011; 65 years of age; or 33 years of creditable service for employees initially enrolled on or after July 1, 2011. While participating in DROP, your monthly retirement benefits remain in the FRS Trust Fund, earning tax-deferred interest, while you continue to work (but you do not earn additional service credit for retirement). When the DROP period ends you must terminate all employment with FRS employers. At the discretion of the school principal, teachers who finish their 5-year DROP may return annually for up to 3-years at first year teacher pay. At that time, you will receive payment of the accumulated DROP benefits and begin receiving your monthly retirement benefit (in the same amount as determined at retirement, plus annual cost-of-living increases). At the discretion of the school principal, teachers who finish their 5-year DROP may return annually for up to 3-years at first year teacher pay.

For employees currently in DROP or entering before July 1, 2011, the interest rate on your accrued DROP benefits remains at 6.5%. Employees entering DROP on or after July 1, 2011, will earn a reduced accrual interest rate of 1.3% on their Drop account benefits. The 3% guaranteed annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for retirement service earned on or after July 1, 2011 is eliminated.

If you are preparing to retire, contact the Human Resources Department at 863-679-6550.

Section V

Payroll Services

Additional Work
Direct Deposit
Payment Schedule
Payroll Deductions

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ADDITIONAL WORK

Will I be paid for additional work and overtime?

All hours worked by non-exempt employees will be paid, as required by law. However, a non-exempt employee must have prior approval from his/her supervisor to work overtime or face disciplinary action. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay.

Examples of Non-Exempt Positions

Secretaries
Paraprofessionals
Custodians
Clerical Staff
Bus Drivers

Examples of Exempt Positions

Principals
Assistant Principals
Teachers
Guidance Counselors

If you are Non-Exempt, you must have prior approval of your immediate supervisor/ principal before you actually work outside of your normal planned working time.

If the additional work is outside of the realm of your regular job, and you have received proper approvals in advance, you will be compensated for the work at the rate of pay associated with the job you are performing. In this instance, it makes no difference whether you are classified as Overtime Exempt or Non-Exempt; you will be compensated. As an example, a teacher, who by FLSA standards is exempt, may work at night teaching at the Adult School and be compensated at a set hourly rate different from her normal hourly rate assigned to her daytime job, but no overtime will be involved. The Adult School will be additional straight time only.

How will I be paid for my additional work?

An employee's normal daily working hours on scheduled workdays is referred to as Planned Working Time. Employees who fall under the Overtime Non-Exempt category (employees who are covered by Wage and Hour Law) will be compensated for time worked outside of their planned working time. Hours worked at the employee's regular job and outside of Planned Working Time will be paid as Additional Time at the employee's regular hourly rate of pay. Hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week, will be paid as Overtime 1.5, at one and one-half the employee's regular hourly rate of pay. (The work week begins Sunday at 12:00AM (midnight) and ends Saturday at 11:59 PM.) For example, a secretary works 42 hours and is scheduled to work 37.5 hours. She will receive hourly rate of pay up to 40 hours and 2.0 hours (Overtime 1.5) at one and one-half her hourly rate.

Hours worked at a job that is not related to the employee's regular job will be compensated at a special hourly rate of pay as decided upon in advance. Another example would be when an employee attends a required in-service training class outside of normal hours. The extra pay on the paycheck will be shown under the category of "Special Activity".

DIRECT DEPOSIT

Electronic direct deposit is strongly advised for all salaried and wage employees who are employed or reemployed on or after July 1, 2006. Electronic direct deposit assures that an employee's pay is in their checking or savings account on payday even if they are sick or on vacation.

Direct Deposit Authorization forms must be completed at the time of hire to have their semi-monthly pay directed to a checking or savings account of their choice. Direct Deposit Authorization forms are included in the new employee packet, available at the LWCS Payroll office, and on the LWCS Website under <https://content.schoolinsites.com/api/documents/58177ef9c8564e59a0acd7836ccda0fd.pdf>. It is the employee's responsibility

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to notify the Payroll office if the individual's bank account changes. This is accomplished through the Direct Deposit Authorization Form.

Please note that to ensure accuracy of the employee's depository account information, the first pay after submission of a Direct Deposit Authorization Form will be a physical payroll check. After the pre-note cycle all future pay will be electronically deposited with employees receiving a pay advice on payday that details pay information.

LWCS is not responsible for service fees assessed by a bank when employees make transactions on their account prior to direct deposit funds being credited to their account. A replacement payroll check for any reason may be subject to a processing fee.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Checks will be distributed on the 15th and the last working day of each month. If the 15th or end of the month falls on a holiday, checks will be distributed on the last working day before the 15th or the end of the month. If you begin work on or before the 15th of the month, and you have submitted your completed employment paperwork, you will receive your first check on the last business day of the month. If you begin work after the 15th of the month, you will receive your first check on the 15th of the next month.

Timely payment depends on proper paperwork being completed in time to meet payroll cut-off.

PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Deductions can be taken from employees' paychecks to cover items such as health and life benefits, supplemental insurance coverage provided by outside carriers, charitable contributions such as the United Way, LWCS Foundation, and court ordered garnishments, and Tax Sheltered Annuities. Board sponsored health and life coverage will be provided to employees upon employment and again each year during the open enrollment process. Other deductions are arranged between the employee and the company providing the insurance coverage or services. A standard authorization card should be given to the payroll secretary at the school indicating the amount of the monthly deduction with the employees' signature evidencing authorization of the deduction. When deductions start is subject to the payroll deadline each payroll period. For questions regarding payroll deductions please contact the Central Office payroll department.

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Section VI

Employee Policies & Procedures for Students

Bullying
Child Abuse Reporting
Code of Student Conduct
Compulsory School Attendance
Critical Issues
Ethics in Education Act
Home Education
Psychotropic Medication Administration
Student Threats of Harm to Others
Youth Suicide
Indicators of Child Abuse & Neglect

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BULLYING

The Lake Wales Charter Schools are committed to creating a healthy and safe learning environment for all students that is free from bullying and harassment. All employees are expected to model and support a school culture that promotes positive interactions and respect for others. Bullying is more specifically addressed in the Code of Student Conduct, Section 6.07

Bullying:

- Is aggressive behavior or intentional harm-doing.
- Can be physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual.
- Is carried out repeatedly over time.
- Occurs within an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power.

Staff members who witness or become aware of bullying will immediately intervene in the following manner:

- Establish the safety of the victim of bullying.
- Report to administration.

CHILD ABUSE

When child abuse and/or neglect are suspected by school personnel, the law requires the following:

The suspected child abuse and/or neglect will be reported immediately to the Florida Abuse Registry, 1-800-962- 2873. Child Abuse Indicator information can be found at the end of this section.

Return the "Notice of Referral to Child Abuse" anonymously to your school administrator immediately after calling the Child Abuse Registry at 1-800-962-2873. The form is attached at the end of this section and also located on the LWCS website under staff/forms.

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

The LWCS follow the Polk County School Board's Code of Student Conduct. The Code of Student Conduct was developed to inform students and parents of acceptable student behavior and the disciplinary alternatives for modifying unacceptable behavior. The document is updated on an annual basis and outlines the rights and responsibilities of the schools and the students with regard to the conduct of students while attending school or a school sponsored activity, while on school property or a school bus, or at a designated school bus stop. Discipline and appeal procedures, as well as consequences for violations, are included in the Code of Student Conduct.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Florida statute requires all students, ages 6-16, to attend school. Students are considered truant if they have 5 unexcused absences within a 30-day calendar period or 10 unexcused absences within a 90 day calendar period. Truancy should be reported to the principal of your school.

CRITICAL ISSUES

The Lake Wales Charter Schools recognizes that questions concerning various critical issues may be raised by a student in or out of the classroom. It is important that personal values and opinions not be shared with students. The primary goal is to teach students traditional values such as respect, trust, honesty and kindness. Students need to understand and decide what is healthy behavior for one's mind, body and soul. Abstinence is advocated by the Florida Legislature as the expected standard for all school-aged children and youth (Division of Statutory Revision, 1996). The Lake Wales Charter Schools supports this recommendation and the Health Curriculum used by the LWCS is abstinence based in its philosophy and orientation. Students should always be encouraged to discuss critical issues with their parents or guardians, especially in the areas of personal/family values and morals.

ETHICS IN EDUCATION ACT

Senate Bill 1712 titled "Ethics in Education Act" was created and signed by Florida Governor Crist on July 1, 2008. Florida Statutes, Section 112.2173 is amended to allow the forfeiture of retirement benefits for the conviction of a felony as

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defined in Section 800.04 of the Florida Statutes (lewd and lascivious offenses committed upon or in the presence of persons under 16), or Chapter 794 of the Florida Statutes (unlawful sexual activity with certain minors.)

Any LWCS employee found to be guilty of such crimes will be terminated immediately and the proper procedures for forfeiture of teaching credentials will be initiated by the LWCS Superintendent with the Florida Department of Education. Any staff member or administrator who is aware of such actions by another LWCS employee and does not inform his or her immediate supervisor/principal or the Superintendent will be immediately terminated.

HOME EDUCATION

Parents are allowed, by Florida Law, to educate their children at home. Information and procedures for home education are located on the Polk County School Board Student Services website at www.Polk-fl.net/studentservices/Homed3-05.pdf.

PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION ADMINISTRATORS

In 2005 The Florida Legislature passed Senate (SB) 1090 creating Section 1006.0625, Florida Statutes (F.S.), and Administration of Psychotropic Medications. Beginning July 1, 2005, this legislation prohibits public schools from denying any student access to programs or services because the parent has refused to place the student on psychotropic medication. Further, any medical decision made to address a student's needs is a matter among the student, the student's parents, and a competent health care professional chosen by the parent.

School teachers and district personnel may share school-based observations of a student's academic, functional, and behavioral performances with the student's parents and offer program options and other assistance based on these observations. School teachers and district personnel may not compel or attempt to compel any specific action by the parent or require a student to take medication.

The US Congress added an amendment to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 that prohibits state and local educational agency personnel from requiring a student to obtain a prescription for a substance covered by the Controlled Substance Act as a condition of attending school, receiving an education, or receiving services.

Florida Statute Section 1006.0625 indicates the parent's right to refuse psychological screening. Rule 6A.6.03311, Florida Administrative Code (procedural Safeguards for Students with Disabilities), currently requires informed parental consent prior to conducting an initial individual evaluation to determine eligibility and prior to initial provision of specially designed instruction and related services to a student with a disability.

STUDENT THREATS OF HARM TO OTHERS

Report immediately any threats of harm to others or threatened violent acts to the principal or other school administration. Polk County School Board has developed guidelines and procedures for threat assessment and provided these to school administrators. Teachers and support personnel should not attempt to intervene without following these procedures under the guidance of school administration.

YOUTH SUICIDE

Teachers and other school personnel in direct contact with students may become aware that a student is considering suicide. It is important for staff to recognize the signs and symptoms of suicide and to intervene immediately. Threats of suicide must be taken very seriously. Do not keep suicide threats a secret or attempt to resolve problems alone! Help is needed and may be obtained through your school administration, superintendent's office and in some situations, law enforcement.

Some of the risk factors and warning signs of suicide may include:

- Serious depression
- Increasing isolation or withdrawal
- Giving away prized possessions
- Poor academic performance
- Making statements about wanting to die
- Acting in a violent fashion
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Threatening to commit suicide or previous attempts

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK & BENEFIT INFORMATION

Over-reacting to perceived loss of failure
Suddenly happy for no apparent reason after long depression
Abusing drugs and/or alcohol
Gun available
Changes in eating, sleeping, or grooming habits
Recent loss

One sign may or may not signal trouble. More than one sign often means that help is necessary. Notice how long and how intense the signs are and how many are present at one time.

What to do:

1. Provide appropriate supervision of student (do not leave alone or send home without intervention).
2. Inform the principal or administrative staff of the suicidal student.
3. The school administrator (or his/her designee) is responsible for notification of parents of the suicidal student. If administration is not available, proceed to notify parent and continue to attempt to make contact with administrator.
4. Provide the parents and student with a list of community resources and stress that immediate action should be taken.
5. Consult with school counselor, school administration.
6. Continue to monitor the student's progress, support the student, and work collaboratively with outside professionals and agencies.

If a student is in imminent danger, the School Resource Officer or other law enforcement should be immediately contacted. If the student is injured, call 911. Your school guidance counselor and school administration may also be contacted for information on suicide prevention and intervention.

If an employee indicates that he or she is considering suicide, immediately contact your school administration.

INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT ABUSE REGISTRY 1-800-962-2873

Section VII

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK & BENEFIT INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

I acknowledge having received the Lake Wales Charter Schools Employee Handbook. I accept my responsibility to read and understand this handbook, including the Lake Wales Charter Schools' policy on Code of Ethics/Principles of Professional Conduct. I understand the topics discussed in this handbook represent the general policies the Lake Wales Charter Schools and that my employing agency may impose additional requirements, depending upon the nature of my position and the authority granted by the agency.

Employee Name: _____
(Please print)

Employee Signature

Date

CODE OF ETHICS/PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The Education Standards Commission has drafted the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct which were adopted by the State Board of Education as rules on June 15, 1982. As a part of the Florida Administrative Code, these rules are enforced by the Education Practices Commission. Violation of the Principles of Professional Conduct can result in the revocation or suspension of the teaching certificate, probation, fine, or restriction of the scope of practice.

As a means of implementing the Code of Ethics and the Principles of Professional Conduct, please sign this form and return it to your school secretary who will place it in your personnel record.

"I ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE CODE OF ETHICS AND PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT OF THE EDUCATION PROFESSION IN FLORIDA

Name

Signature

School

Position