



## Research Triangle High School

### RTHS Board of Directors Meeting

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#### Date and Time

Sunday July 13, 2025 at 4:00 PM EDT

#### Location

<https://rthighschool.zoom.us/j/93566460638>

Meeting ID: 935 6646 0638

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#### Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
<b>I. Opening Items</b>			<b>4:00 PM</b>
<b>A.</b> Record Attendance		Ailette Tobien	2 m
<b>B.</b> Call the Meeting to Order		Elizabeth Cunningham	2 m
<b>II. Public Comments</b>			<b>4:04 PM</b>
<b>A.</b> Open to all community members (students, family members, faculty and staff, community members, and others)	FYI	Elizabeth Cunningham	5 m
<i>The RTHS Board of Directors welcomes and values input from members of the public during its meetings. In compliance with Open Meetings Law, the public is invited to attend all open meetings of the RTHS Board.</i>			

Purpose	Presenter	Time
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*To complete its planned agenda effectively and efficiently, the Board designates a specific time for public comment at each regular monthly meeting. Individuals seeking to address the board must:*

- 1. Sign up at least two (2) hours before the start of the meeting by contacting the Board Chair in writing.*
- 2. Each written request to comment must include the speaker's name, their contact information, and the subject of the comment.*
- 3. Each speaker will have no more than three (3) minutes to address the Board.*

*The following guidelines are observed during the public comment session:*

- 1. Comments must be directed to the Board of Directors.*
- 2. Profanity and personal attacks are not permitted.*
- 3. Board members do not engage in dialogue or respond to speakers.*
- 4. Per state law, any discussion of personnel matters or attorney-client privileged issues must occur in a closed session.*

*Thank you for your cooperation and your continued commitment to RTHS.*

<b>III. Governance Committee Report</b>	<b>4:09 PM</b>
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<b>A. Governance Committee Business</b>	Vote	Carolyn Coia	15 m
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Committee Chair Carolyn Coia will present the following items for Board review and approval:

- New Board member
- 2025-26 Board officers
- 2025-26 Employee and Student and Family Handbooks

<b>IV. Executive Session</b>	<b>4:24 PM</b>
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The Board will move into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.

<b>A. Recorded Vote</b>	Vote	Elizabeth Cunningham	5 m
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The Board will review and approve a personnel contract.

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
<b>V. Other Board Business</b>			<b>4:29 PM</b>
<b>A. 2025-26 Meeting Dates</b>	Discuss	Elizabeth Cunningham	5 m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2025-26 Board Meeting schedule (<i>attached and on Board on Track</i>)</li><li>• 2025-26 Committee Meeting scheduling (<i>by August 1st</i>)</li><li>• Teacher Welcome and Orientation Session: <i>August 5, 2025, 9:30 AM, RTHS</i></li><li>• 2025 Board Retreat (<i>Doodle Poll: <a href="https://doodle.com/group-poll/participate/eIEB816a">https://doodle.com/group-poll/participate/eIEB816a</a></i>)</li></ul>			
<b>VI. Closing Items</b>			<b>4:34 PM</b>
<b>A. Adjourn Meeting</b>	Vote	Ailette Tobien	1 m

# Coversheet

## Governance Committee Business

**Section:** III. Governance Committee Report  
**Item:** A. Governance Committee Business  
**Purpose:** Vote

**Submitted by:**

**Related Material:**

2025-26 RTHS Student and Family Handbook, final for approval, 6-24-2025.pdf

2025-26 RTHS Employee Handbook, final for approval, 6-24-2025.pdf

Priteesh Shahi Resume, 6-2025.pdf



# Student & Family HANDBOOK

## 2025-2026



### Find us on Social Media

Website: [www.researchtrianglehighschool.org](http://www.researchtrianglehighschool.org)

Twitter: [@restrihigh](https://twitter.com/restrihigh)

Athletics Twitter: [@RTHSRaptors](https://twitter.com/RTHSRaptors)

Facebook: [Research Triangle High School](https://www.facebook.com/ResearchTriangleHighSchool)

Instagram: [rths\\_raptors](https://www.instagram.com/rths_raptors)

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## HISTORY

The Contemporary Science Center is an educational nonprofit founded in 2002 created to adapt scientific discoveries and processes that originated in Research Triangle Park into long-format lab activities for high school students. Its focus was on experiential learning: immersing students in the process of science so as to change their thinking about science and make lifelong engagement with science more accessible. In 2011, a team of educators, professionals, and scientists collaborated to create Research Triangle High School and write a charter, which was approved in 2012. The school opened August 13, 2012 at 10 Park Drive in the Research Triangle Park, with an inaugural class of 147 ninth graders. In January of 2016, the school opened at its current location, the former Sigma Xi world headquarters in RTP. The school has since implemented a personalized learning philosophy that seeks to develop students' ability to manage their own learning beyond high school.

## MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

### MISSION STATEMENT

To increase access to globally competitive Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education for students and teachers across North Carolina by incubating, proving and scaling innovative models of teaching and learning.

### VISION STATEMENT

To provide the tools and develop the capacity for students to intentionally determine their futures.

### CORE VALUES

1. We are responsive.
2. We respect each other.
3. We find joy in learning and discovery.
4. We provide students with the tools to access power.
5. We hold high standards and encourage growth through failure.



## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Research Triangle High School is committed to having a community in which every individual is treated with sensitivity and respect, and in which each student and teacher has an equal opportunity to work, learn, and develop to his or her full potential in an atmosphere free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. To that end, RTHS prohibits any form of harassment or discrimination (including sexual harassment) and does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, disability or handicap, gender (including actual or perceived gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy/conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), or other protected characteristic, whether by a supervisor, administrator, co-worker, volunteer, contractor, student, or non-employee. No person shall, on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender (including actual perceived gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy/conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), sexual orientation, disability, or handicap, be denied equal access or admission to school programs, courses, extracurricular activities and employment opportunities. In addition, under section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, no otherwise qualified individual, shall solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity at the school.

1. **We are responsive.** We take time and make an effort to know our students and we value their experiences, their truths, and their family context. We have built a system that recognizes and adapts to the needs of our students while still holding high achievement and effort paramount.
2. **We respect each other.** Our students, staff, parents, board, and others who deal with our school recognize the difficulty of the teaching profession and of the learning process for students. These days school is a high-stress environment, and we deal with issues extending far beyond just classroom learning. It is critical to have a school where all approach each other with a noble purpose, appreciating our backgrounds, preparation, and history, we build from responsiveness to respect, which is critical for supporting our students and our teachers.
3. **We find joy in learning and discovery.** Both students and teachers are learning every day. This is collaborative. As challenging as learning is, there must be a way to engage our emotions as well. Science tells us that linking emotion and learning is powerful and productive. We want students to be able to find joy in their work, as that joy will continue to drive them beyond school, and that joy will give them power over the challenges they meet in the world beyond school.
4. **We provide students with the tools to access power.** The world is structured in a way that controls who moves through it. Student progress is historically governed by ZIP code, and we seek to enable students to break that legacy. Our students deserve control of their lives: professional, economic, political, and social. As adults who have navigated the world, we work to pass that practical knowledge to students, so that we are addressing more than just subject matter content every day. We aspire to a society free of the tyranny and oppression of racism, classism, sexism, and the structural systems left to us by previous generations that stamp our children at birth.
5. **We hold high standards and encourage growth through failure.** Finally, we learn lessons intentionally and unintentionally. It is our goal as instructors, counselors, and leaders to support our students through those experiences, so that they become bumps rather than the end of the road. We promise two fundamental statements that underlie all we do in our daily work: provide students with opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and insist on high quality work. Failure, with support, leads to growth. Whatever the circumstances, though, we have the capacity to change in response to setbacks, and we are responsive.

## RESEARCH TRIANGLE FACULTY & STAFF

## FACULTY & STAFF

A complete list of personnel can be found on the RTHS website under About Us > Faculty & Staff, or directly at: <https://researchtrianglehighschool.org/about-us/faculty-staff/>

## COMMUNICATING WITH FACULTY & STAFF

Faculty and staff are expected to respond to and acknowledge messages within **two business days**, and provide considered answers to questions within three days. If an issue takes more time to resolve, that will be communicated. **We want to balance meeting the needs of students and families with teacher lives with the many responsibilities of teachers**

### BY TELEPHONE

All faculty and staff members may be reached at the front office number, **919-998-6757**. Each teacher has an individual extension and voicemail box. In addition, some teachers have their own private work numbers which they may share.

Can I leave a voicemail message at the main number?

Yes, and you can also leave messages directly for teachers if you know their direct extensions

### BY FAX

RTHS fax number is 919-998-3402. We can send and receive faxes in color.

### BY EMAIL

The faculty and staff at Research Triangle High School principally communicate by email. We do so for several reasons, including keeping records of communication, ease of tracking, and accessibility at any time or place. If you would prefer to receive paper copies of notices, please contact the front office.

### BY STUDENT BACKPACK

For very important, but not time-sensitive issues, we will also send home letters. These letters will usually be sent through the Mentor, with a return signature or communication requested. Historically, asking students to take papers home to families has been problematic at every school.

### BY PARENTSQUARE

ParentSquare is a platform designed to communicate with you at the school, and in your classrooms and groups. With ParentSquare you'll be able to:

- Receive all school and classroom communication via email, text or app
- View and download photos
- View the school and classroom calendar and RSVP for events
- Easily sign up to volunteer and/or bring items

How do I activate my ParentSquare account?

Parents will receive an email notification from ParentSquare to activate their account. After activating your account, parents will be able to access ParentSquare through [www.parentsquare.com](http://www.parentsquare.com) or through the iOS or Android app.

How do I use ParentSquare?

Parents Getting Started [Video](https://vimeo.com/187431155/338cf3f348) - <https://vimeo.com/187431155/338cf3f348>

ParentSquare Tour and Features [Video](https://vimeo.com/186008987/ab5d20a52e) - <https://vimeo.com/186008987/ab5d20a52e>

Parent App [Video](https://vimeo.com/307587191/55b5893b30) - <https://vimeo.com/307587191/55b5893b30>

## TEACHER CONFERENCES

To request a teacher conference with the student's mentor and current teachers, parents or guardians should contact the dean of students and leave a date or possible dates convenient for the meeting. Once the conference

has been scheduled, the office staff will contact the parent. If a conference is needed with an individual teacher, the parent should contact that teacher by email.

## WHOM TO CALL/EMAIL ABOUT WHAT

Who?	About What?
<b>Teachers</b>	Assignments Grades Class Policies Classroom concerns Student performance
<b>Exceptional Children</b> Mechia DuPree EC Coordinator <a href="mailto:mdupree@rthighschool.org">mdupree@rthighschool.org</a> Margaret Nelson Case Manager <a href="mailto:mmajors-nelson@rthighschool.org">mmajors-nelson@rthighschool.org</a> Ellen Apple Case Manager <a href="mailto:eapple@rthighschool.org">eapple@rthighschool.org</a>	IEP/504 eligibility or implementation
<b>Leadership Team</b> Chief School Officer Akiba Griffin <a href="mailto:agriffin@rthighschool.org">agriffin@rthighschool.org</a>  Assistant Principal/Testing Coordinator Priscilla Rodriguez  Dean of Students and Culture Dez Thompson <a href="mailto:dthompson@rthighschool.org">dthompson@rthighschool.org</a>  Chief Operations Officer Alex Drake <a href="mailto:adrake@rthighschool.org">adrake@rthighschool.org</a>	School Policy Discipline Conflict Resolution Testing Transportation Safety
<b>Front Office Staff</b> <a href="mailto:office@rthighschool.org">office@rthighschool.org</a>  <b>Student Services</b> Deirdre Lewis <a href="mailto:dlewis@rthighschool.org">dlewis@rthighschool.org</a>	Absences Tardies  Student Record Requests
<b>School Counselors</b> Kristen Cook <a href="mailto:kcook@rthighschool.org">kcook@rthighschool.org</a>  Vacancy	Student Schedules Transcripts Grade Records NC Virtual Public School Courses Student Well-Being
<b>College Counselor</b> Sarah Overman, Director <a href="mailto:soverman@rthighschool.org">soverman@rthighschool.org</a>	College Applications Scholarships Post-high school options
<b>Freshmen Academy</b> Ellen Apple <a href="mailto:eapple@rthighschool.org">eapple@rthighschool.org</a> Jessica Stokes <a href="mailto:jstokes@rthighschool.org">jstokes@rthighschool.org</a>	Freshman Concerns

## CALENDAR

School calendars are located on the RTHS's website under About Us / Calendars and Schedule or in link: <https://researchtrianglehighschool.org/about-us/calendar-and-schedule/>

## ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT

**As we partner with families to best support students, it is critical that we engage in a way that allows our partnership to flourish. We understand that situations can become stressful, and we want to maintain the best support possible.**

All adults entering the school or participating in school events shall adhere to the following rules of conduct:

1. Always be respectful to the staff, students, and other school community members.
2. Model appropriate behavior and be good examples to our school community.
3. Do not display dangerous or unsafe behavior when on our campus.
4. Check in and obtain clearance from the office upon entering the building.
5. Do not disrupt teaching and learning when visiting the school.
6. If you need to speak with a staff member, schedule a meeting.
7. Refrain from using threats, profanity, inappropriate or rude language/gestures, or an aggressive/loud voice.
8. Handle complaints by first seeking a resolution with the staff members involved in a positive and professional manner.
9. Ensure email communications to school staff, faculty, or students are respectful.
10. Do not harass, bully, or threaten school staff, faculty, or students on school grounds, at school events (whether or not on school grounds), or via email.

**To the extent that an adult's actions/behavior fall below the code of conduct, the adult can be subjected to disciplinary action by the administration.**

- Upon the first occurrence, the direct supervisor will send a follow-up email to the individual.
- Upon a second occurrence, individuals can be:
  - o removed from the premises;
  - o restricted from re-entry for a period of 30 calendar days; and
  - o limited to pick-up and drop-off of students outside the building.
- Upon a third occurrence, individuals can be:
  - o Removed from the premises; and
  - o Permanently restricted from re-entry.

## BANNING FROM CAMPUS

The school reserves the right to ban any person including parents, separated personnel, or those under investigation, from campus where there is a safety or security concern, actual/potential disruption to the school environment, or where it is in the best interest of the School to do so. The Chief School Officer, their designee, or the Board may issue such a ban.

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

(Please See attachment B for the complete list of definitions and descriptions.)

**The Research Triangle High School's expectation for student behavior is based upon the following governing principles:**

1. Students will act with courtesy, consideration, tolerance, and patience in all interactions with others both at school and during school-sponsored activities.
2. Students shall treat school property and facilities with care and respect.
3. Students shall treat the property of others with care and respect.
4. Students will follow the school's [Honor Code](#) and be honest in all academic and social situations.
5. Student behavior will reflect positively upon the school.

Good discipline is imperative to the School's success and to the success of each individual student. Our goal is to help a student adjust to the requirements of their environment rather than punishment for their not having adjusted, it is turning unacceptable conduct into acceptable conduct, and it is not humiliating or embarrassing. The ultimate, unique achievement of good discipline is self-discipline on the part of the student. Each teacher/team has a plan for managing student behavior that incorporates effective strategies consistent with the purpose and principles established by Board policies regarding student behavior. Teachers are encouraged to seek positive, innovative and constructive methods of correcting and managing student behavior in an effort to avoid repeated misbehavior and suspension.

Consequences for violating the policies in this handbook, teacher/team standards, or rules may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Parental involvement
- Isolation or time-out for short periods of time
- Behavior improvement agreements (contracts)
- Limitation of technology privileges
- Individual or small group sessions with an administrator
- Silent Lunch
- Detention during lunch or before/after school
- Exclusion from extracurricular activities
- Suspension or exclusion.

The school is not required to engage in progressive discipline. Some offenses are so serious they warrant more severe consequences including, but not limited to, immediate suspension and/or recommendation for longer-term consequences.

This Student Code of Conduct is not to be seen as all-inclusive. The administration reserves the right to amend or add to these lists as unique situations arise. The administration further reserves the right to deviate from the stated disciplinary action(s) based on unique or aggravating factors.

Failure to follow the instruction of a teacher, administrator or other school official and any conduct in violation of any written rule, policy or procedure or code of the school will result in appropriate disciplinary measures.

## DEFINITIONS

- **Short-Term Suspension:** suspension from school, school activities and school grounds for a period of up to ten (10) school days.
- **Long-Term Suspension:** suspension from school, school activities and school grounds for more than ten (10) school days, but less than exclusion.
- **Exclusion:** Permanent removal of the student from school, school activities and school grounds. A charter school student who has been excluded may return to their local educational agency pursuant to North Carolina law.
- **Expulsion:** Permanent termination of the student-school relationship. This applies only to students 14 years of age or older whose continued presence constitutes a clear threat to the safety of other students or school staff.

## TIER I OFFENSES

Result: Parent engagement, lunch detention, limitation of technology privileges.

- Dress Code violations
- Academic Integrity violations
- Littering on school property
- Repeatedly refusing to complete school assignments
- Violation of the Technology Use Agreement
- Cell phone/headphone use during the school day
- Violation of Technology Acceptable Use Policy
- Repeatedly neglecting to bring notebook, pencil and/or other learning materials to class

## TIER II OFFENSES

Result: Scheduled Detention, In School Suspension, Exclusion, or Short/Long-term Out of School Suspension, Suspension of technology privileges

- Committing repeated Tier I offenses
- Failure to comply with other assigned consequences
- Deliberately disrupting the normal educational process in the classroom
- Use of profanity and/or an obscene gesture
- Lying to or deliberately deceiving a teacher or a staff member
- Willfully leaving the classroom or school grounds without permission
- Inappropriate public displays of affection
- Failure to follow instructions of school staff
- Throwing objects in the classroom or on school grounds
- Repeated tardiness
- Use of inappropriate language
- Insubordination
- Repeated violations of the Honor Code such as cheating and/or plagiarism
- Taking unauthorized or inappropriate photos or videos of another individual
- Bullying/harassment (cyber-bullying included)
- Causing breakage to another student's school issued technology
- Failure to attend an assigned class without a valid excuse, skipping school or cutting classes
  - Any conduct committed off-campus that (a) if committed on campus would constitute a Tier II offense and (b) has a reasonable relationship to school operations

- Unauthorized or inappropriate use of any electronic device while on school property not associated with the educational process during normal school hours.

### TIER III OFFENSES

Result: Suspension or possible disciplinary hearing for repeated and/or severe behavior, which could include but would not be limited to a Long-Term Suspension or Exclusion from attending Research Triangle High School.

- Committing a combination of or repeated Tier I and/or Tier II offenses
- Using school technology or network to access pornographic, violent or other unacceptable content either at school or at home using school-owned electronic devices.
- Accessing, producing, posting, displaying or sending offensive message, music or images, including images of exposed body parts
- Damaging the reputation of a staff member – defamation of character.
- Trafficking, possessing and/or using tobacco/nicotine products on school property or at a school-sponsored event including the use or possession of electronic cigarettes or paraphernalia.
- Stealing or possessing stolen property
- Threatening to physically harm or attack another student, staff member or adult on school property or at a school-sponsored event
- Physically striking or attacking a student, staff member or adult whether as an individual act or with the assistance of others
- Possessing, handling, transferring or bringing a weapon or ammunition (including a toy weapon; example – toy gun, toy knife) on school property or at a school-sponsored event
- Creating or encouraging other students to join in a disturbance, so as to cause the disruption of normal school operations.
- Accessing or disseminating pornography, graphic content, sexual content or any other inappropriate material on an electronic device or in print.
- Possessing, selling, exchanging, distributing, attempting to purchase, using or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or any substance purported to be an illegal drug, prescription medicine or alcohol on school property or at a school-sponsored event. This includes distribution of or purposely taking more than the prescribed amount of medically necessary prescription medication. (*SEE ATTACHMENT H*)
- Touching or conduct perceived as sexual or inappropriate in nature or which is deemed offensive to that person
- Damage/destruction/vandalism/arson of or trespassing on school property
- Hazing
- Bomb threat/hoax, false alarms
- Possession or use of explosives, fireworks, sparklers, smoke/stink bombs on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event
- Any conduct committed off-campus that (a) if committed on campus would constitute a Tier III offense and (b) has a reasonable relationship to school operations
- Creating or encouraging other students to join in a disturbance, so as to cause the disruption of normal school operations.



Note: Any student who inadvertently possesses or finds a weapon or illegal substance or stolen property, which may subject the student to exclusion, may or may not be recommended for these sanctions if the student voluntarily surrenders the property to a school staff person prior to discovery by another person. This should be done as soon as the student realizes that he/she is in possession of the weapon or substance or stolen property.

Any student who has been given out-of-school suspension three or more times in the same academic year may be recommended for exclusion.

The School and its employees shall follow applicable rules concerning the discipline of students who qualify under relevant special education laws.

The Chief School Officer shall have the authority to suspend a student for up to ten (10) school days at a time (*i.e.*, a Short-Term Suspension). There are no appeals for short term suspensions of 10 days or less.

For Tier III offenses, the school's Chief School Officer may recommend a Long-Term Suspension, and/or Exclusion, and/or participation in a Behavioral Contract. Decisions as to Long-Term Suspensions and/or Exclusion shall be made by the Director after appropriate written notice to the parties involved and a hearing if one is requested. In the absence of the Director, the Board Chair shall appoint a hearing officer. Student appeals from the decision of the Director or hearing officer shall be heard by a panel of three Board members who shall be appointed by the Board Chair. Appeals must be made in writing to the Board Chair within ten (10) days of the decision of the Director or hearing officer. The hearing of the panel will occur at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting date unless the family is otherwise notified. Decisions of the Board panel shall be final, and there will be no further appeal to the full Board of Directors.

The School's disciplinary procedures will be exercised in a manner consistent with state and federal law, including the Gun Free Schools Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The disciplinary procedures applicable to students with disabilities and those who have Section 504 accommodation plans are available on the school's website.

## RESEARCH TRIANGLE HIGH SCHOOL: A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

### EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

At Research Triangle High School we are a community of learners who are responsible for our own learning, engaged in our learning, supportive and respectful to one another, and willing to be vulnerable for the sake of growing.

### HOW DO WE BEHAVE AS A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

- We are productive when we need to be and relaxed when we can be.
- We treat each other with respect and recognize that our personal experiences are valid and unique.
- We value important contributions to discussion and growth of our experiences as individuals.
- We take ownership of our academic and social futures.



- We are not afraid to criticize school practice or policy in order to make the school a better place.

## GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTION

### COMMUNITY

- All communications should be respectful, whether speaking to peers or staff members. Profanity (swearing) should not be used on school property or at school events and should never be directed at a staff member or other students.
- Students should make an effort to get to know their classmates and practice respectful tolerance towards those people who may be different from themselves. Students should look out for each other and seek to help everyone find a way to feel welcome and valued.
- Public displays of affection should not occur on school grounds or at school events.
- Bullying, name calling, and unkind behavior, whether in person or online, will not be tolerated.

### TECHNOLOGY

- Academic uses for technology have first priority.
- Students should use technology to develop academic independence; they are responsible for keeping up with assignments online, checking email, and watching videos as assigned.
- Students must abide by the guidelines of the **Responsible Use Policy**. In addition, please keep the following guidelines in mind:
  - Any videos, music, or games experienced at school should be in the PG-13 or lower range. Please remember we have a diverse population and be sensitive to what may be offensive, inappropriate or distracting for the student next to you.
  - Earbuds and headphones should not be worn when staff is giving instructions or when working in classroom groups.
  - Be polite, respectful and immediately responsive if a staff member makes a request for a device to be put away.
  - Social uses of technology, such as texting, personal email, Facebook, Twitter, etc. should be kept to a minimum during the school day and avoided completely during academic instruction.
  - Sending explicit messages or photos via email or text is a crime in North Carolina. High school age children have been convicted.

### CELL PHONES

RTHS allows student cell phone use during the school day. That use is subject to the school's **Technology Acceptable Use Policy** and so inappropriate use of these devices can result in loss of technology privileges at school. Additionally, as inappropriate student use of personal devices may challenge student engagement in classrooms and disrupt safe, orderly school environments, and established parameters for authorized use of such devices are set forth above, unauthorized student use of personal devices may result in consequences under the Code of Student Conduct.

Consistent with that policy, the specific consequences will depend in part on the specific conduct at issue. The school's cell phone use policy for students is as follows:

- Students do not regularly need a cell phone or smartphone for schoolwork or activities. Most schoolwork can be done with a laptop. We prefer laptops because of screen formatting and keyboard access. We recognize the need for phones at certain times, and so we do not prohibit them outright.
- Students may use phones before and after school, between classes, and lunch without restriction. We ask that students respect others by keeping volume down, using earbuds or headphones, and choosing content that is appropriate for school. Volume on headphones should be low enough that it cannot be heard outside of one's own ears.
- Students may use phones during class time **only at the teacher's discretion**. This means that different teachers may have different rules for their use. Students should not assume that all classrooms are equal. Also, a teacher who generally allows use may choose to restrict it for certain purposes. When told, students are expected to put their phones away and devote their full attention to the teacher and class. **Put your phone away when asked.**
- School staff are authorized to temporarily confiscate a student's personal device. A confiscated device should be returned at the end of the class period, school event, or activity when the device was improperly used.
- School administration may determine that a device will be confiscated until the end of the school day if the improper use is willful, repeated, substantially disruptive, or interferes with other students' ability to focus on instruction or extracurricular programming. Parents/Guardians should be notified before the afternoon bell rings if a device is confiscated for the remainder of the school day.

## DRESS CODE

- Students should dress appropriately for academic activities.
- Clothing must cover undergarments (waistbands and straps excluded).
- Breasts, genitals and buttocks must be covered with opaque (non-see-through) fabric.
- In keeping with our goals to have our students ready for internships and higher academic and business pursuits, the following items should be avoided:
  - Clothing bearing images or slogans referring to drug or alcohol use, or which are generally considered offensive to another person or group, including the swastika and Confederate flag, for example. Students will be asked to remove or cover these items. If a person or group finds a symbol or slogan offensive, the administration will entertain the student's argument and investigate if this content should be added to the list.
  - Sunglasses and novelty items worn in the classroom.
  - Pajama pants and slippers worn during the school day.
  - Some exceptions can be made for school spirit day and other specific occasions.

## SCHOOL GROUNDS

- **To ensure the health and safety of students with severe nut allergies, Research Triangle High School has designated certain classrooms and areas as nut-free zones. We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining these safe spaces for our students.**
- Students should be with a staff member and in view of the school and staff at all times.
- Please pick up trash and follow recycling guidelines.
- Do not write on walls, desks, bathrooms, or other parts of school property.
- Be mindful of power cords and backpacks in classrooms. We don't want someone's computer knocked over accidentally.
- Please keep food and drink in designated areas.
- Use the crosswalk if you need to cross Highway 54.
- Skateboarding and rollerblades are permitted in designated areas and with the use of a helmet. Engaging in these activities is at your own risk, and the school assumes no liability for any injuries or accidents that may happen.

## TOBACCO USE POLICY

(See attachment H)

North Carolina laws about tobacco, illegal substances and weapons will be strictly enforced, and violations can result in criminal charges as well as school disciplinary actions. RTHS considers "tobacco products" to include cigarettes, cigars, "blunts," pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, e-cigarettes, juuls, vaporizers, and any other items containing or reasonably resembling tobacco or tobacco products. "Tobacco use" includes smoking, vaping, chewing, dipping, or any other use of tobacco products. "Tobacco-free campus" refers to any building, facility, grounds, property, owned by RTHS as well as any spaces where school-sponsored or activities are held, whether on or off campus.<sup>1</sup> Students interested in quitting smoking are encouraged to visit the NC Quitline: <http://www.quitlinenc.com/tobacco-users/just-for-you/teens>

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic honesty is required by Research Triangle High School, and any form of academic dishonesty is a violation of the school's Honor Code and the Student Code of Conduct. Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating and includes but is not limited to the following; working with another person(s) without permission, copying someone else's work, sharing your work with others without permission, unauthorized use of notes or books on examinations, tests or quizzes; giving or receiving information on examinations, tests, quizzes, classroom assignments, lab assignments, homework assignments or any other work without the approval of the instructor; forging a parent signature; and plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as intentionally using another person's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without proper citation. Any act of academic dishonesty could result in loss of credit for the assignment and/or other disciplinary action.

## SCHOOL HONOR CODE

**The purpose of the Honor Code at Research Triangle High School is to build a community of honor and trust among administrators, teachers, students, parents, and staff.**

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<sup>1</sup> Thank you to Durham Technical Community College for their help with this wording.

## RTHS HONOR CODE

School students are good citizens who value honor and demonstrate integrity in all that they do. They help community members by having a positive attitude and respecting other people and school property.

**Honor:** Having high moral standards of behavior; Being judged by other people as possessing good qualities or character.

**Integrity:** Possessing the quality of being honest and fair.

**Lying:** Purposefully being dishonest or misleading to a fellow student, teacher, or administrator.

**Cheating:** Receiving unauthorized help on work; copying another person's work or answers on assessments. Asking other students to provide information, such as questions posed or material covered on tests, quizzes, or other assignments already taken or completed by the other student. Plagiarizing is a form of cheating.

**Plagiarism:** Passing off another's work or ideas as your own or intentionally failing to cite sources for information that is not widely known. Ignorance of proper citation procedures is not an acceptable excuse for failing to cite sources. Plagiarism includes:

- Excessive parental assistance with homework or projects.
- Forgery or falsification of documents.
- Lying, outwardly and/or by omission.
- Aiding others who are violating the School Honor Code.
- Taking property that does not belong to you without permission.
- Not abiding by the School Technology Handbook's rules and/or guidelines.

**Stealing:** Taking another person's belongings or ideas (plagiarism) without permission or providing proper citations.

**Disrespectful of People or Property:** Being rude, defiant, or unkind to another person; vandalism or misuse of school property.

**Inappropriate Use of Technology:** Loading unauthorized programs or viewing non-approved websites on school laptops.

## STUDENT HONOR PLEDGE:

"As an honorable member of Research Triangle High School, I promise to uphold the Honor Code of my school to promote honor and integrity. I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, be disrespectful of people or property, or use technology inappropriately. "

## REPORTING OF HONOR CODE VIOLATIONS

Each RTHS student is honor-bound to report immediately all violations of the Honor Code of which the student has first-hand knowledge; failure to do so is a violation of the Honor Code. All students, staff, and other employees of the School are responsible for familiarity with and

support of the Honor Code. Any staff member may charge a student with a violation of the Honor Code. Charges are presented to the School Administration Team.

## CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATING THE HONOR CODE

When a student is found to have displayed a lack of academic integrity, consequences will include the following:

- First Offense
  - Have a conversation with the teacher about their actions.
  - Be allowed to retake the assessment or redo the assignment.
- Second or Third Offense
  - Have their parent/guardian contacted and informed of their actions.
  - Have a conversation with the administration about their actions.
  - Receive reduced credit for the assignment\*
- Fourth Offense
  - Have their parent/guardian contacted and informed of their actions.
  - Have a conversation with the administration about their actions.
  - Student receives a 0 for the assignment.

\*Classes using the PLP reserve the right to reduce or replace a score and require a student to retake the assessment if the assignment is shown to be academically dishonest.

## PERSONALIZATION

Student behavior at RTHS is addressed on an individual basis, and the context of each situation is investigated and examined by school staff to ensure that the complete picture is known. Students can expect a complete interview and that their presentation of their circumstances will be taken seriously and considered in any challenging situation. State law requires some student behaviors to be addressed in a particular way, and for this reason we present the Tiered Intervention Plan. The idea is to give examples of disruptive situations, not prescribe punishments for student actions.

## RTHS TIERED INTERVENTION and RESTORATIVE PRACTICE<sup>2</sup>

We respect and trust each student at Research Triangle High School to exhibit exemplary behavior which contributes to the learning environment at RTHS. Should students struggle with the above expectations, appropriate interventions will be utilized with emphasis on Restorative Practices and Family Engagement. Restorative Practices are processes that proactively build healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing.

## PARENT ENGAGEMENT

RTHS recognizes that parents are invaluable resources in the process of educating students. Parents play an important role as the first teachers of their children and parental support is critical to a student's success. It is the intent of RTHS to establish a collaborative partnership between

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<sup>2</sup> Restorative Practice at RTHS are based on the Schott Foundation for Public Education Restorative Practices Guide - <http://schottfoundation.org/sites/default/files/restorative-practices-guide.pdf>

the home and school. RTHS staff will use ParentSquare, email, telephone, and face-to-face meetings to engage parents in their child's education.

## RESTORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Restorative practices focus on righting a wrong committed and repairing harm done. The goal is to place value on relationships and focus on repairing relationships that have been injured. All parties involved have the opportunity to share perspectives and how they will work to resolve the issues or conflicts.

## MEDIATION

Mediation is facilitated discussion that helps students in conflict resolve their disputes and create their own solutions, using shared problem-solving within a school setting. Trained mediators serve as neutral third parties to help participants reach an agreement that is both mutually fair and reasonable.

## RESTORATIVE CIRCLE DISCUSSIONS

A Restorative Circle is a community process for supporting those in conflict. Restorative circles are facilitated in three stages designed to identify the key factors of the conflict, reach agreements on the next steps, and evaluate the result. As a circle forms, they invite shared power, mutual understanding, self-responsibility, and effective action.<sup>3</sup>

## A NOTE ON SUSPENSION

Please note that suspension of a student in or out of school is a last resort and is usually reserved for cases where safety must be preserved. At RTHS, we prefer consequences that do not remove a student from the learning environment. In some cases, where a student represents a threat to an individual or the school, out-of-school suspension may be necessary. Should a student choose to disrupt the learning environment for others, that student will be removed and placed in an environment that allows all RTHS students the best learning opportunity available.

Some more serious offenses will result in immediate long-term suspension, which include the student having received repeated short-term suspensions, and specifically those offenses outlined by General Statute 115C-391, such as possession of weapon(s) including a firearm or other weapons as dictated by General Statute. Students who are placed under long-term suspension are entitled to a hearing before the Board of Directors, or a subcommittee thereof, as prescribed in the General Statute.

Students may also require intervention for conduct not occurring on school property if that conduct violates this Code of Student Conduct and has had, or is expected to have, a direct and immediate impact on the orderly and efficient operation of the school or the safety of individuals in the school environment. In addition, our expectations for our students during the school day apply to all extracurricular and co-curricular events, both on campus and off campus, as well as during travel on public transportation to and from the school.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.restorativecircles.org/>

## LUNCH

Because RTHS does not have a cafeteria, students may eat lunch in galleries, designated classrooms, or outside in the patio area in the front of the school building. Students may eat in the designated lunch area (DLA) of their choice. Parents who would like to deliver lunch to their student should bring it to the front office for pick up before lunch begins.

Because classrooms are used immediately following lunch, students are expected to take extra care to make the rooms ready for the incoming class. **Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves at lunch.** Students who do not meet RTHS expectations for behavior during lunch may be assigned lunch detention.

## HOT LUNCH BOX

A group of students organize hot lunch box delivery to school four (4) days a week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesdays, and Thursday. Orders are due by noon the day before to receive lunch on [myhotlunchbox.com](http://myhotlunchbox.com). If you have any questions, reach out to student leader Blake Maaske, [bmaaske26@rthighschool.org](mailto:bmaaske26@rthighschool.org)

## LUNCH DELIVERY POLICY

RTHS **does not** allow students to leave campus for lunch. Should students choose to have lunch delivered by a third party (parent, vendor, Doordash etc.), all business must be resolved before the end of lunch. **Additional lunch time will not be allotted to students simply because their food is delivered late.**

1. Any orders must be placed in such a way that class is not disrupted.
2. All payment must be made in advance.
3. All deliveries must be made at the front desk at the front of the building. Deliveries must be made in the presence of a member of the school staff.
4. Any delivery made before lunch starts will be held at the front office. **Students will not be called out of class to receive or resolve lunch delivery issues.**

## LITTER

Students have a responsibility to help keep the facilities at Research Triangle High School clean and free of litter. This includes classroom space, bathrooms, hallways, and outdoor areas. Teachers will establish cleanup routines for their classrooms, and students may be asked to contribute to the cleanliness of the school area. We are a learning community and our environment should be kept clean.

## DISTRIBUTION OF MEDICATION

If a student needs to take any medication during the school day, the student should bring the medicine, along with a form obtained from the physician (either a prescription or a note explaining the dose, medication, and circumstances in the case of over-the-counter medications), to the office. The student is responsible for coming to the office at the specified time to receive the medication from a member of the office staff. Medication must be taken in the presence of a staff member. The student should sign the medication log provided by the office staff. Students should never self-medicate. We understand that each medical situation is unique and will work with families. Please see the front office staff if you have questions.



## VISITORS

Any visitors to Research Triangle High School, including parents, other family members, or guardians, should check in at the front office and receive a visitor name tag. Students who attend other schools are not permitted to visit RTHS during the school day. This includes RTHS graduates, unless by special arrangement. Parents or guardians who need to meet with teachers or administrators should make an appointment directly.

Family members or guardians who are delivering materials (including lunch) to a specific student must take those items to the front office for the student to pick up. Please do not have a student simply meet you in the parking lot.

**Parents may not freely wander in the building under any circumstances. You must be escorted by an RTHS staff member at all times.**

## REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS POLICY

*Purpose: To clearly identify how registered sex offenders will be expected to respect the boundaries set forth by Research Triangle High School.*

Pursuant to Session Law 2008-117, The Jessica Lunsford Act for North Carolina ("the Act"), the General Assembly of North Carolina has recognized that sex offenders often pose a high risk of engaging in sex offenses after being released from incarceration or commitment and that the protection of students from sex offenders while on School property and at School-sponsored activities serves an important governmental interest.

**Research Triangle High is committed to the following:**

### 1. Sex offenders are banned from all School property and School events

In accordance with G.S. 14-208.18, all persons who (1) are required to register under the Sex Offender and Public Protection Program AND (2) have been convicted of certain sexually violent offenses or any offense where the victim was under the age of 16 years at the time of the offense ("Prohibited Persons";) are expressly forbidden to be present on any property owned or operated by the School system, including School buildings, athletic fields, playgrounds, parking lots, School buses, activity buses or other property of any kind for any reason, including attendance at sporting events or other School-related functions, whether before, during or after School hours. In addition, Prohibited Persons may not attend or be present at any student function or field trip on or off of School property which is 1) School-sponsored or 2) otherwise under the official supervision or control of School personnel. This policy applies to all Prohibited Persons regardless of their relationship to, or affiliation with, a student in the School system (i.e. stepparents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc).

#### (a) Prohibited persons

The Chief School Officer or designee shall insure that administration is familiar with the criminal offenses that qualify an individual as a Prohibited Person under this policy. The Chief School Officer will also subscribe to electronic notification of Registered Sex Offenders and access the state database as needed.

#### (b) No special permission

There shall be no "special permission" given for Prohibited Persons to be on School grounds or attend events or activities in violation of this policy.

#### (c) Possible exceptions for students



Students who meet the definition of a Prohibited Person may be on School property only in accordance with state law.

(d) Limited exception for prohibited persons who are parents/legal guardians of a student

(i) A Prohibited Person who is the Parent/Legal Guardian of a student may be on School property only for the following reasons:

(1) To attend a previously scheduled School conference with School personnel to discuss their child's academic or social progress; or

(2) At the request of the Chief School Officer/designee, for any other reason relating to the welfare or transportation of the child

(ii) The procedure for making a request is as follows:

(1) For each visit authorized by subsection (i)(1) above, the Parent/Legal Guardian must provide the Chief School Officer with prior written notice of their registration on the Sex Offender Registry

(2) A request for presence at the School must be submitted to the Director in writing, minimally 72 hours in advance.

(3) The request must include the nature and specific times of the request

(4) The Director or designee will respond within 48 hours either authorizing or denying the request.

(5) The decision of the Chief School Officer or designee is final.

(6) The Chief School Officer will notify the Board of any such requests and the decision.

(iii) For each visit authorized by subsection (c) above, the Parent/Legal Guardian must check in at the front office upon arrival and departure. In addition, during each and every visit, the Parent/Legal Guardian must be under the direct supervision of School personnel at all times. If personnel are not available to supervise the Parent/Legal Guardian during any visit then they shall not be permitted on the School property.

(iv) For each visit authorized by subsection (c) above, the Parent/Legal Guardian shall comply with all reasonable rules and restrictions placed upon them by the Chief School Officer, including any restrictions on the date, time, location, and length of meetings.

## **2. Enforcement**

Any suspected violation of this policy shall be reported by a School administrator to the Chief School Officer and to law enforcement for immediate investigation. All School personnel should report the presence or suspected presence of a Prohibited Person to a School administrator and take appropriate action. The Chief School Officer shall immediately notify the Board Chair of any known or suspected Prohibited Person who is a student, or parent or legal guardian of a student, at their School.

## **3. Applicability**

This policy shall supersede any conflicting provisions in all other Board policies regarding School safety, parental involvement, School field trips, School visitors, School volunteers and student transportation

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This policy shall supersede any conflicting provisions in all other Board policies regarding School safety, parental involvement, School field trips, School visitors, School volunteers and student transportation.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Attendance in class is critical for academic success at Research Triangle High School. Students who are ill should remain at home to recover. However, parents, guardians and students should

be aware that frequent absences often result in academic difficulties. We encourage you to schedule appointments and travel during non-school hours and scheduled breaks. Additionally, continued tardiness has a negative impact on both the education of the tardy student, and on that of other members of the class. Students should arrive at class on time and be ready to participate.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

**School begins at 8:45 am.** To accommodate various schedules, students may arrive at school as early as 7:45 am. Any student arriving on campus between 7:45 and 8:30 am must come into the building and sit in a first or second floor gallery or a supervised morning study hall. If teachers are available, students may meet with them during this time.

**During the school day,** students must stay in the immediate vicinity of our building. When students arrive at school, they must come into the building. Students must not stay in the school parking lot or in their vehicles parked anywhere before school unless accompanied by a parent. During school, students are not permitted in the school parking lot, other than the PE lot, or on any grounds located off school property, including the woods around the school, or the Frontier across the street. Students are not to leave the school building during the day. Students should not use the lower-level exit door except in emergencies. Students should never prop open doors.

**School ends at 3:30 pm and all students not in a supervised activity must be picked up by 4:30 pm.** Students may stay after school for athletics, club meetings, drama, or extra help from a teacher. After 4:00 pm all students must be in a supervised activity or silent study hall. The building will close at 4:30 pm Monday-Thursday and 2:45 pm on Friday. Unsupervised students are allowed to remain on the front patio for pick-up, but the building will be closed.

## **LATE ARRIVAL**

Students arriving between 8:45 and 9 am should go directly to class, where the teacher will issue a penalty for the tardiness.

- Students arriving after 9 am must provide a **signed note from a parent or guardian** explaining the tardiness and must sign-in at the office. Office staff will give the student an admittance form to enter class.
- RTHS does not distinguish between lateness due to the fault of the student or the fault of the parent or guardian that brings the student after school has started in the morning.

## **EARLY DEPARTURE**

- Students who leave school early must bring a signed note from a parent or guardian explaining the reason for the departure. When it is time to leave school, the office will phone the teacher and the student will be dismissed from class to go to the front desk for dismissal. The student must then sign out before leaving the building. Parents will be called by the front office to authenticate the call.
- If a student leaves school for an appointment, he or she must sign out and sign back in again when returning to campus.
- If a student gets sick during the school day and needs to leave school, the student should go to the office and call a parent or guardian. Office staff will speak to the parent or guardian before the student is allowed to sign out.
- In the event that a student is a part of a carpool that must leave early, the student must have permission on file from a parent or guardian in order to leave school early. The law does not allow us to check minors out to anyone who is not listed in our files as a parent.

## **TARDINESS TO CLASS**

Students are allowed five minutes passing time between classes. If a student arrives to class tardy, the student will receive a penalty from the teacher for being tardy. If a student is frequently tardy, the Dean of Students may become involved and interventions will be put in place.

### Consequences for unexcused tardies (quarterly)

Number of Occurrences	Action Taken
1st/2nd Tardy	Verbal warning
3rd Tardy	Teacher contacts parents/guardian
4th Tardy	Teacher assigned consequence/lunch detention
5th Tardy	Admin - After School Detention
Subsequent occurrences	Parent + student conference with a member of the Student Services Support team

The administration reserves the right to modify consequences on a case-by-case basis whenever appropriate. This may include the loss of campus privileges such as parking, participation in the Food Truck Rodeo, and other school activities.

**\*Students arriving on late buses will not be considered tardy.**

**\*Tardiness resulting from known major traffic delays will be excused.**

### ABSENCE POLICY

**Any absence must fit one of the seven reasons below to be excused.**

North Carolina General Statutes consider absences for these reasons to be lawful:

1. Illness or injury: When absence results from illness or injury which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.
2. Quarantine: When isolation of the student is ordered by the local health official or the State Board of Health
3. Death in the immediate family: When absences result from the death of a member of the immediate family of the student.
4. Medical or dental appointments
5. Court or administrative proceedings
6. Religious observance
7. Educational opportunity\*

\*Educational Opportunity: If a student plans to be absent for an educational opportunity, the student should return from the absence with a note from a parent or guardian explaining the absence and the school administration will decide if the absence meets school policy for an educational opportunity. This may be requested in advance of the absence.

### COMMUNICATING ABOUT ABSENCES

- In case of an absence, a parent or guardian should call the school before 10 am on the morning of the absence in order to help ensure the safety of our students. Parents or guardians may leave messages on the school's voice mail (919-998-6757), or email the office at [office@rthighschool.org](mailto:office@rthighschool.org) announcing the absence. Also, parents may reply in Parent Square to the absence notification. Please do not email the administration.
- If the school does not receive a notification, the student will be marked absent and our records system will automatically contact the parents or guardians on record. Parents or guardians should expect calls from the school office in the morning if the student is absent, and we have no advance notice.
- When the student returns to school, the student must go to the main office first thing in the morning to turn in a note with a handwritten signature from a parent or guardian explaining the absence. This written confirmation is required for state auditing purposes.
- If a student returns to school from an absence WITHOUT a note hand-signed by the parent or guardian, the student should still go to the main office first thing in the morning. Absences will be considered Unexcused if a student misses school for any other reason or if the proper documentation is not provided within 7 days of the absence.
- Parents will receive notice of unexcused absences at 3, 6, and 10 day accrual. **If a student accumulates six unlawful absences, parents will be notified that they are in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law.**

**Unexcused Absences will be handled in the following manner:**

Number of Occurrences	Action Taken
0-2 unexcused absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Action</li> </ul>
3rd unexcused absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written notice home to parent and student</li> </ul>
6th unexcused absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication from Student Services Support Team</li> <li>• Written notice to parent and student</li> </ul>
10th unexcused absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication from Dean of Students</li> <li>• Written notice to parent and student</li> <li>• The parent/guardian will be contacted by phone or by mail and will be required to come to the school for a mandatory meeting regarding the violation of the General Compulsory Attendance Law. If the absences cannot be justified the parent may be prosecuted according to NCGS 115C-378. If it is found that a good faith effort to comply with the law has not been upheld, the Lead Administrator may notify Social Services and the District attorney.</li> </ul>

## LOSS OF CREDIT DUE TO ABSENCES

Any student with **20 or more unexcused absences** in any class in a school year is subject to failure of that course or grade level. What we do during school time at Research Triangle High School is extremely important to the academic success of our students. The flipped model and Canvas LMS enables students to keep up with class content and assignments, while also creating opportunities for special class activities. Students who miss class time are not taking full advantage of the educational experience offered by Research Triangle High School.

The Chief School Officer shall have authority to waive the no-credit or retention provisions of the policy. Any review involving a child with disabilities recognized by Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 173 29 U.S.C. 702 et seq., or the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq., shall be conducted in accordance with applicable laws or regulations, including review by the school based committee, if appropriate.

## MAKE-UP WORK

Students are responsible for making up work when they are absent, and they are expected to keep current with assignments when not in class. Students should work with their teachers to make arrangements to complete assignments, tests, and quizzes in a timely fashion. Students may access their assignments and instruction from the Canvas LMS or by emailing their teacher. If a student does not have home internet access, assignments can be collected from teachers in advance with proper notice.

## BAD WEATHER POLICY

Should the weather interfere with our normal school schedule as is sometimes the case in North Carolina please monitor local news stations, radio broadcasts, or their websites and apps for information regarding school closures or delayed openings for Research Triangle High School. In addition, information will be posted to our Facebook page, website ([www.researchtrianglehighschool.org](http://www.researchtrianglehighschool.org)) and RTHS social media platforms. Email notification will be sent to students and parents/guardians when possible. Because our population is split between counties with often different weather results and policies, it is important to check the school's report rather than looking at the county schools themselves. **Since Research Triangle High School is not a part of any county school system, we do not necessarily follow the closing policies of other county school systems.**

Conditions may vary widely across the geographic area our students come from. It is RTHS policy to allow parents to make individual judgments about the safety of travel in their area. If the school is declared open, but a family does not feel safe about their area, the student's absence will be excused.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Teachers and students practice emergency procedures throughout the year. If students are evacuated and classes are not able to resume, students will contact their parents or guardians using cell phones to pick them up, and the front office will contact parents if possible (for example, if we cannot return to the school building, we will use cell phones and social media). The school staff will work through local news stations or their websites and apps, RTHS social media platforms, and ParentSquare to publicize emergency information as quickly as possible.

If an emergency occurs during carpool pickup or dropoff times, students will be sequestered safely according to the school's safety policy. Students may be released directly to parents or guardians so long as others are not endangered further by the release.

## TRANSPORTATION

### PARKING AND PARKING LOTS

Students who park in areas near our campus but not on our campus do so at their own risk and are subject to whatever policies the owners of those spaces enact. RTHS does not intervene to prevent towing, parking tickets, or other consequences.

Students are not allowed in the school parking lot during class time or lunch. Student drivers are expected to come into the building immediately upon arrival and leave immediately upon reaching their cars in the afternoon.

### VISITOR PARKING

Visitors may use the spaces labeled "visitor" in the main parking lot. Please do not park in numbered spots since these spaces are reserved for students.

**NOTE:** Parking or leaving the school will be difficult during peak of carpool time, between 3:30 and 3:45. After 4:00 everyone is much more relaxed.

### CARPOOL ROUTE

Research Triangle High School has developed a traffic plan in conjunction with the NC Department of Transportation designed to help ensure the safety of RTHS students and patrons of local businesses. We ask **all drivers** to observe the following conventions:

1. Observe the 7-mph speed limit in the parking lot.
2. Keep the center lane clear for traffic to exit.
3. Do not turn left under any circumstances when exiting the parking lot during carpool
4. Do not attempt a U-turn on Highway 54.
5. Do not use the parking lots of the surrounding businesses or organizations for school parking or to pick up students. These locations are private property.
6. Be aware of the crosswalk. It may be activated at any time.
7. Do not enter the parking lot and turn left when entering the school. You must follow the carpool lanes at all times.
8. Do not make a left turn when exiting the school. A left turn into the school is permitted.
9. Do not park in the visitor spaces or side lot (PE area) for carpool pickup.
10. Do not stop to pick up students on highway 54.
11. Be aware that students may walk anywhere on campus and their movements are not always predictable.
12. Remain in the carpool line and do not pass through the staff and student parking lot.

### MORNING DROP-OFF/AFTERNOON PICKUP

- Incoming cars will be "double stacked."
- Drivers **may not turn left to exit the parking lot onto Highway 54 during carpool**. Visitors (family members or guardians) may not park in the lot to the left of the school. This is an athletic practice area.
- Student pickup and drop off should only occur on RTHS school grounds.

### SPORTS PICKUP



- Drivers who will be transporting students to off-campus practices or games should get an athlete pass from the front office. These passes are good for the particular season for the sport.

**Students are encouraged to walk out into the carpool line to meet their rides at the end of the day rather than waiting by the front door. This is the reason for the free-flowing center lane.**

## STUDENT DRIVERS

Students who wish to drive to school and park on campus must obtain a parking space through the front office. This is a lottery process and requires an application. The link to the application form will be sent via ParentSquare in early May. If a student receives a parking space, that space must be used in accordance with the student parking rules. **There are not enough spaces to meet demand. RTHS makes no promise to provide student parking. We have no arrangements with any off-campus areas for students to park. Parking off our campus is at a student's own risk and can result in ticketing or towing, and RTHS will not intervene to prevent these consequences.**

- Students may park in their own numbered spaces only.
- Upon arrival, students must leave the parking lot and enter the school building. Students may not wait in their cars before or after school.
- Student drivers wishing to leave before the end of the school day must bring a signed note from a parent or guardian to check out. Students under the age of 18 may not check themselves out of school.



## BUS & CARPOOL INFORMATION RIDING THE GOTRIANGLE BUS

Many of our students ride GoTriangle buses to and from the school. GoTriangle serves Apex, Cary, Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill. Information, including smartphone apps for bus schedules and route planning, can be found here:

- Go Triangle <http://www.gotriangle.org/>

RTHS students who choose to use the bus, allows for free rides between the school and any other location they serve (for school travel only). Students who ride are subject to GoTriangle rules and regulations as well as school standards for behavior. GoPasses can be revoked at the discretion of Research Triangle High School for violation of either GoTriangle or school rules.

## RIDING THE RTHS SCHOOL BUS

We are very excited to be able to offer limited bus service to some of our families in parts of our community where public transportation is particularly difficult to come by.

RTHS Bus Routes and Times 2025-2026

AM RTHS Bus Stops	AM Time	PM Blue Bus Stops	Regular PM	Friday	Transportation # :
3021 S. Miami Blvd (World Overcomers Church/Sheetz)	7:17 AM	3021 S. Miami Blvd (World Overcomers Church/Sheetz)	3:50 PM	2:35 PM	984.888.7156
101 Ganyard Farms Way (Dollar General)	7:27 AM	101 Ganyard Farms Way (Dollar General)	4:00 PM	2:45 PM	
107 N. Driver St./Main St (Shephard's House Church )	7:39 AM	107 N. Driver St./Main St (Shephard's House Church )	4:12 PM	2:47 PM	
904 W. Chapel Hill St. (Emily K Center front Lot))	7:49 AM	904 W. Chapel Hill St. (Emily K Center front Lot))	4:22 PM	2:59 PM	
4215 University Dr. (At Home Store Parking Lot)	7:59 AM	4215 University Dr. (At Home Store Parking Lot)	4:32 PM	3:09 PM	
1305 Odyssey Dr. (Kings Park Church Parking Lot )	8:11 AM	University & Shannon ( Bank Of America 2100	4:35 PM	3:12 PM	
		1305 Odyssey Dr. (Kings Park Church Parking Lot )	4:47 PM	3:24 PM	
ARRIVAL AT RTHS		ARRIVAL AT RTHS			

If you feel this bus service would be beneficial for your family, please take a moment to carefully read through the [RTHS Bus Rider Expectations and Contract](#) and complete the [Transportation Request Form](#). A paper copy of the **Expectations and Contract**, submitted to the Front Office, will be required prior to a student riding the bus.

## CARPOOLING

At RTHS, we are striving to host a more sustainable campus, but cannot do that without the cooperation of our students and their families. A great contribution that we can all do as part of the RTHS community is carpool to and from school every day. Carpooling is not only a great way to help the environment, it cuts down on time it takes for drop-off and pickup, and is a much more efficient way to get your students to and from school.

We have located several RTHS families that live close to you and wanted to connect all of you to hopefully form a carpool group. There are so many ways to arrange a carpool schedule, but here are some ideas:

1. Rotate days for who picks up and drops off
2. Chip in for gas for those willing to step up and drive
3. Meet at a central location at a designated time so pick up is smooth
4. Create a group text with your carpool group, so everyone can be aware of illnesses, doctor appointments, etc.

We would love to have RTHS become a greener campus, but we need YOU to help with that. Please let us know if you have any more questions.



## ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### PERSONALIZED LEARNING

RTHS believes that learning should be personalized for each student. Personalized learning prepares students for future success in college and work environments; it is an extension of the flipped classroom that provides teachers more time to work with each student and offers students more freedom to access important information provided by teachers in a variety of ways that better suit the learning of each student.

The RTHS school culture rewards students who creatively use and demonstrate knowledge. This approach focuses on building skills students will continue to use after high school, and teaches students to understand their own learning and thinking.

RTHS defines the following as essential components of personalized learning:

1. Student agency
2. Flexible instruction
3. Immediate instructional interventions and supports for each student on-demand, when needed
4. Flexible pacing (but not “learn at your own pace”)
5. Individual student profiles (personalized learning plans)
6. Deeper learning and problem solving to develop meaning
7. Frequent feedback from instructors and peers
8. Standards-based, world-class knowledge and skills
9. Anywhere, anytime learning
10. Performance-based assessments (projects, ongoing assessments) - students are given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge

Research Triangle High School believes strongly in the importance of effective classroom teachers being present in the classroom and bringing their own classroom skills and attitude to the course. The teacher-student relationship within the context of a course is critical, and the SLP helps us add to the time needed to develop that relationship.

In our personalized classrooms,

#### **Students:**

- generate content based on instructional themes
- explore a narrow range of content focus areas deeply
- are held to a standard of quality work based on need for growth
- choose and use archived course materials as needed
- learn from others and then share their learning
- choose methods of learning from a variety of provided resources
- write and reflect on their learning
- ask questions and challenge what they see

#### **Teachers:**

- manage classrooms based on individual student needs
- work with individual students to evaluate and reflect on student growth
- design relevant real-world learning experiences through classroom projects

- conference with students to build goals and plans of action
- build relationships with students to enable a positive working environment
- provide opportunities for innovation
- provide tough challenges for students and let them find innovative solutions
- bring experts into the classroom via social media and video-conferencing

## MAKING PERSONALIZED LEARNING WORK

Canvas is a web-based learning management system (LMS) that allows institutions to manage digital learning, educators to create and present online learning materials and assess student learning, and students to engage in courses and receive feedback about skill development and learning achievement.

Rather than a “learn at your own pace” environment, students are expected to make progress at a certain rate, but this rate is somewhat flexible.

Students, parents and/or guardians access information in the Canvas LMS through the same interface that teachers see, so all information about student progress is available, and it is expected that parents and/or guardians will help students remain on pace with their learning goals.

## RTHS COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Teachers at RTHS are given latitude in how they construct and evaluate their courses and students. It is not RTHS policy to have a uniform set of standards across all classes for grading, course structure, difficulty, or expectations. It is unrealistic to expect that every environment in which a student finds him or herself will be the same outside of school, so we expect that students will be able to adapt to a different set of expectations in each class.

However, we do believe that every student is entitled to a reasonable set of expectations about the courses they are taking, and so the RTHS administration is providing this guaranteed minimum set of expectations for any course. Much of what follows applies mostly to courses *not* using the SLP, since that has a common framework and directs expectations.

Each teacher at RTHS will supply for each course, the following:

1. A detailed scope and sequence document for each course. A scope and sequence lists the entire range of topics covered in a course, the approximate time spent on each, and the order in which they will be covered. The scope should align with the NC Essential Standards for the course. If an AP course, the College Board-approved course syllabus will meet this requirement.
2. An approximate schedule of major tests, projects, quizzes, and other assignments. While these dates are not expected to be set in stone, it is expected that they will not move around without sufficient notice to students. Teachers are expected to take into account the other teachers and courses at the school in considering their assignment schedule, which is to say try not to pile on due dates.
3. A description of how course material will be taught, including how classwork and homework relate to course topics, and how those topics are instructed (videos, direct

instruction, guided practice, etc). There must be links between the material assessed and the material presented and the methods used to teach.

4. A syllabus for parents and students. This document includes a summary of the above items, as well as grading policy (weights, percentages if not in SLP), contact information, and lists of resources, including texts, websites, and other applications. Any other information you would like to include is welcome. This may be online and linked for parents elsewhere.

The syllabus will be publicly posted. The other items must be available for administration to consult. We do not plan to drop by your office and ask to see your documents, but if we have questions, expect that we will ask about these things. For example, I do not expect a detailed list for #3, but I do expect you to be able to walk me through your process for a particular test or lesson.

Students are entitled to the following:

1. Graded work that is returned permanently, unless the material is to be reused or otherwise prohibited to be distributed (eg. some College Board AP testing materials).
2. Grades that can be explained and justified by a teacher.
3. Work to be graded in a reasonable amount of time.
4. Grades to be posted in a reasonable amount of time. Students should be able to know their progress in a course on at least a weekly basis. This may mean individual progress updates when the whole class cannot be updated because of timing or grade load. The expectation is weekly as much as possible.
5. Reasonable notice for a major test or project due date. The time given to prepare must be commensurate with the magnitude of the assessment. No test should be announced less than one week before it is to be given. "Pop" quizzes may be given provided students are aware that these are possible.
6. Time to complete assignments missed due to an excused absence equal to one additional day for each day missed. The nature of the absence should be taken into account. For example, a student who is on a trip may be able to work on assignments, but a student who is sick in bed with an illness may not.
7. Access to a teacher during the teacher's office hours. Office hours must be clearly posted and the teacher must meet them. It is a good idea for teachers to keep records of their own presence at their office hours as well as the time students spend with them, should a family question the support a student receives. It is not unusual for students to say they have been in attendance when they have not.
8. Instruction in the material that is to be assessed. For example, the teacher may provide videos, provide direct instruction, work individually with students, or provide guided note packets, study guides, worked problem sets, or other resources with clear links to the material to be assessed.
9. Clear expectations for work that is to be graded. Examples may be explained or posted for student review. Teachers should be able to explain how student work may be improved for the next assessment cycle.

10. To be able to ask questions without fear of reprisal, criticism, or penalty. No matter what a student asks, or how they ask it, a teacher should be professional enough to handle the request calmly, seriously, and with respect for the question. Student questions should always be taken at face value.

### MENTORING TIME

An element of RTHS' educational program is the creation of specific time for student mentoring. Students will be assigned a mentor and will meet with that mentor during the mentoring period once a week. The purpose of this period is to help students develop goals and monitor and reflect on those goals, as well as to help students connect with the school and their peers.

### SEMINAR

Every student at RTHS is in a seminar group with a staff member. Seminar is a time for students to complete schoolwork in a semi-structured environment at school where they can receive help from teachers or peers, or to relax quietly without disturbing the learning of others. In addition, important announcements and special learning opportunities happen during this time. We want the environment during this time to mirror our local coffee shop; quiet, respectful, productive, relaxing.

### GRADING

The grading scale for school transcripts, and thus final grades, at Research Triangle High School follows the 10-point scale as defined by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction:

Letter Grade	Percent Range	Grade Points
A	90-100	4.0
B	80-89	3.0
C	70-79	2.0
D	60-69	1.0
F	0-59	0.0

### QUALITY POINTS and COURSE WEIGHTS

The North Carolina Essential Standards assign different quality point weights to courses. Research Triangle High School offers a variety of courses.

Honors, AP, and other college level classes add "quality points" to enhance GPA. Honors classes grant 0.5 quality points (i.e. a B in an honors class earns 3.5 points instead of just 3.0); AP and college level courses grant 1 quality point. These are counted as a part of the student's weighted GPA, which is reflected on the transcript.

- Standard courses receive 4 quality points for an A (3 for a B, 2 for a C, etc.).
- Honors level courses receive 4.5 quality points for an A (3.5 for a B, etc.).
- Advanced Placement (AP) courses receive 5 quality points for an A (4 for a B, etc.).

### INFINITE CAMPUS

When reading the Infinite Campus grade display:

- Y1 is the grade for the year, not including the final exam.
- X1 is the grade for the final exam or End of Course exam.
- F1 is the cumulative grade for the entire year.
- Grades will be "stored" at the end of the first semester and at the end of the year. This process records grades on transcripts. The Infinite Campus grade display is a current,

running grade. Stored grades are used for determining academic eligibility and for producing transcripts for colleges and other programs.

### CANVAS LMS

For courses in the Canvas LMS, the F1 grade is the only grade permanently stored and will always be the course grade. The final exam counts as 20% of the F1 grade; the Canvas grade is the remaining 80%.

- Grade Weight ranges are as follows...
  - Major Grades: 40-60%
  - Minor Grades: 30-40%
  - Homework/Classwork: 10-25%

### EXAMS

- Teachers may choose to give midyear exams. RTHS does not give a traditional, large-format exam at the end of the first semester. Regular classes will continue until the end of the semester.
- Final exams, including EOC state tests, will be held during the last week of May and the first week of June. One exam will be held each day. One day is designated as final exam make-up day. Final exams will count as 20% of the student's grade for the year.
- EOC state tests will be given for: NC Math 1, Biology, English II, and NC Math 3.
- Research Triangle High School is not required to, and chooses not to, administer North Carolina Final Exams. Teachers of classes other than NC Math 1, Biology, English II and NC Math 3, will give their own exams at the end of the year.

### SENIOR EXAM EXEMPTION

In order to be exempt from a final exam, seniors must have **no more than five unexcused** absences and an average grade of C or better for the course.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR ATHLETICS AND ACADEMIC SOCIETIES

The school uses unweighted grades to determine athletic eligibility and academic society memberships as well as other extracurricular activities.

### CLASS RANK

According to NC GS 116-11(10a) and SBE GRAD-09, class rank is now required for all standardized transcripts. In order to remain compliant with the State of NC, RTHS will have to include class rank on all transcripts starting school year 2023-2024.

Seniors are recognized as *summa cum laude* (highest honors), *magna cum laude* (high honors), or *cum laude* (honors) graduates based on their weighted grade point averages.

### PROGRESS REPORTS

Parents have detailed access to student grades and progress through PowerSchool and the Canvas LMS. For this reason, teachers do not send formal progress reports or report cards at the end of grading periods. Teachers are expected to contact parents and guardians before the end of the first grading period, and as needed throughout the year, if a student is not making sufficient progress in a course.

While grade information may be available twenty-four hours a day over the internet, teachers are not. RTHS faculty make every effort to enter grades as quickly as possible and to keep student

averages in a timely manner, but these can change from day to day. Grades should not be considered final until a teacher says that they are. It is our expectation that teachers will update grades in PowerSchool or the SLP at least weekly.

## **HOMEWORK**

Personalized learning and the flipped classroom model change the way we think about homework. **Students should expect to spend approximately 20-30 minutes outside of class each day per class preparing for their next day's classes. Our internal research shows that for the majority of our students, 2-3 hours of homework each day is typical. If the courses are AP courses, this number will be higher. This amount of time will vary from student to student,** and it is impossible to predict the needs of an individual student. For this reason we have provided some study time during the school day. Students can complete work or consult their playlists during this time. TTA buses also feature wireless internet access, so students who have travel time can complete homework on their way to and from school.

## **LATE ASSIGNMENTS: DEADLINE POLICY**

Teachers set their own late work policies, and it is the **responsibility of the student** to make arrangements regarding any late work with the individual teacher. The student should approach the teacher at an appropriate time and discuss the time limit for turning in late work.

- **Entering Zero Grade for Missing Work:** Teachers will prioritize entering zeros for missing work, promptly alerting families to missing work and allowing intervention for missing assignments before the grade penalty becomes severe. Ideally, zeroes will be entered within 24 hours of the deadline; note that this can be automatically set up in the LMS.
- **Late Major Assignments:** Students have until the end of the quarter to submit major assignments for a partial grade. An automatic 5% will be deducted from the major assignment's grade for each late day until the grade reaches 50%.
  - **Automation:** Note that this can be automatically set up in the LMS.
  - **Clarification:** Students can receive less than 50% on work. For instance, if a student turns an assignment in two weeks late and receives a 60% score, the 50% deduction would be applied to their score, resulting in a 30%.
  - **Clarification:** A student can receive a 0% grade if they fail to submit an assignment.
- **Late Minor Assignments:** Students have two weeks to submit late work for a partial grade after the deadline. An automatic 5% will be deducted from the minor assignment's grade for each late day until the grade reaches 50%.
  - Please note the same automation and clarification sub-points for the section above.
- **Late Homework/Classwork:**
  - Required Policy: Partial work will be accepted and graded for completion.
  - Suggested Policy: We suggest that homework and classwork have an immediate deadline with no late turn-in option. However, treatment of late homework and classwork is at the teacher's discretion.

- **Exceptions:**
  - **AP Classes** may have hard deadlines for all grades, meaning unexcused late work is not accepted for major, minor, and homework/classwork grades.

## RESEARCH TRIANGLE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Mathematics	4 units (Math I, Math II, Math III, and fourth Math course)
Science	4 units (Biology, Chemistry, Earth/Environmental Science, and Physics)
History	4 units (World History, Civic Literacy, American History, Economics and Personal Finance,)
English	4 units (English I, II, III, and IV)
Foreign Language	2 units (including one course beyond the first year and must be the same language)
Healthful Living	1 unit
<u>Electives</u>	<u>4 units</u>
Total	23 units

Previous to 2020-2021 school year, the history sequence was different.

Mathematics	4 units (Math I, Math II, Math III, and fourth Math course)
Science	4 units (Biology, Chemistry, Earth/Environmental Science, and Physics)
History	4 units (World, Civics and Economics, US I and II/or AP US History+1 additional)
English	4 units (English I, II, III, and IV)
Foreign Language	2 units (including one course beyond the first year and must be the same language)
Healthful Living	1 unit
<u>Electives</u>	<u>4 units</u>
Total	23 units

A unit equals the successful completion of a yearlong course or two semester courses. In some cases, a one-credit course may be completed in a semester, such as some courses offered through the NC Virtual Public School, including summer courses.

### NCVPS COURSE POLICY

RTHS uses the NC Virtual Public School to supply independent study courses to students for the following reasons:

1. Students are in need of credits in order to graduate because of failed courses.
2. Students want to take classes not offered at RTHS that are necessary for graduation.

\*NCVPS placement is prioritized on a case-by-case basis according to student needs.

RTHS does not support:

- Students taking NCVPS courses offered in classrooms at RTHS
- Students taking summer Math courses to accelerate their Math schedules
- Ninth grade students taking NCVPS courses

While NCVPS courses are rigorous and well-taught, we find that:

- Summer courses do not provide sufficient depth and length of time exposed to material for students to develop long-term mastery of math and other content



- Classroom language courses provide cultural information, personal interaction, and speaking practice that an online course does not usually offer

### GRADE LEVEL PROMOTION

	To Be Promoted to Grade 10	To Be Promoted to Grade 11	To Be Promoted to Grade 12	To Graduate
RTHS units	5 Units <u>including at least</u> Math 1 English I	11 Units <u>including at least</u> Math 1 & Math 2 English I & English II	17 Units <u>including at least</u> Math 1 ,2, & 3 English I,II, & III	23 Units <u>including at least</u> 4 Math credits 4 English credits

At Research Triangle High School, as at other North Carolina schools, promotion from one grade level to the next is based on the number and type of credits earned. For example, a student is not designated as a Sophomore (or Tenth grader) unless and until the student has earned a total of five credits, two of which must be English I and Math 1. Graduation from RTHS is based on credits earned, not time spent in school. If a student wishes to be classified as a particular grade level, then the student must pass the requisite courses to advance.

A student's grade level classification, based on the number of earned credits, may be used in school publications (i.e. yearbook) and student participation in events such as Food Truck Rodeo. While we are aware that grade level designations of this type can sometimes be a source of frustration and disappointment for a student, we choose to prioritize progress towards graduation as the primary indicator of a student's academic standing, rather than the year during which the student entered high school.

For college counseling purposes, student credits are monitored. For example, students may be classified as 11<sup>th</sup> graders at the beginning of the fourth year at the school and may become 12<sup>th</sup> graders by the end of the first semester because of extra work they complete. The college advisor and school counselors will ensure that students in this situation will be considered for graduation, yearbook placement and other senior opportunities.

### REGISTERING FOR COURSES

Registration will be discussed in seminars, and individual students will be able to discuss a four-year plan with mentors at this time. RTHS will ensure that students understand how high school courses contribute to developing a competitive college resume, exploring career interests, and how course selection impacts GPA and grade promotion.

#### Important Points about Course Registration at RTHS:

- Registration will take place early in the spring semester.
- The student's four-year plan should be considered when choosing courses.
- Each student will choose six courses and a selection of alternate courses.
- It is critical to choose alternates; otherwise, courses will be selected for the student.
- Student course choices will be limited in PowerSchool based on the recommendations of their current subject teachers.



- Electives can include a fine arts course, language, or another choice in the core courses (i.e. second history, science, English or math). Courses may be taken through certain outside vendors as well.
- Course offerings may change from year to year according to interest and availability of resources.

It should be noted that for a school the size of Research Triangle High School, fulfilling every schedule request of each student is nearly impossible due to demand, staff availability, and our desire to maintain low class sizes. On occasion, courses may not be available and a student may have to take a course that was not requested.

### **TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

During the registration process, teachers in a given course provide recommendations in order to help students make appropriate course choices for the next school year. These recommendations are based on conversations and experiences the teacher has had with students, along with the ability, work habits and potential for growth that students have demonstrated over the course of the year.

RTHS works hard to ensure that students are correctly placed in courses where they will stretch themselves; we want to set students up for success, and teacher recommendations take this into account. The policy of Research Triangle High School is to defer to teacher expertise and experience in determining student placement.

### **WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES**

If a parent would like to withdraw their child from Research Triangle High School, they should fill out the online Student Withdrawal Form or the Paper Student Withdrawal Form. Parents are required to list their student's next school on the form at the time of withdrawal. If the student will be homeschooled, the state-issued homeschool identification number must be provided for the student to be withdrawn. A records request for one of our current students from a new school can be considered a withdrawal request; if a legitimate records request is received, the records will be sent, and that student will be withdrawn from Research Triangle High School..

### **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

Research Triangle High School offers support services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to students who are state-identified. Other students may receive special services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Students experiencing difficulties are referred to the Student Support Team at Research Triangle High School who will determine into which group a student falls, if eligible.

The level of support for special education students is dependent on the student's Individualized Education Plan. For more information, contact the Department of Exceptional Children.

### **PROJECT CHILD FIND & TRANSFERS OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) includes the Child Find mandate, under which all school districts must identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. After identifying children who may need services, all necessary evaluations must be completed on these children, at no cost to parents. RTHS participates in Child Find. General public notice signs to inform and educate the public about the need to locate and identify all children with disabilities are posted in the main lobby of RTHS, in accordance with IDEA.

## DISCIPLINE

A student with a disability may be removed from a current placement for up to ten cumulative school days in one academic year for any violation of the school code of conduct. This removal may be to another setting or it may be suspension. Services are not required during the first ten days. A disciplinary change in placement may occur when a student is removed for more than ten consecutive school days. Changing a student with a disability educational placement (continuum of services) may be made by an IEP team only, and services may be provided. A functional behavior assessment as well as a behavior intervention plan may be developed to address the behavior violation so that it will not recur.

## TRANSFERS OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

RTHS accepts transfers of IEPs from within the state of North Carolina and from other states. Enrolling students must indicate on their enrollment paperwork that an active IEP is in place and the school will request the transfer of those records. Services from the Department of Exceptional Children will be in place from the time of enrollment with availability and access to records.

## DISPUTE RESOLUTION

**Facilitation** - An impartial facilitator can be requested to assist the IEP team members in communicating more effectively, keeping the focus on student outcomes, and developing compliant IEPs.

**Mediation** - Parents or guardians have the right to request the Department of Public Instruction to provide mediation services if you and the school are unable to agree upon the identification, evaluation, educational program, placement or the provision of a free, appropriate public education of a student.

**Formal Written Complaints** - When informal means for solving disagreements have not been successful, more formal dispute resolution alternatives are available through the provisions of federal and state laws governing special education [the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Article 9 of Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes].

More information on informal and formal dispute resolution is available at the DPI web site: <http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/parent-resources/dispute-resolution/dispute-resolution>

The administrative (LEA) contacts for RTHS are the Chief School Officer and Assistant Principal. Either can serve as the contact.

## TECHNOLOGY AT RTHS

At Research Triangle High School, we use technology as one way of enhancing the mission to teach the skills, knowledge, and behaviors students will need to succeed in the global community. These technologies may include, but are not limited to, school-provided equipment as well as personal devices (computers, tablets, cell phones, laptops, chromebooks, e-readers, and more).

We recognize that there are guidelines for students to use new technologies in a meaningful, safe, and responsible way. But with these new opportunities comes great power and with great power comes great responsibility. We want students to embrace appropriate use of technology so they may become responsible, compassionate and empowered digital citizens. The information, release forms, and agreements below will govern how a student uses technology at RTHS.

## STUDENT INFORMATION-MEDIA RELEASE OF INFORMATION

During the school year, Research Triangle High School will from time-to-time release information about students through the school directory, Facebook and other social media, Raptor Report, or other public and private media outlets. This information may include the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student. Parents and/or guardians who do not wish to have this information released should contact the school office in writing within three weeks of the first day of school.

If you move or change phone numbers, please report any changes to the office at [office@rthighschool.org](mailto:office@rthighschool.org) or bring written notice.

## RTHS TECHNOLOGY RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY

The statements below describe RTHS expectations for how students will use technology. Students should read and sign the policy. By accepting this agreement, students acknowledge the following rules and conditions about technology use at RTHS:

- I will use technology in a meaningful, safe, and responsible way.
- I understand that I represent the school in all my online activities. I understand that what I do on social media should not reflect negatively on my fellow students, teachers, or on the School.
- I will use technology resources productively and appropriately for school-related purposes. I will avoid using any technology resource in such a way that would disrupt the activities of other users.
- I will use digital communication (email, texting, video and photo sharing apps) with the understanding that I am creating a digital reputation.
- I understand that the school network, my school internet traffic, school communications, and my school accounts are property of RTHS and anything that I do can be monitored.
- I understand that RTHS administrators will deem what conduct is inappropriate use if such conduct is not specified in this agreement.

## **As an RTHS student, I will use technology in accordance with the laws of the United States and the State of North Carolina, including those described below:**

- Criminal acts – These include, but are not limited to, “hacking” or attempting to access computer systems without authorization, harassing email, cyberbullying, cyberstalking, child pornography, vandalism, and/or unauthorized tampering with computer systems.
- Libel laws - Publicly defaming people through the published material on the Internet, email, etc.
- Copyright violations - Copying, selling or distributing copyrighted material without the express written permission of the author or publisher (users should assume that all materials available on the Internet are protected by copyright), engaging in plagiarism (using other's words or ideas as your own).

## **If I choose to use social media:**

- I understand all my online actions leave a permanent record and remain online, even if deleted.
- I understand personal use of social media may have an effect on current and future educational institutions, employers, and others that may impact my future opportunities.

## **BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE (BYOD) AGREEMENT/PROTOCOL FOR USE**

### **DEFINITION OF “DEVICE”**

For purposes of BYOD – Bring Your Own Device, “Device” means privately owned wireless and/or portable electronic handheld equipment that includes, but is not limited to, existing and emerging mobile communication systems and smart technologies such as IoT (internet of things) devices, cell phones, smart phones, augmented reality glasses, portable internet devices, video gaming systems, handheld entertainment systems or portable technology devices that can be used for word processing, wireless internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording and information transmitting/receiving/storing, etc.

### **INTERNET**

**It is the policy of Research Triangle High School to:**

- (a) Prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications;**
- (b) Prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity;**
- (c) Prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors;**
- (d) Comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].**

Only the internet gateway provided by the school may be accessed while on campus. Personal internet connective devices including, but not limited to, cell phones/cell network adapters are not permitted to be used to access outside internet sources at any time.

### **ACCESS TO INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL**

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or “Internet filters”) shall be used to block or filter Internet, or other forms of electronic communications, and access to inappropriate information. Specifically, as required by the Children’s Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors. Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

### **INAPPROPRIATE NETWORK USAGE**

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Specifically, as required by the Children’s Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes:

- (a) Unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking', and other unlawful activities;
- (b) Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

## **EDUCATION, SUPERVISION AND MONITORING**

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the staff to educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act. Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of the IT Department.

The IT Department will provide age appropriate training for students who use the Internet facilities. The training provided will be designed to promote the commitment to:

- (a) The standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in the Internet Safety Policy;
  - (b) Student safety with regard to:
    - (i) Safety on the Internet
    - (ii) Appropriate behavior while online, on social networking websites, and in chat rooms
    - (iii) Cyberbullying awareness and response
  - (c) Compliance with the E-rate requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA")
- Following the receipt of this training, the student will acknowledge that he/she received the training, understood it, and will follow the provisions of the School's acceptable use policies.

## **SECURITY AND DAMAGES**

Responsibility to keep the personal technology secure rests with the individual owner. RTHS is not liable for any device stolen or damaged on campus. RTHS can NOT replace or provide financial restitution for any stolen or damaged personal technological device. If any technological device is stolen or damaged, the issue will be handled through the administrative office similar to other personal artifacts that are impacted in similar situations. It is recommended that skins (decals) and other custom touches are used to physically identify your personal technology from others. Additionally, protective cases for technological devices are encouraged.

## **BYOD STUDENT AGREEMENT**

The use of technology to provide educational material is a privilege. When abused, privileges will be taken away. When respected, they will benefit the learning environment as a whole.

Students and parents/guardians participating in BYOD must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, as well as all Board policies, particularly the Responsible Use Principles (RUP).

Students and parents/guardians agree that technology:

- Must be in silent mode while on school campuses
- May not be used to cheat on assignments or tests, or for non-instructional purposes (such as making personal phone calls and text/instant messaging).
- May not be used to record, transmit, or post photographic images or video of a person, or persons on campus during school activities and/or hours for non-instructional purposes.
- May only be used to access files, applications or internet sites which are relevant to the classroom curriculum.

**As a student at RTHS, I acknowledge that:**

- The school's network filters will be applied to my connection to the internet and I will not attempt to bypass them (via VPNs, proxy servers, etc).
- Bringing on premises or infecting the network with a virus, Trojan, or program designed to damage, alter, destroy, or provide access to unauthorized data or information is in violation of the RUP.
- Processing or accessing information on school property related to "hacking", altering, or bypassing network security policies is in violation of the RUP.
- The school has the right to collect and examine any device that is suspected of causing problems or is the source of an attack or virus infection.
- Printing from personal technology will not be possible at school.
- The school is NOT responsible for:
  - stolen or damaged personal technological devices
  - the maintenance or repair of any personal technology or any costs incurred due to use of personal technology.

### RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT-STUDENT

As a student at RTHS, I \_\_\_\_\_ understand  
(printed name)

and will abide by the above Responsible Use Principles. Should I commit a violation, I understand that consequences of my actions could include suspension of computer privileges, disciplinary action, and/or referral to law enforcement.

---

Student Signature

Date

### RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT-PARENT/GUARDIAN

As the parent or guardian of this student, I \_\_\_\_\_  
(printed name)

have read the Responsible Use Principles. I understand that technology is provided for educational purposes in keeping with the academic goals of the School, and that student use for any other purpose is inappropriate. I recognize it is impossible for the School to restrict access to all controversial materials, and I will not hold the school responsible for materials acquired on the school network. I understand that children's technology activities at home should be supervised as they can affect the academic environment at school.

I hereby give permission for my child to use technology resources at Research Triangle High School.

---

Parent or Guardian's Signature

Date



## DRIVER'S EDUCATION AND ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATES

Research Triangle High School does not offer driver's education classes. Students who are residents of Wake County may take courses through Jordan Driving School (<http://www.jordandriving.com/>). For Durham County residents, a similar arrangement can be made through Durham Public Schools (<http://www.dpsnc.net/programs-services/driver-ed>). At the present time all classes in Durham and Wake County are offered at public schools throughout the counties and students can attend whatever site they like; however, these sites fill quickly, so planning ahead is a must.

## DROPOUT PREVENTION/LICENSE REVOCATION

North Carolina has established legislation that reflects a coordinated statewide effort to motivate and encourage students to complete high school. This legislation, effective August 1, 1998, requires that a student's driving permit or license be revoked if a student is unable to maintain adequate progress or drops out of school. Adequate progress is determined by first semester grades and end-of-year grades and is defined as passing 70% of courses. At Research Triangle High School, this means a student must be passing five of six courses they are currently enrolled in, including Math and English<sup>4</sup>. A student is exempt from this law upon reaching the age of 18 or obtaining a high school diploma, GED, or an adult high school diploma. RTHS is required to notify the Division of Motor Vehicles after each semester if a student fails to meet this requirement.

A student's driving permit or license must be revoked for one year if a student is given a suspension for more than 10 consecutive days or an assignment to an alternative educational setting for more than 10 consecutive days for: 1) possession or sale of alcoholic beverages or illegal controlled substance on school property, 2) possession or use on school property of a weapon or firearm, or 3) the physical assault on a teacher or other school personnel on school property. School property includes the physical premises of the school, including the parking lot, any vehicles under the school's control that are used to transport students, and school-sponsored or school-related activities that occur on or off the physical premises of the school.

## DRIVER'S ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATES

A Driver's Eligibility Certificate (DEC) will be issued to a student when the student completes the driver's education class and meets the above requirement. The student and a parent or guardian should present the form stating that the student has completed the class to the office staff at RTHS. After grades have been verified, the DEC will be issued. The DEC is only good for thirty days from the date issued.

In the event that the school or office is closed, students needing a DEC can send a photo or scan of the completion certificate to the Chief School Officer and they will prepare the DEC for the student to pick up at the front office when it is open. If school is closed for a long period of time, the DEC will be mailed to the student's current home address as listed in PowerSchool.

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<sup>4</sup>State law requires passing 70% of courses taken in the previous grading period and allows schools to add their own requirements.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

### STUDENT CLUBS

Clubs at RTHS vary a great deal in terms of the time commitment for the students, allowing most students to find some activity that fits their schedule. Club meetings are held before school, during lunch, or after school. Clubs may vary slightly from year to year to suit the interests of our students and faculty. Clubs require students to commit to attendance and being engaged in activities.

### STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activities at RTHS occur weekly and allow for students to attend as interested. Activities allow students to attend when possible, and to experiment with ideas and activities to determine where their interests lie.

### CLUB FUNDRAISING GUIDELINES FOR RTHS

#### Objectives

- To ensure that all fundraising done on the behalf of a club is in compliance with IRS rules and regulations.
- To ensure proper accounting for all funds and gifts received by the club.
- To identify club priorities.
- To ensure that prior approval is given for fundraising activities.
- To ensure that the funds raised benefit the entire club and not just a few individuals.
- To ensure that club activity does not exceed what the club can afford.

#### Fundraising Plan

Before any fundraising can commence, a fundraising plan must be approved by the club sponsor and then submitted to the Chief Operations Officer for final approval. This plan must include:

- Proposed budget (how much you intend to raise, supplies needed, expected overhead costs, etc.).
- Strategy for fundraising.
- Fundraising goal (what is this money for?).
- Proposed dates for fundraising.

#### Procedure for After Fundraiser

- All funds collected during the fundraiser must be turned into the school within 24 hours for deposit into the club account.
- In order to use club funds for the desired fundraising goal, the staff sponsor must submit a check request with the front office. These forms are available at the front desk of RTHS.

**Note:** Please understand that RTHS clubs and their fundraisers are all subject to audit as part of the RTHS community. All club activities must be approved by the club sponsor and those activities are up to their discretion. If the club sponsor is unwilling to participate in more activity

than the club desires, club members are able to seek further club support to accomplish those goals. Club members are not allowed to participate in outside school activities (conferences, field trips, etc.) without a club sponsor being present.

## RAPTOR ATHLETICS

**(Please see attachment G)**

Research Triangle High School offers a limited number of sports. Tryouts are open to students of all grade levels. Below are the sports offered at Research Triangle High School:

### FALL

Cross Country (M/W)  
Golf (W)  
Soccer (M)  
Tennis (W)  
Volleyball (W)

### WINTER

Basketball (M/W)  
Indoor Track (M/W)  
Swimming (M/W)

### SPRING

Golf (M)  
Soccer (W)  
Tennis (M)  
Track & Field (M/W)

RTHS is a member of NCHSAA and the Central Tar Heel Conference, which includes local charter schools.

## ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES:

*Required Information:*

1. Student-athlete information form
2. Medical History and Physical Examination, signed by a doctor (valid for one calendar year)
  - a. For 2025-26, any physicals completed since March 1, 2025 are valid through the end of the 2025-26 school year.
3. Concussion Awareness Statement
4. Eligibility and Authorization Statement
5. Sportsmanship Pledge

Forms are available through the Athletic Director's Office and ParentSquare

**Playing a sport at Research Triangle High School is not a right, but a privilege;** in order to have that privilege, student-athletes must meet the following requirements:

## ACADEMICS REQUIREMENTS

- Must have passed five out of six classes in the previous semester
- (Fall semester) Must have met the requirements to be promoted to the next grade:
  - 10th grade - 5 credits; must also pass Math I and English I
  - 11th grade - 11 credits; must also pass Math II and English II

- 12th grade - 17 credits; must also pass Math III and English III
- Must have a weighted grade point average of 2.00 or higher in the previous semester

#### **ATTENDANCE**

- Must be present in school in order to take part in a practice or game that day

#### **BEHAVIOR REQUIREMENTS**

- Ejection from a game: two-game suspension (four games for fighting)
- Two ejections in one school year: Student is ineligible from all sports for the remainder of the school year
- Out-of-school suspension: Student is ineligible to participate in any practices or games during the suspension time (if no games occur during the suspension, the student will be suspended for the next game, whether or not the student's sport is in season at the time of the suspension)
- Two in-school suspensions = one out-of-school suspension (min. one-game suspension)

## APPENDIX 1. STUDENT PARKING REGULATIONS

1. Permits are issued at designated times established and announced by school administration. Until students possess their assigned tag to display, they are not permitted to park on campus.
2. The parking fee established by RTHS for the 2025-2026 school year is \$115. Permits issued for less than the entire school year will be subject to a prorated fee.
3. Parking permits will be available only to students who have a valid North Carolina Driver License.
4. All students who park a motor vehicle on the school campus must display the current hanging-tag permit. The tag must be hung from the inside rear-view mirror, facing the front of the vehicle. Students who fail to properly display the tag may have their parking privileges revoked.
5. Vehicles must be parked in assigned spaces. Students remaining on campus for school activities after school are to leave cars in the assigned spaces until exiting campus. The only places available for student parking are the marked student parking spaces. Students may not park on the road, driveway, in intersections, or in any other place. Parking in any of the business parking lots near the school is strictly prohibited. Vehicles parked in the wrong space or in unauthorized areas may be towed or "booted" at the expense of the owner and the permit will be subject to revocation without refund.
6. Loitering in the parking lot is prohibited. Students should lock their cars and leave the parking lot immediately upon arriving at school. Students should take all materials/items needed for the school day and not use vehicles as a storage area. Students need written permission from an administrator to be in student lots during school hours, including class changes and lunch time.
7. Students are prohibited from leaving the campus during lunch time.
8. Vehicles should be parked front-end first. Backing into spaces is not permitted.
9. The safe operation of motor vehicles is required. Vehicles must not travel in excess of 7 miles per hour in the school parking lot. Seat belts are required for driver and all passengers. Speeding and reckless driving are prohibited.
10. RTHS is not responsible for damages to or theft from vehicles.
11. Students are cautioned NOT to leave valuables in their vehicles. Parked vehicles should be left with windows closed and doors locked.
12. Disabled vehicles may not be left on campus overnight. If necessary, towing should be arranged by the student.
13. Only one tag will be issued per space. Students may register up to two of their family vehicles. The tag may be moved from one registered family vehicle to another, but may NOT be sold, given, or loaned to another student to use with another vehicle not registered with the parking space. The penalty for so doing is revocation of parking privileges.
14. Carpooling is encouraged and parking spaces may be shared by students. If students apply to share a parking space and are approved to share, only one tag will be issued for the shared space. Both students must submit a completed application and each will be placed in the lottery. The student using the space must display the tag. If the permit is revoked, neither student driver may park on campus during the revocation period.
15. Students shall inform the office immediately of any changes in vehicle or license plate.
16. Lost parking tags will be replaced for a \$10 fee. Report losses to the office.
17. The possession and/or use of tobacco products are prohibited on campus. Students may not possess tobacco products or smoke in cars at any time while on the school campus. Weapon and drug charges will result in automatic revocation of parking privileges.
18. Attendance and tardy policy violations may result in revocation of parking privileges. Specifically, chronic tardiness to first period may result in revocation of parking privileges.

19. Students who operate a motor vehicle on campus should fully understand their duties and responsibilities. Students who violate parking regulations are subject to any or all of the following consequences
  - a. Revocation of parking privilege
  - b. Ticketing
  - c. Towing and storage of the vehicle at the owner's expense
  - d. Disciplinary action
  - e. Criminal charges as prescribed by law
20. Handicapped parking is available as needed on an assigned basis only. After exiting parked vehicles, students should exercise caution around other vehicles.
21. Students are not to leave the student parking lot until 15 minutes after dismissal in order to avoid safety issues with the carpool line.
22. When student drivers are exiting their parking space, they should back out of their assigned spaces only when there is an opening in the line of traffic. Creating a double line of traffic is a violation.
23. In order to be eligible for a parking permit, the student must have passed five of their six academic classes in the prior semester. If a student becomes ineligible, their parking pass/space will be saved and they will have one quarter to bring their grades up to eligibility. If the grades are not raised, that parking pass/space will be provided to the next student on the waitlist. If a loss of parking privilege occurs, the student will not be reimbursed for any portion of the fee.
24. Refunds for parking fees will be made only if the student moves out of the area (away from RTHS). Parking fees will NOT be refunded for:
  - a. voluntary withdrawal from school (changing schools or dropping out).
  - b. long-term suspension from school.
  - c. school-based disciplinary action related to loss of parking privilege.
  - d. loss of driving privilege due to revocation of operator's license.
  - e. All other refund requests are at the discretion of the Chief Operations Officer.
25. Parking a vehicle on school property is a privilege, not a right. Please review all parking regulations with your parents/guardians and communicate with school administrators for clarification of any matter about which there are questions.
26. Submitting a complete electronic or paper application does not guarantee that a space will be granted. Parking spaces will be assigned randomly through a lottery. Only applications received by the published deadline will be included in the lottery. Once all available parking spaces have been assigned, the lottery will continue in order to build a waiting list with the remaining applications. Any application received after the published deadline will be added to the end of the waiting list in the order in which they are received, no exceptions.
27. All applicants will be notified by email of their status within one day of the lottery. Students who receive a parking permit are expected to submit their payment for the entire school year and a hard copy of their driver's license at the time that they pick up their parking tag. (Student is responsible for making the copy.) Parking pass pickup will be on the first day of school.
28. Failure to follow or complete a step in the application/parking pass collection process will cause the application to become null and void and the application will have to be resubmitted.
29. Applications will be kept on file in case spaces become available during the school year. Those spaces will be assigned based on availability and original lottery order. Additional applications may be filed during the school year and will be added to the bottom of the waiting list.

**NOTE:** *Students who do not pick up parking permits after the lottery/notification and the first day of school are not allowed to park on campus until the parking tag has been obtained from the school office.*

## APPENDIX 2. ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION

State and Federal environmental protection and health regulations require that all families be notified about the presence of asbestos in school buildings and be given information about what plans the school has to continue inspection and management of any materials in the building.

**No asbestos containing materials were used in the construction of Research Triangle High School and none were present on the premises prior to its upfit in 2015.**

Documentation supporting this, including inspection forms and reports from the inspectors and management agencies, along with a copy of this letter and documentation sent to NCDHHS in support of establishing compliance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986, is available at the school front desk for review.

The current Chief Executive Officer is the designated person assigned responsibility for this plan.



## APPENDIX 3. MCKINNEY-VENTO

The McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act The McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act is a federal law that ensures immediate enrollment and educational stability for homeless children and youth. McKinney-Vento provides federal funding to states for the purpose of supporting district programs that serve homeless students. Defining Homeless The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." The act provides examples of children who would fall under this definition:

- Children and youth sharing housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason
- Children and youth living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations
- Children and youth living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Children and youth abandoned in hospitals
- Children and youth whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc)
- Children and youth living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations
- Migratory children and youth living in any of the above situations

The McKinney-Vento Program also meets the needs of "a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian" (42 USC §11434a(6), 2001). Youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and lacking a fixed, regular and adequate residence are referred to as unaccompanied homeless youth. Youth who run away are also eligible for services even if the parent/guardian/caregiver wishes the student to return home.

Some reasons a youth may be on his/her own include, but is not limited to, family dysfunction, parental neglect and abuse (emotional, physical, sexual, or substance), incarceration, illness and deportation. Runaway youth and unaccompanied homeless youth are eligible to be enrolled immediately without a legal guardian. Under the McKinney-Vento Program, there is no age limit for an unaccompanied homeless or runaway youth as long as the student is eligible for K-12 public education in NC.

Schools must immediately alert the School McKinney-Vento Liaison or the District McKinney-Vento Liaison if presented with a possible runaway or unaccompanied homeless youth. The provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act supersede any state law or local policy that may conflict with this act.

### Homelessness Data

Due to smaller student populations, we cannot post school specific data counts. Please visit the NCHPEP website to learn more about homelessness across North Carolina To learn more about parent's rights visit: Parent's Rights

To learn more about unaccompanied homeless youth rights visit: Unaccompanied Youth

### Contact Information

Research Triangle High School, McKinney-Vento Liaison  
Kristen Cook  
[kcook@rthighschool.org](mailto:kcook@rthighschool.org)

919-998-6757 ext. 225

**Additional McKinney-Vento contact information**

NC Homeless Education Program

Lisa Phillips, State Coordinator

[lphillip@serve.org](mailto:lphillip@serve.org)

336-543-4285

## APPENDIX 4. ATTACHMENTS

Links to attachments:

[Attachment A McKinney-Vento](#)

[Attachment B Code of Conduct](#)

[Attachment C Service Animal Policy](#)

[Attachment D Available Upon Request](#)

[Attachment E Omitted](#)

[Attachment F Admissions Policy](#)

[Attachment G Athletic Policy](#)

[Attachment H Alcohol and Drug Policy](#)



# **Employee Handbook**

***2025-2026***

## ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK/DISCLAIMER

We prepared this handbook to help employees find answers to many questions they may have regarding their employment with Research Triangle High School (RTHS). Please take the necessary time to read it.

We do not expect this handbook to answer all questions. The school's leadership team and Human Resources also serve as a significant source of information.

Neither this handbook nor any other verbal or written communication by a representative of leadership is, nor should it be, considered to be an agreement, contract of employment, express or implied. Nor is it, nor should it be, a promise of treatment in any particular manner in any given situation, nor does it confer any contractual rights whatsoever. RTHS adheres to the policy of employment-at-will. Employment "at-will" permits either RTHS or the employee to end the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice.

No school representative other than the RTHS Board of Directors may modify at-will status or provide any special arrangement concerning terms or conditions of employment in an individual case or. Any such modification must be in writing and signed by the Board Chair.

Many matters covered by this handbook, such as benefit plan descriptions, are also described in separate RTHS documents. These RTHS documents control any statement made in this handbook or by any member of leadership.

This handbook states only general RTHS guidelines. RTHS may, at any time, in its sole discretion, modify or vary from anything stated in this handbook, with or without notice, except for the rights of the parties to end employment-at-will, which may only be modified by an express written agreement signed by the employee and the RTHS Board of Directors.

This handbook supersedes all prior handbooks. This handbook is intended to comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws and should be construed accordingly.

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## ***Introduction: Mission, Vision, And Values***

We extend a warm and sincere welcome to employees commencing employment with Research Triangle High School (RTHS). For those employees who have been with us, thank you for your service and continued support of RTHS.

The leadership of RTHS is invested in your professional growth and in achieving excellence. Our Board of Directors is a working board with a strong connection and vested interest in supporting our students, faculty, staff, and campus. We pride ourselves on the familial atmosphere of our campus. Additionally, our families and community members are an integral part of our success.

Please familiarize yourself with the policies in this handbook, as it details what you can expect from us and what we expect from you. Please keep our Mission, Vision, and Core Values in mind as you carry out your duties.

### ***Mission***

***To increase access to globally competitive Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education for students and teachers across North Carolina by incubating, proving, and scaling innovative models of teaching and learning.***

### ***Vision***

To provide the tools and develop the capacity for students to intentionally determine their futures.

### ***Guiding Values***

- We are responsive.
- We respect each other.
- We find joy in learning and exploring.
- We provide students with the tools to access power.
- We hold high standards and encourage growth through failure.

### ***Organizational Chart***

## ***Equal Employment Statement***

RTHS is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any applicant, contractor, or employee on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, gender (including actual or perceived gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy/conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), sexual orientation, national origin, veteran status, disability, natural hair style, genetic information or other legally protected status, except where it is an occupational qualification. This policy extends to all terms, conditions, and privileges of employment as well as the use of the school's facilities and participation in all activities sponsored by the school. It is also the school's policy to ensure that all employees are treated equally on the basis of merit and

performance competence with regard to any and all terms and conditions of employment, including recruitment, hiring, compensation, promotions, demotions, assignments, training, layoffs, and terminations.

RTHS seeks to provide an inclusive and supportive environment for our employees, contractors, and applicants. We do not employ quotas or use race, or any class protected by law as a factor in any employment-related decision, including recruitment, hiring, compensation, promotions, demotions, assignments, trainings, layoffs, and terminations. We encourage all employees to be their best selves and care for one another. We believe the more we learn about each other, the better we can serve our students and community.

RTHS complies with all local, state, and federal laws regarding non-discrimination and provides accommodations as required by law, including those under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Pregnancy and Women's Fair Treatment Act (PWFA), and those based on religion. Any questions or requests for accommodations should be directed to RTHS's Human Resource representative: **ALT HR Partners** ([contact@althrpartners.com](mailto:contact@althrpartners.com))

## ***General Standards Of Conduct***

### ***General Regulations & Expectations of All Employees***

1. All employees should be acquainted with the rules, regulations, and policies of RTHS and observe and enforce these in the course of their duties.
2. No adult in charge of students is to leave a classroom duty station or any area unattended for any reason. In cases of emergency, contact the leadership team via Google Chat or secure coverage from another adult.
3. All employees should attend meetings called by the leadership team unless excused prior to the meeting.

### ***Code of Ethics & Standards of Conduct for Educators***

The responsibility to teach, the freedom to learn, and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all are essential to the achievement of these principles. The professional educator acknowledges the worth and dignity of every person and demonstrates the pursuit of truth and devotion to excellence, acquires knowledge, and nurtures democratic citizenship. The educator exemplifies commitment to the teaching and learning processes with accountability to the students, maintains professional growth, exercises professional judgment, and personifies integrity. The educator strives to maintain the respect and confidence of colleagues, students, parents, legal guardians, and the community and serve as an appropriate role model. Please refer to the [NC State Board of Education Policy Manual](#) (NC SBE) for the full policy.

To uphold these commitments, every RTHS educator (licensed and non-licensed) is responsible for the following:

### ***Commitment to our students***

- Protect students from conditions within the educator's control that circumvent learning or are detrimental to the health and safety of students.
- Maintain an appropriate relationship with students in all settings; do not encourage, solicit, or engage in a sexual or romantic relationship with students, nor touch a student inappropriately for personal gratification, with intent to harm, or out of anger.
- Evaluate students and assign grades based on the students' demonstrated competencies and performance.
- Discipline students justly and fairly, and do not deliberately embarrass or humiliate them.
- Hold in confidence information learned in professional practice except for professional reasons or in compliance with pertinent regulations or statutes.
- Refuse to accept significant gifts, favors, or additional compensation that might influence or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.

### ***Commitment to RTHS***

- Utilize available resources to provide a classroom climate conducive to learning and promote learning to the maximum possible extent.
- Acknowledge the diverse views of students, families, legal guardians, and colleagues as they work collaboratively to shape educational goals, policies, and decisions; does not proselytize for personal viewpoints outside the scope of professional practice.
- Accept a position in good faith and do not voluntarily abandon their professional duties without a substantive reason.
- Participate actively in professional decision-making processes and support colleagues' expression of professional opinions and judgments in decision-making processes or due process proceedings.

### ***When acting in an administrative capacity***

- Act fairly, consistently, and prudently in the exercise of authority with colleagues, subordinates, students, parents, and legal guardians.
- Evaluate the work of other educators using appropriate procedures and established statutes and regulations.
- Protect the rights of others in the educational setting, and do not retaliate, coerce, or intentionally intimidate others in exercising rights protected by law.
- Recommend persons for employment, promotion, or transfer according to their professional qualifications, the needs and policies of RTHS, and according to the law.

### ***Commitment to the Profession***

- Provide accurate credentials and information regarding licensure or employment and does not knowingly assist others in providing untruthful information.
- Take action to remedy an observed violation of the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators and promote understanding of the principles of professional ethics.
- Pursue growth and development in the practice of the profession and use that knowledge in improving the educational opportunities, experiences, and performance of students and colleagues.

### ***Purpose & Applicability***

The purpose of these rules is to establish and uphold uniform standards of professional conduct for licensed professional educators throughout the State. These rules shall be binding on every person licensed by the NC SBE, hereinafter referred to as "educator" or "professional educator," and the possible consequences of any willful breach shall include license suspension or revocation. The prohibition of certain conduct in these rules shall not be interpreted as approval of conduct that is not explicitly cited. **RTHS applies these standards to all employees, including, but not limited to, educators (licensed or unlicensed), administrators, and all other staff. The word “educator” shall be interpreted to cover all employees.**

### ***Standards of Professional Conduct***

The standards listed in this Section shall be generally accepted for the education profession and shall be the basis for NC SBE review of the performance of professional educators. These standards shall establish mandatory prohibitions and requirements for educators. Violation of these standards shall subject an educator to investigation and disciplinary action by the SBE and/or RTHS.

All RTHS educators shall adhere to the standards of professional conduct contained in this policy. Any intentional act or omission that violates these standards is prohibited and will be addressed with disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

All RTHS educators shall practice the professional standards of federal, state, and local governing bodies.

### ***Personal Conduct***

The educator shall serve as a positive role model for students, parents/legal guardians, and the community. Because the educator is entrusted with the care and education of small children and adolescents, the educator shall demonstrate a high standard of personal character and conduct.



*Honest*

The educator shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties, including the following:

- Statement of professional qualifications; application or recommendation for professional employment, promotion, or licensure.
- Application or recommendation for college or university admission, scholarship, grant, academic award, or similar benefit.
- Representation of completion of college or staff development credit; evaluation or grading of students or personnel.
- Submission of financial or program compliance reports submitted to state, federal, or other governmental agencies.
- Submission of information during an official inquiry by RTHS or the SBE related to facts of unprofessional conduct, provided, however, that an educator shall be given adequate notice of the allegations and may be represented by legal counsel.
- Submission of information in the course of an investigation by a law enforcement agency, child protective services, or any other agency with the right to investigate, regarding school-related criminal activity; provided, however, that an educator shall be entitled to decline to give evidence to law enforcement if such evidence may tend to incriminate the educator as the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution defines that term.

*Proper Monetary Conduct*

The educator shall not solicit current students or parents/guardians of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator in a private monetary-gain capacity. Unless approved by the Chief School Officer (“CSO”), an educator shall not tutor students currently assigned to the educator's classes for monetary gain. An educator shall not accept any compensation, benefit, or thing of value other than the educator's regular compensation for the performance of any service that the educator is required to render in the course and scope of the educator's employment. This rule shall not restrict the performance of any overtime or supplemental services at the request of RTHS; nor shall it apply to or restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens of minimal value offered and accepted openly from students, parents/guardians, or other persons in recognition or appreciation of service.

*Conduct with Students*

The educator shall treat all students with respect. The educator shall not commit any abusive act or sexual exploitation with, to, or in the presence of a student, whether that student is or has been under the care or supervision of that educator, as defined below:

- Any use of language that is considered profane, vulgar, or demeaning.
- Any sexual act.
- Any solicitation of a sexual act, whether written, verbal, or physical.
- Any act of child abuse, as defined by law.

- Any act of sexual harassment, as defined by law; and any intentional solicitation, encouragement, or consummation of a romantic or physical relationship with a student, or any sexual contact with a student. The term "romantic relationship" shall include dating any student.

#### Confidential Information

The educator shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information regarding students or their family members that has been obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure is required or permitted by law or professional standards or is necessary for the personal safety of the student or others.

#### Rights of Others

The educator shall not willfully or maliciously violate the constitutional or civil rights of a student, parent/legal guardian, or colleague.

#### Required Reports

The educator shall make all reports required by Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes (N.C.G.S.)

#### Alcohol or Controlled Substance Abuse

The educator shall not:

- Be under the influence of, possess, use, or consume on school premises or at a school-sponsored activity a controlled substance as defined by N.C.G.S. § 90-95, the Controlled Substances Act, without a prescription authorizing such use.
- Be under the influence of, possess, use, or consume an alcoholic beverage or a controlled substance on school premises or at a school-sponsored activity.
- Furnish alcohol or a controlled substance to any student except as indicated in the professional duties of administering legally prescribed medications.

#### Compliance with Criminal Laws

The educator shall not commit any act referred to in N.C.G.S. 115C-332 and any felony under the laws of the United States or any state.

#### Public Funds & Property

The educator shall not misuse public funds or property, funds of a school-related organization, or a colleague's funds. The educator shall account for funds collected from students, colleagues, or parents/legal guardians. The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

**Scope of Professional Practice**

The educator shall not perform any act as an employee in a position for which licensure is required by the rules of the NC SBE or by Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes during any period in which the educator's license has been suspended or revoked.

**Conduct Related to Ethical Violations**

The educator shall not directly or indirectly use or threaten to use any official authority or influence in any manner that tends to discourage, restrain, interfere with, coerce, or discriminate against any subordinate or any licensee who in good faith reports, discloses, divulges, or otherwise brings to the attention of RTHS, the NC SBE, or any other public agency authorized to take remedial action, any facts or information relative to an actual or suspected violation of any law regulating the duties of persons serving in the public school system, including but not limited to these rules.

Note that all employees are employed at-will, and RTHS reserves the right to impose whatever disciplinary action it chooses, or none at all, in a particular instance. RTHS will deal with each situation individually, and nothing in this handbook should be construed as a promise of specific treatment in a given situation. However, RTHS will endeavor to utilize progressive discipline but reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to terminate the employee at any time for any reason.

**Testing Code of Ethics**

All testing personnel shall be familiar with the [Testing Code of Ethics](#) regarding the statewide testing programs and shall adhere to it in all aspects of the testing programs. Employees who violate the Testing Code of Ethics are subject to appropriate disciplinary action. The CSO or their designee shall report testing irregularities that affect the validity of the test results to the NC SBE.

**Workplace Conduct**

All RTHS employees hold positions of public trust and are responsible for the education of students and for serving as role models. Each employee is also responsible for the integrity and consequences of their actions. The highest standards of honesty, integrity, and fairness must be exhibited by each employee when engaging in any activity concerning the school, particularly in relationships with students, parents/legal guardians, fellow employees, vendors, suppliers, and the public. Employee conduct should be to protect the person's integrity and/or reputation and that of RTHS. Every employee is expected to have an unswerving commitment to honorable behavior. Integrity can support inadvertent error and the honest difference of opinion; it cannot support deceit or subordination of principle.

Employees must perform their jobs competently and ethically without violating public trust or applicable law, policies, or regulations. It is not practical or possible to enumerate all situations

that might fall under the guidelines of this policy. In addition to other policies, regulations, and approved practices that have been established covering specific areas of activity (such as purchasing), the absence of a law, policy, or regulation covering a particular situation does not relieve an employee from the responsibility of consistently exercising the highest ethical standards.

Because everyone may not have the same idea about proper workplace conduct, it is helpful to adopt and enforce rules all can follow. Unacceptable conduct may subject the offender to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in RTHS's sole discretion. The following are examples of some, but not all, conduct that can be considered unacceptable:

- Obtaining employment on the basis of false or misleading information.
- Stealing, removing, or defacing RTHS property or a co-worker's property, and/or disclosure of confidential information.
- Completing another employee's time records.
- Violation of safety rules and policies.
- Violation of RTHS's Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy.
- Fighting, threatening, or disrupting the work of others or other violations of RTHS's Workplace Violence Policy.
- Failure to follow the lawful instructions of a supervisor.
- Failure to perform assigned job duties.
- Violation of the Punctuality and Attendance Policy, including but not limited to irregular attendance, habitual lateness, or unexcused absences.
- Violation of RTHS's financial policies and procedures.
- Willful or careless destruction or damage to RTHS assets or the equipment or possessions of another employee.
- Wasting work materials.
- Performing work of a personal nature during working time.
- Violation of the Solicitation and Distribution Policy.
- Violation of RTHS's Harassment or Equal Employment Opportunity Policies.
- Violating safety or boundary rules
- Inappropriate conduct or communication with students or minors.

Not every type of misconduct can be listed. Note that all employees are employed at-will, and RTHS reserves the right to impose whatever discipline it chooses, or none, in a particular instance. RTHS will deal with each situation individually, and nothing in this handbook should be construed as a promise of specific treatment in each situation. RTHS will, however, endeavor to utilize progressive discipline but reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to terminate the employee at any time for any reason.

The observance of these rules will help to ensure that our workplace remains a safe and desirable place to work.

### ***Drug-Free & Alcohol-Free Workplace***

To help ensure a safe, healthy, and productive work environment for our employees and others, to protect RTHS property, and to ensure efficient operations, RTHS has adopted a policy of maintaining a workplace free of drugs and alcohol. This policy applies to all employees and other individuals who perform work for RTHS.

The unlawful or unauthorized use, abuse, solicitation, theft, possession, transfer, purchase, sale, or distribution of controlled substances (including medical marijuana), drug paraphernalia, or alcohol by any individual anywhere on RTHS premises, while on RTHS business (whether or not on RTHS premises) or while representing RTHS, is strictly prohibited. Employees and other individuals who work for RTHS also are prohibited from reporting to work or working while they are under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substances which may impact the employee's ability to perform their job or otherwise pose safety concerns, except when the user is under a licensed medical practitioner's instructions, and the licensed medical practitioner authorized the employee or individual to report to work. However, this exception does not extend any right to report to work under the influence of any drug which may impair an employee's ability to safely and competently perform their job or a positive drug test and includes but is not limited to medical marijuana, Delta 8, Delta 9, prescription drugs, psilocybin, opioids, and benzodiazepines, except as permitted by and under applicable law. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

RTHS maintains a policy of non-discrimination. It will endeavor to make reasonable accommodations to assist individuals recovering from substance and alcohol dependencies and those who have a medical history that reflects treatment for substance abuse conditions. However, employees may not request accommodation to avoid discipline for a policy violation. We encourage employees to seek assistance before their substance abuse or alcohol misuse renders them unable to perform the essential functions of their jobs or jeopardizes the health and safety of any RTHS employee, including themselves. For further information, please refer to the School's ADA policy.

Employees must notify RTHS within five calendar days if they are charged with, plead guilty to, or are convicted of a criminal drug or alcohol-related violation.

All employees are advised that full compliance with the preceding policy shall be a condition of employment at RTHS.

Any employee who violates the preceding drug-free workplace policy described above shall be subject to discipline up to and including immediate termination.

At the discretion of RTHS, any employee who violates the drug-free workplace policy may be required, in connection with or in place of disciplinary sanctions, to participate to RTHS's satisfaction in an approved drug assistance or rehabilitation program.

To maintain a drug-free workplace, RTHS has established a drug-free awareness program to educate employees on the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, our drug-free workplace policy, the availability of any drug-free counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs, and the penalties that may be imposed for violations of our drug-free workplace policy. Such education may include: (1) distribution of our drug-free workplace policy at the employment interview; (2) a discussion of our policy at the new employee orientation session; (3) distribution of a list of approved drug assistance agencies, organizations, and clinics; (4) distribution of published educational materials regarding the dangers of drug abuse; (5) reorientation of all involved employees in cases in which a drug-related accident or incident occurs; (6) inclusion of the policy in employee handbooks and any other personnel policy publications; (7) lectures or training by local drug abuse assistance experts; (8) discussion by RTHS's safety experts on the hazards associated with drug abuse; and (9) videotape presentations on the dangers of drug abuse.)

### **Title VI**

No person shall, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of the School in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. This means that the School does not advantage any one racial or ethnic group over another or use racial/ethnic stereotypes. Further, the School recognizes that Title VI protection covers students who are or are perceived to be Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, or other groups that are or are perceived to: 1) share ancestry or ethnic characteristics; or 2) have citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity. Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin against students of any religion when the discrimination, for example:

- involves racial, ethnic, or ancestral slurs or stereotypes;
- is based on a student's skin color, physical features, or style of dress that reflects both ethnic and religious traditions; or is based on the country or region where a student is from or is perceived to have come from, including, for example, discrimination based on a student's accent or name, a student's limited English proficiency, or a student speaking a language other than English.

Please see the School's Policies Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination, which govern complaints alleging Title VI violations.

General inquiries regarding Title VI compliance and appeal procedures may be directed to the Title VI Coordinator. The Title VI Coordinator is **Akiba Griffin**.

The Title VI Coordinator may be contacted by email, telephone, or mail as follows:

Email: [agriffin@rthighschool.org](mailto:agriffin@rthighschool.org)

Telephone: (919) 998-6757 x215

Mail: 3106 NC Hwy 54 E; Durham, NC 27713

### ***Prohibition Against Harassment and Discrimination***

RTHS is committed to having a community in which every individual is treated with sensitivity and respect, and in which each student and staff member has an equal opportunity to work, learn, and develop to his or her full potential in an atmosphere free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. To that end, the School complies with all applicable anti-discrimination laws, including Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, and prohibits any form of harassment or discrimination (including sexual harassment) on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, pregnancy/conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth, or other protected characteristic, whether by a supervisor, administrator, co-worker, volunteer, contractor, student, or non-employee. Discrimination on the basis of sex includes discrimination on the basis of sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

The purpose of this policy is not to regulate our employees' morality, but to ensure that each employee is able to accomplish his or her job without being subjected to harassment. We do not permit any harassment in the workplace, including while on RTHS premises, while on RTHS business (whether or not on RTHS premises) or while representing RTHS. In addition to being a violation of this policy, harassment or retaliation based on any protected characteristic as defined by applicable federal, state, or local laws is also unlawful. For example, sexual harassment and retaliation against an individual because the individual filed a complaint of sexual harassment or because an individual aided, assisted, or testified in an investigation or proceeding involving a complaint of sexual harassment, as defined by applicable federal, state, or local laws, are unlawful.

### ***Harassment and Discrimination Defined***

Discrimination involves intentionally treating anyone in an unequal or disparate manner because of that person's inherent or natural personal characteristics, including race, color, national origin, religion, gender (including actual or perceived gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy/conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran status, any other protected class, or participation in a protected activity, when such



treatment causes the victim to suffer adverse educational, employment, or other school-related consequences.

Harassment generally is defined in this policy as unwelcome verbal, visual, or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual because of any actual or perceived protected characteristic or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. Harassment can be verbal (including slurs, jokes, insults, epithets, gestures, or teasing), visual (including offensive posters, symbols, cartoons, drawings, computer displays, text messages, social media posts, or e-mails), or physical conduct (including physically threatening another, blocking someone's way, etc.). Harassment includes, but is not limited to the following: slurs, epithets, threats, derogatory comments, unwelcome or abusive jokes, insults, name calling, threats, bullying or intimidation, unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct such as uninvited touching or sexually related comments or the exchange of benefits for performance of sexual or other favors. Such conduct violates this policy, even if it does not rise to the level of a violation of applicable federal, state, or local laws. Because it is challenging to define unlawful harassment, employees are expected to behave at all times consistent with this policy's intended purpose.

Other conduct that can be unlawful harassment includes verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct that shows aversion, denigration, or hostility because of race, color, religion, national origin, gender (including actual or perceived gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy/conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), age, disability, sexual orientation, or other protected classification and that:

- Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment;
- Unreasonably interferes with an individual's work; or
- Adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

### ***Sexual Harassment Defined***

No employee, student, volunteer, or contractor shall engage in sexual harassment against any other student, employee, or other person in the School community. Sexual harassment can include all of the above actions, as well as other unwelcome conduct, such as unwelcome or unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, conversations regarding sexual activities, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to that conduct or those advances/requests is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; or
- submission to or rejection of the conduct or advances/requests by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or
- the conduct or advances/requests have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.



Examples of conduct that violate this policy include:

- Unwelcome flirtations, leering, whistling, touching, pinching, assault, blocking normal movement;
- Requests for sexual favors or demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment;
- Obscene or vulgar gestures, posters, or comments;
- Sexual jokes or comments about a person's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies;
- Propositions or suggestive or insulting comments of a sexual nature;
- Derogatory cartoons, posters, and drawings;
- Sexually explicit e-mails, text messages, or voicemails;
- Uninvited touching of a sexual nature;
- Unwelcome sexually related comments;
- Conversation about one's own or someone else's sex life;
- Conduct or comments consistently targeted at only one gender, even if the content is not sexual; and
- Teasing or other conduct directed toward a person because of the person's gender, which includes gender identity, or sexual orientation.

### ***Hostile Work Environment/ Sexual Harassment***

A hostile environment exists if the conduct of a sexual nature is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program or creates a hostile or abusive educational or work environment.

Romantic or sexual advances toward students by employees or romantic or sexual relationships between school employees and students are always prohibited in all circumstances. RTHS employees are prohibited from engaging in romantic or other inappropriate relationships with students and are required to report such relationships or reasonable suspicions thereof to the CSO or any other member of the Leadership Team with whom they feel comfortable. Procedures established by RTHS for reporting suspected sexual harassment shall be followed in any instances involving such conduct.

Either men or women can be sexually harassed by someone of the same or opposite sex, and the law protects both sexes equally from this discrimination. This policy applies to sexual harassment by staff, students, volunteers, vendors, and service providers of either gender against someone of the same or opposite gender.

### ***Cyber-Harassment***

The School prohibits cyber-harassment. Cyber-harassment is any words, actions, or conduct that meet the definitions of harassing behavior described in this policy and are conveyed via e-mail, text message, Internet message boards, interactions on social media, or other electronic media.

## ***Retaliation***

RTHS prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of discrimination or harassment or who participates in an investigation as a witness or complainant, or in any other capacity. Employees should report any such retaliation to the administrator/director with whom they feel comfortable. This policy, however, shall not be used to bring frivolous or malicious complaints.

## ***Procedure for Complaints of Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Under Title VI and Title VII***

- Any person who believes they have been the victim of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, or retaliation should immediately discuss and report to his or her direct supervisor, the CSO, the Human Resources representative, or another supervisor. While the person should report sexual harassment to the CSO, there is no requirement to report sexual harassment, discrimination, or retaliation to a particular supervisor.
- Any supervisor receiving a complaint of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, or retaliation shall report such complaint to the CSO. If the CSO is the subject of such a complaint, the supervisor shall report to the Chair of the Board of Directors or any other Board member that the supervisor believes is appropriate.
- Any complaint made under this policy will be investigated thoroughly and promptly. To the maximum extent possible, RTHS will protect the privacy of the parties involved.
- Any attempt to interfere with or influence the investigation of a harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, or retaliation complaint is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.
- There will be no adverse action against an employee who acts in good faith and reports an incident or who participates in or cooperates with an investigation of an alleged incident.

## ***Disciplinary Action***

Any individual found to have engaged in harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. In addition, some forms of sexual harassment, such as sexual relations between an adult and a minor, may violate criminal laws. RTHS will cooperate with local authorities in the investigation of any alleged criminal activity.

## ***Confidentiality of Records***

RTHS will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of the parties involved in the investigation of a sexual harassment, discrimination, and retaliation complaint. All written materials related to the investigation of allegations of harassment will be placed in confidential files, which are separate from student and personnel records. Reasonable efforts will

be taken to ensure that access to these records is limited to those persons with a need to know. However, RTHS will comply with any state or federal law that requires disclosure.

### ***Unlawful Harassment/Discrimination on School Grounds by Contractors, Volunteers or Individuals Who Are Not School Employees***

The policies contained in this section, including the reporting procedures and no retaliation policy, regarding harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination, shall also apply to contractors, volunteers or individuals who are not employees of RTHS when such individuals are on school property or during school events.

#### **Implementation: Information and Education/Training**

- This policy will be distributed to all employees and will be discussed as part of the staff orientation at the beginning of each school year.
- The CSO is authorized and expected to establish training and administrative procedures to help eliminate discrimination and harassment, and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all individuals.
- This policy will be included in the School's Operation and Board Policy Manual, and a summary policy will be included in the Student/Family Handbook, which is sent to families and students at the beginning of each school year.

***For Non-Title IX Harassment and Discrimination, see Attachment A***

***For Title IX Harassment and Discrimination, see Attachment B***

### ***Disability Accommodation***

The School complies with the Americans with Disability Act and Amendments. RTHS is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities, those regarded as having disabilities, and those associated with individuals with disabilities. Accordingly, RTHS does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training, or any other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. RTHS complies with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons with disabilities, including the ADA and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAA), and acts in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

### ***Eligibility of Accommodations***

RTHS will engage in an interactive process to find reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with a disability to enable them to perform the essential functions of a job, unless doing so causes an undue hardship to the School, or a direct threat to these individuals or others in the workplace, and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation.

When an individual with a disability requests accommodation and can be reasonably accommodated without creating undue hardship or causing a direct threat to workplace safety, they will be given the same consideration for employment as any other employee or applicant. All employees are required to comply with RTHS standards. Current employees who pose a direct threat to the health and safety of themselves or other individuals in the workplace will be placed on appropriate leave until RTHS can make a lawful and reasonable decision regarding continued employment.

Individuals who are active illegal drug users are excluded from coverage under RTHS's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy.

Applicants and employees are assured that all information regarding a disability shall be kept confidential except that:

- Appropriate supervisors may be informed regarding restrictions on the work or duties of disabled employees and any accommodations that have been made; and
- Government officials investigating compliance with federal laws may be informed.

All employees with responsibilities that may require knowledge of disabilities are advised to treat the knowledge with confidentiality.

### ***Implementation of Education/Training on Harassment and Disability***

This policy will be distributed to all employees at the beginning of each school year via the Employee Handbook. The CSO or their designee is responsible for implementing this policy, including requests for and resolution of reasonable accommodations, safety and direct threat determinations, and undue hardship issues. Additionally, the CSO or their designee is authorized to establish training and administrative procedures to help eliminate discrimination and harassment, and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all individuals. All requests for reasonable accommodations should be presented to the CSO in person or via e-mail, and request such accommodation.


Any employee or job applicant who believes that they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability should immediately bring the problem to the attention of their supervisor/administrator, or any other supervisor/administrator with whom the individual feels comfortable, including the CSO. A supervisor or administrator receiving a complaint under this policy regarding the CSO should report it to the Board Chair or any other Director with whom they feel comfortable. No applicant or employee will be subject to coercion, intimidation, interference, discrimination, or retaliation for registering a complaint or for assisting in an investigation of any alleged violation of laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability.

Violation of this policy, including improper retaliatory conduct, will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **Religious Accommodations**

RTHS respects the religious beliefs and practices of all employees and will make, upon request, accommodation for such observances when reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship on the School's operations.

### Requesting Religious Accommodation

An employee whose religious beliefs or practices conflict with his or her job, work schedule, or with policy or practice on dress and appearance, or with other aspects of employment, and who seeks religious accommodation must contact RTHS's Human Resources representative (ALT  Partners; contact@althrpartners.com) to make a formal request. The written request will include the type of religious conflict that exists and the employee's suggested accommodation. If the request is for an absence, the employee shall provide at least two weeks' notice.

### Providing Religious Accommodation

The employee's supervisor will work with Human Resources to evaluate the request, considering whether a work conflict exists due to a sincerely held religious belief or practice and whether accommodation is available that is reasonable and that would not create an undue hardship. In making these decisions, supervisors will consider such factors as business necessity, financial costs, and expenses, and resulting personnel problems. An accommodation may be a change in job, using paid leave or leave without pay, allowing an exception to the dress and appearance code that does not affect safety or uniform requirements, or for other aspects of employment.

The employee's supervisor will meet with him or her to discuss the request and the decision on the accommodation. If the employee accepts the proposed religious accommodation, then the accommodation will be implemented. If the employee rejects the proposed accommodation, he or she may appeal the decision and provide another alternative and will evaluate the alternative and make a decision on whether it can be honored provided there is not an undue hardship on the school's operations.

It is the policy of RTHS to comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons requesting religious accommodation. Furthermore, it is our policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals requesting religious accommodation in regard to application procedures, hiring advancement, discharge, compensation, training, or other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

## **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act**

### ***The Pregnancy Workers Fairness Act, and The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers Act***

RTHS fully complies with The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) and provides reasonable accommodations to employees with known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

Examples of potential reasonable accommodations include:

- the ability to sit, stand, or drink water;
- closer parking;

- additional break time to use the bathroom, eat, and rest;
- unpaid leave or time off to recover from childbirth; and
- limitations on strenuous activity.

Employees covered by this policy should follow the process set forth in the School's Americans with Disabilities Act policy to request reasonable accommodations. It is prohibited for adverse action to be taken against a covered employee on account of requesting or using reasonable accommodation.

If the need for a particular accommodation is not obvious, an employee may be asked to include reasonable documentation which:

- confirms the physical or mental condition;
- confirms that the physical or mental condition is related to, affected by, or arising out of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions (the "limitation"); and
- states that reasonable accommodation is needed due to the limitation.

The School will not require an employee to accept any accommodation without engaging in the interactive process to accurately understand the employee's limitations and explore potential accommodations. The School is not required to provide any accommodation that would constitute an undue hardship on the School, meaning significant difficulty or expense for the School.

### ***FLSA and the PUMP Act for Nursing Mothers***

In accordance with the **Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)**, RTHS provides reasonable break time to any covered employee to express breast milk for their nursing child for one year after the child's birth, each time such employee has a need to express the milk. As such, for up to one year after the child's birth, any employee who is breastfeeding will be provided with reasonable break times to express breast milk. In addition, the School fully complies with **The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers Act** ("The PUMP Act"), which provides that nursing employees are entitled to a place to pump at work, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public.

Employees are required to discuss their lactation schedule with their supervisor and/or the CSO. Lactation breaks should be scheduled to minimize disruptions to student learning.

Any breast milk stored in the refrigerator must be labeled with the name of the employee and the date of expressing the breast milk. Any nonconforming products stored in the refrigerator may be disposed of. Employees storing milk in the refrigerator assume all responsibility for the safety of the milk and the risk of harm for any reason, including improper storage, refrigeration, and tampering.

Please contact the front office staff for more information on the location of the private lactation area.

### ***Genetic Information***

RTHS prohibits discrimination against employees based on genetic information. It does not seek to collect genetic information through any of its policies or programs, and employees should not provide genetic information, including family medical history, to RTHS for any reason.

### ***Use of Social Media and Electronic Resources***

All employees are required to conduct themselves in their online interactions with students, families, and co-workers according to the same professional standard of behavior demanded in in-person interactions. All employees are reminded of their responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of personal information about students and families.

At RTHS, we understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers worldwide. However, the use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for the appropriate use of social media.

This policy applies to all persons who work or volunteer for RTHS.

### ***Faculty Use of Social Networking Sites***

RTHS respects the right of employees to use social media and networking sites, as well as personal websites and blogs, but it is essential that employees' personal use of these sites does not damage the School's reputation, its employees, or its students or their families. Employees should exercise care in setting appropriate boundaries between their personal and public online behavior, understanding that what is private in the digital world often can become public, even without their knowledge or consent. The School strongly encourages all employees to carefully review the privacy settings on any social media and networking sites they use and exercise care and good judgment when posting content and information on such sites.

When using a personal social media site, an employee shall not include current students as "friends," "followers," or any other similar terminology used by various sites. If an employee maintains or participates in a RTHS-sponsored online community that extends to persons who are students, families, alumni, or other constituents, they must exercise good judgment about any content that is shared on the site. Additionally, employees should adhere to the following guidelines, which are consistent with the School's workplace standards on harassment, student relationships, conduct, professional communication, and confidentiality:



- An employee should not make statements that would violate any of RTHS's policies, including its policies concerning discrimination or harassment.
- The employee must uphold the school's value of respect for the individual and avoid making defamatory statements about the School, its employees, its students, or their families.
- An employee may not disclose any confidential information of the school or confidential information obtained during their employment, about any individuals or organizations, including students and/or their families.
- All postings (including comments, likes and other online communication) shall be consistent with the North Carolina Educators Code of Ethics, as well as any laws, regulations or rules pertaining to educators, professionals and public school employees.

If RTHS believes that an employee's activity on a social networking site, social media site, blog, or personal website may violate school policies, the school may request that the employee cease such activity. Depending on the severity of the incident, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### ***Guidelines Regarding Electronic Communication and Social Media***

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating, blogging, podcasting, or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity Web site, Web bulletin board, blogs, or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with RTHS, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

Employees should refrain from using social media during work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related, as authorized by your supervisor or consistent with all RTHS policies. Do not use school email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use. School email should only be used for School purposes and your work at the School.

The same principles and guidelines are found in RTHS's policies, and these fundamental beliefs apply to your activities online. You are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow workers, or otherwise adversely affects students, families, suppliers, volunteers, or people who work on behalf of RTHS or RTHS's legitimate business/education interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.



*Know and Follow the Rules*

Carefully read the Employee Handbook guidelines, including the communications policy, confidentiality policy, RTHS's non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, obscenity, remarks not aligned with the School's mission/purpose, those that raise safety concerns, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

*Be Respectful*

Always be fair, kind, and courteous to fellow teachers or staff, volunteers, students, families, suppliers, or people who work on behalf of the School. Also, remember that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our open-door policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating, that disparage students, family members, volunteers, staff, or vendors, or that might constitute discrimination, harassment, or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion, or any other status protected by law or School policy.

*Be Honest and Accurate*

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about RTHS, board members, fellow workers, students, families, volunteers, suppliers, and people working on behalf of RTHS.

*Post Only Appropriate and Respectful Content*

- Maintain the confidentiality of private or confidential information. Such information may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, information, and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal business/School-related confidential communications. Do not post information about individual students or families and be sure to maintain confidentiality, as is protected and required under state or federal law.
- Do not create a link from your blog, website, or other social networking site to a RTHS website without identifying yourself as an employee or volunteer of the School.

- Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for RTHS. If RTHS is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee or volunteer and make it clear that your views do not represent those of RTHS, fellow workers, families, students, suppliers, or people working on behalf of RTHS. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with RTHS, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the School. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Research Triangle High School."

### *Student Pictures and Information*

Employees and volunteers shall not take any pictures of students unless directed to by an administrator, the student's family member or guardian, or as part of a school/class project. In addition, employees and volunteers shall not post any pictures of students on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or any other form of social media or on the internet unless the CSO or designee has approved such posting. This applies to all School functions, whether or not conducted on school property, including field trips. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit a family member or guardian from taking and posting pictures of their child, provided no other students are featured in such pictures.

The school reserves the right to post pictures and images of current and former students on its website, official Facebook page or for any other official purpose. Family members or guardians who do not wish to allow RTHS to use their child's picture or image must notify the school via the Enrollment and Re-Enrollment forms. RTHS employees cannot accept a verbal change to the selection made on the Enrollment Forms.

### ***Restrictions on the Use of Social Media and Other Electronic Communications***

Absent specific advance approval for legitimate instructional purposes only, employees shall use RTHS's communications networks (school-affiliated email, ParentSquare, or school-owned phones), not social media, texting personal phone number or personal email, when communicating electronically in their roles as employees with students, families, and/or other employees.

Requests for the use of social media for legitimate instructional purposes should follow these guidelines:

- All requests for the use of social media for instructional purposes must be approved by the Chief Operations Officer (COO).
- All approved social media shall be devoted solely to educational uses.
- All approved social media shall be available to all students in the class for which the use is approved.

- Personnel who request social media approval for instructional purposes shall understand that the posts and site may be monitored by RTHS administrators.

Employees shall always maintain appropriate and professional relationships with students, including but not limited to any electronic communications. **Employees shall not “friend,” “follow,” or interact with students on social media. Employees shall not post any videos or content on social media, including but not limited to Facebook, TikTok, or Instagram, which would identify RTHS or RTHS staff, RTHS families or students, or RTHS volunteers. Employees shall not text or email with students or families except through RTHS’s email system or server on RTHS devices, and such communications must be school related. Any violation of this policy may result in immediate termination.**

Employees shall not knowingly permit students to access any words, images, or other content they have posted or maintained on social media that would not be appropriate to share or discuss with students at school. Employees shall take reasonable precautions, including but not limited to the use of available privacy or security settings, to keep students from accessing such content, regardless of whether that content was posted by the employees themselves or by others given access by employees.

Employees shall not use social media to post or convey information about students that is deemed confidential under any applicable law or policy. Employees shall not use social media to post or convey information about confidential personnel matters. Employees shall be respectful and professional in all electronic communications directed to or referencing families, students, and/or other employees, including but not limited to communications through social media. Employees shall not use social media or other forms of electronic communication in violation of any other RTHS policies or administrative regulations. Employees shall not use social media in a manner that adversely affects their ability to perform their job duties.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### ***Personal & School-Provided Electronic Devices***

RTHS-provided electronic devices, including laptops, tablets, and other related equipment, should be used primarily for business purposes. Employees are expected to keep any school-provided device stored securely, and if taken off campus, they should never be left in a vehicle unattended. Employees are expected to take reasonable security precautions to protect such equipment from theft, misuse, or loss. Employees are responsible for protecting and securing confidential information, such as student information, when using School-provided devices off campus.

Employees have no reasonable expectation of privacy regarding the use of such devices, and all use is subject to monitoring, to the maximum extent permitted by applicable law. This includes, as permitted, the right to monitor personal communications, as necessary. All communications using school-owned accounts or devices are the property of RTHS.

Employees are only authorized to use school-provided electronic devices for School-related activities. Employees may not use their personal devices for School-related activity unless written approval is received from their supervisor and the CSO. These employees should work with the IT department to configure their electronic devices for business use. Employees are not permitted to use the School email or other accounts for non-school purposes. Employees should not use their School email as their personal email. Employees are not permitted to forward or otherwise send schoolwork emails or information to non-school electronic accounts, absent extraordinary circumstances or with written approval from the CSO.

Communications sent via a personal electronic device may also be subject to monitoring if sent through RTHS's networks. RTHS reserves the right to immediately inspect and/or review any electronic device used for school-related activity upon request. Any school-related activity conducted using either school-provided electronic devices or personal devices used for school-related activity is the property of RTHS and may be used for any lawful purpose. All electronic devices must be provided immediately for inspection and review upon request.

All conversations, text messages, and emails must be professional. When sending a text message or using an electronic device for business purposes, whether a RTHS-provided or personal device, employees must comply with applicable RTHS guidelines, including policies on sexual harassment, discrimination, conduct, confidentiality, equipment use, and operation of vehicles. Using an RTHS-issued electronic device to send or receive personal text messages is prohibited at all times, and personal use during working hours should be limited to emergency situations.

If employees who use a personal electronic device for business separate from the School for any reason, including but not limited to resignation or termination, they will be required to submit the device to the IT department for resetting on or before their last day of work, absent extraordinary circumstances. At that time, the IT department will reset and remove all information from the device, including but not limited to, RTHS information, student information, and personal data (such as contacts, e-mails, and photographs). The IT department will make efforts to provide employees with the personal data in another form (e.g., on a disk) to the extent practicable; however, the employee may lose some or all personal data saved on the device.

Employees may not use their personal electronic device for business unless they agree to submit the device to the IT department on or before their last day of work to reset and remove RTHS information. This ensures all RTHS information is removed from the device at the time of

termination. The removal of RTHS information is crucial to ensure compliance with RTHS's confidentiality and proprietary information policies and objectives.

Please note that whether employees use their personal electronic device or a RTHS-issued device, RTHS's electronic communications policies, including but not limited to, proper use of communications and computer systems, remain in effect. Any devices that use the School's network, including school property and personal property approved for school use, are subject to search at any time with or without notice for any reason not unlawful.

### ***Use of Communications & Computer Systems***

RTHS's communication and computer systems are intended primarily for business purposes; however, limited personal usage is permitted if it does not hinder the performance of job duties or violate any other RTHS policy. This includes voicemail, e-mail, and Internet systems. However, users have no legitimate expectation of privacy regarding their use of RTHS systems, whether such use is for business or personal use.

RTHS may access voicemail, chat, and e-mail systems and obtain communications within the systems, including past voicemail and e-mail messages, without notice to users of the system, in the ordinary course of business when RTHS deems it appropriate to do so. The reasons for which the School may obtain such access include, but are not limited to: maintaining the system; preventing or investigating allegations of system abuse or misuse; assuring compliance with software copyright laws; Human Resource purposes (including investigations and disciplinary matters), complying with legal and regulatory requests for information; upon advice of the School's advisors or direction of RTHS's Board of Directors; and ensuring that RTHS operations continue appropriately during the employee's absence.

Further, RTHS may review Internet usage to ensure that such use of RTHS property, or communications sent via the Internet with RTHS property, are appropriate. The reasons for which the school may review employees' use of the Internet with RTHS property include, but are not limited to: maintaining the system; preventing or investigating allegations of system abuse or misuse; assuring compliance with software copyright laws; complying with legal and regulatory requests for information; upon advice of the School's advisors or direction of School's board of directors, for Human Resource purposes, and ensuring that RTHS operations continue appropriately during the employee's absence.

RTHS may store electronic communications for a period of time after the communication is created. From time to time, copies of communications may be deleted. RTHS's policies prohibiting harassment, in their entirety, apply to the use of RTHS's communication and computer systems. No one may use any communication or computer system in a manner that may be construed by others as harassing or offensive based on race, national origin, sex, sexual

orientation, age, disability, religious beliefs, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. Further, since RTHS's communication and computer systems are intended for business use, all employees, upon request, must inform the Director of Information Technology of any private access codes or passwords. Unauthorized duplication of copyrighted computer software violates the law and is strictly prohibited. No employee may access or attempt to obtain access to another employee's computer systems without appropriate authorization.

Violators of any provision in this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### ***Electronic Devices Use While Driving***

Employees who drive on RTHS business must abide by all state or local laws prohibiting or limiting electronic device (cell phone or personal digital assistant) use while driving. Regardless of state or local laws, employees may only use electronic devices in hands-free mode. Employees may not review or send text messages, chats, or email for any reason while driving. Regardless of the circumstances, including slow or stopped traffic, if any use is permitted while driving, employees should limit their calls unless necessary or required by RTHS. Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their electronic devices while driving on school business will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions. Under no circumstances should employees feel that they must place themselves at risk to fulfill business needs.

For any employee who transports children, such employees are never permitted to use a cell phone while driving. Texting, sending chats, emailing, and other uses of a cell phone while driving is prohibited in all circumstances. Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their electronic devices while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions.

### ***Camera Phones/Recording Devices***

**Students:** To foster a supportive school environment and to comply with laws pertaining to student confidentiality, except as set forth below, the RTHS prohibits employees from audio or visual recording of students (except their own children) without the CSO's prior approval, including:

- in their classrooms;
- at on-campus or off-campus school-organized events; and
- during face-to-face, virtual, or telephone meetings, or conversations.

**Employees:** RTHS expects that faculty, students, and staff will respect the privacy rights of other individuals in the workplace and educational setting. This helps promote the freedom to share ideas and to respect the privacy rights of staff and the school community members, including students. As such, RTHS prohibits the secret or open recording (audio or visual) of



formal or informal meetings or conversations with anyone, including but not limited to co-workers, employees, volunteers, board member, advisors, and/or contractor, while at school, on the phone, over video conference (i.e. Zoom, Teams, Google Meet) or a school event. Employees are also prohibited from arranging for others to record conversations, telephone calls or other work or educational activities.

**Recording:** Allowed only with pre-approved written permission from the CSO:

- All recordings must serve pre-approved legitimate academic and workplace purposes.
- Classes for studying or assignment purposes may be recorded by staff or by a student in the class for personal use with the prior consent of only the class instructor.
- Class participants should be informed when a class may be recorded. However, staff should not disclose the identity of students recording classes under an accommodation.
- Class recordings by students may not be downloaded to any computer, uploaded to the internet, or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published without the further, prior written consent of school.
- Video or audio recordings shall not be publicly shared, such as on the internet or in public viewings, without the written consent of those being recorded.
- Surveillance cameras/equipment and software may be placed on campus by authorized campus personnel to prevent or deter crimes and protect public safety and to facilitate official School investigations into criminal activities or violations of campus policy.
- The CSO may make exceptions to this policy when appropriate to protect the School.

It will be a violation of this policy to download recorded conversations to a computer, upload them to the internet, or otherwise share, transmit or publish such recordings without the prior written consent of all participants.

Violation of North Carolina Law may lead to criminal sanctions and/or exposure to civil liability. Within RTHS, violation of this policy by a student may lead to disciplinary action. Violation of the policy by an employee may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment with RTHS.

This provisional section applies only to employees, not the School or Board of Directors.

If the recording of students is approved, RTHS is responsible for making families aware of the following:

- Family member or guardian consent is required to have a child appear in video and other photography media used on campus for educational purposes. Only children's images are used, and no descriptors identifying individual families are released. Occasionally, photos of children will be used to publicize the RTHS program.

- If a videotape is needed for a presentation at a professional conference or used as part of a professional portfolio, only students whose family members have signed the RTHS Photography/Videotape permission form are included.
- If videotaping is part of a research study, no child will participate unless family or guardian consent is given for the specific project.

***Relationships with Students:*** Romantic or sexual advances toward students by employees, agents, or others subject to this policy, or romantic or sexual relationships between these individuals and students are never appropriate, whether or not they are perceived as consensual. The School expects all School employees to always conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner. Relationships between staff and students that include “dating,” “courtship,” or “romantic involvement” are strictly prohibited. Violation of this policy is subject to immediate termination, as well as possible reports to law enforcement and licensing bodies.

The School strongly encourages staff members to set their social media profiles to private, including Facebook and Instagram. Employees are not permitted to allow students to follow or friend them on social media unless they are a relative of the employee. Employees are never to initiate contact with students or families on social media or text. The School prohibits engaging individual students and family members via non-School platforms. Engaging with students or families via personal email, personal phone, social media, or text will result in disciplinary action.

See also RTHS’ social media policy.

## ***Workplace Environment***

### ***Weapons***

Weapons are expressly prohibited on school grounds or during school events. Weapons are defined as firearms, knives, destructive devices, and/or any item (regardless of its nature) used to threaten or cause actual harm.

### ***Drug and Alcohol Use***

RTHS is dedicated to maintaining a safe educational environment. Thus, RTHS has implemented a drug and alcohol-free school policy, which prohibits anyone from being under the influence of alcohol or illegal/misused drugs on school grounds or attending a School-related event.

Alcoholic beverages are never to be consumed on School grounds or during field trips. Alcoholic beverages are never to be consumed in vehicles of transportation owned or operated on behalf of the School, or by their drivers, while they are responsible for the operation of such vehicles. The use, sale, transfer, or possession of alcohol, e-cigarettes, vaping devices, illegal drugs, hallucinogens, stimulants, sedatives, controlled substances, or drug paraphernalia on School



property, at School events, or on field trips is prohibited. This includes the misuse of prescription drugs, including medical marijuana, or any mood-altering substances while on RTHS property, at a school event, on field trips, or in circumstances the school believes will adversely affect RTHS's operation or safety.

### ***Student Drug and Alcohol Policy***

RTHS is a tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free campus. Any possession, use, or sale of these substances is strictly prohibited. Possession of these substances with the intent to distribute or sell will result in possible expulsion. Drug paraphernalia, whether possessed for use or with the intent to sell or distribute, will be seen as an attempt to promote the distribution and use of illegal drugs and will result in suspension or expulsion.

A student's involvement with alcohol or other drugs can interfere not only with his or her academic and co-curricular activities, but also with the student's emotional, physical, mental, and social development. It is the board's goal to create a supportive, drug-free school environment. Unauthorized or illegal drugs and alcohol are a threat to safe and orderly schools and will not be tolerated. Students and their families are encouraged to voluntarily seek help with any type of substance abuse problem.

This policy applies to students while on school property or at a school-sponsored event or activity (whether on or off school property) and at any other time or place where the conduct is reasonably expected to have a direct and immediate impact on the orderly and efficient operation of the schools or the safety of individuals in the school environment. The CSO or their designee may develop and oversee procedures to implement this policy.

### **Prohibited Behavior:**

1. Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, delivering, sharing, providing, manufacturing, or being under the influence of any of the following substances:
  - narcotic drugs;
  - hallucinogenic drugs;
  - amphetamines;
  - barbiturates;
  - marijuana, CBD, Delta 8, or any related product;
  - anabolic steroids;
  - synthetic stimulants, such as MDPV and mephedrone (e.g., "bath salts"), and synthetic cannabinoids (e.g., "Spice," "K2");
  - any other controlled substance;
  - any substance containing any amount of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), Delta 8, CBD, regardless of whether it constitutes a controlled substance under state or federal law;

- any alcoholic beverage, malt beverage, fortified or unfortified wine or other intoxicating liquor; or
  - any chemicals, substances, or products procured or used with the intention of bringing about a state of exhilaration or euphoria or of otherwise altering the student's mood or behavior.
2. Students are prohibited from being at school with the odor of alcohol or illicit drugs about their person.
  3. Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, sharing, delivering, or manufacturing counterfeit (fake) drugs.
  4. Students are prohibited from possessing, using, sharing, selling, delivering, or manufacturing drug paraphernalia, including but not limited to rolling papers, roach clips, lighters, matches, vaping devices, vape liquid containers, pipes, syringes, and other delivery devices for prohibited substances.
  5. Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, delivering, or sharing prescription or over-the-counter drugs. A student who possesses or uses a prescription or over-the-counter drug in accordance with the School's medication policy does not violate this policy.
  6. A student is not in violation of this policy for being under the influence of a prohibited substance following its proper use as a medication lawfully prescribed for the student by a licensed health care practitioner.
  7. Students may not conspire to sell or deliver prohibited substances or participate in any way in the selling or delivering of prohibited substances, regardless of whether the sale or delivery ultimately occurs on school property.
  8. The CSO may authorize lawful uses of substances that are otherwise prohibited by this policy, such as for approved school projects.

### **Reporting and Consequences:**

All employees are required to immediately report the above Prohibited Conduct to their supervisor and/or the CSO. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. As required by law, the CSO must report to the appropriate law enforcement agency any student who has used or possessed a controlled substance in violation of law while on school property. The disciplinary consequences for drug and alcohol violations are described in the School's Code of Student Conduct. Where the disciplinary action does not result in withdrawal, exclusion, or expulsion from the School, after completing substance abuse treatment a student will be provided the opportunity to be included in the school-based student support group upon re-entry to school as part of the recovery process.

### ***Tobacco Free Environment***

RTHS is a smoke-free campus. In keeping with RTHS's intent to provide a safe and healthy work environment, smoking is prohibited on RTHS property at all times, including all RTHS vehicles. This policy applies equally to all employees, family members, students, volunteers, and visitors. This policy also includes the use of e-cigarettes.

### ***Employee Dress & Personal Appearance***

All RTHS employees serve as role models for students and are expected to dress professionally and appropriately relative to their specific job duties and responsibilities. RTHS expects all employees to respect and recognize that while on duty, they are representatives of RTHS to students, families, and the community. When meeting with family members, board members, or community members, etc., employees are expected to follow a more business/business casual style dress.

All employees must dress professionally and modestly, in business casual attire on a daily basis.

RTHS respects and permits grooming styles, clothing, and accessories that are dictated by religious beliefs, ethnicity, or disability. If an employee should need accommodation to the dress code policy based on any of these, they should contact our Human Resources Representative.

Supervisors are expected to inform employees when they are violating the dress code.

If an employee reports to work dressed or groomed inappropriately, they will be asked to leave and return to work well-groomed and wearing the proper attire. Hourly, non-exempt employees will not be compensated for any time missed because of violating the standards above.

Repeated dress code violations will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### ***Solicitation & Distribution***

To avoid distractions, employees are prohibited from directly and individually soliciting another employee while during school hours or "work time." "Work time" is defined as the time the employee is engaged, or should be engaged, in performing their work tasks for RTHS.

Solicitation of any kind by non-employees on RTHS premises is always prohibited. Employees shall not solicit an employee who has made it known or communicated that they do not wish to be solicited. Employees shall never solicit families or students unless they receive written permission from the CSO.

Distribution of advertising material, handbills, printed or written literature of any kind in working areas of RTHS is prohibited at all times. Distribution of literature by non-employees on RTHS premises is prohibited at all times.

### ***Workplace Violence***

RTHS is strongly committed to providing a safe workplace. The purpose of this policy is to minimize the risk of personal injury to employees and damage to RTHS and private property. Our policy is to strive to maintain a school environment that is free from intimidation, threats, or violent acts. This includes, but is not limited to, intimidating, threatening or hostile behaviors, physical abuse, vandalism, arson, sabotage, use of weapons, carrying weapons of any kind onto school property, or any other act, which, in the School's opinion, is inappropriate to School. In addition, jokes or offensive comments regarding violent events will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary measures.

RTHS does not expect employees to become experts in psychology or physically subdue a threatening or violent individual. Indeed, RTHS explicitly discourages employees from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual. However, RTHS expects and encourages employees to exercise reasonable judgment in identifying potentially dangerous situations.

Mental health professionals state that before engaging in acts of violence, troubled individuals often exhibit one or more of the following behaviors or signs: over-resentment, anger, and hostility; extreme agitation; making ominous threats such as bad things will happen to a particular person or a catastrophic event will occur; sudden and significant decline in work performance; irresponsible, irrational, intimidating, aggressive or otherwise inappropriate behavior; reacting to questions with an antagonistic or overtly negative attitude; discussing weapons and their use, or brandishing weapons in the workplace; overreacting or reacting harshly to changes in RTHS policies and procedures; personality conflicts with co-workers; obsession or preoccupation with a co-worker or supervisor; attempts to sabotage the work or equipment of a co-worker; blaming others for mistakes and circumstances; or demonstrating a propensity to behave and react irrationally.

### ***Prohibited Conduct***

Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any RTHS employee will not be tolerated. For purposes of this policy, a threat includes any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, any attempt at intimidating or instilling fear in others, menacing gestures, flashing of weapons, stalking, or any other hostile, aggressive, harmful, or destructive action undertaken for domination or intimidation. To the extent permitted by law, employees and visitors are prohibited from carrying weapons onto RTHS premises.

### ***Procedures for Reporting a Threat***

All potentially dangerous situations, including co-workers' threats, should be reported immediately to the employee's direct supervisor, CSO, or any school Director. Reports of threats

may be maintained confidential to the extent maintaining confidentiality does not impede RTHS's ability to investigate and respond to the complaints. All threats will be promptly investigated. All employees must cooperate with all investigations. No employee will be subjected to retaliation, intimidation, or disciplinary action due to reporting a threat in good faith under this policy.

If RTHS determines that someone has violated this policy after an appropriate good faith investigation, RTHS will take appropriate corrective action.

If the employee is the recipient of a threat made by an outside party, that employee should follow the steps detailed in this section. RTHS needs to be aware of any potential danger to its employees or others present on its campus. Indeed, RTHS wants to take adequate measures to protect everyone from the threat of a violent act by employees or by anyone else.

### ***Visitors and Guests in the Classroom and Telephone Calls***

Disruptions during work hours can lead to errors and delays; therefore, personal telephone calls must be kept to a minimum, and only be made or received after working time, or during lunch, break times, or planning periods.

While RTHS welcomes visits from the community, the following process must be followed by all RTHS visitors:

- All visitors must report directly to the office and indicate their purpose for their visit.
- Requests to observe a class should be made to the CSO according to the following:
  - Email requests must be received at least one (1) week prior to visiting the classroom.
  - The CSO or their designee is responsible for confirming that the visit will not interfere with testing, field trips, or other school factors.
  - Observation visits are not intended to serve as conference time with a teacher.
- Guests who are invited to present to a class must sign in and obtain a visitor pass.
- Guest speakers must be pre-approved by the CSO or their designee at least one (1) week before the visit.
- Solicitations, political agendas, and petitioning are not permitted on school property or during a school event (on or off campus).
- 

### ***Use of Facilities, Equipment & Property, Including Intellectual Property***

Equipment essential in accomplishing job duties is often expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Employees should notify their supervisor if any equipment, machines, or tools are or appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of loss, damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and injury to employees or others. Supervisors can answer any questions about the employees' responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment used on the job.

Employees also are prohibited from any unauthorized use of RTHS's intellectual property, such as audio and video tapes, print materials and software.

Improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment can result in discipline, up to and including termination.

Further, RTHS is not responsible for any damage to employees' personal belongings unless the employee's supervisor provided advance approval for the employee to bring the personal property to work.

### ***School Safety***

RTHS's leadership team, in consultation with local public safety officers, will create and manage the following procedures by outlining the actions and responsibilities of staff and administration in addressing the following issues:

- Evacuation Fire
- Evacuation Non-Fire
- Hazardous Materials
- Lockdown-Perimeter
- Lockdown-Full
- Serious Medical Emergency
- Severe Weather (tornado; hurricane; etc.)
- Public Health Emergency
- Student in Crisis

RTHS's crisis plan can be found here: [!\[\]\(e1d6102fe77919492c04879c8450f1f5\_img.jpg\) RTHS Crisis Plan](#)

The CSO oversees the Crisis Management Team, and it is the responsibility of the CSO to ensure that the procedures are current and applicable and that all applicable parties are aware of the procedures.

The COO is responsible for ensuring drills occur on a regular basis. These procedures will be reviewed annually by the COO who will make the Crisis Management Team and any changes or revisions. The CSO is responsible for communicating these procedures to the Board of Directors.

### ***Workplace Health & Safety***

The health and safety of employees and others on RTHS property are of critical concern to RTHS. RTHS intends to comply with all health and safety laws applicable to our business. To this end, we must rely upon employees to ensure that work areas are kept safe and free of hazardous conditions. Employees are required to be conscientious about workplace safety, including proper operating methods, and recognize dangerous conditions or hazards. Any unsafe conditions or potential hazards should be reported to the Director of Business immediately, even if the problem is corrected.

Any suspicion of a concealed danger presents on RTHS's premises, or in a product, facility, piece of equipment, process, or business practice for which RTHS is responsible should be brought to the attention of leadership immediately. Additionally, all staff members are responsible for assisting with building security by being aware of any suspicious activity and reporting it immediately to an administrator.

Periodically, RTHS may issue rules and guidelines governing workplace safety and health. RTHS may also issue rules and guidelines regarding the handling and disposal of hazardous substances and waste. All employees should familiarize themselves with these rules and guidelines, as strict compliance will be expected.

### ***Emergency Procedures***

Proper emergency procedures [fire and tornado] must be displayed in plain view in the classroom. Drills will be completed throughout the school year. The teacher is to discuss the procedures with all students on the first day of school and periodically afterward. Each teacher is responsible for following the emergency procedures as posted. The teacher is also responsible for ensuring their classroom rosters are printed and carried with them during any evacuation or emergency.

### ***Supervision of Students***

Teachers and staff should begin and end their classes promptly at the times appointed and according to the master schedule. Close supervision is one of the keys to successful teaching and is the responsibility of every staff member.

An adult must always supervise classrooms. When a teacher needs to step out of the classroom, it is required that another adult be present to supervise. This provision applies before and after school. Classrooms must be inaccessible to children (before, during, and after school) unless an adult is present in the absence of extraordinary circumstances. Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.



### Lunch

Lunch is eaten in the building's common areas, outside in areas supervised by staff members, and in classrooms marked as designated lunch areas (DLAs). Students should never eat lunch or be present at any time in a classroom without a staff member present.

For all assignments for supervising students before, during, or after school, employees should consult the [Duty Schedule](#).

### ***Staff Illnesses/Medication***

If an employee has a fever of over one hundred degrees and/or is displaying any symptoms of illness, the employee should stay home until they are symptom-free and fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours.

To the extent that staff are taking over-the-counter and/or prescription medications or supplements while on campus, please remember to secure those items to ensure that students cannot gain access to them. It is the responsibility of the individual staff member to take affirmative steps to ensure these medications are secured in a way that prevents access by students at all times. Should a student obtain a staff member's medication (which includes supplements), that could result in harm to students and result in a claim against the individual staff member as well as RTHS. Every staff member has a duty to protect the safety and security of our students; failure to do so will also have disciplinary consequences. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to the COO.

### ***Staff Injury***

Any workplace injury, accident, or illness must be reported to the employee's supervisor as soon as possible, regardless of the severity of the injury or accident. An [Incident Report Form](#) should be completed as soon as possible.

### ***Student Illness***

The administration of medication to students should only be done by school personnel trained by the school nurse to administer medication. School personnel may not dispense any type of medication; including over-the-counter medication (i.e., Tylenol, Motrin, cough drops, throat lozenges, sunscreen, etc.) without a completed Physician Medication Order Form on file in the Front Office. All medications must be brought to the Front Office by a family member/guardian to ensure accuracy of medication documentation/administration and all necessary forms are completed.



Refer to "Steps to Take for a Student with Medical Needs" if you have a child that requires medication at school and/or have a child with a medical condition that may require attention at school (i.e., asthma, diabetes, allergy, etc.).

Refer to the "[Medication Policies](#)" for all information regarding medication needs while at school.

Students that are feeling ill while at school should be evaluated by the most qualified person on campus to determine if they require being sent home. The Office Manager or front desk staff will ensure the student is properly checked out. Refer to the "[Communicable Disease Policy](#)" for necessary exclusions for illnesses.

Trained First Aid Responders will refer to the "NC Emergency Guidelines for Schools" and the student's Medical Plan, if applicable, to provide adequate care for illnesses. Teachers will work directly with the School Nurse to ensure that all Medical plans are followed appropriately, and students are receiving the necessary accommodations and modifications for educational success as required by law.

### ***Student Injury***

In the event of a student injury, the child must be sent to the Front Office or escorted to the Front Office by school personnel to be evaluated by a trained First Aid Responder. If the injury is considered dangerous for the child to be moved, [notify](#) the Front Office immediately. The staff member sending the child for evaluation must complete the Incident Report Form as soon as possible.

Trained First Aid Responders will refer to the [NC Emergency Guidelines for Schools](#) to provide adequate care for an injured child.

### ***Facilities***

#### ***Maintenance Requests***

Routine maintenance requests must be submitted using the [Maintenance Request Form](#). Requests will be completed as quickly as possible in a prioritized order. If there is an emergency, please notify the COO or another member of the administrative team.

#### ***Care of Rooms***

Teachers and staff must assume responsibility for seeing that the rooms and equipment assigned to them are kept in as good a condition as possible. Destruction of any property should be reported to the CSO's office as soon as possible. The names of students known or believed to be responsible for such damage should also be reported. To keep rooms clean and bug/rodent free,

teachers should not allow students to eat in the classroom (other than snack time and lunch), unless the student has a medical plan stating otherwise.

### Lights

Lights should be turned off when leaving the classrooms.

### Animals

Except for service animals which are subject to other policies, pets/animals are not allowed in the classroom without prior permission from the CSO.

### Facilities Requests

- Please place student chairs on desks at the end of each day.
- Only leave open food items in the trash can at the end of each day. Opened food items in and around both your desk and student desks attract unwanted critters to your learning environment.
- If you notice ANY bathroom problem, that is deemed an emergency, and the front office should be notified via the “Custodial Requests” chat in Google Chat or the Front Office.

### ***Building Access***

Staff members receive a key fob upon employment which allows staff to enter through secured doors – this may be a physical key fob or a digital one on the employee’s personal cell phone. The key fob is your responsibility and may not be used by anyone else. If the key fob is lost, notify the Director of Information Technology immediately so it can be disabled.

Do not prop open any external doors. This is a safety hazard to the staff and students in that building and will not be allowed. Any staff member found to be propping doors on a regular basis will receive disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### ***Fire Marshal Code***

To keep our school buildings as safe from a fire as possible, RTHS employees shall adhere to the following guidelines:

- Nothing should be hung on any walls within eighteen inches of the ceiling.
- Nothing should be hung on any internal door unless it is completely metal and approved by the Facilities Manager.
- The following items are not allowed on campus unless owned by RTHS and permission for use has been granted:
  - Space heaters
  - Wax burners
  - Toaster ovens

- Electric stovetops/burners
- Do not use regular extension cords on the campus of RTHS. Instead, you may use extension cords with surge protectors built in. See the Director of Information Technology if you require such a cord.

Any staff member found to be in violation of these guidelines may receive disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### ***Fire and Safety Regulations***

RTHS will submit to all fire and safety inspections by state, county, and municipal authorities as required by law. The School will also obtain all necessary certificates and licenses prior to opening for each School year.

### ***Emergency Drills***

Students must follow their teachers' instructions and go to designated areas as quickly as possible. Students must not talk, run, or push. A signal will be given for returning to class. A student who does not follow the safety rules will receive an office referral and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

### ***Asbestos Management Plan***

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requires us to annually notify families, students, staff members, and others who regularly occupy the School building of compliance with AHERA. An Asbestos Management Plan (AMP) has been developed for the School and is on file in the School office. Family members/guardians may schedule an appointment with the Director of Business if they wish to review the AMP.

### ***Pesticide Notification***

RTHS aims to control pest populations and to reduce the use of active pesticides throughout the School by implementing an integrated pest management program. The health and safety of all persons within the school's facilities are of primary concern. RTHS will notify families via ParentSquare in advance of any pesticide applications occurring when students are on campus.

### ***Hazardous Chemicals***

RTHS will take all necessary steps to protect its students and staff from hazardous chemicals or other potentially dangerous materials, and it will comply fully with all required inspections, laws, ordinances, and regulations regarding hazardous chemicals.

### ***Human Resources***

### ***Employee Classifications & Definitions***

For purposes of this handbook, all RTHS employees are classified according to the following:

#### **Regular Full-Time Employees**

Employees who regularly work at least 30 hours per week who were not hired on a short-term basis.

#### **Regular Part-Time Employees**

Employees who regularly work fewer than 30 hours per week who were not hired on a short-term basis.

#### **Casual Employees**

Employees who were hired for a specific short-term project or on a short-term freelance, per diem, or temporary basis. Casual employees are not eligible for RTHS benefits. Substitute teachers fall under this category.

In addition to the above classifications, employees are categorized as either "exempt" or "non-exempt" for purposes of federal and state wage and hour laws. Employees classified as exempt do not receive overtime pay. They generally receive the same weekly salary regardless of the hours worked. Such a salary may be paid less frequently than weekly. The employee will be informed of these classifications upon hire and informed of any subsequent changes to the classifications.

### ***Employment Records***

To obtain their position, employees have provided personal information, such as address and telephone number. This information is contained in their personnel file.

Employees should keep their personnel file up to date by informing the COO of any changes in writing and, if applicable, in RTHS's Human Resources portal (BambooHR). Employees should also inform the COO of any specialized training or skills they acquire, as well as any changes to any required visas. Unreported changes of address, marital status, etc. can affect withholding tax and benefit coverage. Further, an "out-of-date" emergency contact or an inability to reach employees in a crisis could cause a severe health or safety risk or other significant problem.

### ***Payroll***

Full-Time employees will be paid monthly for all the time worked during the current pay period.

Payroll stubs itemize deductions made from gross earnings. By law, RTHS is required to make deductions for Social Security, federal income tax, and any other appropriate taxes. These

required deductions may also include any court-ordered garnishments. Payroll stubs will also differentiate between regular pay received and overtime pay received.

If there is an error in any employee's pay, the employee should bring the matter to the attention of the Director of Business immediately so RTHS can resolve the matter quickly and amicably.

RTHS requires employees to use direct deposit. Authorization forms are available from the COO and are fillable in BambooHR.

Pay stubs and tax documents are available to be downloaded through LINQ. To view pay stubs:

- Go to [www.employeeinq.linq.com](http://www.employeeinq.linq.com)
- Select Register Now
- Use a personal email address. Do NOT use a work email address.
- 32N is the Unit ID for Research Triangle High School
- Once registered, log into account.
- Select Reports
- Select Check History – to view or print a paystub, click the printer icon
- W2s will be available to view when that year's W2s have been processed.

RTHS does not permit advances on paychecks or against accrued paid time off (where applicable).

### ***Safe Harbor Policy for Exempt Employees***

It is RTHS's policy and practice to accurately compensate employees and to do so in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws. To ensure proper payment and that no improper deductions are made, employees must review pay stubs promptly to identify and report all errors.

Those classified as exempt salaried employees will receive a salary which is intended to compensate them for all hours they may work for RTHS. This salary will be established at the time of hire or classification as an exempt employee. While it may be subject to review and modification from time to time, such as during salary review times, the salary will be a predetermined amount that will not be subject to deductions for variations in the quantity or quality of the work performed.

Under federal and state law, salary is subject to certain deductions. For example, unless state law requires otherwise, salary can be reduced for the following reasons:

- Full-day absences for personal reasons;
- Full-day absences for sickness or disability if the deduction is made in accordance with a bona fide plan, policy or practice of providing wage replacement benefits for such absences (deductions also may be made for the exempt employee's full-day

absences due to sickness or disability before the employee has qualified for the plan, policy or practice or after the employee has exhausted the leave allowance under the plan);

- Full-day disciplinary suspensions for infractions of our written policies and procedures;
- Family and Medical Leave Act absences (either full- or partial-day absences);
- To offset amounts received as payment from the court for jury and witness fees or from the military as military pay;
- The first or last week of employment in the event the employee works less than a full week; and
- Any full work week in which the employee does not perform any work.

Salary may also be reduced for certain types of deductions such as a portion of health, dental or life insurance premiums; state, federal or local taxes; social security; or voluntary contributions to a 457(b) or other pension plan designated by the employee.

In any work week in which the employee performed any work, salary will not be reduced for any of the following reasons:

- Partial day absences for personal reasons, sickness, or disability;
- An absence because RTHS has decided to close the facility on a scheduled workday;
- Absences for jury duty, attendance as a witness, or military leave in any week in which the employee performed any work (subject to any offsets as set forth above); and
- Any other deductions are prohibited by state or federal law.

However, unless state law provides otherwise, deductions may be made to accrued leave for full- or partial-day absences for personal reasons, sickness, or disability.

If employees believe they have been subject to any improper deductions, they should immediately report the matter to their supervisor or the COO. If either of these are unavailable or if the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact these people (or if the employee has not received a prompt and fully acceptable reply), the employee should immediately contact the CSO or any other supervisor with whom the employee feels comfortable.

### ***Compensation Plans***

The RTHS compensation plan is multifaceted, incorporating salary structures/pay schedules, bonus pay, and extra duty pay. This policy will summarize the core compensation programs available to employees of RTHS.

### ***Salary/Regular Pay***

RTHS has salary structures for all staff and is reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors annually. These salary schedules are based upon years of experience and degrees for certified employees and for years of service for classified employees.

If a certified employee receives an advanced degree or passes the National Board Certification process, they should notify the COO via email immediately for an adjustment to their salary. Only advanced degrees from accredited colleges and universities will be considered for increases in compensation.

### ***Bonus Pay***

All bonus pay is contingent on funding availability as recommended by the CSO to the Board of Directors. Bonuses are to be one-time distributions and are not to be considered an increase in salary.

### ***Extra Duty Pay***

Specific duties that require an employee to perform duties beyond the scope of their primary position with RTHS may be eligible for compensation through extra duty pay. Each year, the Board of Directors will identify and approve the roles and their associated stipends that are eligible for extra duty pay if any. Each employee approved for any of these roles will be required to sign a written agreement before extra duty pay is distributed. To be eligible for consideration, an employee must be a regular, full-time employee and in good standing with RTHS. Additionally, the role must not interfere with the employee's primary duties and responsibilities.

### ***Working Hours & Schedule***

Employees are expected to arrive to work by 8:30 a.m. each morning and remain on campus until 3:45 p.m. Monday thru Thursday; on Fridays and any other early-release day, employees are expected to remain on campus until all faculty meetings are concluded, or until 15 minutes following the end of the last class period of the day. The CSO or their designee may alter an employee's required working hours in extraordinary circumstances.

To accommodate the needs of the school, at some point RTHS may need to change individual work schedules on either a short or long-term basis. Additionally, employees that are salaried are expected to work until all professional duties have been completed. This includes after school assigned duties, including, but not limited to, after-school staff meetings, athletic gate duty, etc.

Employees will be provided with meal and rest periods as required by law. A supervisor will provide further details.



### ***Inclement Weather & Emergency Closings***

RTHS is responsible for making its own decisions concerning any weather-related or emergency that may result in an early release, delayed start, cancellation, or opening. For employees to be assured that they have the latest and most accurate information from RTHS, the following sources should be consulted:

- RTHS website
- RTHS email
- ParentSquare
- Local news websites (e.g., WRAL, WTVD, WNCN)
- RTHS Facebook page
- RTHS Instagram page

The CSO will consult with the COO to make the final decision promptly. The COO will notify employees, students, and families through approved channels regarding any change to the school's operating schedule. In the absence of these people, interim designees will be appointed to manage appropriately.

Employees are exempt from work on days that RTHS closes campus and cancels classes for inclement weather. However, on days that RTHS closes campus for inclement weather but calls for a Remote Learning Day, employees are expected to work the full day virtually as if they were on campus. If an employee chooses not to work remotely in that situation, they have the option to take a PTO day.

### ***Timekeeping Procedures***

Non-exempt employees must record the time work begins and ends, as well as the beginning and ending time of any departure from work for any non-work-related reason, via methods as prescribed in this handbook. Altering, falsifying, or tampering with time records is prohibited and subjects the employee to discipline, up to and including termination. Non-exempt employees may not start work until their scheduled starting time. Failure to adhere to this guideline may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. It is the employee's responsibility to electronically complete and/or sign time records to certify the accuracy of all time recorded. It is the responsibility of the employee to clock in and out at accurate times via the payroll software system. Any errors in the time logged should be reported immediately to your supervisor and the COO who will attempt to correct legitimate errors.

Exempt employees are required to request absences from work for reasons such as leaves of absence, sick leave, PTO, or personal business.

Failure to follow timekeeping procedures and repeated timekeeping errors may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## ***Overtime***

At times, RTHS experiences periods of extremely high activity. During these busy periods, additional work is required by everyone. Supervisors are responsible for monitoring business activity and requesting overtime work if it is necessary. Efforts will be made to provide employees with adequate advance notice in such situations.

Any non-exempt employee who works overtime will be compensated at the rate of one and one-half times (1.5) their normal hourly wage for all time worked over 40 hours each week, unless otherwise required by law. Employees may work overtime only with prior authorization from the COO. For the purpose of overtime calculations, RTHS's work week starts at midnight on Sunday and ends 168 hours later at midnight on the following Sunday. Any employee who works overtime without prior permission will be paid but may be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

## ***Travel Time for Hourly, Non-Exempt Employees***

### ***Overnight, Out-of-Town Trips***

Non-exempt employees will be compensated for time spent traveling (except for meal periods) during their normal working hours, on days they are scheduled to work, and on unscheduled workdays (such as weekends). Non-exempt employees will also be paid for any time spent performing job duties during otherwise non-compensable travel time; however, such work should be limited to prior supervisor authorization.

### ***Out-of-Town Trips for One Day***

Non-exempt employees who travel out of town for a one-day assignment will be paid for all travel time, except for, among other things: time spent traveling between the employee's home and the local railroad, bus, or plane terminal; and meal periods.

### ***Local Travel***

Non-exempt employees will be compensated for time spent traveling from campus to off campus meeting locations during a workday. The trip home, however, is non-compensable when the employee goes directly home from the final location unless it is much longer than the regular commute home from the regular worksite. In such a case, the portion of the trip home in excess of the regular commute is compensable.

### ***Commuting Time***

Traveling from home to work and from work to home is generally non-compensable. However, if a non-exempt employee regularly reports to a location near their home but is required to report to a location farther away than the regular work location, the additional time spent traveling is compensable. If compensable travel time results in more than 40 hours worked by a non-exempt

employee, the employee will be compensated at an overtime rate of one and one-half (1.5) times the regular rate.

### ***Punctuality & Attendance***

Employees are hired to perform critical functions at RTHS. As with any group effort, operating effectively takes cooperation and commitment from everyone. Therefore, attendance and punctuality are especially important. Unnecessary absences and tardiness are expensive, disruptive, and place an unfair burden on fellow employees and Supervisors. The RTHS school calendar provides employees with ample time for leave when school is not in session. We expect excellent attendance from all employees. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness, such as taking off several Fridays in a row or being consistently late to work on Monday mornings, will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

We do recognize, however, there are times when absences and tardiness cannot be avoided. In such cases, employees are expected to notify their immediate supervisor and the Office Manager as early as possible, but no later than the start of the workday. Asking another employee, friend or relative to give this notice is improper and constitutes grounds for disciplinary action. Employees should call/ text, stating the nature of the illness and its expected duration, for every day of absenteeism.

### ***Job Postings***

RTHS is dedicated to assisting employees in managing their careers and reaching their professional goals through promotion and transfer opportunities. This policy outlines the on-line job posting program which is in place for all employees. To be eligible to apply for an open position, employees must meet the following requirements:

- Be a current, regular, full-time, or part-time employee;
- Have been in their current position for at least six (6) months;
- Maintain a performance rating of satisfactory or above;
- Not be on conduct/performance-related probation or warning;
- Meet the job qualifications listed on the job posting; and
- Provide their current administrator with notice prior to applying for the position.

If employees find a position of interest on the job posting website and they meet the eligibility requirements, an on-line job posting application must be completed to be considered for the position. Not all positions are guaranteed to be posted. RTHS reserves the right to seek applicants solely from outside sources or to post positions internally and externally simultaneously. School also reserves the right to hire without any posting and to offer positions without notification.

### ***Conflict of Interest and Business Ethics***

It is RTHS's policy that all employees avoid any conflict between their personal interests and those of RTHS. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that RTHS's honesty and integrity, and therefore its reputation, are not compromised. The fundamental principle guiding this policy is that no employee should have, or appear to have, personal interests or relationships that actually or potentially conflict with the best interests of RTHS.

It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of situations that might involve violations of this policy; however, the situations that would constitute a conflict in most cases include but are not limited to:

- Holding an interest in or accepting free or discounted goods from any organization that does, or is seeking to do, business with RTHS, by any employee who is in a position to directly or indirectly influence either RTHS's decision to do business, or the terms upon which business would be done with such organization;
- Holding any interest in an organization that provides services to or competes with RTHS;
- Being employed by (including as a consultant) or serving on the board of any organization that does, or is seeking to do, business with RTHS or that competes with RTHS;
- Profiting personally, e.g., through commissions, loans, expense reimbursements, or other payments, from any organization seeking to do business with RTHS; and/or
- Recommending an applicant, contractor, or business to the School with whom the employee has a family or close relationship.

A conflict of interest would also exist when a member of the employee's immediate family or close friend is involved in situations such as those above.

This policy is not intended to prohibit the acceptance of modest courtesies, openly given and accepted as part of the usual business amenities, for example, occasional business-related meals or promotional items of nominal or minor value.

It is the employee's responsibility to report any actual or potential conflict that may exist between the employee (and the employee's immediate family) and RTHS. Such reports shall be made to the CSO.

Any employee who fails to comply with RTHS's conflict of interest policy shall be subject to immediate termination.

### ***Secondary Employment Policy***

Any employee who holds a full-time position with RTHS shall consider their school employment responsibilities as primary. RTHS expects all full-time employees and particularly those who are

exempt employees to fully commit to their employment responsibilities at the school. Any employment outside of their primary RTHS position is considered secondary employment. Secondary employment is defined as any activity involving the production or sale of goods, the provision of services, the performance of intellectual or creative work for pay in either an employer/employee relationship or in a self-employment capacity such as an independent contractor or business owner.

Secondary employment will not be permitted if it: (1) has an adverse effect on the employee's employment at RTHS; (2) directly or indirectly creates a conflict of interest with primary employment; (3) interferes with or impedes in any way the employee's ability to perform all expected duties, including to make decisions and carry out in an objective fashion the responsibilities of the employee's position; (4) interferes with the employee's work hours or has the actual or potential to require employee to perform non-RTHS work during employee's work hours at RTHS; (5) negatively impacts the school, its employees, students, families or stakeholders; or (6) is in conflict or is not aligned with the mission of the school (as solely determined by the school), its families or students.

In addition, no RTHS employee (whether full-time or part-time) may perform non-RTHS work while on RTHS campus, during the school/workday, on any RTHS device or at any time when the employee is expected to perform work for RTHS. Further, no exempt full-time RTHS employee may be affiliated with or perform work for any other school without the prior express written permission of the CSO after review and approval from the RTHS Board of Directors.

No RTHS employee may tutor or provide academic assistance of any kind to any student enrolled at the school on or off campus or using RTHS property unless it is part of their job description and they do not receive remuneration for such services. Any school employee wishing to provide other services to students or families and receiving compensation must receive written approval from the CSO.

If RTHS deems that secondary employment does not meet the requirements set forth in this policy or should the school find there is a conflict of interest at any time, the employee may be given the opportunity to adjust the secondary work to comply with this policy. Failure to comply with this policy or a directive associated with this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

### ***Hiring Relatives/Employee Relationships***

A familial relationship among employees can create an actual, or at least a potential, conflict of interest in the employment setting, especially where one relative supervises another relative. To avoid this problem, RTHS may refuse to hire or place a relative in a position where the potential for favoritism or conflict exists.

In other cases, such as personal relationships where a conflict or the potential for conflict arises, even if there is no supervisory relationship involved, the parties may be separated by reassignment or terminated from employment, at the discretion of RTHS. Accordingly, all parties to any type of intimate personal relationship must inform their direct supervisor and the Director of Business.

If two employees marry, become related, or enter into an intimate relationship, they may not remain in a reporting relationship or in positions where one individual may affect the compensation or other terms or conditions of employment of the other individual. RTHS will generally attempt to identify other available positions, but if no alternate position is available, RTHS retains the right to decide which employee will remain with RTHS.

For the purposes of this policy, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

### ***Nepotism Policy***

In accordance with the Charter Agreement and N.C.G.S. 55A-8-31, the board recognizes that the employment of immediate family can cause various problems including but not limited to charges of favoritism, conflicts of interest, family discord, and scheduling conflicts that may work to the disadvantage of both the School and its employees. It is the goal of the School to avoid creating or maintaining circumstances in which the appearance or possibility of favoritism, conflicts, or management disruptions exist. For the purposes of this policy the term “relative” shall include the following relationships: relationships established by blood, marriage, or legal action.

For the purposes of this section, the term "immediate family member" is as set forth in N.C.G.S. Section 115C-12.2 and means a spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild. The term includes the step, half, and in-law relationships. The term also includes domestic partners (a person with whom the employee's life is interdependent and who shares a common residence) and a child of an employee's domestic partner.

School may allow existing personal relationships to be maintained or employ individuals with personal relationships with current employees under the following circumstances:

1. No voting members of the Board of Directors shall be an employee of a for-profit organization that provides substantial services to the school for a fee.
2. No employee of the charter school shall be a voting member of the Board of Directors.
3. No employee shall be an immediate family member or a voting member of the Board of Directors.
4. They may not create a supervisor/subordinate relationship with a family member.

5. They may not supervise or evaluate a family member.
6. The relationship will not create an adverse impact on work productivity or performance.
7. The relationship may not create an actual or perceived conflict of interest.
8. They may not audit or review in any manner the related individual's work.
9. They may not be employed if a member of the employee's immediate family (spouse, children, parents/legal guardians, grandparents, brothers, sisters, step-family members, in-law family members) serves on the organization's Board or any Committee which has authority to review or order personnel actions or wage and salary adjustments which could affect their job.
10. No teacher or staff member who is the immediate family of the Chief School Officer shall be hired without the Board evaluating their credentials, establishing a structure to prevent conflicts of interest, and notifying the Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), with evidence that this process has occurred.
11. Before any immediate family of any member of the Board of Directors or a School employee with supervisory authority shall be employed or engaged as an employee, independent contractor, or otherwise by the Board of Directors in any capacity, such proposed employment or engagement shall be:
  - a. Disclosed to the Board of Directors; and
  - b. The Board of Directors must approve the hiring or contract in a duly called open session meeting.

No personal employee relationship covered by this policy will be allowed to be maintained, regardless of the positions involved, if it creates a disruption or potential disruption in the work environment, creates an actual or perceived conflict of interest, or is prohibited by any legal or regulatory mandate.

This policy must be considered when electing, hiring, promoting, or transferring any employee and any action must be discussed and approved by the board of directors in a duly called open-session meeting.

Should relationships addressed within this policy be identified with either candidates for employment or current employees, the matter should be immediately reported to the Chief School Officer and/or Board of Directors and the following policies and procedures will be followed:

- A determination will be made whether the relationship is subject to the organization's Nepotism policy based on the conditions described above.
- If the relationship is determined to fall within one or more of the conditions described in this policy the Chief School Officer in consultation with the affected employees and/or the Board of Directors will attempt will to resolve the situation through the transfer of one employee to a new position or identifying some other action (e.g., supervisory



reassignment) which will correct the conflict or issue identified. If accommodations are not feasible then, with affected employee suggestions, the Chief School Officer in consultation with the organization's Board of Directors shall determine which employee must resign to resolve the situation.

The School reserves the right to exercise appropriate managerial judgment to take such actions as may be necessary to achieve the intent of this policy.

The burden of disclosure of such personal relationships covered in this policy shall be on the applicable Board member, Director, or employee with supervisory authority. If the requirements of this policy are complied with, the School may employ the immediate family of any member of the Board or a School employee with supervisory authority consistent with this policy and applicable law.

It is the responsibility of every employee to identify to the organization's CSO any potential or existing personal relationship, which falls under the definitions provided in this policy.

Employees who fail to disclose personal relationships covered by this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including the termination of employment.

### ***Staff as RTHS Parents/Legal Guardians***

Employees who are also parents/legal guardians of RTHS student(s) should not schedule meetings or school conversations with their child's teacher during working hours. Any parent/legal guardian conferences should be held outside of work hours, as you are first and foremost an employee of RTHS from 8:30 am - 3:45 pm. Should this be the only time a meeting is available, the employee should request to take time off work to conduct their meeting. It is best practice to communicate with colleagues via your work email and with your child's teachers via your personal email. Teachers shall not permit their own children to be unsupervised in their classroom, including before or after school.

Additionally, employees must understand that your child's teachers/ coaches are also your coworkers and should be treated as such during work hours. Employees shall not use their position at the school when interacting with their co-workers. Some examples of this include the following:

- Communicate as a parent/legal guardian through normal parent/legal guardian channels. Calling directly into your child's classroom is not something that outside families can do, so please refrain from this.
- Give your child's teacher space to be the teacher. Do not follow your child's teacher to their room, or anywhere on campus, for an impromptu meeting. Request a conference as other families must do as outlined in the Student/Family Handbook.
- Respect your child's teacher's classroom - do not use your key to unlock your child's teacher's door or be in your child's classroom without permission.

- Check your child out of school following the Front Office processes as outlined in the Student/Family Handbook.
- Follow the Student/Family Handbook when acting in a family/caregiver role.

### ***Supervisory Staff as RTHS Parents/Legal Guardians***

To prevent unnecessary challenges, it is RTHS's policy that no one in a supervisory position may directly supervise any other employee while that employee is the teacher of the supervisor's child(ren). When such situations arise, RTHS will modify the reporting structures to comply with this policy.

### ***Performance Review and Management***

Depending on the employee's position and classification, RTHS endeavors to provide mid-year reviews and annual summative reviews as a part of the annual performance review process. However, a positive performance evaluation does not guarantee an increase in salary, a promotion or continued employment. Compensation increases and the terms and conditions of employment, including job assignments, transfers, promotions, and demotions, are determined by and at the discretion of the CSO and the Board of Directors.

In addition to these formal performance evaluations, RTHS encourages employees and supervisors to discuss job performance on a frequent and ongoing basis.

Clear and concise professional expectations contribute to a successful employer-employee relationship at RTHS. The leadership team will work diligently to ensure that the professional expectations at RTHS are structured in a way that will support and guide us toward our Mission and Vision. In addition to the professional duties and expectations inherent in an educational environment, expectations have been outlined throughout this handbook. In the event performance and conduct expectations are not met, an employee's supervisor, Human Resources, and the CSO will take the necessary steps to address the issue.

It is necessary to establish rules that allow for a fair, equitable, and uniform handling of employee misconduct and the application of disciplinary action. As violations of established performance and conduct rules can lead to termination, records are kept of warnings and other corrective action taken in violation of any RTHS policy. It is the policy of RTHS to expect each employee to conform to established rules of conduct regarding personal and professional behavior, job performance, and job safety. They include, but are not limited to, those noted elsewhere in this handbook.

Disciplinary action can occur in a progressive sequence; however, RTHS is not required to follow the steps outlined below. Employees should have no expectation of any notice or warning before disciplinary action or termination. Disciplinary action may begin at any step depending on

the seriousness of the offense. Also, offenses do not have to be of the same nature to constitute a violation serious enough to move on to the next step of the disciplinary action sequence. **Nothing in this policy alters the at-will nature of employment at RTHS, meaning employees may be terminated at any time without or with notice or cause and with or without the use of progressive discipline.**

If you manage employees, you must consult with the CSO before initiating either the progressive discipline or coaching processes outlined below. Pointing out a performance issue is not necessarily a verbal warning and may be part of your regular feedback. If you judge that progressive discipline is appropriate, seek assistance from Human Resources to help you navigate the process and document appropriately. All performance concerns must be documented in writing either formally or informally.

**Although RTHS may choose to implement any form of disciplinary action and bypass the disciplinary procedures outlined at its sole discretion, this does not alter an employee's at-will employment with RTHS.**

### **Step 1: Informal Discussion**

When a performance problem is first identified, the nature of the problem and the action necessary to correct it should be thoroughly discussed with the employee and followed up with an email summary of the discussion to the employee.

*The supervisor must review all performance-related notices with the CSO prior to meeting with the employee.*

### **Step 2: Written Notice**

If a private informal discussion with the employee has not resulted in improved performance, following a thorough investigation, the supervisor should draft a written Corrective Action Notice ("notice"). Following approval, the supervisor will meet with the employee and (a) review the problem, (b) permit the employee to present their views on the problem, (c) advise the employee that the problem must be corrected, (d) inform the employee that failure to correct the problem will result in further disciplinary action which may include termination, and (e) provide the notice to the employee. It is strongly recommended that the supervisor have Human Resources attend this meeting.

**Step 3: Final Written Notice**

If satisfactory performance and corrective action are not achieved under Steps one and two, the supervisor will meet with the employee in private and proceed through steps (a) through (e) above and issue a final notice to the employee. Human Resources or the CSO must attend this meeting.

**Step 4: Suspension and/or Termination**

Based on a supervisor's recommendation, the CSO has the authority to temporarily remove employees from the workplace, with or without pay, in accordance with wage and hour laws or terminate the employee.

Nothing in this policy requires the School or any School official to engage in progressive discipline prior to the termination of employment. Typically, where there are allegations of serious misconduct, breach of policy or violation of law, impacts to safety or security, or where an employee's continued presence at the school creates challenges to culture or negatively impacts the working environment, the employee will typically be immediately suspended (with or without pay) and an investigation conducted. However, the School may immediately terminate the employee. The progressive discipline set forth above may be disregarded as determined by the School.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to review any staff performance issues with the CSO and/or Human Resources prior to implementing any of the steps above.

***Banning from Campus***

The School reserves the right to ban any person, including parents, family members, guardians, separated personnel, or those under investigation, from campus where there is a safety or security concern, actual/potential disruption to the school environment or where it is in the best interest of the school to do so. The CSO or their designee or the Board of Directors may issue such a ban and may consult with local law enforcement in doing so.

***Grievance Policy & Procedures for Employees***

RTHS believes mutual respect and dignity are essential elements of effective collaboration and work amongst our employees. We are committed to creating a safe and meaningful work environment, recognizing individual contributions, and making open, direct, and personal communication a part of our daily efforts.

We believe that the open discussion of ideas, suggestions, and concerns is important to our mutual success and ongoing development. Employees are encouraged to bring forth recommendations, questions, problems, or any other concerns that they believe are important.

This policy is in place to respond to a grievance by an employee or volunteer (herein after “employee”). It is expected that any employee with an issue should try to resolve the issue by using open communication with their supervisor. If an employee feels that their issue is still a concern after speaking to their supervisor and that the issue has risen to the level of a grievance, then the employee may initiate the grievance procedures as described below. The goal of filing a formal grievance would be to use the process to come to an equitable solution.

1. **Definition of a grievance:** A grievance is defined as a formal written complaint by an employee stating that a specific action has violated a School policy, board policy, law, or regulation. Complaints that do not raise an alleged violation of a School policy, board policy, law, or regulation do not raise a grievance issue and are not subject to these procedures. In addition, a grievance does not include: the non-renewal or termination of employment, disagreements on day-to-day operation issue (including conflicts with co-workers and supervisors), schedules, employee discipline or employee reviews unless they violate a specific policy, law, or regulation. And, a grievance does not include a complaint covered by another policy or procedure, including but not limited to complaints under Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the ADA/ADAA, the PUMP Act, the PWFA and the School’s non-Title VII and non-Title IX harassment and bullying policy which shall be handled in accordance with those policies. Any employee who has a complaint covered by those policies must follow the specific policy that addresses their complaints. Even if a complaint constitutes a grievance, a grievance will only be considered eligible for the Grievance Process if the employee demonstrates that they have attempted to have their concerns addressed by their supervisor.
2. **Time Limits:** A grievance will only be heard if the complaint has been filed within fifteen calendar days of the act that is being reported or fifteen days from the date the issue was brought to the attention of a supervisor, whichever is shorter. The fifteen-day deadline may be extended at the discretion of the CSO.
3. **The grievance process is as follows:**  
**Step 1:** To file a grievance, an employee must submit a letter in writing (email accepted) stating the school policy, board policy or law/regulation that was violated including details of the actions and the place, date, and time of the violation. The employee should make all efforts to include any details about the event that may be helpful in the decision-making process. The written letter should be submitted to the CSO. If the CSO is implicated in the grievance, the grievance should be submitted to the Chair of the Board of Directors or to any other Board member with whom the individual(s) feel comfortable disclosing the information.

**Step 2:** In response to the formal grievance, the CSO shall have up to five business days from the time they receive the formal grievance to respond to the grievance in writing. If the employee is satisfied with the decision after they receive the response from the CSO, the issue is considered resolved. The employee shall submit their satisfaction to the CSO in written form such as email.

**Step 3:** If the employee is not satisfied with the response from the CSO, the employee may file an appeal by submitting a letter in writing (email accepted) stating The School policy, board policy or law that was violated including details of the actions and the place, date and time of the violation. The employee should make all efforts to include any details about the event that may be helpful in the decision-making process to the Board of Directors. This must be done within five business days of the initial response from the CSO. The appeal should be provided to the CSO and Board Chair (or their designee).

**Step 4:** Where the grievance is filed directly with the Board as set forth above or after receiving the appeal letter, the appeal shall be considered by the Board at its next regularly scheduled board meeting provided such meeting is more than seven days after the filing, or the Chair of the Board of Directors may call a special meeting of the Board to consider the appeal in accordance with The School's bylaws. The Board will consider and discuss the grievance at the meeting in accordance with Open Meetings laws. At that meeting, the Board of Directors will decide how to handle the grievance. If the board decides that it needs additional time to consider the grievance or gather information or investigate, it may defer its decision until another regularly scheduled board meeting or schedule a special meeting. At the Board's sole discretion, the Board may investigate or gather additional information regarding the grievance, including interviews or engagement of an investigator, if needed. At the meeting where the board makes a decision on the grievance, the board will give the individual filing the grievance or appeal the opportunity to attend the meeting. Once the board reaches a decision, the Board will communicate that decision to the individual who filed the grievance within five The School days. The Board's decision concerning the grievance is final. The Board reserves the right to appoint a Board Panel to address the grievance. In such cases, the Board Panel's decision is final and there is no appeal rights to the Board.

***Inspections/Investigations/Searches***

From time to time, RTHS may conduct internal investigations pertaining to security, auditing, or work-related matters. Employees are required to cooperate fully with and assist in these investigations if requested to do so.

Whenever necessary, RTHS reserves the right to search without notice work areas (i.e., desks, file cabinets, computers, etc.) and personal belongings (i.e., backpacks, purses, vehicles, etc.) if there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that any school policy or law is being or has been violated. The School may provide desks, computers, lockers, and other items for the use by the school's employees. The school's email system, including individual emails and chats, may be viewed and read at any time and employees should have no expectations of privacy in their school email account. At all times, these items remain the property of RTHS. Employees are expected to cooperate with the school's workplace searches. While the School will generally attempt to obtain an employee's consent before conducting a search of work areas or personal belongings, it may not always do so.

RTHS reserves the right to require employees while on RTHS property, or on RTHS sponsored trips, to agree to the inspection of their persons, personal possessions and property, personal vehicles parked on RTHS or client property, and work areas. This includes vehicles, desks, cabinets, workstations, packages, handbags, briefcases and other personal possessions or places of concealment, as well as personal mail sent to RTHS. Employees are expected to cooperate in the conduct of any search or inspection.

Any employee who refuses to submit to a search or is found in possession of prohibited articles will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees with questions regarding this policy should contact the CSO.

***Whistleblower Policy***

The School prohibits any form of reprisal, retaliation, or discrimination against any employee who (1) in good faith, has made or intends to make a report that a practice, policy, act, or omission of the Board, employee or entity/person with whom the School has a business relationship violates a federal, state, or local law, regulation, or public policy; or (2) has refused to carry out a directive which violates a state or federal law, rule or regulation, or poses a substantial or specific danger to public health and safety. An employee who reasonably believes that any such violation exists may file a grievance in accord with the School's Grievance Policy for Employees, or a complaint in accord with this whistleblower policy.

A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee of RTHS who reports an activity that they consider to be illegal or dishonest to one or more of the parties specified in this Policy. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate Directors are charged with these responsibilities.

Examples of illegal or dishonest activities include violations of federal, state, or local laws, fraudulent financial activities, and reporting.



If an employee has knowledge of or a concern about illegal or dishonest, fraudulent activity, the employee is to contact their immediate supervisor, the CSO, or the RTHS HR Representative. The employee must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas – confidentiality and against retaliation. To the extent possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law and to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defense. RTHS will not retaliate against a whistleblower. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, or poor work assignments and threats of physical harm. Any whistleblower who believes they are being retaliated against must contact our Human Resources representative immediately. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.

All reports of illegal and dishonest activities will be promptly submitted to the RTHS Board of Directors who is responsible for investigating and coordinating corrective action.

Employees with any questions regarding this policy should contact the CSO.

### ***Prohibition of Retaliation***

The School prohibits taking negative action against any employee or volunteer for reporting a deviation from any of the School's policies or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee or volunteer who retaliates against another employee or volunteer for reporting a deviation from the School's policies or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### ***At Will Employment/Separation of Employment***

RTHS is an "at-will" employer, which means the employment relationship may be terminated at any time and for any reason, not prohibited by law, by either the employee or RTHS. If you initiate separation, it is considered a voluntary resignation.

### ***Non-Renewal***

At the time designated by the school calendar, Non-Renewal of an employee may be recommended, effective at the end of the current school year. The reasons for non-renewal cannot be based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth and pregnancy-related conditions), gender identity or expression (including transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, military service and veteran status, physical or

mental disability, genetic information, hairstyle, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local laws and ordinances.

### ***Renewal***

Renewal offer letters will be issued by the end of the school or fiscal year following the approval of the next year's budget by the Board of Directors.

### ***Involuntary Resignation***

In the event the employee is absent from work two (2) consecutive days without giving proper notice to their supervisor or fail to return from an approved leave of absence or paid time off or fails to perform services as required in this contract without approval from the supervisor, RTHS may consider such as abandonment of employment. At that time, RTHS may elect to accept that as you have voluntarily resigned from your position, and as such, your employment will be terminated. In addition, accepting alternate employment during an approved leave of absence will also be considered a voluntary resignation.

### ***At the Time of Separation***

At the time of your separation, you will be responsible for returning all RTHS property, including keys, credit cards, equipment, records, or other company-related information and/or resources. Please be advised that final pay may be withheld until you have returned all company property, in accordance with state law. The School reserves the right to pursue all available legal remedies against an employee who fails to return school property when requested.

### ***Exit Interview***

In addition, employees separating from RTHS may be asked to participate in an exit interview and provide any constructive comments and suggestions for improvement as an employer. RTHS appreciates receiving employees' candid opinion of their time with us.

### ***Final Pay***

You will receive your final pay according to the RTHS normal payroll schedule and will be informed of any benefits or conversion privileges that may be available to you during your exit interview.

### ***Eligibility for Rehire***

Employees who leave the RTHS in good standing and are classified as eligible for rehire may be considered for future employment. An application must be submitted, and the applicant must meet all qualifications and requirements of the position, including any qualifying assessments, when required.

Supervisors must obtain approval from the CSO and Human Resources Department prior to rehiring a former employee. Rehired employees begin benefits just as any other new employee.

An employee who is terminated for violating policy or who resigned in lieu of termination from employment due to a policy violation or not returning from an approved leave may be ineligible for rehire.

### ***References***

RTHS will respond to reference requests through Human Resources. RTHS will provide general information concerning the employee such as date of hire, date of termination, positions held, and whether the employee is eligible for rehire. Requests for reference information must be in writing, and responses will be in writing. Please refer all requests for references to Andrea Brown, RTHS's Human Resources representative, at [andrea@althrpartners.com](mailto:andrea@althrpartners.com).

### ***Return of Property After Employee Termination***

Upon termination of employment from RTHS, the employee must return all supplies, keys, technology equipment, phones, student and family information, and any other property belonging to RTHS. Failure to return property within five (5) business days may result in the RTHS pursuing legal action, reporting to law enforcement and/or licensing authorities.

### ***Personnel Files/Address or Personal Status Changes***

It is important that the CSO and COO have your correct home address and telephone number at all times. You should report any changes to the CSO and COO immediately.

If your personal status, such as your marital status, should change or if you have an addition to your family, you should notify the COO. Because your benefits may be affected, you may need to change your insurance and/or tax records.

School maintains personnel files on each employee. These files contain documentation regarding all aspects of your employment with the School, such as performance appraisals, beneficiary designation forms, disciplinary warning notices, and letters of commendation. Current employees may review their personnel file on an annual basis. As such, personnel files contain confidential information. You may review and/or make photocopies of documents contained in your file with the permission of the CSO. Please see the CSO if you are interested in reviewing your file or making copies. All requests for personnel files, whether to view or copy, will be responded to within a reasonable time and in accordance with any applicable laws.

### ***Arrests and Convictions Policy***

Employees arrested or convicted of a crime for any reason, other than a traffic citation such as a speeding ticket (unless driving a school vehicle), must notify the School within 24 hours. In accordance with legal requirements, the School will conduct an individualized assessment to determine whether the employee will be disqualified from employment, using the following factors:

- The nature and gravity of the offense or conduct;
- The time that has passed since the offense, conduct and/or completion of the sentence; and
- The nature of the job held.

In all cases, the School reserves the right to

- Assign an employee to different responsibilities or departments,
- Suspend the employee with or without pay, or
- Terminate the employee.

### ***Employee Compensation and Contract Policy***

As a public charter school, RTHS is almost exclusively funded through state, local and federal monies. Prior to the beginning of each school year, the Board approves the school's annual budget, which contains all expected personnel costs. Those costs are derived in large part from the compensation and benefits paid to employees pursuant to our policies and contracts. As such, the school does not change compensation for employees during the year unless there is a change in position, responsibility, licensure/certification, or level of education. Teachers are expected to ensure their licensure and experience is updated by the end of the school year, prior to contracts being offered. Contract changes are only permitted if there is a change in responsibility or position and must be approved or ratified by the RTHS's Board of Directors. Changes in classroom, grade level or subject matter do not need to be approved by the RTHS Board of Directors

## **Benefits**

### ***Benefits Overview***

It is RTHS's policy to provide a comprehensive benefits program to all eligible employees. We are constantly studying and evaluating our benefits programs and policies to better meet present and future needs. These policies will continue to be refined to keep up with changing times and needs.

The following few pages contain a brief outline of the benefits programs RTHS provides for employees and their families. Of course, the information presented here is intended to serve only as guidelines.

If applicable, the descriptions of the insurance and other plan benefits merely highlight certain aspects of the applicable plans for general information only. The details of those plans are spelled out in the official plan documents, which are available for review upon request from the COO. Additionally, the provisions of the plans, including eligibility and benefits provisions, are summarized in the summary plan descriptions ("SPDs") for the plans (which may be revised from time to time). In the determination of benefits and all other matters under each plan, the terms of the official plan documents shall govern the language of any descriptions of the plans, including the SPDs and this handbook.

Further, RTHS (including the officers and directors who are responsible for administering the plans) retains full discretionary authority to interpret the terms of the plans, as well as full discretionary authority with regard to administrative matters arising in connection with the plans and all issues concerning benefit terms, eligibility, and entitlement.

**While RTHS intends to maintain these employee benefits, it reserves the absolute right to modify, amend or terminate these benefits at any time and for any reason. If there is a conflict**

**between the plan documents and information provided by the School in this handbook or any other communication, the provisions of the plan document control. Employees should not rely on information from School personnel or policies for their benefits information and should instead rely on the plan documents.**

If employees have any questions regarding benefits, they should contact [Nicole Lightner](#), RTHS's accountant.

### ***Insurance Programs***

As a North Carolina public charter school, RTHS participates in the North Carolina State Employees and Teachers group health insurance plan. Additional benefits such as dental, vision, life insurance, and short-term disability plans and programs are also offered. Regular full-time employees will be eligible to enroll in those plans in accordance with the terms of such plans and programs if the employee meets the eligibility requirements for such plans. Open enrollment for these programs occurs in October each year; the COO will notify employees of the exact dates.

Regular full-time employees must be enrolled in the Teachers' and State Employee's retirement system and will have the option to participate in the state health insurance program unless the employee can provide proof of other coverage. Under these plans, eligible employees have the option for comprehensive health and other insurance coverage for themselves and their families, as well as other benefits.

Upon becoming eligible to participate in these plans, employees will receive summary plan descriptions (SPDs) describing the benefits in greater detail. Please refer to the SPDs for detailed plan information. Contact the COO with any further questions.

RTHS reserves the right to modify, amend or terminate any such plans and programs it adopts at any time, at its discretion, and may decide not to provide some or all benefits.

More information can be found on the [State Health Plan](#) website.

### ***Paid Time Off***

#### ***Holidays***

All employees will be paid for the Federal Holidays the School observes and that fall in their scheduled work calendar. Non-exempt employees will be paid for the hours they would have been scheduled for on the day the holiday falls. Non-exempt employees are not expected to work and will not be paid for other days when school is closed during the school year.

An employee is not eligible for holiday pay when:

- The holiday occurs before the employee's hire date, or

- After the last day of employment when the employee separates from RTHS, or
- The employee is on extended leave without pay for over half of the workdays and holidays in the applicable month.

RTHS will make efforts to accommodate an employee's request to be away from work for certain religious holiday observances when reasonable accommodation can be made.

### ***Personal Time Off***

Full-time teachers (10-month employees) accrue 6.67 hours of personal time off (PTO) per month for a maximum of 10 days per year. 12-month employees accrue 10 hours per month for a maximum of 15 days per year. Part-time employees accrue PTO proportional to their employment. For example, an employee considered half-time (50%) would accrue 3.33 hours per month for a maximum of 5 days per year. If an illness keeps staff out of school for more than one day in a particular month, the additional days will be used against your remaining balance. Employees' PTO balance may drop to a negative amount for a temporary time. Once the employee's PTO balance drops to a point low enough that monthly accruals through the end of the school year would not get the employee back to a balance of 0.00 hours, all leave for the remainder of the school year shall be unpaid.

PTO days are to be used in the event of employee or family illness, doctor appointments, or business that cannot be scheduled outside of work hours. **No more than 3 PTO days may be taken consecutively unless such time off falls under the FMLA or ADA, unless otherwise approved by the CSO. At the end of each school year, employees have the option to roll over up to 240 hours of unused PTO. Any unused PTO that cannot be rolled over will be forfeited. RTHS does not pay accrued unused PTO upon termination for any reason; all unused PTO will be forfeited.**

### **Blackout Days:**

Absent prior approval by the CSO, PTO/leave may not be used on the first day the employee is required to report for the school year, during the first two weeks of the school year, on in-person teacher workdays, on days scheduled for state or schoolwide testing, on the day before or the day after a holiday, school breaks or other closures, or during the month of May through the end of the School year, unless extraordinary circumstances exist. Further, an employee may not take unused PTO at the end of their employment with the School.

### **Approval Required:**

Employees are required to obtain approval for all foreseeable PTO use. RTHS is not required to approve the use of PTO. Where PTO is not approved and the employee takes time off without approval, disciplinary action up to and including termination may result.

### ***Professional Leave***

Professional days are taken at the discretion of the administration and consist of events and activities that complement the school and the employee professionally, such as presenting at a conference, attending school training, supervising school-sanctioned field trips or travel, or serving on boards and statewide or national committees. These days do not count against an employee's PTO amount. The CSO or their designee must approve professional days in writing in advance.

***Partial-Day Leave***

Staff leave/PTO is calculated by the hour, with a full-day absence constituting eight (8) hours of leave. Employees who will miss part of a day shall notify the Office Manager and the CSO or their designee. In the case of partial-day absence, the Office Manager will arrange coverage as needed. When applicable, substitute plans must be provided by the employee to the substitute and the Office Manager.

***Leave Without Pay***

Employees taking leave without pay will have their daily or hourly rate docked based on their individual salary. Leave without pay is provided at the discretion of the CSO and is not guaranteed.

***Bereavement Leave***

The school provides up to 3 days of Bereavement leave for local leave and up to 5 days of Bereavement leave for out-of-town leave for the death of an immediate family member. Additional leave for the death of an immediate family member may be granted at the discretion of the CSO, consistent with all applicable laws. For this policy, a close relative includes a spouse, domestic/civil union partner, child, parent/guardian, sibling, or any other relation required by applicable law. Employees may request personal or sick leave for the death of another family member or a close friend. Approval is at the discretion of the CSO. RTHS may require evidence for approving bereavement leave.

***Workers' Compensation***

On-the-job injuries are covered by RTHS's Workers' Compensation Insurance Policy, which is provided at no cost. If employees are injured on the job, no matter how slightly, they should report the incident immediately to their supervisor and the COO. Additionally, the [Incident Report](#) needs to be completed as soon as possible. Failure to follow RTHS procedures may affect the ability of employees to receive Workers Compensation benefits. Instructions on how to report a workplace injury are posted in the mail room, the staff lounge (Room 112), and the second floor galley kitchen.

This is solely a monetary benefit and not a leave of absence entitlement. Employees who need to miss work due to a workplace injury must also request a formal leave of absence. See the Leave of Absence sections of this handbook for more information.

***Jury Duty***

RTHS realizes that it is the obligation of all U.S. citizens to serve on a jury when summoned to do so. All employees will be allowed time off to perform such civic service as required by law. Employees are expected, however, to provide proper notice of a request to perform jury duty and verification of their service.

Employees are also expected to keep their direct supervisor and the Office Manager informed of the expected length of jury duty service and to report to work for the major portion of the day if excused by the court. If the required absence presents a serious conflict for the school, employees may be asked to try to postpone jury duty.



Employees on jury duty leave will be paid for their jury duty service in accordance with state law; however, exempt employees will be paid their full salary for any week in which time is missed due to jury duty if work is performed for RTHS during such week.

### ***Voting Leave***

In the event employees do not have sufficient time outside of working hours to vote in a statewide or national election, if required by law, the employee may take off enough working time to vote. Such time will be paid if required by law. This time should be taken at the beginning or end of the regular work schedule. Where possible, supervisors should be notified at least two (2) days prior to the voting day.

### ***Parental Leave***

In accordance with the North Carolina Parental Leave Law, School will grant up to four (4) hours of unpaid leave per year to any employee who is a parent, guardian, or person standing in loco parentis of any school age child so that the employee may attend or otherwise be involved in activities at the child's school, preschool or child care facility as defined by G.S. 110-86(3). This leave must be scheduled in advance at a mutually convenient time. RTHS reserves the right to request written verification of the employee's attendance from the school.

### ***Lactation Breaks***

Please refer to the School's policy under the **PUMP ACT**.

## ***Leaves of Absence***

### ***Family and Medical Leave Act***

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) applies to all employers with 50 or more employees. If the FMLA applies, the School shall comply with all applicable provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and it is the intent of this and any other School policy to comply with such law. In accordance with the FMLA, RTHS provides eligible employees up to twelve weeks of leave for family and medical reasons.

### ***The Leave Policy***

Employees may be entitled to a leave of absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). This policy provides employees with information concerning FMLA entitlements and obligations employees may have during such leaves. If employees have any questions concerning FMLA leave, they should contact [Andrea Brown](#), RTHS's Human Resources representative.

### ***Eligibility***

FMLA leave is available to "eligible employees." To be an "eligible employee," the employee must: 1) have been employed by RTHS for at least 12 months (which need not be consecutive); 2) have been employed by RTHS for at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period immediately

preceding the commencement of the leave; and 3) be employed at a worksite where 50 or more employees are located within 75 miles of the worksite.

### *Entitlements*

As described below, the FMLA provides eligible employees with a right to leave, health insurance benefits, and, with some limited exceptions, job restoration.

### *Basic FMLA Leave Entitlement*

The FMLA provides eligible employees with up to 12 workweeks of unpaid leave for certain family and medical reasons during a 12-month period. The 12-month period is determined based on a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses their FMLA leave. Leave may be taken for any or a combination of the following reasons:

- To care for the employee's child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent (but not in-law) who has a serious health condition;
- For the employee's own serious health condition (including any period of incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth) that makes the employee unable to perform one or more of the essential functions of the employee's job; and/or
- Because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent is a military member on covered active duty or called to covered active duty status (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty) in the Reserves component of the Armed Forces for deployment to a foreign country in support of contingency operation or Regular Armed Forces for deployment to a foreign country.

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 employees from performing the functions of their job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities. Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 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.

Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, caring for the parents of the military member on covered active duty and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

**Additional Military Family Leave Entitlement (Injured Servicemember Leave)**

In addition to the basic FMLA leave entitlement discussed above, an eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of a covered servicemember is entitled to take up to 26 weeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for the servicemember with a serious injury or illness. Leave to care for a servicemember shall only be available during a single 12-month period and, when combined with other FMLA-qualifying leave, may not exceed 26 weeks during the single 12-month period. The single 12-month period begins on the first day an eligible employee takes leave to care for the injured servicemember.

A "covered servicemember" is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status or is on the temporary retired list, for a serious injury or illness. These individuals are referred to in this policy as "current members of the Armed Forces." Covered servicemembers also include a veteran who is discharged or released from military services under condition other than dishonorable at any time during the five years preceding the date the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for the covered veteran, and who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy for a serious injury or illness. These individuals are referred to in this policy as "covered veterans."

The FMLA definitions of a "serious injury or illness" for current Armed Forces members and covered veterans are distinct from the FMLA definition of "serious health condition" applicable to FMLA leave to care for a covered family member.

**Spouses Who Work For The Same Employer**

Generally, the FMLA entitles each eligible employee to take up to 12 workweeks of FMLA leave in a 12-month period for certain family and medical reasons. The FMLA also entitles each employee to take up to 26 work weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period for military caregiver leave. However, under the FMLA, spouses who work for the same employer share the total number of workweeks of FMLA leave available for certain reasons. Spouses who work for the same employer share a total of 12 workweeks of FMLA leave per leave year for:

- The birth of a child,
- Placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care, or
- Care for a parent with a serious health condition.

Spouses who work for the same employer also share a total of 26 work weeks of FMLA to care for a military family member with a serious injury or illness.

Spouses who work for the same employer may each use a total of 12 workweeks of FMLA leave in a leave year for:

- Their own serious health condition,
- To care for a spouse or child with a serious health condition, or
- Due to a qualifying exigency.

**Definition of spouse.** Under the FMLA, spouse means a husband or wife as defined or recognized in the state where the individual was married, including individuals in a common law marriage and

married same-sex couples. Spouse also includes a husband or wife in a marriage that was validly entered into outside of the United States if the marriage could have been entered into in at least one state. Individuals in civil unions and domestic partnerships are not considered spouses under the FMLA and, therefore, do not share FMLA leave when employed by the same employer.

### **Intermittent Leave and Reduced Leave Schedules**

Intermittent or reduced schedule leave may be taken when a serious health condition, either the employee's or that of a child, spouse, or parent or covered service member, or for qualifying exigencies, makes this schedule necessary. When medically necessary, an employee may take "intermittent" leave (two or more separate leave periods) or "reduced" leave (where an employee continues to work, but for fewer hours per day or per week). In such cases, the total number of hours or days of leave by the employee is limited to the equivalent of twelve (12) workweeks. RTHS may transfer the employee temporarily to an available alternative position if that position better accommodates recurring periods of leave. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule intermittent absences for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt RTHS's operations. RTHS may make deduction from an exempt employee's salary for any hours/time taken as intermittent or reduced FMLA leave within a pay period without affecting the employee's exempt status. Intermittent leave is not available for leave due to the birth or adoption of a child unless approved by RTHS.

### ***Performing Another Job While on FMLA***

The taking of another job while on family/medical leave or any other authorized leave of absence may be grounds for termination, to the extent permitted by law. However, an employee with already established secondary employment that has complied with the school's policy on secondary employment, may work while on FMLA provided such secondary employment does not interfere with employee returning to their position at the School and the employee's FMLA does not prohibit them from performing the secondary employment. This means that an employee cannot work a secondary job that is substantially similar to their job at the School while they are on any type of leave including FMLA unless approved by the school or required by law.

### ***Protection of Group Health Insurance Benefits***

During FMLA leave, eligible employees are entitled to receive group health plan coverage on the same terms and conditions as if they had continued to work.

### ***Restoration of Employment and Benefits***

At the end of FMLA leave, subject to some exceptions including situations where job restoration of "key employees" will cause RTHS substantial and grievous economic injury, employees generally have a right to return to the same or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. RTHS will notify employees if they qualify as "key employees," if it intends to deny reinstatement, and of their rights in such instances. Use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an eligible employee's FMLA leave.

### ***Notice of Eligibility for, and Designation of, FMLA Leave***

Employees requesting FMLA leave are entitled to receive written notice from RTHS telling them whether they are eligible for FMLA leave and, if not eligible, the reasons why they are not eligible. When eligible for FMLA leave, employees are entitled to receive written notice of: 1) their rights and responsibilities in connection with such leave; 2) RTHS's designation of leave as FMLA-qualifying or non-qualifying, and if not FMLA-qualifying, the reasons why; and 3) the amount of leave, if known, that will be counted against the employee's leave entitlement.

RTHS may retroactively designate leave as FMLA leave with appropriate written notice to employees, provided RTHS's failure to designate leave as FMLA-qualifying at an earlier date did not cause harm or injury to the employee. In all cases where leaves qualify for FMLA protection, the school and the employee can mutually agree that the leave be retroactively designated as FMLA leave.

### ***Employee FMLA Leave Obligations***

#### ***Provide Notice of the Need for Leave***

Employees who take FMLA leave must timely notify RTHS of their need for FMLA leave. The following describes the content and timing of such employee notices.

#### ***Content of Employee Notice***

To trigger FMLA leave protections, employees must inform their Supervisor of the need for FMLA-qualifying leave and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave, if known.

Employees may do this by either requesting FMLA leave specifically or explaining the reasons for leave so as to allow RTHS to determine that the leave is FMLA-qualifying. For example, employees might explain that:

- a medical condition renders them unable to perform the functions of their job;
- they are pregnant or have been hospitalized overnight;
- they or a covered family member are under the continuing care of a healthcare provider;
- the leave is due to a qualifying exigency caused by a military member being on covered active duty or called to covered active-duty status to a foreign country; or
- if the leave is for a family member, the condition renders the family member unable to perform daily activities or that the family member is a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness.

Calling in "sick," without providing the reasons for the needed leave, will not be considered sufficient notice for FMLA leave under this policy. Employees must respond to RTHS's questions to determine if absences are potentially FMLA-qualifying.

If employees fail to explain the reasons for FMLA leave, the leave may be denied. When employees seek leave due to FMLA-qualifying reasons for which RTHS has previously provided FMLA-protected leave, they must specifically reference the qualifying reason for the leave or the need for FMLA leave.

Notice of Leave

Employees 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, or the approximate timing of the need for leave is not foreseeable, employees must provide RTHS notice of the need for leave as soon as practicable under the facts and circumstances of the particular case. Employees who fail to give 30 days' notice for foreseeable leave without a reasonable excuse for the delay, or otherwise fail to satisfy FMLA notice obligations, may have FMLA leave delayed or denied. Family Medical Leave forms are available from [Andrea Brown](#) (Human Resources). These forms must be used when employees request leave.

Cooperate in the Scheduling of Planned Medical Treatment (Including Accepting Transfers to Alternative Positions) and Intermittent Leave or Reduced Leave Schedules

When planning medical treatment, employees must consult with RTHS and make a reasonable effort to schedule treatment so as not to unduly disrupt RTHS's operations, subject to the approval of the employee's health care provider. If employees providing notice of the need to take FMLA leave on an intermittent basis for planned medical treatment neglect to fulfill this obligation, RTHS may require employees to attempt to make such arrangements, subject to the approval of the employee's health care provider.

When employees take intermittent or reduced work schedule leave for foreseeable planned medical treatment for the employee or a family member, including during a period of recovery from a serious health condition or to care for a covered servicemember, RTHS may temporarily transfer employees, during the period that the intermittent or reduced leave schedules are required, to alternative positions with equivalent pay and benefits for which the employees are qualified and which better accommodate recurring periods of leave.

When employees seek intermittent leave or a reduced leave schedule for reasons unrelated to the planning of medical treatment, upon request, employees must advise RTHS of the reason why such leave is medically necessary. In such instances, RTHS and the employee shall attempt to work out a leave schedule that meets the employee's needs without unduly disrupting RTHS's operations, subject to the approval of the employee's health care provider.

Submit Medical Certifications Supporting Need for FMLA Leave (Unrelated to Requests for Military Family Leave)

Depending on the nature of FMLA leave sought, employees may be required to submit medical certifications supporting their need for FMLA-qualifying leave. As described below, there are generally three types of FMLA medical certifications: an initial certification, a recertification, and a return to work/fitness for duty certification.

It is the employee's responsibility to provide the school with timely, complete, and sufficient medical certifications. Whenever RTHS requests employees to provide FMLA medical certifications,



employees must provide the requested certifications within 15 calendar days after RTHS's request, unless it is not practicable to do so despite the employee's diligent, good-faith efforts. RTHS will inform employees if submitted medical certifications are incomplete or insufficient and provide employees with at least seven calendar days to cure deficiencies. RTHS will deny FMLA leave to employees who fail to remedy deficiencies in a timely manner or otherwise fail to submit requested medical certifications in a timely manner.

With the employee's permission, RTHS (through individuals other than the employee's direct supervisor) may contact the employee's health care provider to authenticate or clarify complete and sufficient medical certifications. If employees choose not to provide RTHS with authorization to clarify or authenticate certifications with health care providers, RTHS may deny FMLA leave if certifications are unclear.

Whenever RTHS deems it appropriate, it may waive its right to receive timely, complete, and/or sufficient FMLA medical certifications.

#### Initial Medical Certifications

Employees requesting leave because of their own, or a covered relation's, serious health condition, or to care for a covered servicemember, must supply medical certification supporting the need for such leave from their health care provider or, if applicable, the health care provider of their covered family or service member. If employees provide at least 30 days' notice of medical leave, they should submit the medical certification before leave begins. A new initial medical certification will be required on an annual basis for serious medical conditions lasting beyond a single leave year.

If RTHS has reason to doubt initial medical certifications, it may require employees to obtain a second opinion at RTHS's expense. If the opinions of the initial and second health care providers differ, RTHS may, at its expense, require employees to obtain a third, final and binding certification from a health care provider designated or approved jointly by RTHS and the employee.

#### Medical Recertifications

Depending on the circumstances and duration of FMLA leave, RTHS may require employees to provide recertification of medical conditions, which may give rise to the need for leave. The school will notify employees if recertification is required and will give employees at least 15 calendar days to provide medical recertification.

#### Return to Work/Fitness for Duty Medical Certifications

Unless notified that providing such certifications is not necessary, employees returning to work from FMLA leaves that were taken because of their serious health conditions that made them unable to perform their jobs must provide RTHS with medical certification confirming they are able to return to work and the employees' ability to perform the essential functions of



the employees' position, with or without reasonable accommodation. RTHS may delay and/or deny job restoration until employees provide return to work/fitness for duty certifications.

#### Submit Certifications Supporting Need for Military Family Leave

Upon request, the first time employees seek leave due to qualifying exigencies arising out of the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of a military member, RTHS may require employees to provide: 1) a copy of the military member's active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military indicating the military member is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status and the dates of the military member's covered active duty service; and 2) a certification from the employee setting forth information concerning the nature of the qualifying exigency for which leave is requested. Employees shall provide a copy of new active-duty orders or other documentation issued by the military for leaves arising out of qualifying exigencies arising out of a different covered active duty or call to covered active-duty status of the same or a different military member.

When leave is taken to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness, RTHS may require employees to obtain certifications completed by an authorized health care provider of the covered servicemember. In addition, and in accordance with the FMLA regulations, RTHS may request that the certification submitted by employees set forth additional information provided by the employee and/or the covered servicemember confirming entitlement to such leave.

#### Substitute Paid Leave for Unpaid FMLA Leave

Employees must use any accrued Earned/Sick Leave/PTO time while taking unpaid FMLA leave. The substitution of paid time for unpaid FMLA leave time does not extend the length of FMLA leave, and the paid time will run concurrently with the employee's FMLA entitlement. Leaves of absence taken in connection with a disability leave plan or workers' compensation injury/illness shall run concurrently with any FMLA leave entitlement.

#### Pay Employee's Share of Health Insurance Premiums

During FMLA leave, employees are entitled to continue group health plan coverage under the same conditions as if they had continued to work. Unless RTHS notifies employees of other arrangements, whenever employees are receiving pay from RTHS during FMLA leave, RTHS will deduct the employee portion of the group health plan premium from the employee's paycheck in the same manner as if the employee were actively working.

If FMLA leave is unpaid, employees must pay their portion of the group health premium through a method determined by RTHS upon leave.

RTHS's obligation to maintain health care coverage ceases if the employee's premium payment is more than 30 days late. If the employee's payment is more than 15 days late, RTHS will send a letter notifying the employee that coverage will be dropped on a specified date unless the co-payment is received before that date. If employees do not return to work within 30 calendar days at the end of the

leave period (unless employees cannot return to work because of a serious health condition or other circumstances beyond their control), they will be required to reimburse RTHS for the cost of the premiums RTHS paid for maintaining coverage during their unpaid FMLA leave.

#### Questions and/or Complaints about FMLA Leave

If you have questions regarding this FMLA policy, please contact the Business Office. RTHS is committed to complying with the FMLA and, whenever necessary, shall interpret and apply this policy in a manner consistent with the FMLA.

The FMLA makes it unlawful for employers to: 1) interfere with, restrain or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA; or 2) discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA. If employees believe their FMLA rights have been violated, they should contact our Human Resources representative immediately. RTHS will investigate any FMLA complaints and take prompt and appropriate remedial action to address and/or remedy any FMLA violation. Employees also may file FMLA complaints with the United States Department of Labor or may bring private lawsuits alleging FMLA violations.

#### Coordination of FMLA Leave with Other Leave Policies

The FMLA does not affect any federal, state, or local law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or local law that provides greater family or medical leave rights. For additional information concerning leave entitlements and obligations that might arise when FMLA leave is either not available or exhausted, please consult RTHS's other leave policies in this handbook or contact RTHS Human Resources representative [Andrea Brown](#).

### **Special School Rules**

#### Special rules for school employees.

The special rules affect the taking of intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule, or leave near the end of an academic term (semester), by instructional employees. *Instructional employees* are those whose principal function is to teach and instruct students in a class, a small group, or an individual setting. This term includes teachers, athletic coaches, driving instructors, and Special education assistants, such as signers for the hearing-impaired. It does not include, and the special rules do not apply to, teacher assistants or aides who do not have actual teaching or instructing as their principal job, nor does it include auxiliary personnel such as counselors, psychologists, or curriculum specialists. It also does not include cafeteria workers, maintenance workers, or bus drivers. Special rules that apply to restoration to an equivalent position apply to all employees.

#### Special rules for school employees, limitations on intermittent leave.

Leave taken for a period that ends with the school year and begins the next semester is leave taken consecutively rather than intermittently. The period during the summer vacation when the employee would not have been required to report for duty is not counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. An instructional employee who is on FMLA leave at the end of the school year must be provided with any benefits over the summer vacation that employees would normally receive if they had been working at the end of the school year.

If an eligible instructional employee needs intermittent leave or a reduced leave schedule to care for a family member with a serious health condition, or to care for a covered service member, or for the employee's own serious health condition, which is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, and the employee would be on leave for more than 20 percent of the total number of working days over the period the leave would extend, the employer may require the employee to choose either to:

- a) Take leave for a period or periods of a particular duration, not greater than the duration of the planned treatment; or
- b) Transfer temporarily to an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified, has equivalent pay and benefits, and better accommodates recurring periods of leave than does the employee's regular position.

These rules apply only to a leave involving more than 20 percent of the working days during the period the leave extends. For example, if an instructional employee who normally works five days each week needs to take two days of FMLA leave per week over a period of several weeks, the special rules would apply. Employees taking leave, constituting 20 percent or less of the working days during the leave period, would not be subject to transfer to an alternative position.

*Periods of a particular duration* mean a block, or blocks, of time beginning no earlier than the first day for which leave is needed and ending no later than the last day on which leave is needed. They may include one uninterrupted period of leave.

If an instructional employee does not give the required notice of foreseeable FMLA leave to be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule, the employer may require the employee to take leave of a particular duration or to transfer temporarily to an alternative position. Alternatively, the employer may require the employee to delay taking leave until the notice period provision is met.

*Special rules for school employees, limitations on leave near the end of an academic year*

There are also different rules for instructional employees who begin leave more than five weeks before the end of a term, less than five weeks before the end of a term, and less than three weeks before the end of a term. Regular rules apply except in circumstances when:

1. An instructional employee begins leave more than five weeks before the end of a term. The employer may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the term if:
  - a. The leave will last at least three weeks, and
  - b. The employee would return to work during the three-week period before the end of the term.
2. The employee begins leave during the five weeks before the end of a term because of the birth of a son or daughter; the placement of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care; to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; or to care for a covered service member. The employer may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the term if:
  - a. The leave will last more than two weeks, and
  - b. The employee would return to work during the two-week period before the end of the term.
3. The employee begins leave during the three-week period before the end of a term because of the birth of a son or daughter; the placement of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care; to

care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; or to care for a covered service member. The employer may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the term if the leave will last more than five working days.

For purposes of these provisions, *academic term* means the school semester, which typically ends near the end of the calendar year and the end of spring each school year. In no case may a school have more than two academic terms or semesters each year for purposes of FMLA. An example of leave falling within these provisions would be when an employee plans two weeks of leave to care for a family member, beginning three weeks before the end of the term. In that situation, the employer could require the employee to stay out on leave until the end of the term.

*Special rules for school employees, restoration to an equivalent position.*

Employees returning from FMLA leave shall be restored to an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

*Partially Paid Parental Leave Pursuant to Opt-In to State Paid Parental Leave*

RTHS has opted in to the Paid Parental Leave as set forth in 16 NCAC 06C.0408, which states as follows:

A full-time eligible employee who becomes a parent to a child shall be entitled to the following:

1. For a parent who gives birth to a child, up to eight weeks of paid parental leave consisting of:
  - a. Four weeks for physical and mental recuperation; and
  - b. Four weeks for bonding with the child.
2. For the parent who does not give birth, up to four weeks of paid parental leave for bonding with the child.

A part-time eligible employee who becomes a parent to a child shall be entitled to a prorated share of paid parental leave based upon the hours in the employee's regular, weekly schedule compared to the hours worked by a full-time employee in a similar position at the School, provided that the prorated share of leave shall not exceed the total number of weeks provided to a full-time employee.

If an eligible employee gives birth to a child and places the child up for adoption or into foster care, or otherwise legally places the child with another person to serve as the child's parent, the employee shall be entitled to up to four weeks of leave for physical and mental recuperation from the time of the child's birth. Neither a birthing parent nor a non-birthing parent shall be entitled to additional leave for bonding with the child.

If a fetus dies prior to a completed birth, or if a child dies after a completed birth, the following rules shall apply:

1. If the fetus dies before the conclusion of the 12th week of pregnancy, there is no qualifying event creating an entitlement to paid parental leave under this Rule.
2. If the fetus dies after the conclusion of the 12th week of pregnancy but prior to a completed birth, an otherwise eligible employee who carried the child shall be entitled to up to four weeks of leave for physical and mental recuperation. Neither a birthing parent nor a non-birthing parent shall be entitled to additional leave for bonding with the child.
3. If a child dies after a completed birth, an otherwise eligible employee shall be entitled to the same amount of leave to which the employee would be entitled as set forth above.

Once paid leave is exhausted, the employee must use PTO/vacation/sick time or may be eligible for short or long-term disability payments under those insurance/benefit plans. Paid and unpaid leave run concurrently, and the substitution of paid leave time for unpaid leave time does not extend the 12-week leave period. Partially Paid Parental Leave must be completed within the 12 months beginning on the date of birth or placement. NOTE: There are situations where an employee may not be covered under FMLA but may be eligible for Partially Paid Parental Leave.

### ***Non-FMLA Medical Leave***

Where the RTHS is not required to provide FMLA or a regular full-time employee is not eligible for FMLA leave but needs time off for their own serious health condition, the Employee may request Non-FMLA Medical Leave. Employees eligible for FMLA but who have exhausted their FMLA leave are not eligible for this policy.

Non-FMLA Medical Leave is available to employees solely for the employee to tend to their own serious health condition.

Employees must submit medical certification in support of their Non-FMLA Medical Leave request to their Supervisor at least 30 days in advance, if more than five days of consecutive absence are anticipated. RTHS can request additional information to assist in assessing the claim for leave. The request will be considered on the basis of staffing requirements and the reasons for the requested leave, as well as performance and attendance records. Normally, a leave of absence will be granted for a period of up to 6 weeks; however, a Non-FMLA Medical Leave may be extended if, prior to the end of leave, an employee submits a written request for an extension to the Director of Business, and the request is granted.

Employees must notify their supervisor at least 1 week prior to their scheduled return to work. When returning to work, the employee may be required to provide a medical certification of fitness to return to work.

The taking of another job while on Non-FMLA Medical Leave or any other authorized leave of absence is grounds for immediate termination, to the extent permitted by law (see the Secondary Employment Policy).

If an employee is approved for a Non-FMLA Medical Leave, this leave does not guarantee a position upon the end of the leave, and RTHS may post their position. However, the employee may be considered for any available positions for which they are qualified at the time of release to return to work. Upon completion of the Non-FMLA Medical Leave, RTHS will attempt to return the employee to their original job or a similar position, subject to prevailing business considerations. Again, reinstatement is not guaranteed.

Failure to advise the Director of Business of availability to return to work, failure to return to work when notified, or a continued absence from work beyond the time approved by RTHS will be considered a voluntary resignation of employment.

### ***Return-to-Work from a Medical-Related Leave of Absence***

Unless notified that providing such certifications is not necessary, employees returning to work from medical-related leave due to their own serious health conditions, including FMLA, must provide RTHS with medical certification confirming they are able to return to work, at least 1 week prior to their scheduled return. The certification from a medical professional must affirm that the employee is able to perform the essential functions of their position, with or without reasonable accommodation. RTHS may delay and/or deny job restoration until employees provide return to work/fitness for duty certifications. Please contact our Human Resources representative for the required **Return-To-Work Authorization** form.

### ***Parent/Guardian School Attendance Leave***

RTHS will grant employees who are parents/guardians of school-age children up to four (4) hours of unpaid leave during any 12-month period to participate in activities at their children's school. One (1) week written advance notice is required. The leave shall occur at a time mutually agreed upon by the employee and RTHS. RTHS may require verification of the employee's participation in the school activities. Employees must first use accrued Earned/Sick Leave time for this purpose.

### ***Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)***

The School follows the guidelines established by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) regarding military leave.

### ***Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)***

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 is a federal law intended to ensure that persons who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, Reserves, National Guard or other "uniformed services:" (1) are not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their service; (2) are promptly reemployed in their civilian jobs upon their return from duty; and (3) are not discriminated against in employment based on past, present or future military service.

### ***Requesting Military leave***

When an employee is called to military service, USERRA requires the employee in the uniformed services to give advance written or verbal notice of the service to their employer, unless such notice is precluded by military necessity. The employee should submit a request to the COO when notified of an impending call to service as soon as possible and provide documentation.



*Duration of Leave**Extended Military Leave*

Employees who must be absent from work due to military duty for a time period that exceeds ten working days will be placed on an unpaid military leave of absence for the time period consistent with military orders.

*Temporary (Two-Week) Military Leave*

In addition to the rights and benefits provided to employees taking extended military leave, employees who must be absent from their job for a period of not more than 10 working days each year in order to participate in temporary military duty are entitled to as many as 10 days of unpaid military leave.

*Benefits During Military Leave*

An employee on military leave may elect to continue the School health plan coverage and is required to pay only the employee's portion of the insurance premium when in the service for 30 days or less. Thereafter, the employee may elect to continue healthcare coverage as provided under COBRA. However, if coverage is terminated at the employee's option, the School may not impose a waiting period for benefit reinstatement upon return to employment. For more specific information regarding the status of Health Plan coverage and other benefits during military leave, contact Human Resources. An employee on military leave may opt to use PTO but is not required to do so during the time that they are performing military service. This is an exception to our other leave policies, which require an employee to exhaust all PTO prior to going into an unpaid status. PTO is not accrued while the employee is on military leave.

The School will activate the returning veteran's benefits based upon the length of service they would have had if they remained on the job.

*Returning to Work After Military Duty*

To be eligible for protection under USERRA, the employee must report back to work or apply for reemployment within the following guidelines:

- 1) If the employee served fewer than 31 days or was away from School for other qualified reasons, the employee must return to work the next regularly scheduled workday.
- 2) If the employee served more than 30 days but fewer than 181 days, the employee must notify their supervisor of their intention to return to work within 14 days after completion of service.
- 3) If the employee served more than 180 days, the employee must notify their supervisor of their intention to return to work within 90 days after completion of service.
- 4) Upon notification of intent to return to work, the employee must provide military discharge documentation to their supervisor that establishes timeliness of application for reemployment and length and character of the staff member's military service.

An employee returning from military leave will receive seniority and other benefits determined by the seniority that the employee had at the beginning of the military leave, plus any additional seniority and benefits the employee would have obtained with continuous employment. In addition, time spent on active duty will be counted towards eligibility for FMLA once the employee has returned to work.



Contact Human Resources for questions regarding the reemployment of employees returning from military leave.

### ***Other Leave Required by Law***

RTHS complies with any other leave required by law.

### ***Employee Health Certificate***

All new employees and employees who have been separated from public school employment for more than a year or who have been absent for more than 40 successive school days because of a communicable disease must provide a fully completed health certificate. Such a certificate must be prepared by:

1. A physician licensed to practice in North Carolina;
2. A nurse practitioner approved pursuant to state law; or
3. A physician's assistant licensed to practice in North Carolina.

A new employee who has not previously been employed in a public school in North Carolina may provide a certificate prepared by a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant who holds a current unrestricted license or registration in another state, so long as evidence of that license or registration is on the certificate. Such a certificate must certify that the employee does not have tuberculosis in a communicable form; any other communicable disease; or any disease, physical or mental, that would impair the ability of the individual to perform effectively in his or her duties. The Board or superintendent may require any individual covered by this policy to have a physical examination when deemed necessary.

Health certificates will be maintained in separate, confidential medical files in the human resources office. Legal References: [G.S. 115C-323](#)

## ***Operations***

### ***Email & Phone Message Responses***

All emails and phone messages should be reviewed and responded to within two business days. Teachers are to keep a written record of all conversations they have had with families throughout the year and should maintain these records. This includes all phone calls, email conversations, and conference notes. It is recommended to send an email following any in-person conversation or telephone call to summarize the conversation.

RTHS employees may use only their RTHS email accounts to communicate with families/guardians or students. They may not use personal email accounts or personal messaging applications (including, but not limited to, text messaging) to communicate with families/guardians or students. RTHS employees shall not provide families/guardians or students with their mobile phone or home telephone numbers without prior permission from the CSO and only in extraordinary circumstances.

### ***Training and Professional Development***

Attending Conferences

Funds are available for faculty to attend professional workshops and conferences designed to enhance their growth in the school and we highly encourage staff to attend conferences. As part of its mission of education innovation, RTHS strives to support faculty as much as possible in these areas given budget constraints.

An important criterion for deciding on financial support will be how workshop or conference material and ideas are to be shared in ways that benefit colleagues or students. Teachers who are present at state, regional, and national conferences will receive funding preference.

RTHS encourages teachers and staff to attend worthwhile professional development programs. Faculty members are encouraged to notify the CSO as soon as possible if they are interested in attending a conference. The CSO makes the final decision on all conference requests. The following policies are considered guidelines for employees as they choose events to attend.

- Conferences: RTHS considers attendance at professional conferences a priority and encourages teachers and staff to attend as learners or presenters at least once every 3 years. Presenters may attend more often. Attendees are generally expected to be in their second year of employment at RTHS before attending a national conference. RTHS will pay for registration fee, travel, hotel, and dining fees at the federal reimbursement rate or less. Attendees are encouraged to find roommates or compensated rooms and the cheapest airfare.
- AP Workshops: Teachers and staff are encouraged to attend these workshops as often as required, at a local site. Registration fees paid by RTHS; travel and overnight fees may be paid. Attendees are strongly encouraged to attend locally.
- NC-based/DPI Workshops: Teachers and staff are welcome to attend relevant local workshops. RTHS will pay registration fees and travel to and from the event at IRS cent/mile. Overnight stays for conferences over 2.5 hours away will be reimbursed. Employees are encouraged to attend locally held events.

**Licensure**

All licensed personnel with questions pertaining to their licensure requirements and status should contact the CSO. It is strongly advised that non-licensed educators and provisionally licensed teachers maintain regular contact with the CSO to ensure state licensure requirements are met. Funds are available to offset the cost of initial licensing and licensure renewals. See the COO for details on available funds.

RTHS may, at its discretion, hire non-licensed educators. Salaries for such professionals will be determined based on the amount of teaching experience the educator has in the field in which they are being hired. Once licensed, employees have the right to pursue additional credit for non-teaching experience via the Department of Public Instruction. It is important to note that credit for non-teaching work is not transferable to other licensure areas for which the experience is not relevant.

RTHS is committed to providing a quality program that supports beginning teachers' professional growth and development. Any teacher with three years or less teaching experience and/or seeking

licensure will participate in the **NC Beginning Teacher (BT) Support Program**. BTs will be assigned a mentor who will nurture and support their professional growth and ensure they meet the requirements of the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards. All full-time BTs pursuing a continuing professional license must participate in a three-year BTSP. BTs and mentors must attend all meetings and complete all assignments given. Refer to the [BT Support Program Requirements](#).

### ***Family-Teacher Conferences***

Teachers are encouraged to ask for a family-teacher conference (PTC) anytime there is an important matter to discuss in person or remotely with the family member or guardian. Additionally, any time a family member/guardian requests a PTC, the teacher should find time to meet with that individual within a week of the request. If a teacher has already met with the family member/guardian numerous times and feels another meeting would not be beneficial, the staff member must consult with their supervisor for permission to deny the meeting or to schedule the meeting with their supervisor present.

### ***Events & Calendar Approvals***

The school will maintain a master copy of the school calendar in Google Calendar. All school/class events must be submitted at least three (3) weeks in advance to the COO to avoid conflicts. Only upon receipt of approval of the request can planning details be initiated and finalized by the requestor. The CSO must approve any activity that involves the use of RTHS facilities and/or RTHS employees or students.

The COO must approve of any activity that involves fundraising, travel outside of the state or travel that includes an overnight stay. The school calendar will be made available via Google Calendar and employees are responsible for checking this calendar regularly for updates and changes.

Once your request is approved, please notify the COO of what part(s) of the facility will be needed for the event. Additionally, it is your responsibility to notify the Director of Information Technology if you need speaker or projection capabilities.

### ***After-School/ Committee Participation***

Staff may be assigned after-school duties from time to time, including but not limited to staff meetings and athletic duties. If a staff member is assigned a duty after hours in which they have a conflict, they may work with other staff members to trade duties for a time that is more convenient. Should staff need to bring their own children with them to an athletic event for an assigned duty, those children will be admitted free along with any other immediate family of the staff member.

Additionally, membership on school-based committees is essential to the success of RTHS. School-based committees impact the curriculum, culture, and operational functions of the school community. Teachers may be assigned to participate in relevant school-based committees that may meet inside or outside regular business hours.

***Substitute Lesson Plans***

Any time a teacher is going to be absent, they shall log the PTO request in BambooHR and notify the Office Manager. If the absence is not planned in advance (e.g., a teacher wakes up sick), the teacher should also notify the COO via email and/or Google Chat. For any absence, planned or unplanned, the teacher shall give their lesson plans to the Office Manager and, if possible, include the lesson plans in their green substitute binder.

All teachers have a dedicated green binder for substitute plans and procedures. The sub binder should include the following, and be periodically updated as needed to ensure all required information is included:

- Lesson Plan: Plans should be detailed enough to be clearly understood and executed. Please ensure that you have sufficient plans that fill the allotted time.
- Other information or materials (worksheets, lessons, etc.) that will be needed to carry out planned lessons in an effective manner, with a sufficient number of copies for students.
- Note any children with disabilities, accommodations, or medical needs and how you assist them in your room.
- Seating Chart(s) for your classroom(s)
- The RTHS daily bell schedule as well as a schedule of your classes and meeting spaces.
- Emergency Protocols: Fire, Lockdown, and Tornado information

***Fees Charged***

In accordance with North Carolina General Statute § 115C-218.50, RTHS shall not charge tuition or fees except as follows:

1. Any fees that are charged by the local school administrative unit in which RTHS is located.
2. RTHS, upon approval by the Board of Directors of the charter school, may establish fees for extracurricular activities, except those fees shall not exceed the fees for the same extracurricular activities charged by a local school administrative unit in which forty percent (40%) or more of the students enrolled in the charter school reside.

***Field Trips***

Requests for student field trips should be completed at least three (3) weeks in advance of the field trip to allow ample time for collection of fees, reserve buses, and obtaining permission forms; the completed Field Trip Logistics Form should be turned into the COO. Field trips are designed to be an extension of learning. As such, the field trip must be related to the content of the staff member making the request. Overnight field trips should be discussed with your CSO prior to completing the field trip request.

[Field Trip Logistics Form](#) (to be completed by the teacher planning the trip)

[Field Trip Permission Form](#) (to be completed by the family member/guardian)

***Discipline of Students***

Teachers and staff are expected to follow the RTHS's Code of Conduct and hold students accountable when and where discipline is needed. Any staff member on supervisory duty will issue student discipline measures as needed. Staff should not ignore any student action requiring corrective measures, nor should student activities that are positive in nature be ignored by staff. Teachers and staff should provide a level of leadership and guidance that permits as much freedom to pupils as they demonstrate they can use wisely.

***Discipline of Students with Disabilities***

The obligation and the responsibility to attend school regularly and to comply with the school's code of conduct applies to all students. When appropriate, a CSO or designee may discipline a student with a disability who has not complied with the school's code of conduct. Exceptional Children's education services will be provided to a student with a disability if the student has been removed from school for more than ten school days. If a student with a disability is removed for less than ten cumulative days, educational services will be provided only if such services are provided to students without disabilities who have been similarly removed. The school will follow all applicable state and federal laws when disciplining students with disabilities.

***Driver Safety for Work-Related Purposes***

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of those individuals operating their own personal vehicles for RTHS business. Additionally, this policy outlines required driver guidelines and requirements.

For the purpose of this policy, "RTHS business" is defined as driving at the direction, or for the benefit of RTHS. It does not include commuting to and from work every day.

***Driver Guidelines & Reporting Requirements***

All accidents that involve personal vehicles while on company business, regardless of severity, must be reported to the police, your supervisor, and the CSO (see "Accident Procedures" below). Accidents should be reported immediately (from the scene, same day, or as soon as practicable if immediate is not possible).

Any tickets received while driving for RTHS business are to be reported to your supervisor and the CSO within 48 hours.

Drivers must have a valid and current Driver's License to operate their personal vehicle for work-related purposes.

When operating a personal vehicle for RTHS business, you must be covered with an auto insurance policy that covers business use. According to state requirements, a license and insurance policy must always be maintained in active status. RTHS is not responsible for any physical damage to an

employee's vehicle. Accident deductibles, repairs, tickets, violations, etc., incurred by the employee are the responsibility of the driver.

If you should have their license revoked or suspended, you are responsible for notifying your supervisor before the next business day. If your position requires the possession and maintenance of a valid and current driver's license, and it is revoked, you may be terminated from employment for failure to meet the essential functions of your job or re-assigned to a different position, at the discretion of RTHS. Re-assignment may lead to a decrease in pay.

RTHS reserves the right to obtain Motor Vehicle Reports prior to employment and routinely thereafter. A driving record that reflects a failure to meet the guidelines/criteria in this policy or is in violation of the intent of this policy by the CSO will result in a loss of driving privileges. Criteria that may indicate an unacceptable record over a rolling 12-month period include, but are not limited to:

- Three or more moving violations/tickets,
- Two or more at-fault accidents (where the driver is the primary contributor through speeding, distraction, etc.),
- If the insurance company considers the employee uninsurable because of too many points on their driver's license, then the employee will be prohibited from driving on behalf of RTHS.
- Any combination of the above.

### ***Safety Requirements***


- Driving on RTHS business while under the influence of drugs or alcohol is forbidden.
- Cell phone use while driving should be kept to a minimum and only occur in "hands-free" mode, via a headset or speaker. While driving, attention to the road and safety should take precedence over conducting business over the phone.
- Texting is always prohibited while behind the wheel of a vehicle unless the vehicle is in park.
- You should not drive when your ability to do so is impaired by illness, fatigue, injury, or prescription medication.
- You and your passengers must wear seat belts.
- All State and Local laws must be followed.

### ***Accident Procedures***

- Call for medical attention if needed.
- Call the police, and while at the scene, only discuss accident details with the police.
- Contact your supervisor or another member of RTHS leadership.
- Record the names and addresses of those involved, including drivers, witnesses, and occupants of other vehicles.
- Obtain a copy of the police report and provide it to your supervisor or a designated RTHS representative.

### ***Business Purchases and Expense Reimbursement***

Employees wishing to order items for school use shall consult with the COO regarding the nature and cost of the item(s). If the COO approves the purchase, the Office Manager will coordinate the purchase unless that employee has a method to make the purchase (i.e., a school procurement card or a linked Amazon Business account).

Employees will be reimbursed for reasonable pre-approved expenses incurred in the course of business. These expenses must be pre-approved by the COO, and may include air travel, hotels, motels, meals, cab fare, rental vehicles, or gas and car mileage for personal vehicles. Expenses must be reasonable, fiscally responsible, and necessary. All expenses incurred should be submitted to the COO along with the receipts  within ten (10) business days via the [Check Request Form](#).

Employees are expected to exercise restraint and good judgment when incurring expenses. Employees should contact the COO in advance if they have any questions about whether an expense is permissible or eligible to be reimbursed.

For a full explanation of financial procedures, refer to the [RTHS Fiscal Policies and Procedures](#).

### ***Publicity/Statements to the Media***

All media inquiries regarding the position of RTHS as to any issues must be referred to the CSO. Only the CSO or the Board of Directors is authorized to make or approve public statements on behalf of RTHS. Unless specifically designated by the CSO, no employees are authorized to make those statements on behalf of RTHS. Any employee wishing to write and/or publish an article, paper, or other publication on behalf of RTHS must first obtain approval from the CSO.

## ***Required School Recordkeeping and Legal Notices/ Requirements***

### ***Record Retention Litigation***

RTHS acknowledges its responsibility to preserve information relating to litigation, audits, and investigations. Failure on the part of employees to follow this policy can result in possible civil and criminal sanctions against RTHS and its employees and possible disciplinary action against responsible individuals (up to and including termination of the employee). Each employee has an obligation to contact the CSO to inform them of potential or actual litigation, external audit, investigation, or similar proceedings involving RTHS that may have an impact on record retention protocols.

### ***Public Records and School Records***

In North Carolina, charter schools are required to comply with public records law. This means that all communications and documents, including electronic records of any kind, are public records. Employees should be mindful that any written communication and documents in any form (email, texting, Google Chat) are public records and may be provided to anyone at any time if a public record request is made. Further, all school records and communications are the property of the School.



Employees are prohibited from destroying or deleting any school records or property. To the extent required by law, school personnel shall maintain public records in accordance with the applicable records retention and disposition schedule(s) issued by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, unless otherwise required by statute, regulation, or other legal authority. School records include, but are not limited to, emails, education records, MTSS records, threat assessments, IEPs, 504 plans, meeting notes, and personnel records. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### ***Student Grades in Infinite Campus/Canvas***

Class grades should be done promptly and accurately. Grades in Infinite Campus and Canvas shall be kept up to date. Additionally, ample grades to document students' efforts should be recorded. If a teacher is unable to collect this number of grades for the quarter, they should reach out to the CSO for an exemption to this procedure. Furthermore, if a grade is given in a classification [homework, classwork, quiz, test, etc.], at least two grades must be recorded in that category for the quarter. For example, a teacher may not give only one test in a 9-week period.

At the end of each quarter, grades need to be stored by the date assigned by the CSO. Grades changed after the assigned date will not be reflected until the end of the next grading period.

### ***Student Attendance Reporting***

Student attendance should be recorded and reported daily by the classroom teacher for every period a teacher is assigned a class. Attendance should be reported within the first ten minutes of each class.

The school day begins at 8:45 a.m. with the start of first period. If a student arrives at school between 8:45 and 9:00, the student will be directed to class and the teacher should mark the student tardy (unexcused). If the student arrives after 9:00 a.m., they will receive a tardy slip and pass to class and the Front Office will mark them tardy. For all other periods, teachers should mark students tardy (unexcused) if they arrive at class after the designated start time and without a note from another staff member explaining why the student is late.

Any notes received pertaining to absences should be referred to the Front Office.

### ***Mandatory Reporters***

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 7B-301, all school personnel are required to report any suspected abuse of any child as per the School's Child Abuse Reporting Policy. These reports should be made directly to the Department of Social Services in which the child resides. If a report is made, it must be reported to the CSO immediately. All school personnel will receive training on how to report child abuse. If any staff member has a question or concern, they should see the School Counselor and the CSO.

In addition to cases of abuse, neglect, dependency, and maltreatment, under N.C.G.S. §14-318.6, any person 18 years of age or older who knows or should have reasonably known that a juvenile has been or is the victim of a violent offense, sexual offense, or misdemeanor child abuse under N.C.G.S. §14-

318.2 shall immediately report the case of that juvenile to the appropriate local law enforcement agency in the county where the juvenile resides or is found. If a report is made, it must be reported to the CSO immediately. All school personnel will receive training on how to report child abuse. If any staff member has a question or concern, they should see the School Counselor and the CSO.

### ***Child Sexual Abuse and Sex Trafficking Training Policy***

It is the intent of this policy to comply with North Carolina law with respect to child abuse and sex trafficking, including N.C.G.S. 115C-218.75(g). Those laws require that RTHS adopt and implement a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program in accordance with N.C.G.S. 115C-375.20. Specifically, N.C.G.S. 115C-375.20, states as follows:

1. School personnel. Teachers, instructional support personnel, principals, and assistant principals. This term may also include, in the discretion of the employing entity, other school employees who work directly with students in grades kindergarten through twelve.
2. Each employing entity shall adopt and implement a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program for school personnel who work directly with students in grades kindergarten through 12 that provides education and awareness training related to child sexual abuse and sex trafficking, including, but not limited to, best practices from the field of prevention, the grooming process of sexual predators, the warning signs of sexual abuse and sex trafficking, how to intervene when sexual abuse or sex trafficking is suspected or disclosed, legal responsibilities for reporting sexual abuse or sex trafficking, and available resources for assistance. This training may be provided by local nongovernmental organizations with expertise in these areas, local law enforcement officers, or other officers of the court. All school personnel who work with students in grades kindergarten through twelve shall receive two hours of training consistent with this section in even-numbered years beginning in 2020.
3. No entity required to adopt a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program by N.C.G.S. 115C-47(64), 115C-218.75(g), 115C-238.66(14), or 116-239.8(b)(17), or its members, employees, designees, agents, or volunteers, shall be liable in civil damages to any party for any loss or damage caused by any act or omission relating to the provision of, participation in, or implementation of any component of a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program required by this section, unless that act or omission amounts to gross negligence, wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing. Nothing in this section shall be construed to impose any specific duty of care or standard of care on an entity required to adopt a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program by G.S. 115C-47(64), 115C-218.75(g), 115C-238.66(14), or 116-239.8(b)(17)."

Such a program shall be adopted and implemented by January 1, 2020, and training shall be required for school personnel beginning with the 2020-2021 school year. RTHS program under this policy shall be conducted in accordance with North Carolina law and supervised by the COO.

### ***Sexual Abuse and Molestation Policy***

RTHS prohibits and does not tolerate sexual abuse. RTHS provides procedures for employees, volunteers, family members, victims of sexual abuse or others to report sexual abuse and disciplinary penalties for those who commit such acts.

The School has a zero-tolerance policy for any sexual abuse committed by an employee, volunteer, or third party. Following any report of potential sexual abuse, The School will initiate an appropriate investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and criminal prosecution may ensue, if warranted.

Sexual abuse is broadly defined and “includes any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact that is accomplished by force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual contact between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching or molestation, sexual injury or non-contact sexual acts such as exposure or voyeurism, and sexual exploitation.”

### **Code Of Practice And Procedures**

The School has taken steps to educate staff about the risk related to child sexual abuse, instituted policies and practices designed to protect children from the risk of child sexual abuse and trained our staff and volunteers about proper reporting procedures. This policy is reviewed and signed off annually with all staff. Some, but not all of the physical and behavioral evidence or signs that someone is being sexually abused are listed below:

Physical evidence of abuse:

- Difficulty in walking
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear
- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Bruises or bleeding of the external genitalia
- Sexually transmitted diseases

Behavioral signs of sexual abuse:

- Reluctance to be left alone with a particular person
- Wearing lots of clothes, especially in bed
- Fear of touch
- Nightmares or fear of night
- Apprehension when sex is brought up

### **Designated Person**

Although everyone has a role to play in ensuring that children are safe, The School has designated **the Dean of Students and Culture** as the point person for this policy. This designated person has specific responsibility for implementing the policy and acts as the point of contact to receive information and advice from Children’s Services and Law Enforcement and report to such agencies under mandatory reporting law. The designated person’s general terms of reference include:

- Maintaining an up-to-date policy and procedures manual.
- Ensuring that relevant staff and/or volunteers are aware of and follow the procedures, including implementing safe recruitment procedures.
- Conduct and document annual training.
- Advising the management committee on safeguarding and child protection issues.
- Maintaining contact details for local Children’s Services and Police.
- If there is a concern, the designated person would:
  - Be the first point of contact for any concerns or allegations, from children or adults, ensuring confidentiality is maintained in all cases.

- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken, in line with the organization's procedures and in conjunction with the person in charge.

The Designated Person may be contacted by phone, email, or in person:

**Dez Thompson, Dean of Students and Culture**  
[dthompson@rthighschool.org](mailto:dthompson@rthighschool.org)  
(919) 998-6757 x213

### **Reporting Procedures**

Any employee, contractor, or volunteer who becomes aware of or suspects sexual abuse is taking place must immediately report it to their Supervisor and the Designated Person. Where appropriate or required by law, the School will report any incidents of potential sexual abuse to the appropriate authorities. The School's mandatory reporting protocol shall apply in such instances and must be followed in accordance with local, state, and federal law.

Appropriate family members should be notified of alleged instances of sexual abuse unless such a family member is suspected of committing the abuse.

The School should report the alleged sexual abuse incident to its insurance company and shall immediately consult with the School's legal counsel.

### **Investigation and Follow-Up Procedures**

The School will take all allegations of sexual abuse seriously and will promptly and thoroughly investigate whether sexual abuse has taken place. The School may use an outside third party to conduct an investigation. If The School has an internal investigation team in place, the team may be used to investigate the incident. The School will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory agencies. It is The School's objective to conduct a fair and impartial investigation.

If the accused is an employee, volunteer, or contractor, the School shall place the accused on leave of absence, and such person shall not be permitted on school grounds except at the school's request during the investigation.

The School will make every reasonable effort to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation.

### **Anti-Retaliation Statement**

The School prohibits retaliation made against any employee or volunteer who reports a good faith complaint of sexual abuse or who participates in any related investigation. Making false accusations of sexual abuse in bad faith can have serious consequences for those who are wrongly accused. The School prohibits making false and/or malicious sexual abuse allegations, as well as deliberately providing false information during an investigation. Anyone who violates this rule is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **Hiring and Screening Procedures**

At a minimum, the following procedures must be in place for employees, contractors, and volunteers working with children.

- Applications – All prospective staff members will complete an association application to work or volunteer that includes questions in the following areas: criminal conviction, past work history, and education. The job description will include a statement that The School has a zero-tolerance standard for abuse and inappropriate behavior by staff members. All job descriptions will be maintained in their personnel file.
- Interviews – at least two separate staff members will interview Prospective staff members. All interviews will be documented. During all interviews, the prospective staff member will be asked to read The School's statement on abuse prevention and verify that they are in agreement with its purpose and that they will abide by its standards if hired.
- Criminal record checks – The School will conduct a search for criminal activity by any prospective staff member and any volunteers or contractors who interact with children. This search may be conducted through law enforcement agencies or entities that provide such service and may include examining local, county, and state records throughout the entire country; and searching various registered sex offender lists.
- Reference checks – The School will contact at least two references for all prospective staff. The reference's responses will be documented with the specified questions and answers for uniformity of evaluation.
- File documentation – All applications, reference checks, Criminal Record Checks and interview notes will be kept in the individual's personnel file that is maintained at the School.

### **Staff Expectations**

- Reporting of suspicious behavior – All staff are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse to the jurisdiction having authority. Staff will report to their supervisor any indication of or warning signs concerning abuse involving a child. Staff who identify suspicious behavior or a violation of policy by a fellow staff member should report the event to their supervisor immediately, who will report to the Designated Person.
- Being alone with children – At no time should staff be in a situation where they are alone with a child or children and cannot be observed by others. The School will make every attempt to design and structure its programs to eliminate the potential for a staff member to be in a one-on-one situation. If a staff member becomes alone with a child, s/he should promptly move to a location where s/he can be observed by other staff members.
- Hugging and touching of children – Appropriate physical contact is important in the emotional development of all children, and children at different developmental levels will need differing degrees of physical contact. Therefore, staff members should not perform frontal hugs of children – hugs should be from the side. The staff member should get down to the child's physical level when possible. Staff should not touch children in any body location that would be covered by a bathing suit. Staff members should not pick up school-aged children (to reduce the potential for both abuse allegations and physical injury) and should not allow children to sit on their laps.
- Bathroom policy – Teachers should strive to only allow one (1) student go to the restroom at any given time. Administrators or other designated people have the assigned duty of periodically monitoring the restrooms to ensure students are not congregated in a group and/or engaged in prohibited activity.
- Protocols that address the variety of unusual circumstances possible during outdoor or off-site activities shall be established and made part of that program/activity's operating guidelines.

### **Photography**

Publishing articles and photos in School newsletters, websites, local newspapers, etc., is an

excellent way to recognize young people's achievements and promote your organization and recreation. However, it is important to minimize the risk of anyone using images of children in an inappropriate way. Digital technology makes it easy to take, store, send, manipulate, and publish images. Please consult the School's policy on photography and social media for rules and guidance.

### ***Registered Sex Offenders Policy***

Purpose: To clearly identify how registered sex offenders will be expected to respect the boundaries set forth by the School.

Pursuant to Session Law 2008-117, The Jessica Lunsford Act for North Carolina (the "Act"), the General Assembly of North Carolina has recognized that sex offenders often pose a high risk of engaging in sex offenses after being released from incarceration or commitment and that the protection of students from sex offenders while on School property and at School-sponsored activities serves an important governmental interest.

RTHS is committed to the following:

1. Sex offenders are banned from school property and all school events, either on or off campus. In accordance with G.S. 14-208.18, all persons who (1) are required to register under the Sex Offender and Public Protection Program AND (2) have been convicted of certain sexually violent offenses or any offense where the victim was under the age of 16 years at the time of the offense ("Prohibited Persons") are expressly forbidden to be present on any property owned or operated by the School system, including School buildings, athletic fields, playgrounds, parking lots, School buses, activity buses or other property of any kind for any reason, including attendance at sporting events or other School-related functions, whether before, during or after School hours. In addition, Prohibited Persons may not attend or be present at any student function or field trip on or off School property, which is 1) School-sponsored or 2) otherwise under the official supervision or control of School personnel. This policy applies to all Prohibited Persons regardless of their relationship to, or affiliation with, a student in the School system (i.e., stepparents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.).
  - A. Prohibited persons
 

The Director or designee shall ensure that the administration is familiar with the criminal offenses that qualify an individual as a Prohibited Person under this policy. The Director will also subscribe to electronic notification of Registered Sex Offenders and access the state database as needed.
  - B. No special permission
 

There shall be no "special permission" given for Prohibited Persons to be on the School grounds or attend events or activities in violation of this policy.
  - C. Possible exceptions for students
 

Students who meet the definition of a Prohibited Person may be on School property only in accordance with state law.
  - D. Limited exception for prohibited persons who are parents/legal guardians of a student
    - a. A Prohibited Person who is the Parent/Legal Guardian of a student may be on School property only for the following reasons:



- i. To attend a previously scheduled School conference with School personnel to discuss their child's academic or social progress; or
    - ii. At the request of the Director/designee, for any other reason relating to the welfare or transportation of their child.
  - b. The procedure for making a request is as follows:
    - i. For each visit authorized by subsection (D)(a) above, the Parent/Legal Guardian must provide the CSO with prior written notice of their registration on the Sex Offender Registry.
    - ii. A request for presence at the School must be submitted to the CSO in writing, minimally 72 hours in advance.
    - iii. The request must include the nature and specific times of the request.
    - iv. The CSO or designee will respond within 48 hours, either authorizing or denying the request.
    - v. The decision of the CSO or designee is final.
    - vi. The CSO will notify the Board of any such requests and decisions.
    - vii. For each visit authorized by subsection (D)(a) above, the Parent/Legal Guardian must check in at the front office upon arrival and departure. In addition, during each and every visit, the Parent/Legal Guardian must be under the direct supervision of School personnel at all times. If personnel are not available to supervise the Parent/Legal Guardian during any visit, they shall not be permitted on the School property.
    - viii. For each visit authorized by subsection (D)(a) above, the Parent/Legal Guardian shall comply with all reasonable rules and restrictions placed upon them by the Director, including any restrictions on the date, time, location, and length of meetings.
2. Enforcement
- Any suspected violation of this policy shall be reported by a School administrator to the CSO and to law enforcement for immediate investigation. All School personnel should report the presence or suspected presence of a Prohibited Person to a School administrator and take appropriate action. The CSO shall immediately notify the Board Chair of any known or suspected Prohibited Person who is a student, or a parent or legal guardian of a student, at their School.
3. Applicability
- This policy shall supersede any conflicting provisions in all other Board policies regarding School safety, parental involvement, School field trips, School visitors, School volunteers, and student transportation.

### ***Domestic Violence Policy***

The School fully complies with N.C.G.S Section 50B-5.5: The School will not discharge, demote, deny a promotion, or discipline an employee because the employee took reasonable time off from work to obtain or attempt to obtain relief under North Carolina law relating to domestic violence. An employee who is absent from the workplace shall follow the employer's usual time-off policy or procedure, including advance notice to the employer, when required by the employer's usual procedures, unless an emergency prevents the employee from doing so. The School may require documentation of any emergency that prevented the employee from complying in advance with the



employer's usual time-off policy or procedure, or any other information available to the employee that supports the employee's reason for being absent from the workplace.

### ***North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program***

RTHS seeks to provide a work and school environment free from violence or the threat of violence against employees, students, or other persons. The board encourages eligible individuals to participate in the **North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program** established pursuant to Chapter 15C of the North Carolina General Statutes. This program protects the address of relocated victims of domestic violence, sexual offense, stalking, or human trafficking to prevent a victim's assailants or potential assailants from finding the victim through public records. The program provides participants with the use of a substitute mailing address and denies public access to a participant's actual address.

#### **Program Details**

**The State Attorney General administers the Address Confidentiality Program.**

Information and assistance in applying to the program may be obtained by telephone from the Attorney General's Address Confidentiality Program Office at 919-716-6785.

Program participants receive an authorization card with a substitute mailing address that may be presented whenever an address is required. Mail sent to the substitute address is forwarded cost-free by the program to the participant at his or her residential address.

#### **School Personnel Participants**

The name, actual address, and telephone number of any school system personnel participating in the Address Confidentiality Program will not be open to inspection as a public record, will not be included as part of any employee directory published by the school system, and will be redacted from any record released pursuant to [G.S. 115C-320](#).

#### **Student Participants**

The school system will use the actual address of a program participant, not the substitute address designated by the Attorney General, for any purpose related to admission or assignment, but will keep the actual address confidential from the public. Student records will reflect only the substitute address and not the student's actual address. The student's telephone number will also be kept confidential from the public. The family member or guardian of a student participant may request that a student's name be withheld from any release of directory information by the school.

When transferring school records from one school to another, the transferring school may send the files to the participant (family member or guardian) via the substitute address provided by the Address Confidentiality Program to ensure confidentiality of the student's new location.

#### **Disclosure Prohibited**

The knowing and intentional disclosure of a program participant's actual address or telephone number to unauthorized persons is prohibited. Failure to comply with this policy may result in

disciplinary action, up to and including termination. In addition, violators may be subject to criminal prosecution.

### ***Copyrighted Material***

RTHS expects all employees to exercise care in duplicating copyrighted materials and to comply with all relevant laws and regulations. Copyright law makes it illegal for anyone to duplicate copyrighted materials, whether in audio, visual, printed, or computer software format. Severe penalties, including a fine up to \$100,000 and/or imprisonment, are provided for unauthorized copying outside the boundaries of "Fair Use" as defined in the Federal Copyright Law. Reference the US Copyright Law for additional details. Employees, students, and visitors are prohibited from the use or duplication of any copyrighted materials not allowed by copyright law, fair use guidelines sanctioned by Congress, licenses, or contractual agreements. Willful or serious violations also are considered to be in violation of standards of behavior for employees and students and may result in disciplinary action.

### ***Confidential Information***

During work, employees may become aware of confidential information about RTHS's operations, families, and students. All such information must remain confidential, and particularly not be disclosed. Any employee who improperly copies, removes (whether physically or electronically), uses, or discloses confidential information to anyone outside of RTHS may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees may be required to sign an agreement reiterating these obligations.

### ***Confidential Student Information: FERPA***

All information contained in students' records, including information contained in an electronic database, is confidential and maintained in accordance with the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act** (FERPA). These records are the property of RTHS, whose responsibility it is to secure the information against loss, defacement, tampering, or use by unauthorized persons. Employees should not speak about students in hallways or public areas. The information about our students is confidential and must not be discussed in the outside community. No student files are to be taken off the premises unless an employee is granted permission by their Supervisor. Only teachers, administrative personnel, and office personnel are permitted to review the student's files. When a file is requested from the main office, it must be signed out and returned the same day. Files may not be copied without express authorization from the CSO or designee. Information may not be removed from any student's file. If you request a student's file, you will be responsible for its contents.

### ***Posting or Publishing Student Pictures and Information***

The School reserves the right to post pictures and images of current and former students on its website, official Facebook page or for any other School purpose. Family members/guardians who do not wish to allow RTHS to use their child's picture or image must send a letter to the Director of Business.

### ***Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment***

The **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)** affords parents/legal guardians certain rights concerning student privacy, parental access to information, and administration of physical examinations to minors. These include the right to:

1. Consent is required before students are required to submit to a survey, which is funded in part or in whole by a program of the U.S. Department of Education, which concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”):
  - a. Political affiliations or beliefs of the students or the students’ parent/legal guardian
  - b. Mental or psychological problems of the students or the students’ family
  - c. Sexual behavior or attitudes
  - d. Anti-social, demeaning, illegal, or self-incriminating behavior
  - e. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close familial relationships
  - f. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
  - g. Religious affiliations, beliefs, or practices of the students or parents/legal guardians
  - h. Income, other than as required by law, to determine program eligibility
2. Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following:
  - a. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding
  - b. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the School or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the students (except for hearing, vision, scoliosis, or any other physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law)
  - c. Any activity involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information or the marketing, selling, or distributing such information to others
3. Inspect the following, upon request and before administration or use:
  - a. Surveys created by a third party before their distribution by a School to its students
  - b. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
  - c. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum

The School has developed and adopted policies regarding these rights and arrangements to protect students’ privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The School will directly notify parents/legal guardians of these policies at the beginning of each School year and after any substantive changes. The School will also both directly notify parents/legal guardians through U.S. Mail, e-mail, parent/legal guardian meetings, or the Student/Family Handbook at the start of each School year of the specific or approximate dates (if such events are planned and/or scheduled) of the above activities and provide an opportunity to opt a student out of participating in them. Parents/legal guardians who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

### ***Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act***

The School does not discriminate against any group officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America or any other youth group listed in Title 36 of the United States Code (as a patriotic society) that wishes to conduct a meeting within an open forum. The School does not deny such access or opportunity or discriminate for reasons based on the membership or leadership criteria or the oath of allegiance to God and country of the Boy Scouts of America or the youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code (as a patriotic society).

### ***Unsafe School Choice Option***

**Title IX, Section 9532 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001** provides that a student attending a “persistently dangerous School” or a student who is a “victim of a violent criminal offense” on School property, as defined by law, has the right to transfer to another safe School in the district, if their parent/legal guardian requests a transfer. If there is no safe School in the district providing instruction at the student’s grade level, the School shall contact neighboring districts to request that the students be permitted to transfer to a School in one of those districts.

## ***School Special Services***

### ***Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)***

IDEA was originally enacted by Congress in 1975 to ensure that children with disabilities have the opportunity to receive a free appropriate public education, just like other children. Teachers, the EC Director, and EC Teachers are required to work collaboratively to ensure that all Individualized Education Plans (IEP) are followed appropriately, and students are receiving the necessary accommodations to ensure educational success as required by law.

### ***Section 504***

Section 504 is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. This ensures that children with disabilities have equal access to an education. These students may receive accommodations and modifications to help ensure their education. Teachers will work directly with the Student Services Office, the CSOs, and the Director of Special Programs to ensure that all 504 plans are followed appropriately and that students are receiving the necessary accommodations and modifications for educational success as required by law.

### ***Title I***

Title I is a federally funded program that provides additional support to students who are performing below grade level in Reading and/or Math. Students participating in this program are identified based on several possible data points: NWEA Map performance, progress monitoring data, EOGs, EOCs, and other pertinent information.

### ***Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)***

MTSS is an instructional framework that includes universal screening of all students, multiple tiers of instruction and support services, and an integrated data collection and assessment system to inform decisions at each tier of instruction. MTSS can also be used for students who struggle with behavior.

### ***Closing Words***

This handbook is intended to give employees a broad summary of things they should know about RTHS. The information in this handbook is general in nature and, should questions arise, any member of the leadership team should be consulted for complete details. While we intend to continue the policies, rules and benefits described in this handbook, RTHS, in its sole discretion, may always amend, add to, delete from, or modify the provisions of this handbook and/or change its interpretation of any provision set forth in this handbook. Employees should not hesitate to speak to leadership if they have any questions about RTHS or its personnel policies and practices.

## ***Acknowledgement of Handbook and At-Will Employment***

I acknowledge that I have received the School Employee Handbook. I have read the handbook and understand the contents of the handbook. I agree to abide by all of the School's policies. I understand that this Employee Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior Employee Handbooks and any inconsistent verbal or written policy statements. I understand and agree to my at-will employment status as described in the handbook, summarized as follows:

1. This handbook does not in any way reflect a contract of employment, either express or implied, between the School and me.
2. The School is an at-will employer. I am free to terminate the employment relationship with the School at any time; the School, in its sole discretion, also reserves the right to modify or terminate the employment relationship with me for any or no reason at any time. Specifically, the School may modify all terms of employment, including any policy or practice and/or my hours, wages, working conditions, job assignments, position title, compensation rates, and benefits in its sole discretion.
3. Nothing in this handbook creates or is intended to create a promise or representation of continued employment or guaranteed terms and conditions of employment for me. Further, there is no agreement, express or implied, written or verbal, between the employee and the School for any specific period of employment, for continuing or long-term employment, or for guaranteed terms and conditions of employment.

I understand that this Employee Handbook refers to current benefit plans maintained by the School and that I must refer to the actual plan documents and summary plan descriptions, as these documents are controlling.

**By signing this acknowledgement, I understand that this handbook is not a contract and does not guarantee employment for any period or guarantee any specific terms of employment. Employees of school are employed at will. School and its employees mutually retain the right to terminate their employment at any time with or without notice and with or without a reason not otherwise prohibited by law. Unless set forth in writing, approved by the school board of directors, and signed by the chair of the school board of directors (or their designee) and CSO, employment at school is for no specific period of time, and any statement inconsistent with this policy is unauthorized.**

I further acknowledge that I have received and read the sexual abuse policy and/or have had it explained to me. I understand that The School will not tolerate any employee, volunteer, or third party who commits sexual abuse. Disciplinary actions will be taken against those who are found to have committed sexual abuse. I understand: (1) that it is my responsibility to abide by all rules contained in this policy, (2) how to report incidents of sexual abuse as set forth in the abuse policy, (3) that I shall not retaliate against any employee/volunteer or other exercising his or her rights under this policy, (4) that I shall not make false and/or malicious sexual abuse allegations, or deliberately provide false information during an investigation, and (5) that violation of this policy can lead to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination and reporting to law enforcement (where applicable).

Employee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Attachment A***

### ***Non-Title IX Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Complaint Process***

**No student or School employee shall be subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by School employees or students as defined and set forth below.** The School takes seriously all complaints of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. The process provided in this policy is designed for those individuals who believe that they may have been discriminated against unlawfully, bullied, or harassed in violation of the School's **Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy**. This includes violations under Title VI. Individuals who have witnessed or have reliable information that another person has been subject to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying should also report such violations in the manner provided in this policy. Reports may be made anonymously. This policy does not apply where an individual seeks to assert allegations regarding or related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or free appropriate public education of a student under Section 504 or the IDEA. Such allegations may be raised through the procedures governing such matter. This Policy also does not apply to Title IX complaints, behavior falling within Title IX or Title VII complaints. Please refer to the corresponding School's policies for Title IX and VII matters.

### **Definitions:**

As used in this policy, "bullying or harassing behavior" is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

1. Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
2. Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. For purposes of this section, "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

"Cyber-bullying and cyber-harassment" are any words, actions, or conduct that meet the definitions of bullying or harassing behavior described in this policy and are conveyed via email, text message, Internet message boards, interactions on social media, or other electronic media.

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

No student or school employee shall be subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by school employees or students.

No person shall engage in any act of reprisal or retaliation against a victim, witness, or a person with reliable information about an act of bullying or harassing behavior.



A school employee who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall report the incident to the appropriate school official.

A student or volunteer who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior should report the incident to the appropriate school official.

## **Reporting**

**Mandatory Reporting by School Employee:** Any employee or volunteer who witnesses or has reliable information or reason to believe that an individual may have been discriminated against, harassed, or bullied in violation of this policy must report the offense immediately to an appropriate individual designated in subsection B.1., below. Employees who do not promptly report possible discrimination, harassment, or bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

**Anonymous Reporting:** Reports under this policy may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

**Reports by Students and/or Parents/Guardian:** Any individual who believes they have been subject to conduct or communication in violation of this policy is strongly encouraged to file a complaint in writing to any of the following:

- a. The school counselor, teacher, dean of students, principal, or assistant principal of the School for any claim of discrimination, harassment, or bullying, including Title VI complaints;
- b. The Title IX coordinator for claims of sex discrimination or sexual harassment;
- c. The Section 504 coordinator or the ADA coordinator for claims of discrimination on the basis of a disability; or
- d. Any member of the Board if the alleged perpetrator is the CSO.

## **Investigation of Reports**

Reports of discrimination, harassment, or bullying under this policy will be investigated sufficiently to determine whether further action under this policy or otherwise is necessary, and school officials shall take such action as appropriate under the circumstances. The School will follow its Code of Conduct for all investigations and discipline for behavior under this policy.

## **Time Period for Filing a Complaint**

A complaint should be filed as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the complaint. Complaints submitted after the 30-day period may be investigated at the discretion of school officials; however, individuals should recognize that delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to such complaints.

## ***Attachment B***

### ***Title IX***

**Title IX** of the **Education Amendments of 1972** (“Title IX”) prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. Sexual harassment, which includes sexual assault and other sexual misconduct, is a form of sex discrimination. Under the School’s Policy, the School prohibits sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking and retaliation. The School complies with Title IX and has appointed **Mechia DuPree** as the Title IX Coordinator with overall responsibility for Title IX compliance. They can be reached at (919) 998-6757 or via email at [mdupree@rthighschool.org](mailto:mdupree@rthighschool.org).

Any student, employee, or applicant for employment or admission to the School who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of sex, in violation of Title IX, or has been a victim of sexual assault, sexual harassment, or other sexual misconduct, may file a complaint with the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will assist the complainant in identifying the appropriate School policy (with its grievance procedure) to resolve the complaint in a prompt and equitable manner. The Title IX Coordinator may consult with other School administrators, as needed, to resolve the complaint in the most effective manner.

The Title IX Coordinator is knowledgeable and trained in state and federal laws that apply to matters of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other sexual misconduct, as well as the School's policy and procedure.

Title IX provides that “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

It is the policy of RTHS that students should not be subjected to forms of unlawful discrimination or harassment while at school or school-sponsored activities. Furthermore, the policy’s intent is to address the issue in a proactive manner through the establishment of a system for educating students and staff at the School regarding the identification, prevention, intervention, and reporting of such anti-social acts. The School acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. The School strives to model an inclusive environment and prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender or sex, including sexual orientation and LGBTQ+ identification. The School will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination or harassment in any of its educational or employment activities or programs based on such protected classifications.

### ***Prohibited Behaviors and Consequences***

## ***Discrimination Or Harassment***

Students, employees, contractors, volunteers, and visitors are expected to behave in a civil and respectful manner. In accordance with Title IX, the School expressly prohibits discrimination or harassment, based on sex or gender and prohibits sexual harassment (including sexual violence) and gender-based harassment. Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. It includes unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex, requests for sexual favors in exchange for benefits (*quid pro quo*), and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment. Sexual violence refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent. A number of different acts fall into the category of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual abuse, and sexual coercion. In accordance with Title IX, the School also prohibits gender-based harassment, which is unwelcome conduct based on a student's sex, harassing conduct based on a student's failure to conform to sex stereotypes.

Sex-based harassment can be carried out by school employees, other students, and third parties. All students can experience sex-based harassment, including male and female students, LGBTQ+ students, students with disabilities, and students of different races, national origins, and ages. Title IX protects all students from sex-based harassment, regardless of the sex of the parties, including when they are members of the same sex.

## ***Retaliation***

The School prohibits intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under Title IX. Intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, constitutes retaliation. As such, the School prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person for reporting or intending to report violations of this policy, supporting someone for reporting, or intending to report a violation of this policy, or participating in the investigation of reported violations of this policy. After consideration of the nature and circumstances of the reprisal or retaliation and in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and regulations, the CSO or designee shall determine the consequences and remedial action for a person found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation.

The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation. Charging an individual with a code of conduct violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a grievance proceeding under Title IX does not constitute retaliation prohibited under this policy, provided, however, that a determination regarding responsibility, alone, is not sufficient to conclude that any party made a materially false statement in bad faith.

## ***Application of Policy***

This policy prohibits unlawful discrimination or harassment by students, employees, volunteers, contractors, and visitors. This policy is intended to apply to student's vis a via other students, faculty, staff, volunteers/visitors, or contractors. This policy also applies to employees, volunteers/visitors, and contractors. This policy applies to behavior that takes place within the School's "education program or activity," which includes, but is not necessarily limited to, behavior:

1. In any school building or on any school premises before, during, or after school hours;
2. On any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity;
3. During any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity;
4. At any time or place where the individual is subject to the oversight and authority of school personnel;
5. At any time or place where the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools; and
6. While using school or personal electronic communications, including employee and student emails, text messaging, instant messaging, chat rooms, blogging, websites, and social networking websites (i.e., Snapchat or Instagram).
- 7.

## ***Definitions***

For purposes of this policy ONLY, the following definitions apply:

### ***Discrimination***

Discrimination means any act or failure to act that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates the treatment of others based solely on the basis of gender or sex (including transgender and LGBTQ+ identification). Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional.

### ***Harassment***

Prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, under this policy means conduct on the basis of sex/gender that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. An employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e., quid pro quo).
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to an education program, employment, or activity (i.e., hostile environment).
3. Sexual assault (as defined by Clery Act), or "dating violence," "domestic violence" and "stalking" (as defined by Violence Against Women Act).

For purposes of this policy, "hostile environment" means that the harassment is objectively severe and pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is harassment and must be based on sex or gender. A hostile environment may be created through pervasive or persistent misbehavior if sufficiently severe.

Examples of behavior that may constitute harassment include, but are not limited to, verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, lewd propositions, exclusion from peer groups, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Legitimate, age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment. Harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment, is not limited to specific situations or relationships. It may occur between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or between non-employees, including visitors, and employees or students. Harassment may occur between members of the opposite sex or the same sex.

Examples of sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, deliberate, unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature, suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats, pressure for sexual activity, continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual, sexual violence, or the display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures or written materials. Acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, as well as intimidation or hostility based on sex, but not involving sexual activity or language, may be combined with incidents of sexually harassing conduct to determine if the incidents of sexually harassing conduct are sufficiently serious to create a sexually hostile environment.

Gender-based harassment is also a type of harassment. Gender-based harassment may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, as well as intimidation or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping but not involving conduct of a sexual nature.

#### Conduct Not Covered by This Policy

Conduct that does not meet the definitions set forth above in this Title IX Policy is not subject to the School's Title IX Policy or any reporting/grievance procedures that govern Title IX matters. However, such conduct may still constitute a violation of other School policies, including the School's Code of Conduct, non-discrimination policy, and bullying policy. Please refer to and follow those policies for such conduct.

#### **TO REPORT A VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY:**

#### **PLEASE REFER TO THE RTHS'S TITLE IX REPORTING AND GRIEVANCE POLICY.**

This Policy, as it pertains to Title IX, shall remain in effect to the extent required by law.

#### ***Coordinator's Duties, Notice, Reporting and Grievance Policy***

This Policy sets forth the School's Notice, Reporting and Grievance policy for Title IX matters and should be read in conjunction with the School's Title IX policy. This Policy only pertains to Title IX and alleged violations of Title IX. It does not apply to any other type of discrimination, harassment, or bullying. Please refer to the School's other policies, including the **Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy**, and student conduct policies when Title IX does not apply.

The School's Title IX Coordinator is:

Mechia DuPree

(919) 998-6757

[mdupree@rthighschool.org](mailto:mdupree@rthighschool.org).

### ***Training and Programs***

The designated Title IX Coordinator shall establish training and other programs that are designed to help eliminate unlawful discrimination or harassment and foster an environment of understanding and respect for all members of the school community. The training plan must include information about this policy and the related complaint procedure. The training or programs should:

1. Provide examples of behavior that constitutes unlawful discrimination or harassment;
2. Teach employees to identify groups that may be the target of unlawful discrimination or harassment; and
3. Train school employees to be alert to locations where such behavior may occur, including locations within school buildings, at school bus stops, on cell phones and on the internet.

In addition, training of Title IX personnel, including the Title IX Coordinator, Investigator(s) and Decision-maker(s), must include training:

1. On the definition of the definitions of prohibited conduct, including sexual harassment;
2. The scope of the school's education program or activity;
3. How to conduct an investigation;
4. The grievance process including appeals, and informal resolution processes;
5. How to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias; and
6. Relevance, including how to apply the rape shield protections provided only for complainants.

Moreover, training for Title IX personnel, including the Coordinator, Investigator(s), Decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, must not rely on sex stereotypes, and must promote impartial investigations and adjudications of sexual harassment. The School will post materials used to train Title IX personnel on their websites for a minimum of seven (7) years after being posted, if any, or make materials available for members of the public to inspect.

### ***Notice***

The designated Title IX Coordinator is responsible for providing effective notice to job applicants, student applicants, students, parents/legal guardians, and employees of the procedures for reporting and investigating complaints of unlawful sex/gender discrimination and harassment. This policy will be posted on the School's website, and copies of the policy are available at the front office. Notice of this policy will appear in all job applicant information, admissions information, student, and employee handbooks, and in any School publication that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for students and employees.



## ***Title IX Coordinator***

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the overall implementation of Title IX for RTHS and coordinating the institution's compliance with Title IX in all areas covered by the implementing regulations. The major responsibility is the prevention of sexual harassment and discrimination. Other major monitoring duties include, but are not limited to, the following: recruitment and admissions, educational programs, and activities, hiring and employment. Other areas of consideration include:

- Participating in the development and implementation of the RTHS's sexual harassment policy.
- Assisting faculty, counselors, and administrators in complying with Title IX, and when a need arises, planning remedial actions.
- Making your presence known in the community by disseminating civil rights information or by speaking at parent-teacher group meetings, social or professional organization meetings, and other community functions.
- Serving as a resource on Title IX/gender issues.
- Monitoring and evaluating RTHS's Title IX compliance efforts and making recommendations for any appropriate changes.
- Providing updated information to schools on Title IX implementation and issues.
- Identifying and disseminating information about Title IX educational resources (organizations, individuals, print, internet, and audio-visual)

## ***Evaluation***

The CSO or designee shall evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to correct or prevent unlawful sex/gender discrimination and harassment and shall share these evaluations periodically with the School's Board.

## ***Confidentiality***

The recipient, whether a School employee, staff member, contractor, or the Title IX Coordinator, must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by the FERPA or as required by law, or to carry out the purposes of Title IX, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising thereunder. Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the Title IX grievance procedures.

The Title IX Coordinator shall maintain confidential records of complaints or reports of unlawful discrimination or harassment. The records will identify the names of all individuals accused of such offenses and the resolution of such complaints or reports. The Title IX Coordinator also shall maintain records of training conducted and corrective action(s) or other steps taken by the School to provide an environment free of unlawful discrimination or harassment. The CSO shall report to the Board all verified cases of unlawful discrimination or harassment under the School's Title IX Policy.



## ***Reporting Title IX Violations***

1. For Students:
  - a. To report discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment/misconduct based on sex/gender, students or their parents/legal guardians should contact a trusted teacher or advisor, grade-level Principal, CSO, and/or Title IX coordinator immediately and file a complaint.
  - b. Employees are required to report any actual or suspected violations of this policy. When anyone reports harassment and/or discrimination to a school employee, that employee shall notify the Title IX Coordinator, grade-level CSO, or CSO, as soon as possible and within 24 hours.
  - c. If the CSO is involved in the allegation, another administrator will immediately inform the Chair of the Board of Directors.
2. For Employees: for discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment complaints based on sex/gender, employees should contact the Title IX coordinator immediately and follow the School's harassment and discrimination policy as well as its Title IX Reporting and Grievance policy.
3. Students, parents/legal guardians, volunteers, visitors, or others are also strongly encouraged to report any actual or suspected incidents of discrimination or harassment based on sex/gender under this policy. Reports may be made anonymously, and all reports shall be investigated in accordance with that policy.
4. Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by e-mail, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report.
5. Reporting may be made at any time, including during non-business hours, by using the telephone number or e-mail address, or by mail to the office address listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

## ***Definitions***

The following definitions shall apply as used in this and all other Title IX-related policies:

**“Complainant”** is as an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. This means that any third party, as well as the complainant, may report sexual harassment. While parents and guardians do not become complainants (or respondents), parents and guardians have a right to act on behalf of parties (including by filing formal complaints) in Title IX matters.

**“Respondent”** is as an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

**“Formal complaint”** is as a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that the school investigate the allegation of sexual harassment and state that at the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant was participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the School with which the formal complaint is filed. A formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail, by using the contact information required to be listed for the Title IX Coordinator, and by any additional method designated by the school.

**“Document filed by a complainant”** means a document or electronic submission (such as by e-mail or through an online portal provided for this purpose by the school) that contains the complainant’s physical or digital signature or otherwise indicates that the complainant is the person filing the formal complaint. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not a complainant or a party during a grievance process and must comply with requirements for Title IX personnel to be free from conflicts and bias.

**“Supportive measures”** are individualized services reasonably available that are non-punitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the other party while designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, or deter sexual harassment. The School’s selection of supportive measures and remedies shall be based on what is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

### ***Mandatory Response and Procedural Obligations***

The School is required to respond whenever any employee has notice of sexual harassment, including allegations of sexual harassment or allegations relevant to mandatory reporting laws in North Carolina. Notice to the Title IX Coordinator or to any School employee, board member, or official with authority to institute corrective measures on the School’s behalf, charges the School with actual knowledge and triggers the School’s response obligations under Title IX.

The School will respond promptly to Title IX sexual harassment or discrimination in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent, which means a response that is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. The School shall also comply with the following mandates:

1. The School will offer supportive measures to the person alleged to be the victim (referred to as the “complainant”).
2. The Title IX Coordinator will promptly contact the complainant confidentially to discuss the availability of supportive measures, consider the complainant’s wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.
3. The School will follow the grievance process set forth herein before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent.
4. The School will not restrict rights protected under the U.S. Constitution, including the First Amendment, Fifth Amendment, and Fourteenth Amendment, when complying with Title IX.
5. The School will investigate sexual harassment allegations in any formal complaint, which can be filed by a complainant or signed by a Title IX Coordinator.

6. A complainant's wishes with respect to whether the school investigates should be respected unless the school determines that not pursuing an investigation would be deliberately indifferent (or that pursuing an investigation is necessary for community safety or similar reasons), in which case the Title IX Coordinator may sign complaint even if the complainant does not file a formal complaint (doing so will not be viewed as adversarial toward the respondent).
7. If the allegations in a formal complaint do not meet the definition of sexual harassment as defined in the School's Title IX policy, or the alleged conduct did not occur in the School's education program or activity, against a person in the United States, the School must dismiss such allegations for purposes of Title IX. However, the School may still address the allegations in any manner the School deems appropriate under the School's code of conduct or other policies.
8. Treat complainants equitably by providing remedies any time a respondent is found responsible and treat respondents equitably by not imposing disciplinary sanctions without following the grievance process set forth herein.
9. Remedies, which are required to be provided to a complainant when a respondent is found responsible, must be designed to maintain the complainant's equal access to education and may include supportive measures; however, remedies need not be non-disciplinary or non-punitive and need not avoid burdening the respondent.
10. All Title IX personnel (Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, people who facilitate any informal resolution process) shall be free from conflicts of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents.
11. There is a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.
12. The School's grievance process shall not use, rely on, or seek disclosure of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.
13. Any provisions, rules, or practices that a school adopts as part of its grievance process for handling formal complaints of sexual harassment must apply equally to both parties (complainant and respondent).
14. The standard of evidence to determine responsibility is the preponderance of the evidence standard for all formal complaints of sexual harassment, whether the respondent is a student or an employee (including a faculty member).

### ***Supportive Measures, Remedies and Disciplinary Sanctions***

Supportive measures include services, accommodations, and/or other assistance that the School provides for a complainant after receiving notice of alleged sexual misconduct but before any final outcomes – investigatory, disciplinary, or remedial – have been determined. The School wants students and employees to be safe, receive appropriate medical attention, and get the help they need to heal and continue accessing their educational opportunities. We also want students and employees to understand their reporting options and how to access available interim measures.

Upon receiving a report of sexual harassment, the School will provide the complainant, or their advocate, with a written explanation of the interim measures available at the School and through local community resources and shall ask complainants, or their advocates, what measures are sought. Some possible interim measures are listed below, and the School determines which measures are appropriate for a particular complainant on a case-by-case basis. Not all of the measures listed below will be necessary in every case to keep victims safe and ensure their equal access to educational programs and activities. If the complainant or advocate identifies an interim measure that the School does not already provide, the School will consider whether the request can be granted. In those instances where interim measures affect both a complainant and the respondent, the School will minimize the burden on the complainant wherever appropriate while ensuring that the measures are non-disciplinary and non-punitive prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility.

A complainant or their advocate may request the interim measures listed below. The School, after consulting with the complainant and/or their advocate, will determine which measures are appropriate to ensure the complainant's safety and equal access to educational programs and activities:

- Academic accommodations, including a change in classes, testing, or assignments;
- Medical and mental health services, including counseling;
- Modifications to extracurricular activities, field trips, or on- or off-campus activities;
- A “no contact” directive pending the outcome of an investigation. Such a directive serves as notice to both parties that they must not have verbal, electronic, written, or third-party communication with one another;
- Providing an escort to ensure that the student can move safely between school programs and activities;
- Transportation accommodations; and
- Assistance identifying an advocate to help secure additional resources or assistance, including off-campus and community advocacy, support, and services.

***Remedies Include:***

Depending on the specific nature of the problem, remedies for the complainant may include, but are not limited to:

- Providing an effective escort to ensure that the complainant can move safely between classes and activities;
- Ensuring the complainant and perpetrator do not share classes or extracurricular activities;
- Moving the perpetrator or complainant (if the complainant requests to be moved) to a different residence hall or, in the case of an elementary or secondary school student, to another school within the district;
- Providing comprehensive, holistic victim services including medical, counseling, and academic support services, such as tutoring;
- Arranging for the complainant to have extra time to complete or re-take a class or withdraw from a class without an academic or financial penalty; and

- Reviewing any disciplinary actions taken against the complainant to see if there is a causal connection between the sexual violence and the misconduct that may have resulted in the complainant being disciplined.

When a respondent is found responsible for sexual harassment, the School will offer all remedies needed to eliminate the harm to the complainant and the school community and prevent the recurrence of sexual harassment. Simply sanctioning a respondent found responsible, in some cases, may be insufficient to eliminate a hostile environment. Instead, in addition to sanctions, the School may consider offering appropriate remedies for the broader student/staff population after the final outcome, including the following:

- Training or retraining school employees on the school's responsibilities to address allegations of sexual violence and how to conduct Title IX investigations;
- Developing materials on sexual harassment, which should be distributed to all staff and students;
- Conducting bystander intervention and sexual harassment prevention programs with students and/or staff;
- Issuing policy statements or taking other steps that clearly communicate that the school does not tolerate sexual harassment and will respond to any incidents and to any student who reports such incidents;
- Conducting, in conjunction with student leaders, a School climate check to assess the effectiveness of efforts to ensure that the school is free from sexual violence, and using that information to inform future proactive steps that the school will take;
- Targeted training for a group of students if, for example, the sexual harassment created a hostile environment (i.e., on an athletic team);
- When a school is unable to conduct a full investigation into a particular incident (i.e., when it receives a general report of sexual violence without any personally identifying information), it should consider remedies for the broader student population in response.

Disciplinary sanctions include:

- For Students found responsible: verbal warning, written warning, interim suspension, restitution, suspension, required participation in appropriate training, counseling, required completion of a probationary period without additional infractions, or requiring the respondent to stay away from the complainant for a period of time.
- For Employees found responsible: sanctions for violations of Title IX vary depending on severity, from a formal written warning to dismissal.

### ***Investigations***

The school shall investigate the allegations in any formal complaint and send written notice to both parties (complainants and respondents) of the allegations upon receipt of a formal complaint.

Through the Title IX Coordinator or other authorized School official, the School shall designate an impartial individual to serve as the Investigator and conduct an investigation. The Investigator may be the Title IX Coordinator. However, the Investigator shall not be someone with a conflict of interest or

bias. The School may choose an outside investigator, a School employee, or a contractor to conduct the investigation. During the grievance process and when investigating, the Investigator shall comply with the following:

1. The burden of gathering evidence and the burden of proof must remain on the School, not on the parties.
2. The School must provide equal opportunity for the parties to present facts and expert witnesses and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
3. The School must not restrict the ability of the parties to discuss the allegations or gather evidence (e.g., no “gag orders”).
4. Parties must have the same opportunity to select an advisor of the party’s choice who may be, but need not be, an attorney.
5. The School shall send a written notice to the parties (complainant and respondent) of any investigative interviews, meetings, or hearings.
6. The School shall send the parties and their advisors evidence directly related to the allegations, in electronic format or hard copy, with at least 10 days for the parties to inspect, review, and respond to the evidence.
7. The School shall send the parties and their advisors an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, in electronic format or hard copy, with at least 10 days for the parties to respond.
8. The School shall dismiss allegations of conduct that do not meet the definition of sexual harassment set forth in the School’s Title IX policy or did not occur in a school’s education program or activity against a person in the U.S. Such dismissal is only for Title IX purposes and does not preclude the School from addressing the conduct in any manner the school deems appropriate.
9. The School may, in its discretion, dismiss a formal complaint or allegations therein if the complainant informs the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant desires to withdraw the formal complaint or allegations therein, if the respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the school, or if specific circumstances prevent the school from gathering sufficient evidence to reach a determination.
10. The School shall give the parties written notice of a dismissal (mandatory or discretionary) and the reasons for the dismissal.
11. The School may, in its discretion, consolidate formal complaints where the allegations arise out of the same facts.
12. The School shall protect the privacy of a party’s medical, psychological, and similar treatment records. The School shall not access or use such records unless it obtains the party’s voluntary, written consent to do so.

### ***Decision-Maker***

The School, through the Title IX Coordinator or other authorized School official, shall designate a Decision-maker with regard to a Title IX complaint. The Decision-maker shall not be the Title IX Coordinator or Investigator and shall not be someone with a conflict of interest or bias. The Decision-maker shall comply with the following rules:



1. Start with the presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.
2. All Complainants are afforded rape shield protections, deeming questions and evidence about a complainant's prior sexual behavior irrelevant, unless offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged misconduct or offered to prove consent.
3. Use the preponderance of the evidence standard in reaching her/his decision.
4. Require objective evaluation of all relevant evidence, inculpatory and exculpatory, and avoid credibility determinations based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
5. After sending the investigative report to the parties and before reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the decision-maker(s) must afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party.
6. Issue a written determination regarding responsibility with findings of fact, conclusions about whether the alleged conduct occurred, rationale for the result as to each allegation, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, and whether remedies will be provided to the complainant.
7. The written determination must be sent simultaneously to the parties along with information about how to file an appeal.

### ***Title IX Grievance Process***

**Prompt Filing.** The Complainant must file a formal complaint within a reasonable time, ideally within 10 days of the alleged incident. A complaint will not be disallowed solely because of the passage of time. The Title IX coordinator ensures that all such complaints are timely, impartially, and appropriately investigated in accordance with applicable law.

**Confidentiality.** Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of the complainant. There may be times when confidentiality may not be possible for the School to conduct a thorough investigation. There may also be instances where the School has a legal obligation to report certain information it receives to state or local authorities or to protect the School community.

**Timeline.** While the timeframe for completing an investigation into individual complaints may vary depending on the circumstances, the Title IX coordinator will ensure that timeframes are reasonable and endeavor to complete any investigation, including any decision, within sixty (60) days of the filing of a complaint. The timeline may be extended where appropriate at the discretion of the School. Include reasonably prompt time frames for conclusion of the grievance process, including appeals and informal resolutions, with allowance for short-term, reasonable cause delays or extensions of the periods.



**Investigation.** The Title IX coordinator or other School official shall designate an impartial Investigator to conduct the investigation. The Investigator shall have full authority to investigate, including the authority to interview witnesses. The Investigator shall follow the guidance/mandates set forth above in this policy when conducting the investigation.

**Decision-Maker.** The Decision-maker shall follow the guidance/mandates set forth above in this policy and shall use the preponderance of the evidence standard in reaching her/his decision. The Decision-maker shall provide written notice of the outcome of the complaint to the relevant parties in a timely manner.

**Appeal.** Either party may appeal the Decision-maker's decision to the Board of Directors within 14 days after a decision is made or the School dismisses a formal complaint in a Title IX proceeding, on the following bases:

1. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter,
2. Newly discovered evidence that could affect the outcome of the matter, and/or
3. Title IX personnel had a conflict of interest or bias that affected the outcome of the matter.

The Board of Directors will appoint a panel of three board members to serve as the impartial review panel. The review will be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws, and the panel may, but is not required to, request information directly from the parties. The three-member review panel will make a decision and will provide written notice of the outcome of the appeal to the parties within fourteen (14) school days unless circumstances require more time.

### ***Informal Resolution Process for Students***

After a formal Complaint is filed, the School may, in its discretion, offer and facilitate informal resolution options, such as mediation or restorative justice, so long as both parties give voluntary, informed, written consent to attempt informal resolution. The School will not require participation in an informal process. And, at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint.

The School does not require, as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, employment, or continuing employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to a formal investigation and adjudication of formal complaints of sexual harassment. Any person who facilitates an informal resolution must be well-trained. The School will not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student. Finally, the School may not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed.

### ***Policy Application***

This policy shall remain in effect as long as required by law.

# Priteesh Shahi

## Site Reliability Engineer

✉ [teesh.s93@gmail.com](mailto:teesh.s93@gmail.com)

☎ 217-600-9302

🌐 [linkedin.com/in/teeshshahi](https://www.linkedin.com/in/teeshshahi)

Engineer with experience in projects supporting small team or large scale infrastructure through technical design, Proven ability to effectively communicate complex technical concepts to both technical and non-technical stakeholders. Seeking a role where my strong communication and problem-solving skills can help make a difference to a team's success.

## Experience

### Site Reliability Engineer Google

May 2022 - Present  
Durham, NC

- Lead Platforms and Infrastructure SRE team in developing scalable and safe software qualification practices for new hardware and software releases
- Serve as a point of contact for various horizontal programs between dev and SRE partner teams
- Propose and implement designs for improving software and kernel qualification, rollout, and monitoring systems
- Maintain and improve technical infrastructure systems for all Google software services through robust incident management and on-call support

### Senior Software Engineer Ad Hoc LLC

Apr 2021- May 2022  
Remote

- Design and develop a web and mobile software platform for Veteran's Affairs users
- Design reliable, scalable, and maintainable APIs for web and mobile consumption
- Work with an agile, cross-functional team to deliver product goals through planned sprints and test-driven development
- Monitor and maintain software platform through logging, monitoring tools, dashboards, alerts, and on-call rotations

### Research Programmer Information Trust Institute

Jan 2019 - Apr 2021  
Urbana, IL

- Build scalable and intuitive management interfaces for power grid environments using hardware virtualization, data-driven visualizations, and a robust service mesh network
- Expand testbed software to provide a versatile platform for research and development into cyber-resiliency of critical infrastructures
- Create containerized microservices for deployment in a distributed service mesh

### IT Technical Associate University of Illinois Technology Services

May 2016 - Jan 2019  
Urbana, IL

- Spear-headed full-stack development of a software platform for managing networked equipment distributed across a large campus to monitor uptime and usage, provide firmware updates, and alert technicians of equipment faults
- Acted as a liaison and technical expert for AV project managers, infrastructure integrators, programmers, and service support staff
- Researched emerging instructional technologies and developed best practice standards for deploying within the campus environment

## Volunteering

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- **Lead Mentor** **2022 - Present**  
**Durham, NC**  
**TerrorBytes Robotics (FRC 4561)**
  - Lead a team of 50 high school students and 20 volunteer staff in engineering a competitive robot for annual national competitions
  - Support a non-profit organization in personnel management and business development
  - Plan non-profit financial health and sustainability with \$100,000+ annual budget
  - Provide technical expertise to various engineering aspects of the team
  - Expand team mission for STEM outreach and training in the community

## Education

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- **Graduate Courses, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign** *2018*
  - Computer Security
  - Database Systems
- **BS in Computer Engineering, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign** *2017*
  - Computer Organization and Design
  - Algorithms and Computational Models
  - Computer Systems Engineering
  - Digital Systems Laboratory

# Coversheet

## 2025-26 Meeting Dates

<b>Section:</b>	V. Other Board Business
<b>Item:</b>	A. 2025-26 Meeting Dates
<b>Purpose:</b>	Discuss
<b>Submitted by:</b>	
<b>Related Material:</b>	RTHS Board of Directors 2025-26 Meeting Schedule.pdf 2025-26 RTHS Calendar, 2-19-2025, final.pdf

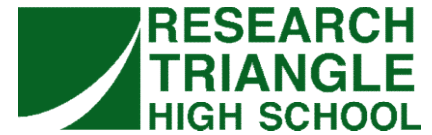


## RESEARCH TRIANGLE HIGH SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### 2025-26 Regular Board Meeting Schedule

Date	Time	Location
Wednesday, August 20, 2025	5:30-7:00 PM	Research Triangle High School 3106 East NC Highway 54 Durham, North Carolina 27709
Wednesday, September 17, 2025	5:30-7:00 PM	<a href="https://rthighschool.zoom.us/j/93566460638">https://rthighschool.zoom.us/j/93566460638</a> Meeting ID: 935 6646 0638
Wednesday, October 15, 2025	5:30-7:00 PM	Research Triangle High School 3106 East NC Highway 54 Durham, North Carolina 27709
Wednesday, November 19, 2025	5:30-7:00 PM	<a href="https://rthighschool.zoom.us/j/93566460638">https://rthighschool.zoom.us/j/93566460638</a> Meeting ID: 935 6646 0638
Wednesday, January 21, 2026	5:30-7:00 PM	Research Triangle High School 3106 East NC Highway 54 Durham, North Carolina 27709
Wednesday, February 18, 2026	5:30-7:00 PM	<a href="https://rthighschool.zoom.us/j/93566460638">https://rthighschool.zoom.us/j/93566460638</a> Meeting ID: 935 6646 0638
Wednesday, March 18, 2026	5:30-7:00 PM	Research Triangle High School 3106 East NC Highway 54 Durham, North Carolina 27709
Wednesday, April 15, 2026	5:30-7:00 PM	<a href="https://rthighschool.zoom.us/j/93566460638">https://rthighschool.zoom.us/j/93566460638</a> Meeting ID: 935 6646 0638
Wednesday, May 20, 2026	5:30-7:00 PM	Research Triangle High School 3106 East NC Highway 54 Durham, North Carolina 27709
Wednesday, June 17, 2026	5:30-7:00 PM	<a href="https://rthighschool.zoom.us/j/93566460638">https://rthighschool.zoom.us/j/93566460638</a> Meeting ID: 935 6646 0638

# 2025-26 School Calendar



Fourth Draft - 2/13/25

August 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

September 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24	25	26	27	28	29

December 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

June 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

## Key

#	First/Last day of School for Students
#	Teacher Workday (non-DLD)
#	Testing Day (DLD for students not tested)
#	Holiday for Staff and Students
#	Final Day of Grading Period
#	Early Dismissal
#	Graduation Day