

Research Triangle High School

RTHS Governance Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday August 13, 2026 at 5:30 PM EDT

Location

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

The RTHS Board of Directors meets monthly on the second Thursday of each month, except for July and December. Meetings are held virtually between 5:30pm ET and 7pm ET. Note that meeting dates/times are subject to change.

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
I. Opening Items			5:30 PM
A. Record Attendance		ShuDon Brown	3 m
B. Call the Meeting to Order		Michael Dwomoh	1 m
C. Approve Minutes	Approve Minutes	Michael Dwomoh	3 m
Approve minutes for RTHS Governance Committee Meeting on June 11, 2026			
II. Governance			5:37 PM

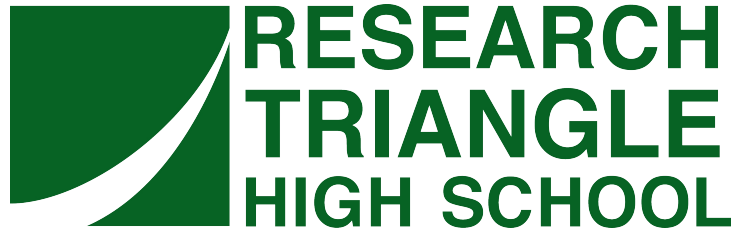
	Purpose	Presenter	Time
A. Policy + Other Reviews	Discuss	Michael Dwomoh	65 m
Track upcoming SOPs and deadlines			
Policies & SOPs for review			
1. Finance			
2. School Safety			
3. Staff			
4. Student/Family			
III. Other Business			6:42 PM
A. Admin Items (as needed)	Discuss	Michael Dwomoh	5 m
• Clean up BoT Officers and New Members			
• Onboarding for New Members			
• Plan for Upcoming Meetings			
• Any additional policy needs at this time?			
IV. Closing Items			6:47 PM
A. Adjourn Meeting	Vote	ShuDon Brown	5 m

Coversheet

Approve Minutes

Section:	I. Opening Items
Item:	C. Approve Minutes
Purpose:	Approve Minutes
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Minutes for RTHS Governance Committee Meeting on June 11, 2026

APPROVED



Research Triangle High School

Minutes

RTHS Governance Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday June 11, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Location

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5978315796?omn=86009931570>

Meeting ID: 597 831 5796

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,5978315796# US (Washington DC)

+13052241968,,5978315796# US

The RTHS Governance Committee meets on the second Thursday of each month, except for July and December. Meetings are held virtually between 5:30 pm and 6:30 pm ET. Meeting dates/times are subject to change with appropriate notice.

Committee Members Present

A. Drake (remote), A. Griffin (remote), A. Tobien (remote), E. Cunningham (remote), M. Dwomoh (remote), P. Thermitus (remote)

Committee Members Absent

C. Coia, S. Brown

Committee Members who arrived after the meeting opened

A. Drake

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

E. Cunningham called a meeting of the Governance Committee of Research Triangle High School to order on Thursday Jun 11, 2026 at 5:33 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

A. Tobien made a motion to approve the minutes from RTHS Governance Committee Meeting on 05-14-26.

M. Dwomoh seconded the motion.

The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Dwomoh	Aye
P. Thermitus	Abstain
E. Cunningham	Aye
C. Coia	Absent
S. Brown	Absent
A. Drake	Absent
A. Tobien	Aye

II. Governance Items for Discussion

A. Governance Items for Approval and Discussion

- Board officers and Committee Chairs for 2026-27 school year
 - Steve Hunter, Chair, Board of Directors
 - Michael Dwomoh, Vice Chair, Board of Directors and Chair, Governance Committee
 - ShuDon Brown, Secretary
 - Carolyn Coia, Chair, Finance Committee and Chair, CEO Support and Evaluation Committee
 - Phoebe Thermitus, Chair, Academic Excellence Committee
 - Julian Berla, Chair, Development Committee
- New board member orientation presentation updates
- Recruitment efforts continues as new board members are needed
 - P. Thermitus has leads with UNC
- Manuals and Procedures

- working on the documents in July and expected to go for approval in August to Governance Committee and Board Meeting
- Finance manual - updates from Audit recommendations
- Faculty Handbook - awaiting on legal

A. Tobien made a motion to approve board officers and committee chair for 2026-27.

M. Dwomoh seconded the motion.

- Steve Hunter, Chair, Board of Directors
- Michael Dwomoh, Vice Chair, Board of Directors and Chair, Governance Committee
- ShuDon Brown, Secretary
- Carolyn Coia, Chair, Finance Committee and Chair, CEO Support and Evaluation Committee
- Phoebe Thermitus, Chair, Academic Excellence Committee
- Julian Berla, Chair, Development Committee

The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Coia	Absent
P. Thermitus	Aye
S. Brown	Absent
A. Drake	Absent
M. Dwomoh	Aye
E. Cunningham	Aye
A. Tobien	Aye
A. Drake arrived.	

III. Other Business

A. Additional Governance Committee Business Items

E. Cunningham and A. Tobien last governance committee meeting

IV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

A. Tobien made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

M. Dwomoh seconded the motion.

The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 5:54 PM.

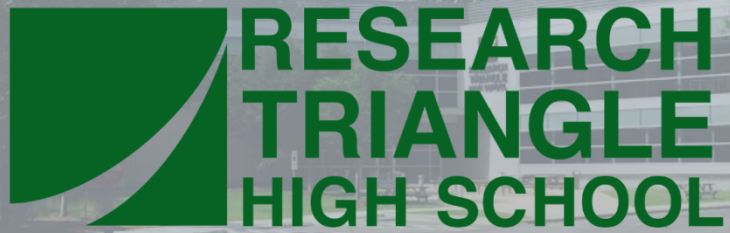
Respectfully Submitted,

A. Tobien

Coversheet

Policy + Other Reviews

Section:	II. Governance
Item:	A. Policy + Other Reviews
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	RTHS Student and Family Handbook 2026-27.docx RTHS School Safety Manual 2026-27.docx RTHS Financial Policies and Procedures 2026-27.docx RTHS Employee Handbook 2026-27.docx



STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

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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. Please see Attachments D for Title IX Policies and Grievance Process

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 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?
Teachers	Assignments Grades Class Policies Classroom concerns Student performance
Exceptional Children Mechia DuPree EC Coordinator mdupree@rthighschool.org Margaret Nelson Case Manager mmajors-nelson@rthighschool.org Ellen Apple Case Manager eapple@rthighschool.org	IEP/504 eligibility or implementation
Leadership Team Chief School Officer Akiba Griffin agriffin@rthighschool.org Assistant Principal of Instruction Jackie Morgenstern jmorgenstern@rthighschool.org Dean of Students and Culture Dez Thompson dthompson@rthighschool.org Chief Operations Officer Alex Drake adrake@rthighschool.org Testing Coordinator Judith Batista jbatista@rthighschool.org	School Policy Discipline Conflict Resolution Testing Transportation Safety
Front Office Staff office@rthighschool.org Student Services Deirdre Lewis dlewis@rthighschool.org	General Information Attendance reporting Student Record Requests
School Counselors Kristen Cook kcook@rthighschool.org Donya Headen dheaden@rthighschool.org	Student Schedules Transcripts Dual Enrollment NC Virtual Public School Courses Student Well-Being
College Counselor Sarah Overman, Director soverman@rthighschool.org	College Applications Scholarships Post-high school options

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

In accordance with House Bill 959 RTHS does not permit student cell phone use during instructional time. 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. 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:

- **The use of wireless communication devices is not allowed during instructional time.** Cell phones should be turned off and stored in the student's backpack.
- The law - and RTHS's policy - allows for limited exceptions, such as during an emergency, when being used with teacher permission for an *educational* purpose (e.g. filming a video for a class project), or when use of a device is required by a student's IEP, 504 plan, or to manage a documented medical condition.
- 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.
- **Teachers** have the right to ask students violating this policy to turn their devices off, or confiscate them in the case of repeated or persistent violations. Violations of this policy - and any defiance or insubordination directed at teachers or staff as a result of it - will be addressed in accordance with the Code of Conduct in the Student and Family Handbook.

- 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.
- Repeat violations of the cell phone policy may result in disciplinary actions, including loss of privileges and suspension.

DRESS CODE

Students have a right to express themselves by the dress and hair style of their own choosing, provided that they dress and groom in a manner that conforms to reasonable and acceptable standards of health, safety, and cleanliness; that will not cause a disruption in the educational process; and that is not offensive and/or does not endanger the health, safety, and welfare of the student or others.

The school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and in accordance with the requirements set forth below. If a student is wearing non-allowable items, they shall be asked to change into alternative clothing. They may call a parent or guardian, if needed, to ask them to bring alternative clothing. The school also shall make some alternative clothing available.

Requirements:

- Students should dress appropriately for academic activities.
- Students must wear a top, bottom, and footwear.
- 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 or promoting drug or alcohol use, or illegal or violent activity.
 - Clothing that depicts hate speech, intimidation, or intolerance towards protected groups, or clothing which is generally considered
 - Students will be asked to remove or cover these items. *Please note that conversations about apparel should be facilitated in a manner in which both parties have an equal voice. These conversations should not occur during class or in front of other students. If an individual or group finds a symbol or slogan offensive, they should alert an administrator, who will consider the concern and make a determination.*
 - Sunglasses and novelty items worn in the classroom.
 - Pajama pants and slippers worn during the school day.
 - Costumes, headgear, and masks. *Please note that masks and clothing/headwear worn for religious and medical purposes are permitted.*

- Please note that some limited exceptions can be made for school spirit days 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.¹ 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.

¹ Thank you to Durham Technical Community College for their help with this wording.

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.

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 within the same course, consequences will include the following:

First Offense

- Have a conversation with the teacher about their actions and expectations for academic integrity.
- Have their parent/guardian contacted and informed of the violation.
- Be required to retake the assessment or redo the assignment.
- Receive reduced credit for the assessment or assignment.

Second Offense

- Have their parent/guardian contacted and informed of the repeated violation.
- Be required to retake the assessment, redo the assignment, or complete an alternate assessment or assignment.
- Receive reduced credit for the assessment or assignment.

Third Offense

- Have their parent/guardian contacted and informed of the continued violations.
- Have a conversation with administration about the pattern of academic integrity violations.
- Receive a zero for the assignment or assessment.

Subsequent Offenses

- Have their parent/guardian contacted and participate in a required parent/guardian conference with administration.
- Receive a zero for the assignment or assessment.
- Become ineligible for exam exemption in the course in which the violations occurred.
- Become ineligible for teacher recommendation for AP or Honors coursework in the applicable subject area.
- Have repeated academic integrity violations documented in the student's disciplinary record.
- Be subject to loss of academic or school privileges as determined by administration.

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 PRACTICE²

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 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.³

A NOTE ON SUSPENSION

² 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>

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

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.

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 five(5) days a week, Monday, through Friday, with the exception of Early Release Days. Orders are due by noon the day before to receive lunch on myhotlunchbox.com. If you have any questions, reach out to student leader Blake Maaske, 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

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.

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.
- Students who arrive after missing more than half of a class period will be marked absent for that class period.
- 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
5	Verbal warning and Written notice to parent/guardian.
10	Parent contact + Administrative detention (lunch or after school)
15	Parent conference + loss of Food Truck Rodeo privileges
20	One(1) day out-of-school suspension (OSS).
30	Students who accumulate more than 30 tardies during the school year will not be eligible for exam exemption.

Subsequent occurrences	A recurring pattern of tardiness may result in further disciplinary consequences, including additional out-of-school suspension, exclusion from school events and activities, and other interventions or consequences as determined by administration.
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Commented [1]: NEW-REVISED

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.

Absences are considered Excused Absences in accordance with State law and will be excused for the following reasons:

1. Illness/Injury (At any point in the year that a student's excused absences are for an illness or injury, the principal may require a statement from the student's physician in order to excuse future absences.)
2. Quarantine
3. Death of an immediate family member
4. Medical or dental appointments (a note from the doctor/dentist office is required to verify the appointment)
5. Court proceedings
6. Religious observance
7. Inclement weather
8. 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 along with supporting documentation 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 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 absences	• No Action
3rd absence	• Communication from Student Support Team
6th absence	• Communication from Dean of Students and Counselor contact
10th absence	• Communication from Dean of Students /Chief School Officer • Attendance meeting required

LOSS OF CREDIT DUE TO ABSENCES

Any student with **20 or more absences** in any class in a school year is subject to failure of that course or grade level because it may impact a student's academic performance.

Regular and consistent attendance for all students is required. In addition to a minimum academic grade of 60, teachers may include attendance as a component of students' grades in order to receive credit for a course. However, no student shall receive a failing grade based solely on attendance. Any student who has more than 4 unexcused absences per semester, may be required to complete additional assignments in order to be granted credit for the course. In addition, students may not be permitted to make up assignments missed due to unexcused absences.

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) 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 (Shepherd's House Church)	7:39 AM	107 N. Driver St./Main St (Shepherd'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.

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 minimum set of expectations for any course.

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.
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), contact information, and lists of resources, including texts, websites, and other applications.

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.

10/20 Day Rule for Dropping Courses

Purpose: This policy is in place to clearly identify School's policy for dealing with students interested in dropping a course after the school year has begun.

The 10/20 Day Rule was established by the State Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Compliance Commission for Accountability. The rule (HSP-C-003) states that, effective with the 1999-2000 School year, students may drop a course with an end-of-course (EOC) test within the first 10 days of a block schedule or within the first 20 days of a traditional schedule. The 10/20 Day Rule was established to prohibit the removal of students from EOC courses later during the instructional year to avoid the impression that a School might have deliberately circumvented the requirement to test all students enrolled in EOC courses.

School will not allow a student to drop a course after the 10th day of a block scheduled course or 20th day of a traditional schedule course with the exception of the following:

1. A student transferred into Research Triangle High School without sufficient records to inform a proper placement. Records do not arrive until after the 10th or 20th day respectively. In such cases, Research Triangle High School has the latitude to withdraw a student if the student has been inappropriately placed in an EOC course.
2. A student is withdrawn to enroll in a higher level EOC course. The student will take the appropriate test for that course. In such a case the student may be better served and Research Triangle High School is still held accountable through the test given in the higher level course.
3. There is a valid medical reason for removing a student from a course. In very rare cases, an individual student may be involved in a major medical emergency such as an accident that incapacitates the student for an extended period of time. In

such instances, it may be in the student's best interest to be withdrawn from a course.

The above, exceptions are allowable in individual cases where circumstances are extenuating and it is clearly in the interest of the student to remove them from an EOC course. Each case will be weighed individually by the Director and consideration will be given to assure that the accountability of Research Triangle High School is not compromised. If the student is withdrawn, sufficient documentation will be kept by the Director explaining why the student was withdrawn. These justifications will be summarized and forwarded to the LEA Testing/accountability Coordinator as supporting documentation to accompany the accountability files of Research Triangle High School.

The Director is encouraged to consider both the credibility of a School's accountability results as well as the interests of the individual student as they consider rare exceptions to the 10/20 Day Rule.

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:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percent Range</u>	<u>Grade Points</u>
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 (5) 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 Infinite Campus 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 weekly in Canvas and quarterly in Infinite Campus.

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 & Personal Finance)
English	4 units	(English I, II, III, and IV)
Foreign Language	2 units	(including one course beyond the first year; must be the same language)
Healthful Living	1 unit	
Computer Science	1 unit	
Electives	3 units	

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 11th graders at the beginning of the fourth year at the school and may become 12th 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 Infinite Campus 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).
- 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.

DUAL ENROLLMENT (See Attachment I)

Research Triangle High School supports eligible high school students in grades 10 through 12 in pursuing rigorous academic opportunities beyond Research Triangle High School's course offerings through approved dual enrollment programs. This policy establishes the programs in which students may participate, the eligibility and approval requirements, and the conditions under which dual enrollment coursework may be credited toward graduation.

Research Triangle High School permits dual enrollment **only** through the following three programs:

1. **Career and College Promise (CCP).** The North Carolina Career and College Promise program, administered through partner North Carolina community colleges, offering the College Transfer pathway, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway. Participation is subject to the eligibility and placement requirements established by the North Carolina Community College System and the partner community college.
2. **North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS).** Online courses offered through the North Carolina Virtual Public School. Enrollment is subject to NCVPS course availability, registration windows, and Research Triangle High School's internal approval process.

3. **North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics Connect Program (NCSSM Connect).** Online and hybrid coursework offered by the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics through its Connect program, subject to NCSSM's admission criteria, course availability, and Research Triangle High School's internal approval process.

No other dual enrollment or e-learning arrangements are permitted. Research Triangle High School will not award high school credit for, or permit attendance during the school day for, any other college, university, online provider, public or private school, or independent course-of-study program. Coursework taken outside the three approved programs listed above is considered a personal educational pursuit undertaken outside Research Triangle High School's academic program and may not be used to satisfy graduation requirements.

Students should review the [Dual Enrollment Guidelines](#) and are required to meet with their School Counselor.

Commented [2]: NEW-ADDED

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 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 English⁴. 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 Infinite Campus.

⁴State 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 Diamond Nine 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 395 days)
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 2026-2027 school year is \$125. 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 NCHPE 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
 Donya Headen dheaden@rthighschool.org 919-998-6757 ext. 225
 NC Homeless Education Program Lisa Phillips, State Coordinator lphillip@serve.org 336-543-4285

APPENDIX 4. SCHOOL POLICIES

School Fee Policy

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide for the establishment of fees.

Consistent with North Carolina law (N.C.G.S. Section 115C-218.50), the Board of Research Triangle High School has approved the establishment of certain fees, including fees for extracurricular activities, to be charged to parents/guardians. The Chief School Officer shall ensure that fees are communicated to parents/guardians. The Chief School Officer shall take steps to ensure that financial assistance is available for parents/guardians who are unable to afford such fees.

Corporal Punishment

No Research Triangle High School employee or volunteer may use corporal punishment to discipline a student. Corporal punishment is any kind of punishment inflicted on the body, including, but not limited to, spanking, paddling, or slapping.

Notwithstanding the policy prohibiting the use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline, school personnel may use reasonable force to control behavior or to remove a person from the scene in these situations when necessary:

- To quell a disturbance threatening injury to others;
- To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects on the person or within the control of a student;
- For self defense;
- For the protection of persons or property; or
- To restrain or direct pupils or otherwise maintain order.

Seclusion and Restraint House Bill 1032 Policy

Purpose: This policy is to comply with the laws governing seclusion and restraint including House Bill 1032, the Deborah Greenblatt Act.

Research Triangle High School has established guidelines for the use of restraint and provisions for training the staff in the management of student behavior in accordance to North Carolina General Statute, 115C-391.1, also known as House Bill 1032 – Deborah Greenblatt Act. This law took effect July 1, 2006; and requires Research Triangle High School to inform parents of the existence of the law, the definitions for the following terms and how Research Triangle High School will use these forms:

- a. Physical Restraint is the use of physical force to restrict the freedom of movement of all or a portion of a student's body. Research Triangle High School will use a trained crisis team to physically restrain a child only as the last resort to protect the health and safety of the child and others in the area.

- b. Mechanical Restraint is the use of any device or material attached or adjacent to a student's body that restricts the freedom of movement. Research Triangle High School will use a trained crisis team to mechanically restrain a student only as a last resort to protect the health and safety of the student and others in the area. Research Triangle High School will also contact the proper authorities (law enforcement) to assist when needed.**
- c. Seclusion is the confinement of a student alone in an enclosed space from which the student is prevented from or not capable of leaving. Research Triangle High School will use a trained crisis team to seclude a student only as a last resort to protect the health and safety of the student and others in the area. Research Triangle High School will also contact the proper authorities (law enforcement) to assist when needed.**
- d. Isolation is a behavior management technique in which a student is placed alone in an enclosed space from which the student is not prevented from leaving. Research Triangle High School will use isolation to help a child get their behavior back under control before allowing them to rejoin their classmates. This space will follow the guidelines set forth in the law.**
- e. Time-out is a behavior management technique in which a student is separated from others for a limited time in a monitored setting. Research Triangle High School uses the time out system to manage student behavior. The new law does not regulate the use of time out.**

Aversive Procedures are a systematic physical or sensory intervention program for modifying the behavior of a student, which causes physical harm and long-term psychological impairment. Research Triangle High School will at no time use aversive procedures to modify a student's behavior.

APPENDIX 5. 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](#)

[Attachment I Non-TitleIX Bullying and Discrimination Reporting and Grievance policy](#)

[Attachment J - 2025.TitleIX Bullying and Discrimination Reporting and Grievance policy -](#)

[Attachment K Crowdfunding](#)

[Attachment L Omitted](#)

[Attachment M Measles Outbreak Response Plan](#)

[Attachment N AI Policy](#)



2026-2027

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & SCHOOL
SAFETY MANUAL**

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General Safety Information

Plan Introduction

Our staff, students, parents/guardians, and community leaders are committed to providing the safest environment possible. We recognize the possibility of a hostile attack, sabotage, or other violent action, as well as disaster/crisis resulting from fire, natural causes, or acts of school violence. As a public institution of learning, RTHS realizes the importance of and need to mitigate, provide for, and respond to emergency situations. This school safety manual provides a framework in which our school can plan for and perform its respective emergency functions during school crisis situations. It is further designed to assist the staff in following procedures with the greatest possible speed and safety. Regardless of the prescribed procedures, training, and instruction, we acknowledge that the sound judgment of the administration and staff is an integral part of safety management. The safety and well-being of students, staff, parents/guardians, and community members are of the utmost importance.

Concept of Operations

Any incident occurring on school grounds while staff and students are present will be responded to initially by school personnel. The staff is expected to take charge and manage the incident until it is resolved or until the command is shifted to someone more qualified with legal authority to take command. In an incident, the Chief School Officer or designee will activate the Crisis Management Plan.

Campus

RTHS is located on an 11-acre campus that is open and unsecured other than a chain-link fence that separates the property from Interstate 885 on its western border. In addition to one driveway that serves as the campus's main entrance, several worn footpaths exist between the RTHS campus, neighboring properties, and the greenway trail that runs along Highway 54 on the campus's northern border.

Left turns from the school's driveway onto Highway 54 are prohibited during morning dropoff and afternoon dismissal. Although the school endeavors to have law enforcement personnel present during these times on a daily basis, it sometimes falls to school administrators to direct traffic during afternoon dismissal.

The building's interior and exterior facilities are maintained by RTHS staff and third-party contractors. Elevators, alarm systems, and fire extinguishers are maintained and inspected periodically in accordance with state and local laws.

Community and Surroundings

Being located in Research Triangle Park, RTHS is surrounded by commercial properties. Progress Center, a currently vacant office building, borders the RTHS campus to the east. Boxyard RTP, a mixed-use facility containing restaurants and retail shops, is located across Highway 54 to the north of the campus. Interstate 885 and undeveloped wooded property border the campus to the west and north respectively. The RTP Streetside Trail runs along the north edge of the campus alongside Highway 54.

A HAWK-style crosswalk with a pedestrian-triggered stop light is located just to the north of campus, allowing pedestrians to safely cross Highway 54.

The HUB RTP, a new mixed-use development containing both residential and commercial properties, is under construction and partially completed approximately half a mile to the east of RTHS. The impact this will have on both vehicle and pedestrian traffic continues to be studied.

Safety Planning

The Chief School Officer and Chief Operations Officer are responsible for development and maintenance of this School Safety Manual. Specific responsibilities supporting plan maintenance include:

- **Annual review of the Manual with approval of necessary changes**
- **Distribution and record of distribution of the Manual**
- **Assignment of personnel to fulfill roles**
- **Training for staff as needed to support assigned roles and responsibilities**

Emergency Supplies Location

Emergency supplies and first aid supplies are necessary when an incident of any nature occurs. Supplies are housed in a storage area located in the front desk area (the drawers are marked with a red cross symbol). Each classroom is equipped with a red “crisis bag.”

RTHS endeavors to have as many staff members as possible certified in CPR, first aid, and the use of automated defibrillator devices (AED). Training is provided annually during a staff workday.

The school is equipped with three (3) permanently-mounted AED units - one in the Holodeck office suite on the 2nd floor near the copy machine, one in the front desk area on the 1st floor, and one near the restrooms and water fountains on the basement level. The school also has one (1) portable AED unit that stays in the possession of the Director of Athletics so it can be present at off-campus athletic contests at facilities that do not have an AED on site. Batteries on each AED are checked to be in working order on an annual basis.

Staff and Student Records

RTHS maintains staff and student information that is current, accurate, accessible on computer, and regularly updated. The front office staff shall ensure that pertinent medical information about students is maintained digitally in Infinite Campus, including but not limited to allergies and required medications.

Current photos of each student are acquired annually from the Yearbook advisor or the school’s contracted photographer, and uploaded digitally for reference.

Records shall clearly identify persons authorized to pick up the student in the absence of a parent/guardian. Copies of court orders relevant to the children are on file in the school office.

Section 1: Introduction

How to Use This Guide

A labeled copy of this Manual will be available in the front office as well as the Chief Operations Officer's office. The manual will be reviewed during staff training at the beginning of each year.

This manual does not replace common sense, sound judgment, and prudent actions in response to emergency situations. Law enforcement reminds all that in the event of an actual emergency involving an intruder on campus the best response is RUN, HIDE, FIGHT. Please remember that we do not "RUN" during a practice drill.

General Staff Responsibilities For All Emergencies

Administrator On Site (Chief School Officer, Chief Operations Officer, or designee)

- Call 911, if necessary
- Use the panic button located in Room 217, or by holding down the button on the intercom call system in any room.
- Notify community agencies, if necessary (those not responding to 911 call)
- Seal off high-risk areas
- Administrator on site implement the post-incident procedures as outlined in this document
- Notify the other Directors as soon as possible
- Chief School Officer will be responsible for notifying Board
- Call a lockdown if needed via the public address system and evacuate students and staff, if necessary
- Notify students and staff (Note: depending on the emergency, students may be notified by teachers)
- Keep detailed notes and fill out the appropriate forms in certain emergencies
- Refer all media to the Chief School Officer

Teachers

- Monitor staff chats (Emergency Hotline, Coconut Telegraph)
- Listen for pertinent public address announcements and heed instructions
- Lock classroom doors unless evacuation orders are issued
- Seal off high-risk areas
- Notify/warn students, if advised
- Stay with students at all times
- Take emergency bag anytime you leave the building and ensure the class roster is up to date
- Account for all students and have them turn off cell phones

Definition of a crisis

An event that is extraordinary and therefore cannot be predicted; an event that can throw the building out of balance and disrupt the daily operations with potential to expose staff and the student population to serious injury.

Human reactions to crises are consistent and, although complex, follow some predictable patterns. Being aware of, and understanding beforehand, how people react in a critical situation makes it possible to implement a plan that defuses those reactions and prevents them from precipitating a secondary crisis.

The challenge is how to provide support and training that not only helps students and faculty weather the storm but also does so in a manner that restores:

- Emotional Balance
- Order & Direction
- Positive Action & Growth

What constitutes a crisis?

- Tornado/severe weather
- An explosion or bomb threat
- Terrorist acts
- A shooting/firearm
- Stalking
- A stabbing/knife
- Student unrest
- Violence/violent acts/threats of violence
- Fire
- Chemical accidents
- Disturbance on or near campus
- Serious injury
- Intruder in the building

Individualized crises and what to report

- Divorce/separations - notify counselor if needed
- Family issues (neglect, fights, drugs/alcohol) - must report to admin and counselor
- Abuse - [mandatory reporting laws](#) apply - must report to an administrator and counselor
- Fighting - notify an on-site administrator as soon as possible
- Death or anticipated death of family members - notify admin and counselor
- Suicidal ideation - notify counselor and do not leave student alone
- Illness (only for serious medical issues) - notify counselor
- Death of a student or staff member - notify admin and counselor as soon as possible

Communication of a critical incident

The senior administrator on site is responsible for communication of critical incidents.

- **The Leadership Team will notify the Board of Directors of the situation as soon as possible after the crisis is handled and student safety is assured.**
- **When all Leadership Team members are absent, they shall assign contact duties to a designated staff member.**
- **The Leadership Team will notify parents of a critical incident as soon as possible after the crisis is handled and student safety is assured.**

Communication with media

- **If approached by the media, direct them to the Chief School Officer, who will be the key spokesperson for the school in a time of crisis.**
- **Administrators may ask designated personnel to prepare media release(s). Any media release(s) related to a crisis shall be shared and reviewed with the Board of Directors Chair and school attorney prior to distribution.**
- **The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) precludes school staff from disclosing a student's name, grade, or other personal identifying information.**

Section 2: General Safety Procedures and Policies

School Efforts to Mitigate Violence

A [Code of Conduct](#), including a discipline plan, is disseminated to each child/parent each year as part of the [Student and Family Handbook](#). A signed notice of receipt is kept on file by the school.

The cornerstone of any plan to mitigate violence or student misbehavior is vigilance by all administration, faculty, and staff. All faculty and staff should be visible throughout the school day to support the Code of Conduct and the discipline plan as provided in the school's duty schedule. Classroom teachers are encouraged to stand in the hallways during the time period between periods to monitor students as they move between classrooms.

Safety Procedures

RTHS implements the following procedures to ensure student and staff safety:

General

- There are distinctive codes for fire/weather alarms and other designated emergencies.
- Emergency lighting is installed throughout the building for use in the event of a power outage; these lights are checked monthly in accordance with Durham County fire code to ensure they are in working order.
- Evacuation maps are located in each classroom and common area throughout the building.
- Rally points are designated off-campus in case of immediate evacuation from the school.
- Community evacuation plans that include the school/students are shared with all staff/students and posted on the RTHS website.
- Faculty and staff adequately monitor all areas of the campus at all times.

Alarm System

- An automated fire alarm system is utilized throughout the building that can be activated at given locations throughout the building and can be heard from all points on the RTHS campus.
- A NOAA weather radio is located in the front office to alert school officials in case of a warning.
- The public address system is used to alert staff to problems utilizing a specific code system.
- In the event of a power failure an air horn shall be used to alert staff to an emergency.

Exits

- All exit doors open to the outside with a panic bar and have a fire exit sign.
- Exit doors are clearly marked and kept free of debris or clutter that could prevent egress.
- All exit doors are visible from at least one security camera.

- Exit doors should never be propped open for any reason.

Drills

Fire Drills

Fire drills are held monthly in accordance with North Carolina state law. All staff, students, and visitors present in the building shall fully participate in each drill. Classroom teachers should review the evacuation route for their respective classrooms with students at the outset of each school year.

Fire Drill Procedure:

- The Chief Operations Officer contacts the alarm company and has the alarm system placed into “test mode.”
- The Chief Operations Officer then activates the alarm, using a stopwatch to record the time it takes to evacuate the entire building.
- Teachers shall carry their red “crisis bag” with them that includes class rosters and a red/green two-sided card - if all students are accounted for at the class’s designated rally point, the teacher shall hold up the green card; if a student is missing, they shall hold up the red card and administration will work to locate the student(s).
- Once all students are at their class’s designated rally point, an “all-clear” will be given to return to the building.
- Following the drill, the Chief Operations Officer will complete the [monthly fire inspection/drill form](#) and place the form on file for inspection by Fire Marshals upon request.

Severe Weather Drills

A severe weather (tornado) drill is held annually in conjunction with Severe Weather Week, typically in March. Classroom teachers should review their classroom’s designated location for severe weather instances with their students at the outset of each school year.

Severe Weather Drill Procedure:

- A member of the Leadership Team will make the following announcement:
Attention staff and students: We are currently under a severe weather warning. Please move to your designated shelter area at this time.
- Students and staff should move to the areas designated in the school’s [Severe Weather Plan](#). Classrooms on the first floor and ground level should move first to avoid congestion when second floor classrooms evacuate to the first floor.
- Students should crouch on the ground away from windows or doors and cover their heads and necks with their arms (“duck-and-cover position”).

- An all-clear will be given via the school's PA system to return to class once the drill is complete.

Lockdown Drill

A lockdown drill should be held annually to make staff aware of what happens in the event of an imminent threat inside the building.

Lockdown Drill Procedure:

- Prior to the drill (ideally 2-3 days prior), a member of the Leadership Team will announce the upcoming lockdown drill via ParentSquare.
- At the time of the drill, a member of the Leadership Team will make the following announcement:
Attention staff and students: This is a CODE RED LOCKDOWN. REPEAT: CODE RED LOCKDOWN
- All staff will lock their classroom doors, lower their door shades, and lower their exterior window shades to the maximum extent possible. Students will move as far from windows and doors as possible.
- Before locking the door, teachers should emulate looking in the hallway and pull any students in the hallways into their classrooms. Additionally, teachers in Room 118, 218, and 50 - the rooms closest to the restrooms - should sweep the restrooms.
- An "all-clear, drill concluded" will be made after the Leadership Team has checked the building for the effectiveness of the drill.

Safe Arrival/Departure Procedures

As students arrive on campus each morning, at least one staff member will be present on the school's front patio from 8:00 to 8:40. Teachers and administrators are also posted in various common areas and classrooms throughout the school building. These duties are assigned in the school staff's duty schedule.

In the afternoon as students are departing, staff members will be assigned via the duty schedule to help direct traffic in the school's driveway and assist with students crossing Highway 54 via the crosswalk. A law enforcement officer will direct traffic at the intersection of Highway 54 and the driveway when possible; an alternate traffic control person from the school's staff is assigned in the duty schedule.

The front office staff will not allow students to be checked out of school in the last 30 minutes before the end of the school day - 3:00 Monday-Thursday, 1:45 Friday, and 12:30 on early release days. Other information regarding student check-out can be found in the [Student and Family Handbook](#).

Visitors

For all guests in classrooms, outside maintenance workers, and other visitors to campus, the following safety measures are in place.

Commented [1]: In consultation with law enforcement (Durham Sheriffs), lockdown drills are done with staff and NOT with students. We will do this during a teacher workday in August next year.

- All exterior doors are visible via the school's security camera system.
- All visitors must enter the building through the main entrance.
- Visitors are immediately recognized by front desk staff and they are given a visitor's badge to wear once they have shown identification and been checked in via the Navigate360 system. Badges are clearly identifiable, commercially made, and cannot be duplicated. Visitors are not allowed to proceed to classes unless they have received prior approval from the school's administration.
- Procedures for school visitation are covered in the [Student/Family](#) and [Employee Handbooks](#).
- The visitor procedure is consistently and efficiently implemented. Family members/guardians, students, faculty, and staff are notified immediately if change in procedure takes place.
- Faculty and staff are instructed to be aware of identified and non-identified visitors.
- If disruption is anticipated, visitors are escorted out and away from the building and law enforcement should be notified.

Special Needs Population Procedures

The ability to get to accessible exits and personal items may be reduced. Communication may be impeded at a time when clear and rapid communication is crucial to safety and survival.

The school's administration, counselors, and exceptional children staff will endeavor to assist these students to the greatest extent possible in the event of an emergency or crisis.

Off Site Procedures

The following safety measures and procedures are in place should an incident occur at an off-campus school-sanctioned event such as a field trip or an athletic contest.

- The RTHS staff member in charge (teacher, athletic coach, etc.) will have access to emergency contact information and medical information for all RTHS students participating. Teachers supervising a field trip should carry the field trip permission forms (including the emergency contact and medical information) for each student.
- In the event of an incident, the staff member should immediately contact a member of the school administration (at an athletic event, the coach should notify the Director of Athletics as soon as possible) and call 911 if necessary.
- The staff member or coach in charge will contact the parents/guardians of students involved in the incident as soon as the situation is stabilized.
- The Incident Report Form should be completed by a staff member or coach that was present at the incident.

Section 3: Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) promotes a school-wide approach to managing crises through prevention, intervention, and post-incident debriefing activities.

The Crisis Team will include The Leadership Team and support staff including the Student Services Coordinator, Counselors, and Instructional Coaches.

Crisis Intervention Team Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Administrator On Site

- Establish chain of command. During a crisis, the senior administrator on site delegates responsibilities. However, during his/her absence, a chain of command is to be established in advance.
- Within the first 60 days of the school year, the following should be completed, and documentation submitted to The Leadership Team:
 - Building Crisis Management Annual checklist and preparation from the list.
 - In-service with staff.
 - Establish Building Crisis Team.
- Designate area to be used as a command post during a crisis situation
- Designate two or more outside assembly locations.
- Call 911 or other emergency numbers if the situation warrants.
- Convene Building Crisis Team, brief them on facts, and discuss procedures.
- Assign a team member to identify students involved in crisis, siblings, and family members.
- Contact family members. Serve as a school representative to the family.
- Convene faculty and staff. Share facts regarding the crisis. Warn against rumors. Provide a paper copy of the facts to all staff.
- In the event of a student death, remove personal items for parents to pick up
- Plan teacher and staff in-service reviewing emergency management.
- Inform staff of school-wide codes to alert staff to emergency.
- Develop an emergency response program. Teachers are to use their class roster for attendance.
- Assign a team member to account for all students and adults in the building.
- If possible, a short memo with the facts of the situation is prepared and communicated to parents.
- Provide local police and fire departments a floor plan and shut-off valves for the building.

Senior Administrator On Site

- Establish chain of command. During a crisis, the senior administrator on site delegates responsibilities. However, during his/her absence, a chain of command is to be established in advance.
- Within the first 60 days of the school year, the following should be completed, and documentation submitted to The Leadership Team:
 - Building Crisis Management Annual checklist and preparation from the list.

- In-service with staff.
- Establish Building Crisis Team.
- Designate area to be used as a command post during a crisis situation
- Designate two or more outside assembly locations.
- Call 911 or other emergency numbers if the situation warrants.
- Convene Building Crisis Team, brief them on facts, and discuss procedures.
- Assign a team member to identify students involved in crisis, siblings, and family members.
- Contact family members. Serve as a school representative to the family.
- Convene faculty and staff. Share facts regarding the crisis. Warn against rumors. Provide a paper copy of the facts to all staff.
- In the event of a student death, remove personal items for parents to pick up
- Plan teacher and staff in-service reviewing emergency management.
- Inform staff of school-wide codes to alert staff to emergency.
- Develop an emergency response program. Teachers are to use their class roster for attendance.
- Assign a team member to account for all students and adults in the building.
- If possible, a short memo with the facts of the situation is prepared and communicated to parents.
- Provide local police and fire departments a floor plan and shut-off valves for the building.

Crisis Team Coordinator

- Implement Building Crisis Plan.
- Serve as a liaison between faculty and Crisis Team.
- Direct other significant roles as appropriate. (e.g., First Aid, building security, communications in the building, transportation).
- Serve as an information source for faculty and staff.
- Monitor Crisis Team's stress level.
- Organize debriefing for Crisis Team. Plans are made for working with students and staff during post-crisis as needed.
- Compile evaluation data on Crisis Team's effectiveness.
- Develop a plan of identification for safe, injured, or deceased individuals.
- Immediately following a crisis, some students may request permission to leave the building. How, when, and to whom students may be released should be determined.

Counselor

- Coordinate counseling services.
- Provide working space as needed for counselors and psychologists.
- Meet with resource personnel. Brief them on all the facts.
- Organize and supervise designated counseling areas.
- Counsel students as needed.
- Assist administration with implementation of the crisis plan.
- Provide support to family, students and staff.
- In the event of the death of a student, remove the student's name from the attendance roster.

Team member in charge of security

- Monitor the situation as to security issues.
- Secure additional help if needed.
- Place designated staff members at each entrance/exit at all necessary building locations.
- Direct media representatives to designated areas as needed.

Health Coordinator

- Handle medical needs (other than those requiring 911) of students and staff, as necessary. May need to move “meds” and log books to the crisis center.
- Develop and coordinate a First-Aid Team.
- Coordinate annual CPR and First-Aid training.
- Provide a list of CPR trained individuals to the crisis team coordinator.
- Ensure First-Aid Kit is available and properly stocked.
- Provide a list of medically fragile students to the crisis team coordinator.
- Collect and notify staff of Health Plans for students who have the following medical needs; Seizure Disorder, Diabetes, Asthma, and life-threatening Allergies (causing anaphylactic shock).
- Fill out the Annual Health Report due in June

Team member in charge of communications

- Establish communication plans in advance of a crisis.
- Convene HR & Data & Operations staff to answer incoming phone calls if needed.
- Brief HR & Data & Operations staff to not share details with the public. Caution against the spreading of rumors.
- Avoid any large group announcements. Only make announcements over the walkie-talkies using predetermined codes.
- Avoid glamorizing of suicide, including school memorial services, flying flag at half-mast, student assemblies.
- Ensure that a visitors' screening procedure is in place and require all visitors (does not include emergency personnel) to sign in at the office so there is a record of everyone who is in the building.

Follow these steps when dealing with media

- Notify the administrator on site immediately. The team may prepare a written statement for the media and any statements to the media must be approved by the Leadership Team and shared with the Board Chair. All media inquiries should be directed to the administrator on site. Staff members should not speak to the media on behalf of the school.
- Designate an area for the media away from the incident area. Place a sign-in sheet by the door and require signatures and any other visitor requirements for the school.
- Designate and staff a waiting area for visitors away from the incident area.
- Escort media and visitors to separate designated locations.

- Ask the media inquiring by phone to leave a name, phone number, and deadline so that the administrator on site can return the call and provide accurate information.
- Advise students and staff of how information will be given to the media. Let them know if reporters ask them questions they should be encouraged to make no comment. They should be cautioned that any comments they make should be sensitive to the persons involved, and that any statements they may choose to make despite the above guidelines will not represent the official school response.
- Advise reporters that they may not interrupt classes/school programs/school business.

Debriefing a crisis

No one involved in the aftermath of a school crisis will remain untouched emotionally. Teachers and staff are no exception and a debriefing for them is imperative. Teachers and counselors may feel tremendous guilt and anger resulting from a sense of responsibility in the crisis. They must have an opportunity to discuss these emotions.

The debriefing should be conducted with small groups of people and, preferably, by a trained individual including counselor or outside professional who was not involved in the crisis. Specific information given about normal reactions and how to handle them is usually helpful. Staff may tend to dwell on preventing future crises from occurring. This is not helpful. What the staff members need most is to focus on their own emotional reaction. Preventive measures can be dealt with later.

- Implement Building Crisis Plan.
- Serve as a liaison between faculty and Crisis Team.
- Direct other significant roles as appropriate. (e.g., First Aid, building security, communications in the building, transportation).
- Serve as an information source for faculty and staff.
- Monitor Crisis Team's stress level.
- Organize debriefing for Crisis Team. Plans are made for working with students and staff during post-crisis as needed.
- Compile evaluation data on Crisis Team's effectiveness.
- Develop a plan of identification for safe, injured, or deceased individuals.
- Immediately following a crisis, some students may request permission to leave the building. How, when, and to whom students may be released should be determined.

Counselor

- Coordinate counseling services.
- Provide working space as needed for counselors and psychologists.
- Meet with resource personnel. Brief them on all the facts.
- Organize and supervise designated counseling areas.
- Counsel students as needed.
- Assist administration with implementation of the crisis plan.
- Provide support to family, students and staff.

- In the event of the death of a student, remove the student's name from the attendance roster.

Team member in charge of security

- Monitor the situation as to security issues.
- Secure additional help if needed.
- Place designated staff members at each entrance/exit at all necessary building locations.
- Direct media representatives to designated areas as needed.

Health Coordinator

- Handle medical needs (other than those requiring 911) of students and staff, as necessary. May need to move "meds" and log books to the crisis center.
- Develop and coordinate a First-Aid Team.
- Coordinate annual CPR and First-Aid training.
- Provide a list of CPR trained individuals to the crisis team coordinator.
- Ensure First-Aid Kit is available and properly stocked.
- Provide a list of medically fragile students to the crisis team coordinator.
- Collect and notify staff of Health Plans for students who have the following medical needs; Seizure Disorder, Diabetes, Asthma, and life-threatening Allergies (causing anaphylactic shock).
- Fill out the Annual Health Report due in June

Team member in charge of communications

- Establish communication plans in advance of a crisis.
- Convene HR & Data & Operations staff to answer incoming phone calls if needed.
- Brief HR & Data & Operations staff to not share details with the public. Caution against the spreading of rumors.
- Avoid any large group announcements. Only make announcements over the walkie-talkies using predetermined codes.
- Avoid glamorizing of suicide, including school memorial services, flying flag at half-mast, student assemblies.
- Ensure that a visitors' screening procedure is in place and require all visitors (does not include emergency personnel) to sign in at the office so there is a record of everyone who is in the building.

Follow these steps when dealing with media

- Notify the administrator on site immediately. The team may prepare a written statement for the media and any statements to the media must be approved by the Leadership Team and shared with the Board Chair. All media inquiries should be directed to the administrator on site. Staff members should not speak to the media on behalf of the school.
- Designate an area for the media away from the incident area. Place a sign-in sheet by the door and require signatures and any other visitor requirements for the school.
- Designate and staff a waiting area for visitors away from the incident area.
- Escort media and visitors to separate designated locations.

- Ask the media inquiring by phone to leave a name, phone number, and deadline so that the administrator on site can return the call and provide accurate information.
- Advise students and staff of how information will be given to the media. Let them know if reporters ask them questions they should be encouraged to make no comment. They should be cautioned that any comments they make should be sensitive to the persons involved, and that any statements they may choose to make despite the above guidelines will not represent the official school response.
- Advise reporters that they may not interrupt classes/school programs/school business.

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Important CIT Items

- Building Crisis Management Checklist - Appendix A
- Crisis Response Team Evaluation Form - Appendix B

Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) Trained Staff to restrain - Contact Administrator or Counselor as soon as issue arises.

- Kristen Cook (School Counselor)
- Mechia DuPree (EC Coordinator)
- Donya Headen (School Counselor)

NOTE: All restraints must be documented on the [Seclusion and Restraint Form](#). Please notify the Leadership Team if this occurs.

Section 4: Emergency Responses and Codes

Emergency Alert Systems

Staff will be alerted to an emergency using email-based staff chats (Emergency Hotline) and ParentSquare via text and email.

There is a "PANIC BUTTON" located at the front desk and in Room 217 in the Holodeck. The button is directly linked to a 911 call and will prompt local law enforcement to call the school. If the school does not answer then a SWAT team is dispatched to come on campus and respond to the emergency. In the event there is a crisis, this button needs to be pushed, if possible.

Family members/guardians will be notified as soon as student safety is assured using ParentSquare via email, phone call, and text.

The following types of Alerts will be utilized:

- Shelter In Place (Code Blue)
- External Lockdown (Code Yellow)
- Internal Lockdown (Code Red)
- EVACUATION

Summarized below are the procedures for each alert.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE (Code Blue)

What is the purpose of shelter-in-place?

Sheltering provides safety for students, staff, and others in an emergency. Shelter-in-place action is implemented as a response to an imminent hazard to protect students, staff, and all other personnel in and around the school, from potential consequences of a pending threat, or to maintain open hallways during a medical emergency with a student or staff member. Please note that "safe areas" may change depending upon the type and location of the emergency.

Shelter-in-Place Procedure

1. Senior Administrator on-site or designee will order a "SHELTER-IN-PLACE."
2. Notification: The administrator will immediately:
 - a. Utilize the public address system: "ATTENTION, CODE BLUE: SHELTER IN PLACE"
 - b. Teachers will need to return to the classroom, remain there, and take attendance.
3. Hallways need to be cleared.
4. Students working in open spaces need to report to their teachers and be secured in a classroom.
 - a. Students outside will need to be notified and return to the school and given directions to either report to a secure location or remain in their current location.
 - b. Instruction may continue but students and staff are not allowed to leave the designated classroom and/or safe area.

5. Once the Shelter in Place is over, an announcement will be made and students and staff may resume normal activity.
6. The SHELTER-IN-PLACE will be ended via the public address system: "THIS IS (ADMIN NAME), AND TODAY IS (DATE), THE SHELTER-IN-PLACE IS OVER."

EXTERNAL LOCKDOWN (Code Yellow)

What is the purpose of a "Code Yellow" lockdown?

A "Code Yellow" lockdown is utilized when a potential threat to staff and/or students exists in the vicinity of the campus or building, such as a disturbance outside the building or a fugitive being pursued by law enforcement near campus. During a "Code Yellow," all exterior doors are closed and locked and all students are brought inside the building, but operations within the building proceed normally.

External Lockdown Procedure

1. Administrator on-site or designee will order the "Code Yellow" lockdown
2. Notification: The administrator will immediately:
 - a. Utilize the public address system to repeatedly announce in a clear and concise manner:
 - i. "ATTENTION, RTHS is under an External Lockdown. Repeat: RTHS is under a CODE YELLOW EXTERNAL LOCKDOWN. All students and staff should remain inside."
 - b. Immediately notify 911
3. When the "Code Yellow" is announced
 - a. Administrators and office staff will look to confirm that all students and staff are inside the building
 - b. Teachers should lower the window shades and any blinds in their classrooms
 - c. Although classes will continue as normal, any movement of students in the hallways during classes (e.g. bathroom passes, students getting loaner laptops at the office) should be kept to an absolute minimum
4. The "Code Yellow" will be ended via ParentSquare and the public address system: "THIS IS (ADMIN NAME) AND TODAY IS (DATE). THE LOCKDOWN IS OVER."

INTERNAL LOCKDOWN (Code Red)

What is the purpose of a "Code Red" lockdown?

A "Code Red" lockdown is the most serious of all lockdown types. It is utilized when an imminent threat to students and/or staff exists within the building itself. During a "Code Red," all internal and external doors are locked, windows are covered, and doorways are barricaded to the extent possible.

Internal Lockdown Procedure

1. Administrator on-site or designee will order the "Code Yellow" lockdown

2. **Notification: The administrator will immediately:**
 - a. Utilize the public address system to repeatedly announce in a clear and concise manner:
 - i. "ATTENTION, RTHS is under an Internal Lockdown. Repeat: RTHS is under a CODE RED INTERNAL LOCKDOWN. Move to the nearest room and lock all doors."
 - b. Notify 911
5. **When the "Code Red" is announced**
 - a. Remain calm and stay with your students.
 - b. Teachers check hallways and quickly bring any students in sight into the nearest classroom, close and lock all classroom doors, and keep students in the classroom, seated on the floor, quiet, and away from the windows and door to the extent possible. Move classroom furniture to barricade doors from inside the classroom.
 - i. If possible to do so, teachers in the following classrooms will check the restrooms:
 1. Basement/Ground Floor: 50
 2. 1st Floor: 118
 3. 2nd Floor: 218
 - c. Students in the hall or restroom must proceed immediately to the nearest classroom. (It is the responsibility of the teacher of that classroom to assist those students in getting secured in their classroom.)
 - d. Relocation Areas for the following open spaces
 - i. Gallery 1: 130 or 134
 - ii. Gallery 2: 126
 - iii. Gallery 3: 230 or 234
 - iv. Gallery 4: 226
 - v. Gallery 5: 50 or 52
 - e. If students are outside, the teacher must be made aware of the lockdown. These students will be walked to the relocation area used during an evacuation.
 - f. Teachers will not allow students to leave the classroom until a police officer evacuates them or instructions are given over the public address system by the Senior Administrator. Do not leave if a fire alarm is pulled during a lockdown unless directed by law enforcement or a Senior Administrator.
 - g. Administrators and front office staff will follow lockdown procedures.
 - h. The Leadership Team will be responsible for notifying the Board of Directors and family members/guardians.
6. The "Code Red" will be ended via ParentSquare and the public address system: "THIS IS (ADMIN NAME) AND TODAY IS (DATE). THE LOCKDOWN IS OVER."

EVACUATION

Evacuation Procedure

- Designated Administrator calls 911, if necessary.

- The Senior Administrator on site determines evacuation procedures.
- The Senior Administrator on site determines if students and staff should be evacuated outside of the school building, or to an off-campus location.
- Notification: The Senior Administrator on site will immediately:
 - Utilize the public address system to repeatedly announce in a clear and concise manner: "ATTENTION: EVACUATION, EVACUATION, EVACUATION."
- Teachers will take attendance and account for all students on your roster
- Staff and students off-site need to report to the relocation center.
- Senior Administrator on site notifies the relocation center.

Relocation Center/Rally Point:

RTP Frontier Building (Building 800)
800 Park Offices Dr.
Durham, NC 27713

- Direct students and staff to follow fire drill procedures and routes. If the primary route is too dangerous, follow an alternate route.

Teachers: Evacuation Procedures

- Direct students to follow normal fire drill procedures unless the administrator on site alters the route or the primary route is too dangerous.
- Take class roster and emergency bag
- Close classroom doors and turn out lights
- When outside the building:
 - Account for all students and indicate that all students are accounted for by holding up the green sign.
 - Inform the Senior Administrator on-site immediately if students are missing.
 - Stay with your class at all times.
 - Take roll again when you arrive at the relocation center.
 - Do NOT release students until directed by the administrator on site.

CRISIS SCENARIOS

Assault/Fight

- First, ensure the safety of students and staff by clearing areas.
- Call 911, if necessary.
- Notify the administrator on site.
- Administrator on site notifies the Leadership Team.
- Seal off the area where the assault took place.
- De-escalate and defuse the situation, if possible.
- Confiscate phones if you see students attempting to film the incident.

- Administrator on site notifies police if a weapon was used in the assault, if a victim has a physical injury causing substantial pain or impairment of physical condition, or if the assault involved sexual contact.
- The Leadership Team notifies parents/guardians of students involved in the assault and notifies the Board.
- Document all actions as soon as possible. Ask the victim(s) and/or witness(es) for their account of the incident as soon as it is possible to do so.
- The Chief Operations Officer and/or Dean of Students will pull any available security camera footage of the incident.
- Implement post-incident procedures to include referral to outside counseling services, if needed.

Bio-Nuclear Threat Response

RTHS will respond according to police and National Security dictates. Staff, students, and parents/guardians will be notified through the emergency alert system or the safest means necessary.

- The front office staff will monitor the phones.
- Students will be released only to authorized parents/guardians; students will not be permitted to leave without an adult.
- If RTHS does release, teachers will be released when their students are gone.
- After 30 minutes, the administrator on site will determine how to appropriately handle release of the remaining students. It is possible that staff members will need to reach out to students' emergency contacts if parents/guardians cannot be reached.. Staff and students must clear the premises as quickly as possible.

Bomb Threat

A bomb threat may come at any time and could be received by anyone who receives the threat, whether over the phone, written, verbal, or by email. Procedures should be reviewed in detail with all personnel including temporary replacements/substitutes, regarding specific duties in this type of emergency situation. The central problem in managing a bomb threat is to make a judgment between two inherently contradictory decisions:

1. Should I evacuate the school, guaranteeing the immediate safety of students and staff?
2. Should I keep the school in regular session, avoiding disruption, at the price of endangering everyone in the building?

This can be the most difficult decision a school administrator ever has to make. The purpose of this section is to provide assistance in making that decision and outline the steps that should be taken.

The person receiving the call should:

- Keep the caller on the line as long as possible.
- Calmly ask questions that will lengthen the call.

- Try to obtain as much information as possible:
 - Where was the bomb placed?
 - Why was it placed?
 - When is it set to go off?
 - What does it look like?
 - What type of explosive?
 - Listen to the voice (male, female, accent, calm, angry).
 - Listen for background noises (trains, music, voices).
- Note Caller ID phone number if available.
- Contact the Senior Administrator on-site immediately.

Administrator on-site or building designee should:

- Collect all the facts from the person who took the phone call.
- Evaluate the facts and decide to remain in the building or evacuate.
 - Decision to remain in the building and keep the school in session:
 - Call 911 and repeat the information given by the caller.
 - If the preliminary search is conducted, it will be done by police and the senior administrator on site.
 - Students should not be aware of preliminary search unless law enforcement deems it necessary or prudent.
 - The decision to evacuate:
 - Call 911 and repeat information given by the caller.
 - Follow the Emergency Evacuation Routes and Procedures Plan.

Bomb Threat Checklist

Whoever receives the call MUST complete the checklist in the appendix as soon as possible and retain it.

Contagious Conditions

Any time you learn that a student or staff member in your building has contracted a serious, contagious disease, you are to do the following:

- Contact the Senior Administrator on site.
- The administrator on site will notify the Board of Directors and the Durham County Health Department for further instructions.
- In the event of a major health crisis, RTHS will follow the directives of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Homeland Security, or Durham County Health Department, in conjunction with requirements from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS).
- When managing a contagious situation, staff members should follow all posted screening, cleaning, quarantining, and reporting protocols.

EXAMPLES OF SERIOUS CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (including but not limited to):

- Tuberculosis

- Meningitis
- Hepatitis
- H5N1 (Avian Flu)
- H1N1 (Swine Flu)

Disturbance in School

If a disturbance in the school is reported (a fight involving weapons and/or resulting in serious injuries to students, some sort of demonstration, strike, unwanted people in the school causing problems), the following procedures should be followed:

- Dial 911 and explain to the dispatcher what is taking place. Stay on the phone with the dispatcher, if possible, until the dispatcher directs you to hang up.
- Notify the senior administrator on site immediately
- The administrator on-site or designee will order a "LOCKDOWN"
- Utilize the public address system to repeatedly announce in a clear and concise manner:
 - "ATTENTION LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN. RTHS is under LOCKDOWN. Proceed to the nearest secure location and lock and secure the doors."
- Complete the steps for a lockdown.

Disturbance Outside of School

If a disturbance outside of the school is reported (large fight, police traffic stops where there is a fight or shots fired, a house/property being searched by SWAT, etc.) the following procedures should be followed:

- Call 911.
- Explain to the dispatcher what is going on and where the disturbance is taking place.
- Stay on the phone with the dispatcher, if possible, until the dispatcher directs you to hang up.
- Notify the administrator on-site immediately.
- The administrator on site or designee may order a "LOCKDOWN" or "SHELTER-IN-PLACE" depending upon the situation.
- Complete the steps identified above for a lockdown or shelter-in-place.
- The Chief School Officer or their designee will be responsible for notifying parents/guardians of the disturbance.

Earthquake

Stay as safe as possible during an earthquake. Be aware that some earthquakes are actually foreshocks and a larger earthquake might occur. Minimize your movements to a few steps to a nearby safe place and stay indoors until the shaking has stopped and you are sure exiting is safe.

Indoor Safety

- DROP to the ground; take COVER by getting under a sturdy table or other pieces of furniture - it can provide you with air space if the building collapses, and if you get under a table and it moves, try to move with it; and HOLD ON until the shaking stops. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the

building. Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.

- Use a doorway for shelter only if it is in close proximity to you and if you know it is a strongly supported, load-bearing doorway. Inner walls or door frames are the least likely to collapse and may also shield against falling objects. If another cover is not available, go to an inner corner or doorway, away from windows or glass panels.
- Grab something to shield your head and face from falling debris and broken glass, large textbooks or binders work well.
- If the lights go out, use a battery-operated flashlight. Don't use candles, matches, or lighters during or after the earthquake. If there is a gas leak, an explosion could result.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Research has shown that most injuries occur when people inside buildings attempt to move to a different location inside the building or try to leave.
- Be aware that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.
- DO NOT use the elevators. Staff members should make every effort to assist any disabled students in their charge to get to safety.

Crowded Indoor Public Places, multi-purpose room, etc.

- If you are in a crowded public place, do not rush for the doorways. Move away from display shelves containing objects that may fall. If you can, take cover and grab something to shield your head and face from falling debris and glass.

Outdoor Safety

- Stay there.
- Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.
- Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits, and alongside exterior walls.

Automobiles

- If you are in a moving vehicle, bus, or activity vehicle, stop as quickly and safely as possible and move over to the shoulder or curb, away from utility poles, overhead wires, and under- or overpasses. Stay in the vehicle, set the parking brake, and turn on the radio for emergency broadcast information. The vehicle may jiggle violently on its springs, but it is a good place to stay until the shaking stops. If you are in a life-threatening situation, you may be able to reach someone with either a cellular or an emergency roadside assistance phone.
- Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.

If Trapped Under Debris

- Do not light a match.
- Do not move about or kick up dust.
- Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.

- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort. Shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

Fire

- All fire extinguishers shall be inspected annually.
- The school should conduct a fire drill during the first two weeks of school and on a monthly basis.
- The building shall have fire drill instructions for each classroom. The administrator on-site will designate selected staff members to assist with confirming that the building is cleared and assist with re-entry.

If a fire is discovered

- Remove anyone from immediate danger.
- Pull the nearest fire alarm.
- Dial 911. If possible, describe the location of the fire, if anyone is trapped by the fire and if anyone is injured. Stay on the phone with the dispatcher if it is safe until the dispatcher directs you to hang up.
- If possible, close all doors and windows in the involved area. If it is safe to do so, administrators should ensure that fire doors in the stairwells are closed.
- Evacuate students and staff to a safe distance outside of the building. Teachers should monitor the staff chat (Emergency Hotline) for further details or instructions.
- Evacuate the building in an orderly fashion. Keep at a minimum of 300 feet away from the building so as not to interfere with emergency personnel. Remain calm. Teachers must take an emergency bag with a class list/roster with them.
- Pay special attention to children with special needs. Check restrooms and elevators while exiting the building. The elevator should be empty and locked to prevent use.
- If the fire was minor and extinguished before the above steps, call 911 to inform them of the situation and request an inspection by the fire department.
- Refer to the [fire drill procedures](#) in this manual for more information on evacuation procedures.

Firearms and Weapons in School

If a firearm or weapon of any type is reported in the school, use the following procedures.

Remember, the safety of everyone, including staff and students is the most important consideration.

Report of a firearm or weapon in a backpack:

- Report the information to the senior on-site administrator immediately.
- The administrator on site will call the police and report the information available and request an officer come to the school, or engage the law enforcement officer on campus if one is present.
- Have the administrator on site/designee, or another staff member go and get the backpack. The backpack will be searched by the administrator on site and if possible in the presence of a law enforcement officer. Any evidence will be submitted to law enforcement. (Search the entire backpack for the weapon, including bags and clothes).

- Do not alert the student or any student that the backpack is being searched prior to the search taking place.
- Notify the Board of Directors Chair as soon as reasonably possible prioritizing law enforcement and school safety.

If a weapon is found law enforcement will take and secure the weapon.

- The officers and the administrator on site will go to the student's class.
- Only the administrator on site should enter the classroom and ask the student to come out to the hallway and proceed to the nearest office.
- Out of sight of the other students, the officer must search the student for any other weapons.

If no weapon is found the administrator on site and police officer should go to the student's class.

- Only the administrator on site should enter the classroom and ask the student to come out to the hallway and proceed to the nearest office.
- Out of sight of other students, the Chief School Officer must search the student for any weapons.
 - Search the student's backpack for the next several days.

Report of a student carrying a firearm or weapon:

- DO NOT approach the student. Remain calm. Notify the senior administrator immediately.
- Tell the administrator on site the name of the individual suspected of bringing the weapon; where the weapon is located; if the suspect has threatened anyone; and any other details that may prevent the suspect from hurting someone or themselves.
- Administrator on site will call 911 immediately and provide the following information:
 - Explain there is a report of a student with a firearm, but the student has not been approached.
 - Ask that officers meet in the office at the school
- If the teacher suspects that a weapon is in the classroom, a neighboring teacher should be confidentially notified. The teacher should not leave the classroom.
- When officers arrive, the administrator on site and officers should go to the class the student is in. (Only the administrator on site or a law enforcement officer should enter the classroom and ask the student to come out to the hallway and proceed to the nearest office).
- Out of sight of other students, the officer must search the student for any weapons.
- Search the student's backpack, including personal belongings.
- Notify the Board of Directors Chair as soon as reasonably possible prioritizing law enforcement and school safety.

Hostage Situation

- Inform the senior administrator on-site immediately if possible. The administrator will call 911.
- If unable to get in touch with the administrator on-site, call 911.
- Stay on the phone, if possible, with the dispatcher until directed to hang up.
- Notify the senior administrator on-site as soon as practicable.

- The administrator on-site or designee will order a "LOCKDOWN."
- Teachers will not allow students to leave the classroom until a police officer evacuates them or instructions are given by the school administrator via the public address system.
- Notify the Board of Directors Chair as soon as reasonably possible prioritizing law enforcement and school safety.

Evacuation

- Teachers and students must follow the instructions of law enforcement.
- Teachers must stay with their students during and after evacuation.
- Follow the Emergency [Evacuation Routes and Procedure Plan](#) referenced above.
- Parents and media will be directed to the designated location to keep them away from the school. (There will be law enforcement and school personnel at the designated area to assist).

Law Enforcement

- Once law enforcement arrives, they are completely in charge of the situation.
- Law enforcement will coordinate with the senior administrator on-site.
- Law enforcement will take all actions they deem appropriate and prudent to address the situation.

Teachers and Students

- Try to stay calm to avoid panic.
- If confronted by the hostage taker, cooperate to the best of your ability.
- Do not try to be a hero. You may be placing yourself and others in danger.
- Follow the instructions of the administrator on site and law enforcement.
- Do not give information concerning the presence of law enforcement to the hostage taker.

Intruder in the Building

"An unauthorized person who enters school property"

- Notify the senior administrator on-site immediately; description, location, and any other descriptive information.

Administrator on site

- Ask another staff member to accompany you before approaching the intruder; In the event, you do not feel comfortable waiting for the administrator on site to arrive.
- Politely greet the intruder and identify yourself.
- Ask the intruder the purpose of their visit.
- Inform intruder that all visitors must register at the main office if the reason is legitimate.
- If the purpose is not legitimate, ask the intruder to leave.
- Accompany the intruder to the exit.

If the intruder refuses to leave use the following steps:

- Call a "[LOCKDOWN](#)" and ensure all students are safe.

- Notify teachers who are outside the building that a “Lockdown” has been ordered and no one is to enter the building.
- Remind the intruder of the consequences of staying on school property. Inform the intruder that police are being called.
- Call 911 immediately and give them a full description of the incident and the intruder.
- Walk away from an intruder if he/she indicates potential for violence (be aware of actions, locations, weapons, packages, etc.)
- Notify the senior administrator on site.
- Notify the Board of Directors Chair as soon as reasonably possible prioritizing law enforcement and school safety.

Active Shooter Protocol

Staff members should recognize that an active shooter situation is fluid and evolving. The following procedures are guidelines to protect and minimize injury and loss of life.

If anyone sees a person with a firearm, call 911. Notify the senior administrator on site. Do not approach the person.

If shots are heard or an announcement is made about an active shooter situation on the walkie-talkies or other notification system, follow these steps in order, depending on the location of the shooter.

If a staff member hears or sees active gunfire, call 911 and follow the *RUN, HIDE, FIGHT* protocol below. Notify the administrator on site as soon as safety permits.

Information you should provide to the 9-1-1 Operator:

- Your exact location
- Location of the shooter if you know it
- Number of shooters if more than one, if you know it
- Description of the shooters, if you know it
- Number and type of weapons involved, if you know it
- Number of potential victims

RUN, HIDE, FIGHT

Teachers should instruct students according to the “Run, Hide, Fight” rule. Start with RUN. If that is not an option, HIDE. If the intruder/shooter sees you and you cannot run or hide, FIGHT.

RUN

- If possible, use the escape routes and movement plans for a fire or evacuation.
- Take the emergency bag if possible. Leave all belongings behind and tell students to leave all belongings behind.
- Students and teachers should keep their hands visible, raised high above their heads, and open wide at all times until directed otherwise by local law enforcement and emergency response personnel.

- When at a secure location, contact the site administrator or assignee with your location and status.
- Follow directives from all local law enforcement and emergency response personnel for reunification procedures.

HIDE

- Lock classroom doors (if possible) and barricade them with classroom furniture.
- Pull the shades/curtains to each window, if possible.
- Turn off all lights.
- Students and teachers should silence all devices (put on sleep mode, turn off all sound, turn down to the lowest light setting).
- Teachers should alert the administrator on site (if possible, and if safe) as to their location so they can communicate to law enforcement.
- Do not huddle together; spread out.
- Hide in any dark corner, against the wall, under desks/tables, away from windows, and out of the line of sight.
- Attempt to keep students as silent and calm as possible.
- Do not leave the location until verified law enforcement arrives and gives directions to leave.
 - Do not leave if the fire alarm goes off.
 - Do not leave if anyone other than a verified law enforcement gives that direction to leave.

FIGHT

- Fighting is ONLY a last resort, to be used when lives are in imminent danger.
- Attempt to disrupt and incapacitate the active shooter.
- Find any object to use as a weapon such as a chair, fire extinguisher, or items in your classroom or office that can be thrown/used to distract and disrupt the shooter.

When Law Enforcement arrives:

- Remain calm and instruct students to follow officers' instructions.
- Raise your hands and have students raise their hands and keep them open wide and visible at all times.
- Avoid making quick movements toward the officers and help students remain calm.
- Follow directives for reunification.

Knives or Other Sharp Objects in the Building

Many people do not consider a knife as dangerous as a gun, but it is. Extreme caution should be used in dealing with anyone who may possess a knife. Remember, the safety of everyone, including staff and students, is the most important aspect.

Report of a knife or other sharp object in a backpack

- Have the senior administrator on-site and another staff member go to the student's backpack or cubby and search. (Search for the knife, including bags and clothes).
- Do not alert the student or any student that the backpack/cubby is being searched.

- If a knife is found, take the knife, secure it and call the student out of class to the office.
- If no knife is found, do not tell anyone the backpack/cubby was searched.
- Senior administrator on site will then go to class and ask the student to come out to the hallway and escort them to the nearest office.
- Senior administrator on-site and another staff member as a witness will search the student by hand. (Females must search females. Males must search males).
- If the administrator on site and staff members are not comfortable getting and searching the student, call the police. Wait for the police to arrive before confronting the student.
- Senior administrator on site should go into the class and ask the student to come out to the hallway and proceed to the nearest office.
- Out of sight of other students, the administrator on site will search the student for any weapons.
- Search the student's backpack for the next several days.
- If the knife found is an automatic opening knife (switchblade), the police must be called, as this is an illegal knife according to law. (Turn the knife over to the police).
- If the knife found is not an automatic opening knife (switchblade) and is not illegal to carry according to law, but illegal by school policy, the police do not have to be called.
 - An incident report must be filled out.
 - The incident should be handled internally.
 - Keep control of the knife in case of an expulsion hearing.

Report of a student carrying a knife or other sharp object

- Report the information regarding the student, student location, and details to the administrator on-site immediately.

Administrator on-site responsibilities

- It will be the administrator on site's discretion regarding calling the police to approach the student.
- If you approach the student, use extreme caution.
- The administrator on site and another staff member should go to the class that the student is in and ask the student to come out to the hallway and then proceed to the nearest office.
- Senior administrator on-site and another staff member as a witness will search the student by hand. (Females must search females. Males must search males).
- If the administrator on site and staff members are not comfortable getting and searching the student, call the police. Wait for the police to arrive before confronting the student.
- The administrator on site should go into the class and ask the student to come out to the hallway and escort them to the Holodeck.
- Out of sight of other students, the administrator on site will search the student for any weapons.
- Search the student's backpack for the next several days.
- If the knife found is an automatic opening knife (switchblade), the police must be called, as this is an illegal knife according to law. (Turn the knife over to the police).
- If the knife found is not an automatic opening knife and is not illegal to carry according to law, but illegal by school policy, the police do not have to be called.

- An incident report must be filled out.
- The incident should be handled internally.
- Keep control of the knife in case of an expulsion hearing.
- Notify the Board of Directors Chair as soon as reasonably possible prioritizing law enforcement and school safety.

Power Outage Procedures

Brown Out

In the event of a minor or major power failure occurring during regular school hours, the administrator on site will keep staff informed and notify parents if needed.

- In the event of a brownout a "Shelter-in-Place" may be called.

If a blackout occurs without warning:

- Stay calm. Reassure students. Open blinds to let outside light in or use flashlights. Emergency lights should activate in classrooms and common areas and should operate for at least 90 minutes.
- Turn off all light switches. The voltage may fluctuate and damage any lights that are on.
- Set all equipment and appliance switches to the OFF position. This is to protect against kicking out the circuit breakers, blowing fuses, or damaging equipment when the full surge or current hits as the power comes back on.
- Take measures to protect your equipment or experiments. Remember that air operated controls and water pressure may be affected.
- If the failure lasts more than a few minutes, it will be necessary to evacuate persons from darkened areas (restrooms, stairwells, or other areas with no windows or natural lighting).
- To prevent the office from being overwhelmed with calls, only the administrator on site should report power outages. If the failure is to be lengthy, The Leadership Team will decide on continued operations for the remainder of the day and/or the duration of the blackout.
- Report all persons trapped in elevators to the administrator on-site immediately.
- If it becomes necessary to evacuate the premises during a blackout, be sure to protect all valuables and make sure that all equipment is safe when the power comes back on.

During periods of very heavy power usage, the area utility company may have to reduce voltage. This is commonly called a "BROWNOUT" and may occur during periods of high air conditioner usage. In the event of a brownout, the following steps should be taken.

- In the event of a brownout a "Shelter-in-Place" may be called.
- Turn off all lights and equipment not necessary for safe operation.
- Central air conditioning may have to be shut down. However, general ventilation will be maintained in centrally air-conditioned buildings at diminished levels.
- Identify equipment that may be sensitive to low voltage, and take positive steps to prevent its damage.
- Full cooperation during a brownout is extremely important. Such cooperation may possibly prevent the loss of all electrical power.

If an emergency exists, the administrator on site will notify all affected personnel.

- All building evacuations or localized evacuations will occur when an alarm sounds continuous and/or when an emergency occurs.
- Take personal valuables, and lock office doors upon leaving. Walk, do not run to the nearest stairway exit.
- When there is a power failure, do not use the elevator. It will be inoperative.
- Assist disabled persons in exiting the building. If these persons are unable to use the stairs, assist them to a stairwell where they will remain. Notify the senior administrator on-site of the location of these persons.
- Evacuate to a distance of at least 300 feet from the building and out of the way of emergency personnel. Do not return to the building until instructed to do so by the administrator on site. Staff will be notified whether to report to the evacuation site at the Frontier parking lot to the north of campus.
- The administrator on site will respond with the appropriate authorities to evaluate the situation and supervise an evacuation or appropriate action.
- The administrator on site will initiate the proper notification procedure for contacting appropriate personnel when a power failure occurs.
- At present, building lighting may not provide sufficient illumination in corridors and stairs for safe exiting. You should use a flashlight for emergency evacuations.

Serious Injury or Death in School

If it is reported that someone is seriously injured (the result of a gunshot, stabbing, self-inflicted wounds, fall, etc.), the following procedures should be followed:

- Call 911.
- Provide as much information as possible to the dispatcher.
- Notify the senior administrator on site immediately.

The administrator on site will call a "Lockdown" or a "Shelter-in-Place" depending upon the situation.

- The administrator on site will utilize the public address system and staff chats to repeatedly announce the steps to be taken in a clear and concise manner.
- If it is possible to get to the victim, First Aid should be administered.
- After prioritizing school safety and emergency personnel, notify the Board Chair as soon as reasonably possible.

If the suspect hands over the weapon:

- Take the suspect to the officer immediately.
- Take control of the weapon, touching it as little as possible.
- Keep everyone away from the actual scene until police and paramedics arrive.
- Keep any witnesses away from other people and separate them from each other.

If the suspect flees:

- Extreme caution should be used until the suspect is located.
- Keep everyone away from the actual scene until police and paramedics arrive.

- **Keep any witnesses away from other people and separate them from each other.**
- **If the suspect is located, do not approach the suspect.**

In the event of the death of a student that occurs outside of the school day, the following procedures will be followed

- **Senior administrator on site will be notified immediately to verify the information**
- **Once administration is contacted, the crisis team will be alerted of the situation and schedule a meeting.**
- **The Leadership Team will notify the Board and will send out an email to RTHS staff making them aware of the situation**

Crisis Team Expectations

- **Creating a list of high risk students (friends, family members, etc.)**
- **Assessing need for police involvement for possible media presence**
- **Placement of staff outside buildings before and after school**
- **Determine who will be involved in the counseling**
- **Determine what counseling will look like**
- **Communication with family of deceased student**
- **Letter to pass out to parents with counseling information**
- **Procedures for emptying student's locker**
- **Food for students and counselors**
- **Assessing need for cancellation of after school events**
- **Providing staff with ways to address questions from students in crisis**
- **Creating a check in system throughout the day to address concerns or needs**
- **Following the crisis team meeting, the administrator on site will meet with the staff affected by the loss**
- **Crisis Team will debrief (at the end of the day):**
 - **Discuss concerns/issues with handling of crisis throughout the day**
 - **Follow up with thank you email to staff for support**
 - **Send an email message at end of day to parents/guardians to update**
 - **Plan for continued counseling services**
 - **If the impacted family allows, provide communication of funeral services and staff or student attendance at services**

Expectations for Teachers

- **Teachers are expected to assist students in expressing their feelings in a supportive environment and provide comfort**
- **Counselor will provide support/explanation at the beginning of the day if needed**
- **Teachers will keep a list of who is sent to the office so we know where students are**
- **Teachers should NOT talk to media**
- **Teachers should not tell students that "We can't talk about it" but should avoid discussing details of the student's death**
- **Teachers will be provided with resources to assist students throughout the day**

Expectations for Data-Operations Managers

- Do not share information on the phone regarding the situation.
- Do not count students absent if sent home grieving.
- Students who need to miss instruction for grieving or counseling will be counted as excused absences.

Severe Weather

Whenever the U.S. Weather Service issues a tornado watch or severe thunderstorm warning, Leadership will decide if schools should remain in session.

Tornado Warning

- The administrator on site will alert staff of the severe weather using the public address system.
- Any students outside should be brought inside immediately.
- Students and staff will remain in the building; taking shelter at all designated areas.
- Close blinds, drapes, and stay away from windows, glass, and unsecured objects.
- Have students sit on the floor along interior walls as far away from any windows and assume the “duck and cover” position.
- Take the student roster and account for all students in your class.
- Wait for further instructions from emergency responders or administration before leaving designated safe areas.
- Be ready to move quickly if flooding occurs.

Winter Storm

- If school is in session and a winter storm strikes, it will be the decision of the Chief Operations Officer whether to close the school.
- If school closes, parents or legal guardians should pick their children up from school as soon as possible.

Release of Students

- Parents, legal guardians, or predetermined persons may pick up children from RTHS during any severe weather warning. We do ask that parents refrain from calling the school. It is extremely important that our school telephone lines remain open during severe weather watches and warnings.
- Should a severe weather incident happen during arrival, dismissal, and carpool, dismissal may be halted. Caregivers who are picking up children may leave their vehicles and take shelter inside the buildings.

Threat to Harm Self or Others

If a student threatens to harm themselves or another person, whether it be another student or staff member, it must be immediately reported to the administrator on-site and the school counselor in person, by phone, or text.

- Assess the situation for level of risk; (if at all not sure- get in contact with administration asap)

- Making a threat vs. posing a threat
- Converse with the student immediately to determine if he or she has any dangerous instrumentalities (weapons, substance, or other material capable of inflicting a mortal wound) on or nearby his or her person
- Notify your co-teacher/co-worker to contact the senior administrator on site and a counselor immediately in a crisis.
- Stay with the individual until the administrator and/or counselor are there to conduct an assessment. Do not leave the student alone.
- Documents to help guide staff: [Responding to Students who threaten Violence, Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management](#)
- You will be required to assist in completing the documentation form as soon as possible detailing the incident.

Child Abuse and Neglect

In the event of abuse or neglect, all staff members have a duty to report the information. If a staff member receives information deemed to be abuse or neglect, notify the administrator on site and the counselor asap. If the student contacts you after school hours or you are unable to get in touch with the administrator on site or counselor you must report the incident to Child Protective Services asap.

For more information regarding reporting laws: [North Carolina Child Reporting Laws](#)

Fill out the [CPS Reporting form- Appendix H](#)

Bullying and Harassment Reporting

State statute in regards to bullying

In the event a student, staff or parent reports bullying of a staff member or student the administrator on site and counselors need to be notified immediately.

In this instance documentation needs to be kept on a bullying report or incident report form depending upon the individual case

Our website also has an [anonymous bullying report form](#).

Appendix A: Crisis Intervention Team Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Administrator On Site

- Establish chain of command. During a crisis, the senior administrator on site delegates responsibilities. However, during his/her absence, a chain of command is to be established in advance.
- Within the first 60 days of the school year, the following should be completed, and documentation submitted to The Leadership Team:
 - Building Crisis Management Annual checklist and preparation from the list.
 - In-service with staff.
 - Establish Building Crisis Team.
- Designate area to be used as a command post during a crisis situation
- Designate two or more outside assembly locations.
- Call 911 or other emergency numbers if the situation warrants.
- Convene Building Crisis Team, brief them on facts, and discuss procedures.
- Assign a team member to identify students involved in crisis, siblings, and family members.
- Contact family members. Serve as a school representative to the family.
- Convene faculty and staff. Share facts regarding the crisis. Warn against rumors. Provide a paper copy of the facts to all staff.
- In the event of a student death, remove personal items for parents to pick up
- Plan teacher and staff in-service reviewing emergency management.
- Inform staff of school-wide codes to alert staff to emergency.
- Develop an emergency response program. Teachers are to use their class roster for attendance.
- Assign a team member to account for all students and adults in the building.
- If possible, a short memo with the facts of the situation is prepared and communicated to parents.
- Provide local police and fire departments a floor plan and shut-off valves for the building.

Crisis Team Coordinator

- Implement Building Crisis Plan.
- Serve as a liaison between faculty and Crisis Team.
- Direct other significant roles as appropriate. (e.g., First Aid, building security, communications in the building, transportation).
- Serve as an information source for faculty and staff.
- Monitor Crisis Team's stress level.
- Organize debriefing for Crisis Team. Plans are made for working with students and staff during post-crisis as needed.
- Compile evaluation data on Crisis Team's effectiveness.
- Develop a plan of identification for safe, injured, or deceased individuals.
- Immediately following a crisis, some students may request permission to leave the building. How, when, and to whom students may be released should be determined.

Counselor

- Coordinate counseling services.
- Provide working space as needed for counselors and psychologists.
- Meet with resource personnel. Brief them on all the facts.
- Organize and supervise designated counseling areas.
- Counsel students as needed.
- Assist administration with implementation of the crisis plan.
- Provide support to family, students and staff.
- In the event of the death of a student, remove the student's name from the attendance roster.

Team member in charge of security

- Monitor the situation as to security issues.
- Secure additional help if needed.
- Place designated staff members at each entrance/exit at all necessary building locations.
- Direct media representatives to designated areas as needed.

Health Coordinator

- Handle medical needs (other than those requiring 911) of students and staff, as necessary. May need to move "meds" and log books to the crisis center.
- Develop and coordinate a First-Aid Team.
- Coordinate annual CPR and First-Aid training.
- Provide a list of CPR trained individuals to the crisis team coordinator.
- Ensure First-Aid Kit is available and properly stocked.
- Provide a list of medically fragile students to the crisis team coordinator.
- Collect and notify staff of Health Plans for students who have the following medical needs; Seizure Disorder, Diabetes, Asthma, and life-threatening Allergies (causing anaphylactic shock).
- Fill out the Annual Health Report due in June

Team member in charge of communications

- Establish communication plans in advance of a crisis.
- Convene HR & Data & Operations staff to answer incoming phone calls if needed.
- Brief HR & Data & Operations staff to not share details with the public. Caution against the spreading of rumors.
- Avoid any large group announcements. Only make announcements over the walkie-talkies using predetermined codes.
- Avoid glamorizing of suicide, including school memorial services, flying flag at half-mast, student assemblies.
- Ensure that a visitors' screening procedure is in place and require all visitors (does not include emergency personnel) to sign in at the office so there is a record of everyone who is in the building.

Follow these steps when dealing with media

- **Notify the administrator on site immediately. The team may prepare a written statement for the media and any statements to the media must be approved by the Leadership Team and shared with the Board Chair. All media inquiries should be directed to the administrator on site. Staff members should not speak to the media on behalf of the school.**
- **Designate an area for the media away from the incident area. Place a sign-in sheet by the door and require signatures and any other visitor requirements for the school.**
- **Designate and staff a waiting area for visitors away from the incident area.**
- **Escort media and visitors to separate designated locations.**
- **Ask the media inquiring by phone to leave a name, phone number, and deadline so that the administrator on site can return the call and provide accurate information.**
- **Advise students and staff of how information will be given to the media. Let them know if reporters ask them questions they should be encouraged to make no comment. They should be cautioned that any comments they make should be sensitive to the persons involved, and that any statements they may choose to make despite the above guidelines will not represent the official school response.**
- **Advise reporters that they may not interrupt classes/school programs/school business.**

Debriefing a crisis

No one involved in the aftermath of a school crisis will remain untouched emotionally. Teachers and staff are no exception and a debriefing for them is imperative. Teachers and counselors may feel tremendous guilt and anger resulting from a sense of responsibility in the crisis. They must have an opportunity to discuss these emotions.

The debriefing should be conducted with small groups of people and, preferably, by a trained individual including counselor or outside professional who was not involved in the crisis. Specific information given about normal reactions and how to handle them is usually helpful. Staff may tend to dwell on preventing future crises from occurring. This is not helpful. What the staff members need most is to focus on their own emotional reaction. Preventive measures can be dealt with later.

Appendix B: Building Crisis Management Checklist
Annual Checklist

School _____ Year _____

Assigns team and responsibilities _____

Directors

_____ Counselor _____ Alternate

Alternate

_____ Training and planning times for crisis team: _____

_____ Training completed for staff: _____

_____ Update One Call List (include cellular phone access)

_____ School-Wide Universal Codes reviewed (LOCKDOWN, SHELTER IN PLACE):

- _____ Physical assistance needed in office
- _____ Physical assistance needed in designated location
- _____ Student medications/First Aid Kit are in a portable container
- _____ Prepare Command Center and Alternate Command Center:
- _____ Building Floor plan provided to Police and Fire Departments
- _____ Copy of crisis manual
- _____ Blueprints for building
- _____ First Aid Kit
- _____ First Aid Manual
- _____ Medical emergency list including names of students with medical needs
and copy of student health plan
- _____ Bull horn
- _____ Emergency battery
- _____ Legal pads
- _____ Pens

- _____ **Permanent markers**
- _____ **List of local telephone numbers for law enforcement, emergency medical services, fire department, and other agencies**
- _____ **List of email addresses and fax lines at each building**
- _____ **Current staff directory with cell phone numbers**
- _____ **Floor plans that show exits, telephones, computer locations placed in medication and emergency box**
- _____ **Local Street and zone maps**
- _____ **Location of master keys**
- _____ **List of CPR trained staff**

Appendix C: Crisis Response Team Evaluation Form
Please return this form within two weeks to the Crisis Team Coordinator.

School: _____ **Date** _____

Presenting Problem: _____

We would appreciate your cooperation in completing this evaluation of the recent services provided by the School Crisis Team. Please return to Crisis Team coordinator when completed.

	Very	Somewhat	Not at All	N. A.
1) Was the service delivery of the Crisis Team timely? Comments:				
2) Did the services of the Crisis Team meet your school's needs? Comments:				
3) Did you have sufficient access to counseling to meet your individual needs? Comments:				
4) Was individual/group counseling provided to students a valuable aspect? Comments:				
5) Were materials provided on site useful? Comments:				
6) Did you have an opportunity to debrief with the Crisis Team? effective? Comments:				

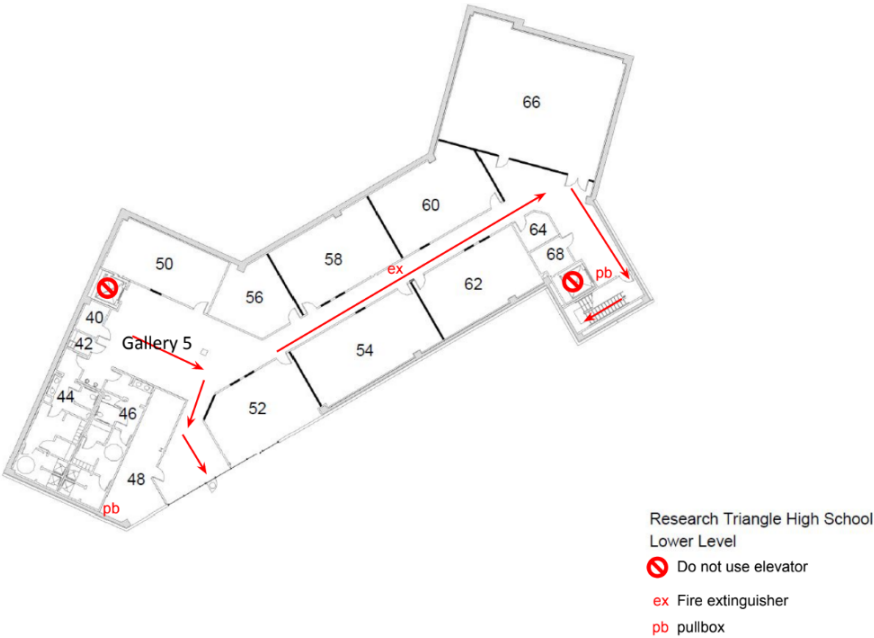
7) What else could have been done to increase the effectiveness and helpfulness of the Crisis Team?_____

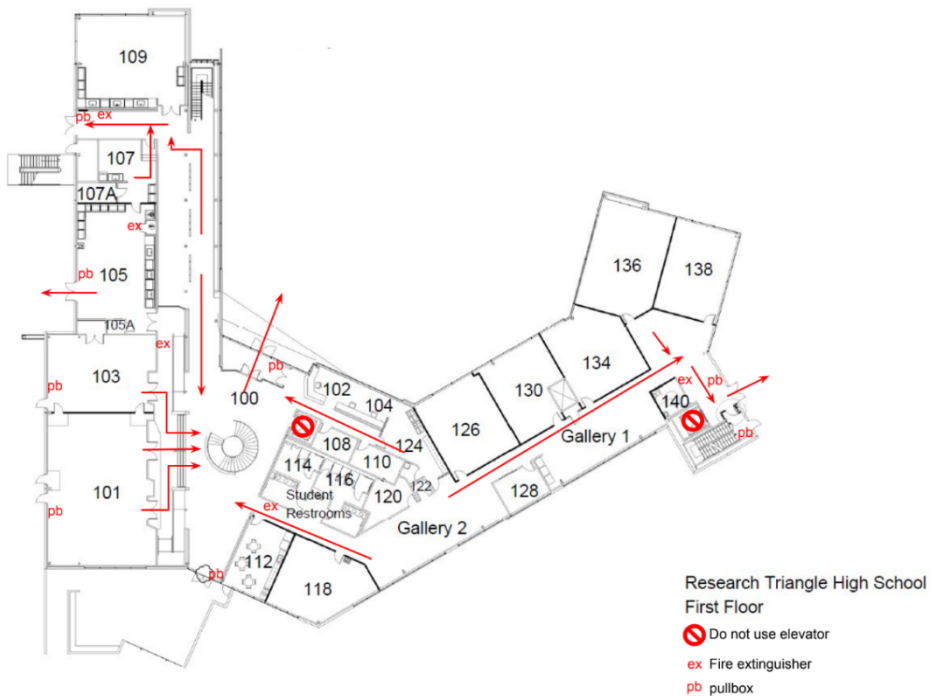
Appendix D: [Bomb Threat Report Form](#)

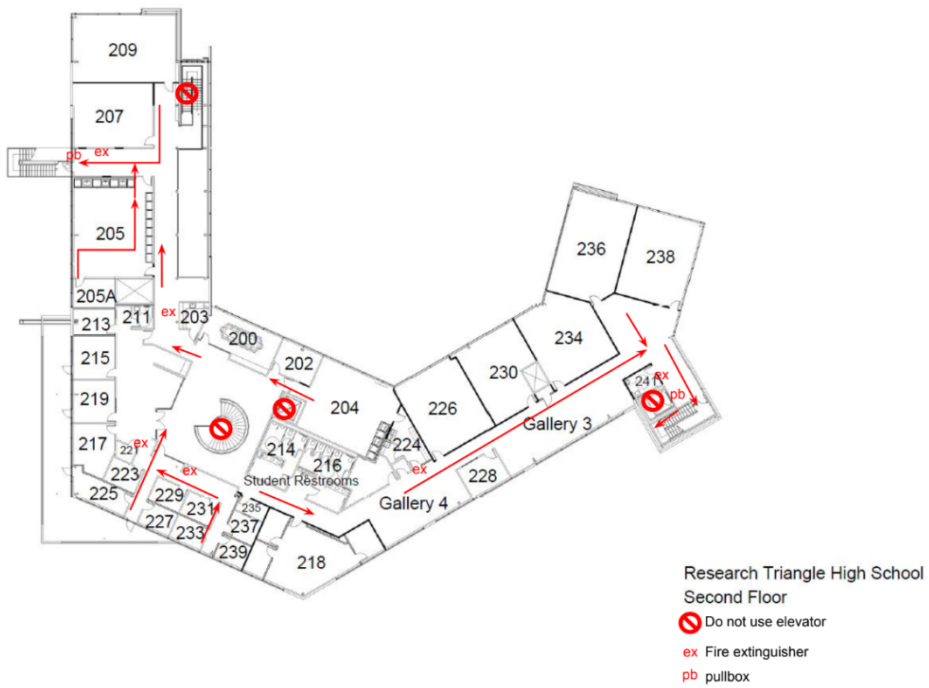
Appendix E: [Incident Report Form](#)

Appendix F: [School Drill and Inspection Form](#)

Appendix G: School Maps and Fire Evacuation Routes







Note: Be aware of all nearby exits, not just the one designated as the evacuation route, as emergencies may result in exits being blocked.

Appendix H: [Child Abuse and Neglect Form](#)

Appendix I: Comprehensive Weapons Ban Policy

Research Triangle High School prohibits weapons (or replicas of weapons) on school property, in school vehicles and at school-sponsored activities on or off school property. Weapons and replicas of weapons constitute any item (regardless of its nature) used to threaten or cause actual harm, including but not limited to: firearms, knives, metal knuckles, chains, razors, explosives, poisonous or noxious gases or any other tool or instrument capable of inflicting bodily injury as determined by school administration. On-duty Law Enforcement Officers (LEO) or School Resource Officers (SRO) are the only approved individuals to carry weapons on school property or at other school-sponsored activities on or off school property.

Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the school for a period of one (1) year from the date the student was found guilty of the violation. The Chief School Officer will review each alleged violation of this policy and will exercise discretion for expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. The Chief School Officer will review each alleged violation of this policy and will exercise discretion for disciplinary action on a case-by-case basis.

Visitors or volunteers who violate this policy will be subject to local law enforcement action.

Any employee who is aware that a student, volunteer, parent or employee is carrying a weapon must report the infraction to their supervisor or an administrator immediately.

All acts of violence and possession of weapons as defined in this policy shall be reported to parents of the violator, appropriate law enforcement agency and any other government agency as required by law.

The Chief School Officer is required to report immediately to the appropriate local law enforcement agency whenever the Chief School Officer has personal knowledge or actual notice from school personnel that any of the following acts has occurred on school property:

- assault involving the use of a weapon
- unlawful possession of a firearm
- unlawful possession of a weapon

This reporting requirement applies regardless of the age or status of the person thought to have committed the act. The report to law enforcement is only required if the act occurs on School property, which includes any public-school building, bus, campus, grounds, or recreational area.



Research Triangle High School Financial Policies and Procedures

This policy manual outlines the framework for financial policies, procedures, and controls at Research Triangle High School (RTHS), ensuring a structured and proactive approach to the maintenance of financial records and assets.

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Commented [1]: The Board Conflict of Interest policy was originally in this manual as Appendix A, but since it's now in the new Board policy manual that Elizabeth created last year, I removed it from here.

Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to establish clear financial management processes for Research Triangle High School that ensure the school's financial resources are used responsibly, transparently, and in compliance with relevant regulations.

Scope

This manual applies to all financial activities conducted by RTHS, including budgeting, income and expense management, procurement, fee collection, and financial reporting.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Chief School Officer	Signatory on all contracts, ensuring that budgeting and spending align with RTHS's needs and mission.
Chief Operations Officer	Day-to-day financial operations, record-keeping, compliance reporting, creation of annual budget
Department Heads	Submission of budget needs for departmental expenses; submission of purchase requests on behalf of department members
Board of Directors	Approval of all contracts over \$25,000, review and advise on budget through the year, approval of annual budget
External Accountant	Annual auditing, tax filing, and compliance consultation, update of budget monthly for Board and Chief Operations Officer review

Financial Procedures

Budget Planning and Approval

- The Chief Operations Officer and the External Accountant create a draft budget based on projected revenues and expenses, in consultation with the Chief School Officer, Board of Directors, and various other administrators and department heads.
- The Chief Operations Officer submits the draft budget no later than April for review and approval by the Finance Committee and the full Board of Directors.
- The Board shall have the right to make budget transfers or amendments to the budget resolution for the reasons prescribed by state law and in accordance with the adopted budget resolution.
- A copy of the approved budget is given to department heads and administrators for planning the following year's expenses.
- The budget should be compared to actual revenue and expenditures on a monthly basis to identify variances.
- When applicable, the Chief Operations Officer, in consultation with the Finance Committee and the full Board of Directors, will review the status of unallocated funds in the operating budget and make proposals to the Board of Directors for how those funds should be expended.

Internal Control Procedures

Handling of Monies

- All funds collected via cash or check shall be submitted daily to the Chief Operations Officer along with a [Deposit Request Form](#).
- The Chief Operations Officer prepares deposits and places money in a safe until they can be taken to the bank for deposit into the appropriate accounts.
 - The Office Manager, Chief Operations Officer, and Chief School Officer are the only staff members with safe access.
- Once the funds are deposited, the deposit receipt from the bank is attached to the completed and signed Deposit Request Form and filed in the Chief Operations Officer's office.

Budget and Deposit Controls

- All bank statements should be reconciled promptly upon receipt by the External Accountant.
- In performing the reconciliations, the External Accountant should check for the following:
 - Compare dates and amounts of deposits on the statements with the check and deposit register.
 - Investigate bank transfers to see that both sides of the transaction have been recorded.
 - Account for all check numbers, including voided checks
 - Examine deposited checks for authorized signatures, irregular endorsements, and alterations

- Bank reconciliation procedures should always include comparing the reconciled balance to the balance per the general ledger for accuracy

Money Collection and Receipting

- All monies due to the school must be paid through cash, check, or a school-approved online platform. RTHS currently has accounts with GoFan, Stripe, [Square, and ParentSquare](#); those are the only approved online platforms.
- Every payment made via cash or check must be issued a numbered receipt; receipt books can be obtained from the Office Manager. Receipts should be filled out completely prior to giving them to the payor. School-approved online platforms provide a receipt directly to the payor.
- All funds collected via cash or check shall be submitted daily to the Chief Operations Officer along with a [Deposit Request Form](#). The Chief Operations Officer shall lock away all funds for safekeeping until they are deposited with a bank.
- The Chief Operations Officer deposits all received funds into the appropriate bank account on a weekly basis.
 - The Chief Operations Officer shall record all funds deposited on a spreadsheet shared with the External Accountant.
- The Chief Operations Officer files all deposit request forms and receipts showing when the funds were deposited.

Purchasing Process

- The Chief Operations Officer shall verify budget availability for all purchases.
- All invoices, both for one-time purchases as well as recurring monthly payments for services, shall be submitted to the Office Manager. The Office Manager will, on a weekly basis, compile these invoices and send them to the Chief Operations Officer for approval. The Office Manager will then send the approved invoices to the External Accountant for processing.
- All purchases exceeding \$25,000 must be approved by the school's Board of Directors in a duly-called meeting.
 - The process for obtaining bids and granting approval for large purchases is outlined in detail in [Appendix B](#).
- All purchases by staff members exceeding \$50.00 shall require approval by the Chief Operations Officer.

Purchases by Check

- For purchases to be made via check, a [Check Request Form](#) and supporting documentation (e.g., invoices or quotes) shall be submitted to the Chief Operations Officer for approval and payment.
 - Payment from the School's Operational Account:

- Submit the check request form and supporting documentation to the Office Manager, who will submit requests to the Chief Operations Officer for approval on at least a weekly basis.
- The External Accountant will then prepare the checks and give them to the Office Manager for mailing or disbursement.
- Payment from School's Club Accounts:
 - Submit the check request form and supporting documentation to the Chief Operations Officer, who will submit requests to the Chief School Officer for approval on at least a weekly basis.
 - The Chief Operations Officer will then prepare the checks and give them to the Office Manager for mailing or disbursement.

Reimbursements

- If a staff member wishes to make a school-related purchase with personal funds and then obtain reimbursement, they must first seek written approval (via email) for that purchase from the Chief Operations Officer to ensure the purchase qualifies for reimbursement.
- The staff member will then submit a Check Request Form and supporting receipt(s) to the Chief Operations Officer for final approval; the Chief Operations Officer will then give the form and supporting receipt(s) to the Office Manager who will send them to the External Accountant for processing and payment.
- If an employee has a question as to whether a purchase or expense is reimbursable, they should contact the Chief Operations Officer for clarification.

Travel and Mileage Reimbursement

- RTHS encourages teachers and staff members to attend meetings and conferences in the interest of their professional development and service to the school, and the school will support employees by covering related expenses.
- Staff members wishing to attend a conference must obtain written approval from a member of the Leadership Team.
- Staff members attending conferences shall track trip-related expenses on the [Travel Reimbursement Form](#) and submit the form, including all required receipts and documentation, to the Chief Operations Officer within one (1) week of the conclusion of the trip.
 - Alcoholic beverages may not be expensed to the school.
 - Employees who must fly to a conference should reserve the lowest airfare available from Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU).
- If an employee has a question as to whether a purchase or expense is reimbursable, they should contact the Chief Operations Officer for clarification.

Amazon Business Purchases

- RTHS has an account with Amazon Business through which school-related purchases may be made.
- Staff members should ask their Department Head or the Office Manager to submit purchase requests through this account to be approved by the Chief Operations Officer.
- The "pay by invoice" option shall be utilized for these purchases unless otherwise directed or approved by the Chief Operations Officer
- The Office Manager shall collect the invoices to send to the Accountant for processing.

Procurement Cards

- RTHS utilizes procurement cards through Bill.com (formerly Divvy.com) for purchases that can be paid for by card.
- All cardholders must sign the "Procurement Card Policy" terms and conditions through Bamboo. This form will be provided in Bamboo by the Chief Operations Officer.
- Cardholders shall request funds using the Bill.com app for the Chief Operations Officer to approve prior to making purchases.
 - All receipts must be uploaded on the Bill.com app for any purchase made with a procurement card, and staff members shall submit all receipts and categorization of expenses in the [Bill.com](#) app within ten (10) business days of the purchase.
- Personal items shall not be charged on school-issued procurement cards. If a personal item is inadvertently purchased on a school-issued card, repayment by the employee must be made immediately.

Capitalized Expenses

- Goods and equipment that meet the value threshold to be a capitalized expense (greater than \$2,500 per single invoice) shall be documented and inventoried by the External Accountant and the department head responsible for each good or piece of equipment.

Fundraising

- To foster an environment that is focused on learning and student growth, RTHS will only raise funds for purposes directly related to school improvement, school community development, or learning enhancement.

Restrictions on Fundraising

- All RTHS marketing for fundraisers must comply with the [School Engagement Plan](#) and is subject to approval by the Leadership Team.
- Fundraisers taking place on campus must benefit an RTHS-related club, organization, or cause. Students and parents are prohibited from soliciting RTHS staff and other families on school property if the fundraiser is not benefiting RTHS or a cause associated with RTHS (i.e., a charity or non-profit that an RTHS club wants to fundraise for).
- Students and staff will not be required to participate in selling any type of product in connection with school-approved fundraisers. All participation in fundraising activities is voluntary.

Clubs and Activities

- Club and activity fundraisers are permitted with the approval of the Chief School Officer or their designee.
- Funds can be collected through cash, checks, or a school-affiliated digital account (i.e., GoFan or Stripe). All currency and checks shall be turned into the Chief Operations Officer or their designate with a completed [Deposit Request Form](#) at the end of each school day.
 - Collection of money after the school's regular hours should be secured in a locked location until the next school day.
- Club funds are maintained only in the school's club account. Under no circumstances are employees or students allowed to use personal electronic cash accounts (e.g., CashApp) for money transactions.
- Staff are prohibited from selling any non-school-related items to students or colleagues.
- Staff are prohibited from depositing funds into a personal account.
- Failure to comply will result in discipline and up to termination.

Payroll

- Payroll and deductions for taxes and all elected benefits are sent by the External Accountant to the Chief Operations Officer for review and approval each month.
- The External Accountant will obtain a record of days/classes worked by substitute teachers from the Office Manager to process at the same time as regular employees' payroll.
- Payroll is processed monthly and submitted by the External Accountant by the 25th of each month.
- Paychecks are direct-deposited to the bank account designated by each staff member; the schedule of days when paychecks will be direct-deposited will be provided to staff via email and the school's internal staff calendar no later than August of each year.
- All pay stubs and tax information are accessible to staff via LINQ.

Login Instructions for LINQ:

- Go to employeeeling.linq.com
- If a first-time user, employees should create an account using their personal email address.
 - The "Unit ID" asked for on the home page is **32N**.

Payroll Deductions

- Research Triangle High School will comply with all required salary deductions as set forth by state and federal law. Research Triangle High School's external accountant will perform all payroll support functions which include: process the monthly payroll, submit payroll direct deposits, submit timely payroll tax deposits, file required monthly and quarterly payroll forms, and submit health benefit and retirement withholdings to applicable agencies. All employees will receive a direct deposit voucher in their LINQ portal each month showing the amount deposited into their account on the last working day of the month. All staff expense reimbursements will be on separate checks and not directly deposited into their account.
- The Office Manager will maintain adequate supporting documentation (substitute hours, leave accruals, etc.) for payroll to ensure that payments are made only for services actually rendered. The Office Manager will submit substitute teacher hours to the Finance Officer monthly. The Finance Officer will prepare payroll checks and perform all payroll support functions. The Chief School Officer will review the monthly substitute payroll reports to ensure the pay amounts are consistent with substitute hourly wages. For any employee not set up for direct deposit, the Chief School Officer will sign the payroll check and mail it to the employee.
- Upon hiring of staff, a personnel file shall be established with all appropriate payroll-related documentation including tax withholding forms and health benefit forms. This file is maintained off-site by the Finance Officer. School personnel must notify the payroll department in writing of any additions, deletions, or other changes to payroll deductions at least 30 days before the effective date of the change.

Financial Reporting

- Monthly financial statements are prepared by the External Accountant and provided to the Chief School Officer, Chief Operations Officer, Finance Committee, and Board of Directors for review at their regular monthly meetings.
 - Reports include a summary of revenue and expenditures, comparing actual amounts to the amounts in the approved budget, as well as reconciled bank statements.
 - The Chief Operations Officer shall submit all required reporting and documentation to external agencies (e.g. bondholders) at the times prescribed by those agencies.
 - Contacts for Reporting:
 - US Bank (bondholder)
Lee Moua - lee.moua1@usbank.com
 - School Improvement Partnership (charter renewal and compliance)
Devante Robinson - devante@schoolimprovementpartnership.net
 - The Chief Operations Officer and External Accountant will consult with the school's auditors or other financial professionals each year to complete the IRS Form 990 required of all 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.
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Third-Party Contracts

- The Chief School Officer and the Chair of the Board of Directors are the only authorized signers of contracts with third-party vendors.
- All contracts or agreements requiring an expenditure of greater than \$25,000 must be approved by the full Board of Directors in a duly-called meeting.
- For all service or vendor contracts, the school should endeavor to obtain at least three (3) bids from various vendors. If the value of the contract exceeds \$25,000, the school is required to obtain at least three (3) bids and present them to the Board of Directors for review, selection of a vendor, and approval. More details on this policy can be found in [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#).
- The school and the Board of Directors shall ensure that any vendor with which RTHS enters into a contract does not constitute a conflict of interest, financial or otherwise, between the vendor and any interested party. See [Appendix A](#) for more details of the Board's conflict of interest policy.
- Guidelines for the use of state funds and all applicable bid and contract approval policies are outlined in Appendix B.
- All vendor contracts shall be valid for one (1) year.
- For all service contracts, the Chief Operations Officer shall ensure that the following items are obtained from the vendor:
 - A fully-executed contract signed by a vendor representative, as well as either the Chief School Officer or the Chair of the RTHS Board of Directors
 - A certificate of liability insurance with RTHS listed as an interested party
- All contracts and agreements entered into by RTHS shall include the following language in accordance with North Carolina state statute:
No indebtedness of any kind incurred or created by the charter school shall constitute an indebtedness of the State or its political subdivisions, and no indebtedness of the charter school shall involve or be secured by the faith, credit, or taxing power of the State or its political subdivisions.

Public Works Contracts

- **Applicable Law.** In awarding contracts that will involve the construction, repair, or renovation of a structure, road, highway, or other improvement or addition to real property, Research Triangle High School will comply with all applicable rules and regulations. The Board and Chief School Officer shall ensure that all applicable advertisement notice bid requirements are satisfied.
- **Bidding Threshold.** The Chief School Officer shall engage the applicable law:
 - Contracts less than \$30,000 require no bid process, but one is encouraged
 - Contracts between \$30,000 and \$499,999 require an informal bid process
 - Contracts greater than \$500,000 require a formal bid process.

Commented [2]: Adjusted formatting.

Board approval is required for any contracts over \$25,000.

- **Contract Award.** The Chief School Officer shall make a recommendation to the Board concerning the award of a public works projects bid pursuant to this policy.
 - In determining the contract award, the Board may take into account factors regarding the bidder and their bid or proposal including:
 - The safety record of the bidder;
 - Whether the bidder, its employees, and agents have relevant and mandatory licensures/registrations;
 - Complaints and/or accident reports to relevant local and/or state agencies;
 - The purchase price or cost of the product and/or service;
 - The reputation of the bidder and of the bidder's goods or services, and the bidder's financial and operating ability to deliver the requested goods and/or services;
 - The quality of the bidder's good or services;
 - The extent to which the goods or services meet Research Triangle High School needs;
 - The bidder's past relationship with Research Triangle High School ;
 - The impact on the ability of Research Triangle High School to comply with the laws and rules relating to historically underutilized businesses;
 - The total long-term cost to Research Triangle High School to acquire the bidder's goods or services;
 - Any other relevant factor specifically listed in the request for bids or proposals.
 - **Definition of Safety Record.** The safety record includes a bidder's Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspection log for the last three years, a loss analysis from the bidder's insurance carrier, any known safety violations on previous projects, and a loss history covering all lines of insurance coverage by the bidder.
-

Management of Federal Funds

Application for Funding

- Federal funding and grants are applied for through [North Carolina CCIP](#).
- The annual application for entitled federal funds shall be the responsibility of the following personnel:
 - IDEA (PRC 060, EC funds): Director of Exceptional Children
 - All other consolidated funds (Title I, Title II, etc.): Chief Operations Officer
- The External Accountant shall input the proposed budget for each budget code (PRC) as part of the funding application.

Monitoring and Maintenance of Effort

- The Board of Directors and the Chief School Officer are ultimately responsible for ensuring that use of all federal funds complies with all relevant guidelines and statutes.
- The External Accountant, in coordination with the Chief Operations Officer, shall ensure that the use of all federal funds received by RTHS aligns with the grant application and the budget submitted as part of the application.
- All equipment and supplies purchased with federal funding shall be inventoried by the External Accountant, in coordination with the Chief Operations Officer.
- Any employees paid with federal funds must do the following:
 - Sign a semi-annual certification form twice each year affirming that their time and effort was spent on activities related to their respective grant; **one each for July 1 thru December 31, and another for January 1 thru June 30 of each fiscal year.**
 - Maintain all valid certifications and licensures required of the grant with which they are being paid.
- Research Triangle High School shall ensure that it consults the appropriate OMB Circular, applicable to open-enrollment charter schools, to determine what costs are allowable. RTHS shall ensure that all grant funds are expended in accordance with the circular.

Commented [3]: Clarified timing of semiannual certifications.

Additional details regarding the acquisition and expenditure of federal funds can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Commented [4]: Previously linked to defunct operations/board manual.

Cash Management

- **Prior to each draw down request, the External Accountant in consultation with the Chief Operations Officer reviews the general ledger to determine the exact amount of cumulative expenditures to date and reviews and calculates the exact amount of payroll and/or other payables that will be paid out within three (3) business days once the payment is received.**
- **The External Accountant requests draw down and certifies that the expenditures are true and correct and that the deposit received will be paid out within three business days of receipt. If at any point it is determined that excess cash was received, the Finance Office will return the excess cash.**

Compliance and Audits

- RTHS's accounting and reporting system will be in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and will conform to all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Accounting procedures shall show a detailed and meaningful analysis of both receipts and expenditures.
 - All financial records are retained for at least 7 years and will be stored in the first floor Records Room.
 - An external audit is conducted annually by a certified public accountant in accordance with North Carolina state law. The External Accountant and the Chief Operations Officer shall assist the auditor in their compliance testing, as well as a review of the school's financial records.
 - The Board of Directors is the fiduciary of the school. It is ultimately responsible for ensuring that financial activities comply with all federal, state, and local regulations for the use of school funds.
 - The Chief School Officer, in consultation with the Accountant, external auditor, and any relevant state or federal points of contact, shall ensure that financial activities comply with all federal, state, and local regulations for the use of funds.
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Document Control

All forms, receipts, and reports must use standardized templates. Only the Chief Operations Officer is authorized to update these templates, with the consent and approval of the Chief School Officer and Board of Directors.

Document Retention

All storage of financial and administrative records shall be in a secure, safe, and confidential manner. The length of time for retention shall comply with legal requirements. Records related to a possible or pending judicial or administrative investigation shall be kept until all proceedings and actions are concluded.

Once annually, the physical documents and files should be transferred from active files to inactive storage and each file should be labeled with the retention date. All confidential files should be clearly labeled Confidential. All files in storage should be stored in a fire resistant, secure, dry place.

When files are past retention requirements, the documents shall be shredded and disposed of as soon as reasonably possible.

Long term storage of electronic files: all electronic files will be backed up daily and the backed up files are moved off-site monthly.

Research Triangle High School complies with all State and Federal laws and regulations for document retention. The table below, which provides the minimum requirements for document retention, is intended to comply with all such laws and regulations.

Type of Document	Minimum Requirement
Accounts payable ledgers and schedules	7 years
Audit reports	Permanently
Bank reconciliations	2 years
Bank statements	3 years
Cancelled checks	7 years
Checks (for important payments & purchases)	Permanently
Contracts, mortgages, notes and leases (expired)	7 years
Contracts (still in effect)	Permanently
Correspondence (general)	2 years
Correspondence (legal and important matters)	Permanently
Correspondence (with customers and vendors)	2 years
Deeds, mortgages, and bills of sale	Permanently
Depreciation schedules	Permanently
Duplicate deposit slips	2 years
Employment applications	3 years
Expense analyses/expense distribution schedules	7 years
Year End financial statements	Permanently
Expired insurance policies	3 years

Insurance records, current accident reports, claim policies, etc.	Permanently
Internal audit reports	3 years
Inventories of supplies, materials, products	7 years
Invoices (to customers, from vendors)	7 years
Minute books, bylaws and charter	Permanently
Patents and related papers	Permanently
Payroll records and summaries	7 years
Personnel files (terminated employees)	7 years
Retirement and pension records	Permanently
Tax returns and worksheets	Permanently
Timesheets	7 years
Trademark registrations and copyrights	Permanently
Withholding tax statements	7 years

Appendix A: Use of State Funds and Bid Processes

Formal Bids (equal to or greater than \$90,000)

- The purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment for expenditures equal to or more than \$90,000 must be secured through the competitive bid process governed by G.S. 143-129.
- The Chief School Officer, in consultation with the Chief Operations Officer, is authorized to determine the best method for formally bidding a product or, as appropriate, utilizing one of the exceptions to formal bidding. The Chief Operations Officer shall oversee the use of any purchasing method and ensure that all state requirements are met, including advertisement, sealed bids, maintaining records, and public opening of bids.
- The Chief Operations Officer shall determine if bid bonds are required.
- The board authorizes the use of newspaper advertisement, electronic advertisement, or both for formal bids; however, the Chief Operations Officer has the authority to determine which method will be used for a specific purchase or categories of purchases.

Informal Bids (\$30,000 to \$90,000)

- The purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment for expenditures of at least \$30,000 but less than \$90,000 must be secured through the informal bidding process governed by G.S. 143-131.
- The Chief School Officer, in consultation with the Chief Operations Officer, is authorized to determine the best method for securing informal bids on a product. The Chief Operations Officer shall oversee the use of any purchasing method and ensure that all state requirements are met, including maintaining records of all bids submitted.
- Records of informal bids will not be available for public inspection until the contract has been awarded. Awards will be made to the lowest responsible, responsive bidder(s) whose bid or proposal meets the requirements and criteria set forth by the school system, taking into consideration quality, performance, and the time specified in the proposal for the performance of the contract.
- In the case of identical low bids among two or more responsive and responsible bidders, the Chief School Officer and Chief Operations Officer, in their discretion, make the award believed to be in the best interest of the school system.

Sole Source Bids

- A contract may be awarded without competitive bidding when the item is available from only one source. Departments must document the justification for and lack of available competition for the item. A sole source contract must be approved by the governing board.
- The Chief School Officer shall develop procedures that ensure compliance with the following provisions:
 - a. The purchase of unnecessary items is prohibited;
 - b. The solicitation of bids or offers must provide a clear and accurate description of the requirements to be fulfilled by the bidder, technical requirements to be performed including the minimum acceptable standards, specific features of brand name or equal descriptions that bidders are required to meet, the acceptance of products and services dimensioned in the metric system of measurement, a preference, where economically feasible, for products that conserve natural resources, protect the environment, and are energy efficient;
 - c. Positive efforts shall be made to enter into business and other transactions that are of highest quality for Research Triangle High School, at the lowest cost;
 - d. The type of procurement instruments used (e.g. purchase orders) must be appropriate for the particular procurement;
 - e. Contracts are made only with responsible and financially sound contractors who possess the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement.

- Procurement documents shall be made available, upon request, to appropriate government officials when:
 - a. Procurement procedures fail to comply with the standards in this section;
 - b. The procurement is expected to exceed the small purchase threshold (currently \$30,000) and is to be awarded without a competitive bidding process or there is only one bid received in response to a solicitation;
 - c. The procurement which is expected to exceed the small purchase threshold, specifies a brand name product;
 - d. The proposed award over the small purchase threshold is to be awarded to a bidder under a sealed bid procurement; or
 - e. A proposed contract modification changes the scope of a contract or increases the contract amount by more than the amount of the small purchase threshold.

Open, Full, and Free Competition

- Research Triangle High School shall ensure that all procurement transactions are conducted in a manner that provides open, full, and free competition. Awards must be made to the bidder/offeror whose bid/offer is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to Research Triangle High School, considering price, quality, ability of the supplier to deliver the product and/or service, and other relevant factors deemed appropriate by the Board and Chief School Officer.

Conflicts of Interest

- In accordance with Research Triangle High School policy, Interested Transactions/Conflicts of Interest set forth herein, Research Triangle High School shall ensure that no employee, officer, or agent of Research Triangle High School, who has a real or apparent conflict of interest, participates in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by Research Triangle High School funds. Employees, officers, and agents may also not solicit or accept favors, gratuities, or anything of monetary value from contractors or their agents.

Record Documentation

1. Research Triangle High School shall ensure there is a cost or price analysis made and documented with every procurement action. Research Triangle High School shall also ensure the evaluation of the contractor performance and document whether the contractor has met the terms, conditions, and specifications of the contract. Procurement records for purchases over the small purchase threshold of \$25,000.00 shall also contain the following information:
 - a. The basis for contractor selection
 - b. The justification for lack of competition when competitive bids or offers are not obtained;
 - c. The basis for award cost or price; and
 - d. Written assurance from the contractor that there are no conflicts of interest that they are reasonably aware of that could materially negatively affect Research Triangle High School.
 - e. Written assurance from the contractor that it does not directly or indirectly do business with Iran in accordance with North Carolina law.

Board Approval

- For all procurement/contracts under this section that exceed \$30,000.00, the Chief School Officer shall endeavor to obtain three bids. In the event that three bids are not obtained, the Chief School Officer must present the Record Documentation, set forth above, to the Board and the Board must approve such procurements/contracts.
- Under these circumstances, the Chief School Officer does not have authority to bind the Board or Research Triangle High School to any contract for goods and services valued above \$25,000.00. Any contract or purchase valued above this amount that is not approved by the Board is null and void.

State Indebtedness Provision

- Research Triangle High School shall ensure, through the following policies and procedures, that it uses state funds in accordance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations.
- No indebtedness of any kind incurred or created by Research Triangle High School shall constitute an indebtedness of the State or its political subdivisions, and no indebtedness of Research Triangle High School shall involve or be secured by the faith, credit or taxing power of the State or its political subdivisions.

Mandated Contract Provisions

- The Chief School Officer shall ensure that all legally mandated provisions are included in each procurement contract. The Chief School Officer shall ensure the school's compliance with all federal and state rules governing purchasing and procurement.

State Fiscal Compliance and Reporting

- Research Triangle High School shall ensure that it fully complies with generally accepted accounting principles, and all applicable federal and state standards for financial management systems.
- Research Triangle High School shall make an accurate, current, and complete disclosure of financially assisted activities in accordance with financial reporting requirements for all funds received.
- Research Triangle High School shall maintain records that adequately identify the source and application of funds provided for activities assisted with state or federal funds.
- The Chief School Officer or designee shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, an annual financial statement for each fund subject to the authority of the Board during the fiscal year showing:
 - The total receipts of the fund, itemized by source of revenue, including taxes, assessments, service charges, grants of state money, gifts, or other general sources from which funds are derived;
 - The total disbursements of the fund, itemized by the nature of the expenditure; and
 - The balance in the fund at the close of the fiscal year.
- The Chief School Officer shall ensure that it complies with the reporting procedures required by the State of North Carolina for charter holders to prepare and distribute the school's annual financial management report.

Grant Management Standards

- If Research Triangle High School receives a grant directly from a state or federal agency, it shall ensure that Research Triangle High School is in compliance with the grant requirements of that state or federal agency.
- If a Research Triangle High School employee's compensation is funded by any grant, Research Triangle High School shall ensure that the employee maintains a time sheet on which he or she records the time spent during the workday along with a description of the service he or she performed during that time. Research Triangle High School shall ensure that the time sheets will contain the signatures of the employee that completed the time sheet, a school official, and the Chief School Officer.

Appendix B: Use of Federal Funds

Fiscal Requirements under ESEA Title I

- Research Triangle High School shall ensure that Title I funds will be used to supplement, not supplant regular non-federal funds. Documentation shall be maintained, or caused to be maintained, by the Chief School Officer. The documentation must clearly demonstrate the supplementary nature of federal funds.
- Research Triangle High School shall ensure that Title I funds shall be aligned to the School Improvement Plan, as appropriate and in compliance with applicable rules and regulations. The Uniform Guidance (UG) procurement requirements are part of the administrative requirements found in Subpart D of the Uniform Guidance, §200.318 to §200.326, and apply to the procurement of goods and services (as well as construction and repair contracts) directly charged to federal awards. They do not apply to indirect costs or payroll. They also do not apply to contracts for the rental of equipment or real property (assuming the rental agreement, i.e., lease does not include an option to purchase).
- A comprehensive needs assessment shall be conducted that will inform the drafting of the School Improvement Plan. The School Improvement Plan shall be aligned to the needs assessment of Research Triangle High School.
- New goals shall be added as new money is identified.
- The Chief Operations Officer shall conduct the needs assessment and School Improvement Plan prior to any grant application.

Federal Grant Allowable Expenditures

- Research Triangle High School shall ensure that it consults the appropriate OMB Circular, applicable to open-enrollment charter schools, to determine what costs are allowable. Research Triangle High School shall ensure that all grant funds are expended in accordance with the circular.

Use of Federal Grant Funds for Procurement

- When expending federal grant funds, Research Triangle High School shall ensure compliance by Research Triangle High School employees, officers, and agents with all applicable federal and state procurement standards and policies. Violations of applicable laws or policies may lead to disciplinary consequences including and up to termination of employment or removal from any officer and/or Board position if applicable.
- Research Triangle High School shall develop procedures that ensure compliance with the following provisions:
 - The purchase of unnecessary items is prohibited;
 - The solicitation of bids or offers must provide a clear and accurate description of the requirements to be fulfilled by the bidder, technical requirements to be performed including the minimum acceptable standards, specific features of brand name or equal descriptions that bidders are required to meet, the acceptance of products and services dimensioned in the metric system of measurement, a preference, where economically feasible, for products that conserve natural resources, protect the environment, and are energy efficient;
 - Positive efforts shall be made to enter into business and other transactions that are of the highest quality for Research Triangle High School, at the lowest cost;
 - The type of procurement instruments used (e.g. purchase orders) must be appropriate for the particular procurement;
 - Contracts are made only with responsible and financially sound contractors who possess the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement;
 - Procurement documents shall be made available, upon request, to appropriate government officials when:

- o Procurement procedures fail to comply with the standards in this section;
- o The procurement is expected to exceed the small purchase threshold (between \$10,000.00-90,000.00) and is to be awarded without a competitive bidding process or there is only one bid received in response to a solicitation;
- o The procurement which is expected to exceed the small purchase threshold, specifies a brand name product;
- o The proposed award over the small purchase threshold is to be awarded to a bidder under a sealed bid procurement; or
- o A proposed contract modification changes the scope of a contract or increases the contract amount by more than the amount of the small purchase threshold.

Procurement Procedures

- The Chief Operations Officer shall solicit bids in accordance with the requirements listed in this section based on the cost and type of contract. The Chief Operations Officer, in consultation with the External Accountant and Board of Directors, shall ensure that all procurements are permitted by the terms and conditions of the federal grant award, and will consult with the grantor of the award if necessary.
- In accordance with 2 CFR §200.320, the following procurement methods shall be utilized when expending federal funds:

Informal Bid Process

- Micro-Purchases (<\$10,000)
 - o The contract may be awarded without soliciting bids if the price of the goods or services is considered to be fair and reasonable; however, the Board encourages the school to obtain at least two bids or quotes when feasible, taking into account price, quality, suitability for the school's needs, and timeliness of delivery or the service.
 - o Contracts should be made under conditions that foster competition among potential vendors.
- Simplified Acquisition (\$10,000-\$90,000)
 - o Price or rate quotes will be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources (at least three [3]). Quotes may be solicited and submitted via telephone or email. Telephone quotes must be placed in writing before a final contract will be awarded.
 - o Per RTHS Board policy, all contracts over \$25,000 must be approved by the Board of Directors in a duly-called or scheduled meeting.
 - o Contracts will be awarded to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder on a fixed-price basis.

Formal Bid Process (≥\$90,000)

- Sealed Bids
 - o Contracts for the purchase of goods or services costing \$90,000 or more will be procured using the uniform guidance "sealed bid" procedure and state formal bidding procedures.
 - o The bid must be formally advertised in a newspaper that has general circulation in the vicinity of the school (the *News & Observer* and/or the *Durham Herald-Sun*), by electronic means on the school's website, or both. The advertisement must list date, time, and location of the public bid opening, and refer interested parties to the Chief Operations Officer to answer questions/provide specifications, and reserve to the Board of Directors the right to reject any or all bids for any sound documented reason.
 - o All bids must be submitted sealed and opened at a meeting open to the public.
 - o At least seven (7) days must elapse between the initial advertising of the bid and the opening of bids.

- **Competitive Proposals**

- Certain service contracts (not including contracts for architectural or engineering services) may be procured using the Uniform Guidance “competitive proposal” procedure.
- The Chief Operations Officer will advertise a Request for Proposals (RFP) in a newspaper that has general circulation in the vicinity of the school (the *News & Observer* and/or the *Durham Herald-Sun*).
- The RFP shall identify evaluation criteria and provide a rubric that will be used by RTHS’s administration and Board of Directors in selecting the successful proposal.
- The school should endeavor to obtain at least three (3) proposals.
- The successful proposal will be the responsible bidder with the most advantageous price and other factors identified in the RFP.

Noncompetitive Procurement

In addition to contracts not surpassing the “micro-purchase” threshold of \$10,000 referenced above, non-competitive contracts are allowed only under the following conditions and with the written approval of the federal agency or state pass-through agency that awarded the federal funds:

- **Sole Source**

- A contract may be awarded without competitive bidding when the item or service is available from only one (1) source. The Chief Operations Officer shall document the lack of available competition for the item or service. A sole-source contract must be approved by the Board of Directors.

- **Emergency Purchases**

- A contract may be awarded without competitive bidding when there is an imminent or actual threat to public health, safety, and welfare, and the item’s purchase is required in a shorter time frame than a public bid process.

- **Approval of Awarding Agency**

- A contract may be awarded without competitive bidding with the express written consent of the federal agency or state pass-through agency that awarded the federal funds, provided that awarding the contract without competition is permitted by state statute.

- **Inadequate Competition**

- If attempts to solicit bids do not result in a sufficient number of qualified bidders, a contract may be awarded without competitive bidding.

Open, Full, and Free Competition

- Research Triangle High School shall ensure that all procurement transactions are conducted in a manner that provides open, full, and free competition. Awards must be made to the bidder/offeror whose bid/offer is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to Research Triangle High School, considering price, quality, and other relevant factors deemed appropriate by the Board and Chief School Officer.

Conflicts of Interest

- In accordance with Research Triangle High School Conflicts of Interest set forth herein, Research Triangle High School shall ensure that no employee, officer, or agent of Research Triangle High School, who has a real or apparent conflict of interest, participates in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by federal funds. Employees, officers, and agents may also not solicit or accept favors, gratuities, or anything of monetary value from contractors or their agents.

Record Documentation

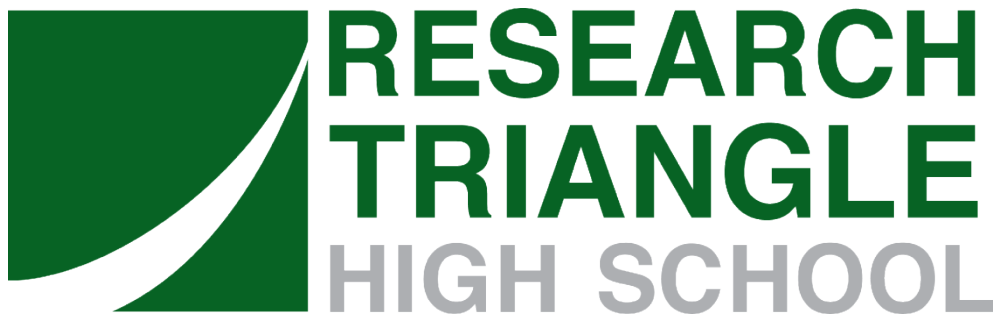
- Research Triangle High School shall ensure there is a cost or price analysis made and documented with every procurement action. Research Triangle High School shall also ensure the evaluation of the contractor performance and document whether the contractor has met the terms, conditions, and specifications of the contract. Procurement records for purchases over the small purchase threshold (between \$10,000.00-90,000.00) shall also contain the following information:
 - The basis for contractor selection;
 - The justification for lack of competition when competitive bids or offers are not obtained; and
 - The basis for award cost or price.

Board Approval

- For all procurement/contracts under this section that exceed \$25,000.00, the Chief School Officer shall endeavor to obtain three bids. In the event that three bids are not obtained, the Chief School Officer must present the Record Documentation, set forth above, to the Board and the Board must approve such procurements/contracts. In such circumstances, the Chief School Officer does not have authority to bind the Board or Research Triangle High School to any contract for goods and services valued above \$25,000.00. Any contract or purchase valued above this amount that is not approved by the Board is null and void.

Mandated Contract Provisions

- Research Triangle High School shall ensure that all legally mandated provisions are included in each procurement contract. Research Triangle High School shall ensure the school's compliance with all federal and state rules governing administration of the program.



Employee Handbook

2026-2027

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK/DISCLAIMER

We prepared this handbook to help employees find the answers to many questions that 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 generally. 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. 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 growing our campus, students, and staff. We pride ourselves on the familial atmosphere of our campus. Additionally, our parents and families 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 School 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

Commented [1]: To be updated prior to start of school year once hiring is complete.

Equal Employment Statement

Research Triangle High School 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 accommodations under ADA, PWFA, and those based on religion. Any questions or requests for accommodations should be directed to the School's Human Resource contact: **Andrea Brown (andrea@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](#) for the full policy.

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

Commitment to our students

- ☐ Protects students from conditions within the educator's control that circumvent learning or are detrimental to the health and safety of students.
- ☐ Maintains an appropriate relationship with students in all settings; does 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.
- ☐ Evaluates students and assigns grades based on the students demonstrated competencies and performance.
- ☐ Disciplines students justly and fairly and does not deliberately embarrass or humiliate them.
- ☐ Holds in confidence information learned in professional practice except for professional reasons or in compliance with pertinent regulations or statutes.
- ☐ Refuses to accept significant gifts, favors, or additional compensation that might influence or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.

Commitment to RTHS

- ☐ Utilizes available resources to provide a classroom climate conducive to learning and promote learning to the maximum possible extent.
- ☐ Acknowledges the diverse views of students, parents and 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.

- ☐ Accepts a position in good faith and does not voluntarily abandon their professional duties without a substantive reason.
- ☐ Participates actively in professional decision-making processes and supports colleagues' expression of professional opinions and judgments in decision-making processes or due process proceedings.

When acting in an administrative capacity

- ☐ Acts fairly, consistently, and prudently in the exercise of authority with colleagues, subordinates, students, parents, and legal guardians.
- ☐ Evaluates the work of other educators using appropriate procedures and established statutes and regulations.
- ☐ Protects the rights of others in the educational setting, and does 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

- ☐ Provides accurate credentials and information regarding licensure or employment and does not knowingly assist others in providing untruthful information.
- ☐ Takes action to remedy an observed violation of the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators and promotes understanding of the principles of professional ethics.
- ☐ Pursues growth and development in the practice of the profession and uses 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 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), administration, and all other staff, and 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 State Board 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, 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 in the course of 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 of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator in a private monetary-gain capacity. Unless approved by the Chief School Officer, 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, 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 or not 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.

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. Gen. Stat. § 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; or
- ☐ 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 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 State Board of Education 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 State Board of Education, 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.

All employees are employed at-will. For RTHS's policy on performance management, discipline, and RTHS's discretion regarding progressive discipline, see Performance Management and Disciplinary Flexibility in the Performance Review and Management section of this handbook.

Conflict of Interest Policy for Employees

See Attachment C.

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 Chief School Officer or designee shall report testing irregularities that affect the validity of the test results to the Board of Education.

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, fellow employees, vendors, suppliers, and the public. Employee conduct should be to protect the person's integrity and/or reputation and that of RTHS. Each and 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

Telephone: (919) 998-6757 x215

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

Prohibition Against Harassment and Discrimination

RTHS prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), and retaliation. This policy applies to conduct on RTHS premises, at all RTHS activities, and in other contexts affecting the RTHS environment.

Scope and Cross-References:

1. Workplace harassment/discrimination under Title VI and Title VII: Follow this policy and report to your supervisor, Human Resources, or the Chief School Officer. See "Procedure for Employee Complaints of Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Under Title VI and Title VII."

2. Title IX sexual harassment in an education program or activity: See Attachment B (Title IX Grievance Procedure) and contact the Title IX Coordinator or Human Resources.

3. Non-Title IX bullying/harassment: See Attachment A (Non-Title IX Bullying/Harassment) and contact the Title VII coordinator.

Retaliation against anyone reporting harassment or participating in an investigation is prohibited.

Information will be shared only with those who need to know to investigate and respond, consistent with applicable policies, including record retention.

Commented [2]: This section was in the previous handbook, but the section was shortened and instead provides references to appendices.

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 Chief School Officer 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 HEAD OF RTHS or to any other 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 Chief School Officer, Human Resources or another supervisor. While the person should report sexual harassment to the Chief School Officer, 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 Chief School Officer. If the Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer 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 Parent/Student Handbook, which is sent to parents 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 and Pregnancy-Related Accommodations

Commented [3]: Section existed in previous handbook; content of section edited.

RTHS provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities and to employees with known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, absent undue hardship or direct threat.

How to Request an Accommodation.

1. Submit a request to Human Resources by email to andrea@althrpartners.com or phone. You may also notify your supervisor, who must promptly forward the request to Human Resources.
2. Include: your name, position, a brief description of the limitation(s), how they affect job functions, and the accommodation(s) requested.
3. If the need is not obvious, RTHS may request reasonable documentation from an appropriate health care provider sufficient to confirm the condition/limitation and the need for accommodation. For PWFA requests, documentation may confirm: (a) the condition; (b) that it is related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions; and (c) that accommodation is needed.
4. RTHS will engage in a timely, good-faith interactive process to identify effective accommodations. RTHS may offer alternative reasonable accommodations.
5. Medical information will be kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know to implement restrictions or accommodations.

For the separate process to request accommodation for sincerely held religious beliefs/practices, see "Religious Accommodations."

Retaliation for requesting or using accommodations is prohibited.

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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer. A supervisor or administrator receiving a complaint under this policy regarding the Chief School Officer 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, on request, an accommodation for such observances when a reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship on the School's operations.

Requesting a 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 a religious accommodation must contact the RTHS's Human Resources representative (Andrea Brown) 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 an 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 a religious accommodation. Furthermore, it is our policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals requesting a 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.

RTHS 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.

Lactation Breaks and Spaces (FLSA/PUMP Act)

Commented [4]: Section already existed; legal provided updated language.

RTHS provides reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for a nursing child for up to one year after birth each time the employee has a need to express milk.

1. **Scheduling Breaks.** Work with your supervisor to identify a reasonable schedule that minimizes disruption to student learning. Breaks over 20 minutes are unpaid for non-exempt employees and should be recorded on time records. Lactation breaks should be scheduled with your supervisor and Human Resources to minimize disruptions to student learning.

2. **Lactation Space.** RTHS will provide privacy in the first floor records room (Room 108), including a refrigerator for storing expressed breast milk.

3. **Storage.** Label breast milk stored onsite with the employee's name and date expressed. Employees assume responsibility for safe storage and handling.

Retaliation for requesting or taking lactation breaks is prohibited.

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.

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.

Professional Electronic Communications and Social Media

Commented [5]: Wording in section updated by legal.

Employees must use School-approved channels (School email/phone systems) for school-related communications with students and parents unless advance written approval is granted for a legitimate instructional purpose consistent with policy by the Chief School Officer.

Do not “friend,” “follow,” or privately message students on personal accounts.

Do not post content identifying RTHS or its staff, students, or families without approval. Confidentiality, FERPA, and records obligations apply to all electronic communications and posts.

See “Confidentiality, FERPA, and Public Records; Cross-References to Technology Policies.”
Concerns or violations should be reported to the Chief School Officer and/or Human Resources.

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, parents, 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 the course of their employment, about any individuals or organizations, including students and/or their families; and
- 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 while on 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 found in RTHS's policies and these fundamental beliefs apply to your activities online. Ultimately, 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, parents, 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, parents, 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, parents, 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, parents, 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, know-how 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, parents, 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 parent, 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 Chief School Officer 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 parent 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. Parents 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 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, parents, 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;
- ☐ Approved social media shall be devoted solely to educational uses;
- ☐ Approved social media shall be open 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 site may be monitored.

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 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 parents, 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 Chief School Officer. 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 Chief School Officer.

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 a 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. And, 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 the 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, and emailing while driving are 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.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

See RTHS Technology Procedures Manual.

Commented [6]: New addition. Will be linked to technology policies/procedures.

Camera Phones, Recording Devices, and Surveillance

General Notice

Employees, students, parents/guardians, and visitors should assume that classes and school activities at RTHS may be recorded for legitimate educational, safety, or security purposes.

There is no reasonable expectation of privacy in classrooms, common areas, or on school grounds, except in restrooms, locker rooms, and other areas where privacy is expected. For purposes of this policy, “recording” includes photographs, video, audio, and any similar data captured in any format, including by camera phones, tablets, laptops, wearable devices, and other recording devices. Recordings made under this policy may be used only for authorized purposes and may not be republished without written consent from a school administrator. Secret or surreptitious recordings, or recordings made without the express permission of the individual being recorded, are prohibited unless authorized by the Head of School.

Employee use of assistive technology capable of recording and/or transmitting recordings (e.g., cell phones, smart glasses, wearable technology) is prohibited unless approved in writing by administration as part of the ADA process. However, employees may wear smart watches provided they are not used for recording and are used consistent with this policy.

Recordings Made by RTHS

RTHS may use cameras, surveillance equipment, software, or other devices for safety, security, or educational purposes when deemed appropriate by an authorized representative of RTHS. Surveillance cameras, equipment, and software may be placed on campus by authorized campus personnel to prevent or deter crimes, protect public safety, and facilitate official RTHS investigations into criminal activity or violations of RTHS policy. Recordings made by RTHS will not be maintained unless intentionally copied and saved. Temporary recordings may be accessible only for a limited time and may be destroyed at any time by an authorized representative unless retention is required by law.

Employee Recording of Students

To foster a supportive school environment and to comply with applicable laws governing student confidentiality, employees are prohibited from making audio or visual recordings of students (other than the employee's own children), except as set forth in this policy, in the following circumstances without the Chief School Officer's prior permission:

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

Recordings Made by Staff

Classroom and Instructional Recordings

Staff may record classroom instruction, student behavior or performance, and school activities without prior written administrative approval, but only for legitimate educational purposes.

Recordings of Colleagues and Workplace Meetings

RTHS expects faculty and staff to respect the privacy rights of other individuals in the workplace and educational setting. This expectation promotes the free exchange of ideas while protecting the privacy of staff and other members of the school community, including students.

Employees are prohibited from secretly or openly recording (by audio or video) formal or informal meetings or conversations with any person — including but not limited to co-workers, employees, volunteers, board members, advisors, or contractors — whether occurring at school, by telephone, by video conference (e.g., Zoom, Teams, or Google Meet), or at a school event. Employees may not arrange for any other person to record such conversations, calls, or activities on their behalf.

Employees may not make secret recordings while on duty, even where such a recording would not otherwise violate state or federal law. An employee who violates this provision may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

V. Approved Recordings

Recording for academic or workplace purposes is permitted only with the prior written approval of the Chief School Officer and only under the following conditions:

- All recordings must serve a pre-approved, legitimate academic or workplace purpose.
- A class may be recorded by a staff member, or by a student in the class for personal study or assignment purposes, with the prior consent of the instructor.
- Class participants should be informed when a class may be recorded. Staff should not, however, disclose the identity of a student who is recording a class pursuant to an approved accommodation.
- Recordings of classes made by students may not be downloaded, uploaded to the internet, or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published without the further prior written consent of RTHS.
- Video or audio recordings may not be publicly shared, including on the internet or at public viewings, without the written consent of the individuals recorded.

The Head of School may make exceptions to this policy when appropriate to protect RTHS.

VI. Parental Notice and Consent for Use of Student Images

Where the recording of students is approved under this policy, RTHS is responsible for ensuring that parents/guardians are made aware of the following:

- Parental/guardian consent is required for a child to appear in video or other photography or media used on campus for educational purposes. Only children's images are used, and no information identifying individual families will be released. RTHS may occasionally use photographs of children to publicize its programs.
- If a recording is needed for a presentation at a professional conference or as part of a professional portfolio, only children whose families have signed RTHS's Photography/Videotape Permission form will be included.
- If a recording is part of a research study, no child will participate unless parental consent has been given for that specific project.

VII. Violations

Downloading recorded conversations to a computer, uploading them to the internet, or otherwise sharing, transmitting, or publishing such recordings without the prior written consent of all participants is a violation of this policy.

A violation of North Carolina law may result in criminal sanctions and/or civil liability. Within RTHS:

- A violation of this policy by a student may result in disciplinary action under RTHS's student disciplinary policies.
- A violation of this policy by an employee may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment with RTHS.

This policy governs the conduct of RTHS employees and does not limit recordings made by RTHS or its Board of Directors in their institutional capacities under Section II of this policy.

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 conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner at all times. 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 parents 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 the School's [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 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 Chief School Officer or 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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer. Failure to do so, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. As required by law, the Chief School Officer 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

School is a smoke free campus. In keeping with School's intent to provide a safe and healthy work environment, smoking is prohibited on School property at all times, including all RTHS vehicles. This policy applies equally to all employees, parents, 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, parents, and the community. When meeting with parents, 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 HR 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 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 prohibited at all times. 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 Chief School Officer.

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, Chief School Officer, 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.

Custody Disputes

Employees are not permitted to assist with, become involved in or take sides in any custody matter involving students or staff. This means that employees are prohibited from speaking with, communicating with or providing any information to any parent, attorney or representative in a custody matter without express written permission from the Chief School Officer. The only time an employee may participate in a custody matter is pursuant to a duly-served subpoena specifically directed towards the individual employee and only where the Chief School Officer has expressly authorized the employee to participate. If an employee is asked to provide information, whether by phone, electronically or otherwise, to a parent or their representative or legal counsel, the employee shall not respond to such requests and shall immediately notify the Chief School Officer. If an employee receives a subpoena related to a custody matter, the employee shall immediately notify the Chief School Officer. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Commented [7]: New section, recommended by legal.

Visitor & Guests in the Classroom & Telephone Calls

Disruptions during work time 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 for 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 Chief School Officer according to the following:

- email requests must be received at least one (1) week prior to visiting the classroom,
 - the Chief School Officer or their designee is responsible for confirming 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 Chief School Officer or their designee at least one (1) week prior to 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 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 possible 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 in the [RTHS School Safety Manual](#).

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

The Chief Operations Officer is responsible for ensuring drills occur on a regular basis. These procedures will be reviewed annually by the Crisis Management Team and any changes or revisions will be made by the Chief Operations Officer. The Chief School Officer 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 appears to be corrected.

Any suspicion of a concealed danger present 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.

Classrooms must always be supervised by an adult. When a teacher needs to step out of the classroom, it is required that another adult is 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 absent 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

Additionally, if an employee has a fever of over 100 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 Chief Operations Officer.

Staff Measles Protocols

Faculty and staff are required to obtain information regarding their measles immunity status and that have medical documentation on-hand. In the event of a confirmed case of measles in the State of North Carolina or where the school believes there is a threat of measles, employees will be required to provide documentation of measles immunity in order for the school to maintain a list of susceptible faculty and staff.

Proof of immunity includes any one of the following:

- Written documentation of two doses of measles-containing vaccine (typically the MMR vaccine)
- Laboratory evidence of measles immunity
- Laboratory confirmation of prior measles disease in the past
- Birth before 1957 (generally considered immune)

Employees shall submit documentation to the Chief Operations Officer or into the employee portal in Bamboo..

All medical documentation will be kept confidential as required by law and kept in a file separate from personnel files. All records and lists of susceptible individuals shall be kept confidential and will remain separate from personnel files.

In the event of a confirmed measles case on campus, local and state health department guidelines will be followed. Employees who have not submitted proof of immunity may be required to remain off campus for up to 21 calendar days following potential exposure.

Employees excluded from campus due to lack of proof of immunity will be subject to the following leave policy:

- Any **available paid time off** (sick/personal leave or vacation) must be used first.

- If an employee exhausts their paid leave or has no available PTO, any additional leave taken during the exclusion period will be **unpaid**.

Failure to comply with the terms of this policy, including providing requested documentation or adhering to exclusion directives, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in accordance with existing school policies.

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 parent/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 Responder's 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 Chief Operations Officer 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 Chief School Officer's office as soon as possible. The names of students known or believed to be responsible for such damage should also be reported. In order 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 Chief School Officer.

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 the responsibility of the employee 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

In an effort 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 18” 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
- ☐ 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 parents, students, staff members, and others who regularly occupy the School building of compliance with AHERA. An Asbestos Management Plan (AMP) has been developed for RTHS and is on file in the office. Parents may schedule an appointment with the Chief Operations Officer 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 parents 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 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 Chief Operations Officer of any changes in writing and, if applicable, in RTHS's Human Resources portal (BambooHR). Employees also should inform the Chief Operations Officer 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 also may include any court-ordered garnishments. Payroll stubs also will 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 Chief Operations Officer and fillable in BambooHR.

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

- Go to www.employeelingq.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 a facility on a scheduled work day;
- ☐ 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 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 Chief Operations Officer. 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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief Operations Officer via email immediately for an adjustment to their salary, **pending approval by the RTHS Board of Directors**. 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 Chief School Officer 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 above and 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 will be 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 Chief School Officer 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-term 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 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 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 (WRAL, WTVD, WNCN)
- ☐ RTHS Facebook page
- ☐ RTHS Instagram page

The Chief School Officer will consult with the Chief Operations Officer to make the final decision promptly. The Chief Operations Officer 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 Chief Operations Officer 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 from 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 Chief Operations Officer. 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 also will 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

Travel 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 important 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 tardies 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 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 in order 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.

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, parents 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/work day, 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 Chief School Officer 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 receive compensation must receive written approval from the Chief School Officer.

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 generally will 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 daughter or son of an employee's domestic partner.

School may allow existing personal relationships to be maintained or employ individuals with personal relationships to 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 of 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, 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 that 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 Instructions (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 Board of Directors shall determine which employee must resign in order to resolve the situation.

RTHS 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 Principal/Head of School 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

Employees who are also parents of a RTHS student(s) should not schedule meetings or school conversations with their child's teacher during working hours. Any parent 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 practices 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 through normal parent channels. Calling directly into your child's classroom is not something that outside parents 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 parents 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 parent processes as outlined in the Student/ Family Handbook.
- Follow the Student/Family Handbook when acting in a parent role.

Supervisory Staff as RTHS Parents

In an effort 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 Chief School Officer 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 be supporting and will 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 Chief School Officer 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 ultimately 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.

If you manage employees, you must consult with the Chief School Officer 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.

Performance Management and Disciplinary Flexibility

RTHS expects all employees to meet performance, conduct, and safety standards. Depending on the circumstances, RTHS may choose to counsel or coach, issue verbal or written notices, suspend (with or without pay, as permitted by law), or terminate employment. RTHS may, but is not required to, use a progressive sequence. RTHS reserves full discretion to determine the appropriate level of action in any given case and to skip, repeat, or combine steps. Nothing in this policy alters the at-will nature of employment.

Supervisors must consult with the Chief School Officer and Human Resources before issuing formal written disciplinary notices or suspensions. Performance and conduct concerns should be documented in writing and shared with the employee.

Allegations involving safety, security, harassment/discrimination, student welfare, significant policy violations, or other serious concerns may result in immediate suspension or termination, at the discretion of RTHS.

Commented [8]: Legal suggested breaking this part out into its own section. The language below the highlighted part is unchanged from last year.

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 Head of School prior to meeting with the employee.

Step 2: Written

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

If satisfactory performance and corrective action are not achieved under Steps 1 and 2, 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 Chief School Officer must attend this meeting.

Step 4: Suspension and/or Termination

Based on a supervisor's recommendation, the Chief School Officer 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 Head of School 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, 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 or their designee or the Board of Directors may issue such 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 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 Chief School Officer.

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 Chief School Officer. If the Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer, the issue is considered resolved. The employee shall submit their satisfaction to the Chief School Officer in written form such as email.

Step 3: If the employee is not satisfied with the response from the Chief School Officer, 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 Chief School Officer. The appeal should be provided to the Chief School Officer 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 make a decision on how to handle the grievance. If the board decides that it needs additional time to consider the grievance or gather information or conduct an investigation, 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 conduct an investigation 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 are no appeal rights to the Board.

Inspections, Investigations, and Searches

RTHS may conduct internal investigations regarding security, auditing, misconduct, or other work-related matters. Employees must cooperate fully.

Employees have no reasonable expectation of privacy when using RTHS's systems, networks, accounts, or school-provided devices. To the maximum extent permitted by law, RTHS may monitor, access, review, and preserve communications and data on its systems and devices to ensure security, compliance, and business continuity.

Personal devices approved for School business and/or connected to RTHS systems or networks may be subject to review of School-related data on the device, consistent with policy and applicable law. Upon separation or when requested, employees must promptly present such devices for removal of School information.

When RTHS has a reasonable suspicion of policy or legal violations, it may search work areas and, when appropriate, request inspection of personal belongings (e.g., bags, vehicles on RTHS property) consistent with law. Refusal to cooperate may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

Investigations and device/search activities will be conducted consistent with RTHS's record retention, litigation hold, public records, FERPA, and confidentiality policies.

Commented [9]: Updated language in already-existing section.

Whistleblower Policy

RTHS 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 of illegal or dishonest fraudulent activity, the employee is to contact their immediate supervisor, Chief School Officer, or our 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. Insofar as 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 HR 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 Chief School Officer.

Prohibition of Retaliation

The School prohibits taking negative action against any employee or volunteer for reporting a possible 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 possible 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 the 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 following 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 the employee fails 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 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 opinions of their time at the school.

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 Chief School Officer and HR 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 or not 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.

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 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 Chief School Officer and Chief Operations Officer have your correct home address and telephone number at all times. You should report any changes to the Chief School Officer and Chief Operations Officer 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 Chief Operations Officer. 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 Chief School Officer. Please see the Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer and/or the Chief Operations Officer 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, RTHS 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, 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's 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 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 Chief Operations Officer. 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 Chief Operations Officer 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 Chief Operations Officer 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 an 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 a 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 max 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 Family and Medical Leave Act or Americans with Disabilities Act, unless otherwise approved by the Chief School Officer. At the end of each school year, employees have the choice of rolling over up to 240 hours of unused PTO. Any unused PTO not able to 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 Chief School Officer, 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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer, consistent with all applicable laws. For this policy, a close relative includes a spouse, domestic/civil union partner, child, parent, 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 Chief School Officer. 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 Chief Operations Officer. 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 2nd 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 also are 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.

Leaves of Absence

Family and Medical Leave Act

The **Family and Medical Leave Act** 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 (12) 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 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, that 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 servicemember 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 continued 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 was 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 HR 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 a 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 HR 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 Chief Operations Officer 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 (2) business days. Teachers are to keep a written record of all conversations they have had with parents 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 parents or students. They may not use personal email accounts or personal messaging applications (including, but not limited to, text messaging) to communicate with parents or students. RTHS employees shall not provide parents or students with their mobile phone or home telephone numbers without prior permission from the Chief School Officer 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 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 Chief School Officer as soon as possible if they are interested in attending a conference. The Chief School Officer makes the final decision on all conference requests. The following policies are considered a guideline 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 welcomed 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 Chief School Officer. It is strongly advised that non-licensed educators and provisionally licensed teachers maintain regular contact with the Chief School Officer to ensure state licensure requirements are met. Funds are available to offset the cost of initial licensing and licensure renewals. See the Chief Operations Officer 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](#).

Parent Teacher Conferences

Teachers are encouraged to ask for a parent-teacher conference (PTC) anytime there is an important matter to discuss in person or remotely with the parent or guardian. Additionally, any time a parent requests a PTC, the teacher should find time to meet with that parent within a week of the request. If a teacher has already met with the parent/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 Chief Operations Officer in order to avoid conflicts. Only upon receipt of approval of the request can planning details be initiated and

finalized by the requestor. The Chief School Officer must approve any activity that involves the use of RTHS facilities and/or RTHS employees or students.

The Chief Operations Officer must approve 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 Chief Operations Officer 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 Chief Operations Officer 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, reserving buses, and obtaining parent permission forms; the completed Field Trip Logistics Form should be turned into the Chief Operations Officer. 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 Chief School Officer 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 parent/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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer (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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer 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:

- ☐ 3 or more moving violations/tickets,
- ☐ 2 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 the 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 prohibited while behind the wheel of a vehicle at all times 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 Chief Operations Officer regarding the nature and cost of the item(s). If the Chief Operations Officer 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 Chief Operations Officer, and may include air travel, hotels, motels, meals, cab fare, rental vehicles, or gas and car mileage for personal vehicles. Travel must be reasonable, fiscally responsible and necessary. All expenses incurred should be submitted to the Chief Operations Officer along with the receipts in a timely manner via the [Check Request Form](#).

Employees are expected to exercise restraint and good judgment when incurring expenses. Employees should contact the Chief Operations Officer 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 Chief School Officer. Only the Chief School Officer or the Board of Directors is authorized to make or approve public statements on behalf of RTHS. Unless specifically designated by the Chief School Officer, 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 Chief School Officer.

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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer. 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 1st 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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer.

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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer.

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 12.
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 12 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 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 Director of Business.

Sexual Abuse and Molestation Policy

The School prohibits and does not tolerate sexual abuse. The School 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 on 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

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 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** – Prospective staff members will be interviewed by at least two separate 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. Background checks will be repeated on all staff, volunteers, or contractors every five (5) years.

- 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 to 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 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 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 reason:
 - 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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer in writing, minimally 72 hours in advance.
 - iii. The request must include the nature and specific times of the request.
 - iv. The Chief School Officer or designee will respond within 48 hours, either authorizing or denying the request.
 - v. The decision of the Chief School Officer or designee is final.
 - vi. The Chief School Officer 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 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 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 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 Address Confidentiality Program is administered by the State Attorney General.

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 parent 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 (parent 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

Commented [10]: Section already existed; language was beefed up by legal.

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.

This policy applies to all parents, students, and volunteers who access, use, reproduce, or distribute copyrighted materials in connection with the School, including through School computers, networks, learning management systems, libraries, copiers, and printed or digital materials.

Copyrighted works – including textbooks, workbooks, software, films, music, images, and online content – may not be copied, distributed, performed, displayed, or adapted without permission from the copyright holder, except as permitted by law (such as fair use) or under a license held by the School.

Limited use of copyrighted material for purposes such as teaching, scholarship, criticism, or research may qualify as "fair use." Whether a use qualifies depends on:

- The purpose and character of the use (e.g., educational and nonprofit vs. commercial);
- The nature of the copyrighted work;
- The amount and substantiality of the portion used relative to the work as a whole; and
- The effect of the use on the market for or value of the original work.

When in doubt, parents, students, and volunteers should seek guidance from [designated administrator/title] before copying, posting, or distributing copyrighted material.

Only software, applications, and digital resources properly licensed to the School may be installed or used on School devices or networks. Login credentials for licensed platforms (such as curriculum

software, e-books, or streaming services) may not be shared with individuals outside the licensed user group, including family members.

When instructional content is delivered through the School's online platforms, the School relies on the TEACH Act and fair use to govern the digital transmission of copyrighted performances and displays. Materials posted online for instruction must be limited to what is reasonable and necessary for the lesson and must remain accessible only to enrolled students and authorized staff.

Students, and volunteers assisting with student projects (reports, presentations, websites, videos, etc.), must give proper credit for any text, image, music, or video that is not their own original work, and must obtain permission when an exception such as fair use does not apply.

Volunteers using RTHS's copiers, computers, printed materials, or digital platforms are subject to this policy and to any applicable license agreements, in the same manner as employees and students.

Violations of this policy may result in loss of access to School technology and resources, and may result in further action consistent with the Family/Student Handbook, volunteer agreements, or School personnel policies, as applicable. Individuals may also be personally liable for copyright infringement under federal law, independent of any School disciplinary action.

Confidential Information

During the course of 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 Chief School Officer 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. Parents who do not wish to allow School 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 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, that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey"):
 - a. Political affiliations or beliefs of the students or the students' parent
 - 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
 - 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 of these policies at the beginning of each School year and after any substantive

changes. The School will also both directly notify parents through U.S. Mail, e-mail, parent meetings, or the Parent and Students 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 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 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 Chief School Officers, 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

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree as follows:

1. I received access to the SCHOOL Employee Handbook dated [INSERT DATE], have read it, understand it is my responsibility to comply with its policies, and understand it may be amended by SCHOOL in its sole discretion at any time, with or without notice.
2. I understand this handbook is not an employment contract and does not create any contractual rights or guarantees of employment, hours, wages, benefits, or specific terms or conditions of employment.
3. I understand my employment with SCHOOL is at-will. I may resign at any time, and SCHOOL may terminate my employment at any time, for any lawful reason, with or without cause or notice.
4. I understand that only the SCHOOL Board of Directors may modify at-will employment, guarantee employment for a specific term, or otherwise enter into any employment agreement inconsistent with this acknowledgment, and that any such modification or agreement must be in a written document approved by the Board of Directors, and signed by the Board Chair and me.
5. I understand that if there is any conflict between the handbook and official plan documents (e.g., benefit plans or insurance policies), the official plan documents control.
6. I further acknowledge receipt of the School's Sexual Abuse and Molestation Policy and understand my obligations under that policy.

Employee Name: _____

Employee 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 Chief School Officer.

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.

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 Chief School Officer 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).

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. She can be reached at (919) 998-6757, or via email at 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, 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 the 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 Chief School Officer 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 Chief School Officer 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 should contact a trusted teacher or advisor, grade-level Principal, Chief School Officer, 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 Chief School Officer, or Chief School Officer, as soon as possible and within 24 hours.
 - c. If the Chief School Officer is involved in the allegation, another administrator will immediately inform the President 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, 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 time frames.

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.

Attachment C

Employee Conflict of Interest Policy

Purpose

Research Triangle High School (“RTHS”, or the “School”), a North Carolina nonprofit corporation operating a public charter school under Article 14A of Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes, is committed to conducting its operations with honesty, integrity, and in full compliance with applicable law. The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of the School’s decision-making processes, to ensure that the School’s assets and resources are used solely to advance its educational mission, and to satisfy the requirements of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-218.15(d), which requires charter school boards of directors to adopt a conflict of interest and anti-nepotism policy that, at a minimum, incorporates the conflict of interest provisions of Chapter 55A of the North Carolina General Statutes (the North Carolina Nonprofit Corporation Act).

Policy Statement

All employees of the School owe a duty of loyalty to the School and are expected to act at all times in the best interests of the School and the students it serves. Employees must avoid situations in which their personal, financial, or business interests — or those of their immediate family members or other close associates — conflict, or appear to conflict, with the interests of the School. No employee may use their position, or information obtained through their position, for personal gain or the personal gain of another person or entity.

A conflict of interest does not automatically violate this policy. What this policy requires is full, timely disclosure and, where a conflict exists, compliance with the review and recusal procedures set out below.

Definitions

Board or Board of Directors means the governing board of RTHS, the North Carolina nonprofit corporation that holds the charter for, and operates, the School.

Conflict of Interest means any situation in which an employee’s personal, financial, business, or other outside interest — or that of an Immediate Family Member — could directly or indirectly influence, or reasonably appear to influence, the employee’s judgment or actions in carrying out their duties for the School, or could result in the employee or an Immediate Family Member receiving an improper personal benefit as a result of the employee’s position with the School.

Employee means any individual employed by the School on a full-time, part-time, temporary, or contract basis, including any individual who provides services to the School as an independent contractor to the extent specified in this policy.

Financial Interest means an ownership, investment, creditor, or compensation interest (including salary, fees, commissions, or in-kind benefits) in an entity that does business with, seeks to do business with, or competes with the School.

Immediate Family Member means a spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, step- or half-relative of any of the foregoing, or any individual residing in the same household as the employee.

Nepotism means the employment, engagement, supervision, evaluation, or advancement of an Immediate Family Member of a Board member or a Supervisory or Decision-Making Employee under circumstances that create, or reasonably appear to create, a Conflict of Interest, as further addressed in Section VI.

School Director means the Chief School Officer, who reports to the Board of Directors.

Supervisory or Decision-Making Employee means any employee who has authority to hire, supervise, evaluate, discipline, or set the compensation of other employees, or who has authority over purchasing, contracting, or budgetary decisions on behalf of the School, including but not limited to the School Director, Principal(s), Finance Officer/Business Manager, and any Assistant or Associate Directors or Principals.

Vendor means any individual, business, or organization that provides, or proposes to provide, goods, services, real property, or financing to the School in exchange for compensation.

Scope and Application

This policy applies to all employees of the School, regardless of position or length of service. Supervisory and Decision-Making Employees are subject to heightened disclosure obligations as described in Sections V and VI below, given their greater authority over School resources and personnel decisions.

This policy supplements, and does not replace, the separate conflict of interest and anti-nepotism policy applicable to members of the School's Board of Directors. Where an individual is both a member of the Board and an employee of the School, both policies apply.

Disclosure Obligations

Each employee has an affirmative, ongoing obligation to disclose any actual, potential, or apparent conflict of interest as soon as the employee becomes aware of it. The burden of disclosure rests with the employee. Disclosures must be made in writing to the employee's immediate supervisor and, for Supervisory or Decision-Making Employees, to the [Board Chair / Finance Committee / designated compliance officer].

Circumstances that must be disclosed include, without limitation:

- Any Financial Interest the employee or an Immediate Family Member holds in a vendor, contractor, landlord, lender, or other entity that does business or seeks to do business with the School;
- Any outside employment, consulting arrangement, board membership, or business ownership that could conflict with, or interfere with the proper performance of, the employee's duties to the School;
- Any situation in which the employee would be in a position to make or influence a decision that financially benefits the employee or an Immediate Family Member; and
- Any gift, gratuity, loan, or other benefit offered to the employee by a person or entity that does business or seeks to do business with the School, beyond what is permitted under Section VIII.

An employee who is uncertain whether a particular situation requires disclosure should err on the side of disclosure and may seek guidance from [the Finance Officer / Human Resources / legal counsel] before proceeding.

Family Employment and Anti-Nepotism Requirements

Consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-218.15(d), before any Immediate Family Member of a member of the Board of Directors, or of a Supervisory or Decision-Making Employee, may be employed or engaged by the School in any capacity — as an employee, independent contractor, or otherwise — the proposed employment or engagement must be:

1. Disclosed in writing to the Board of Directors prior to the individual beginning work or service; and
2. Approved by the Board of Directors in a duly called open session meeting, with the affected Board member or employee abstaining from the discussion and vote.

A Supervisory or Decision-Making Employee may not directly supervise, evaluate, set the compensation of, or make disciplinary decisions regarding an Immediate Family Member. Where such a reporting relationship cannot reasonably be avoided, the School Director (or, if the School Director is the employee in question, the Board) shall designate an alternate supervisor for matters affecting that Immediate Family Member.

No employee or member of the Board of Directors is automatically disqualified from service solely because a conflict of interest exists, provided the individual complies with this policy, the Board's conflict of interest policy, and applicable law.

Outside Employment, Business Interests, and Vendor Relationships

Employees may not, without prior written disclosure and approval as described in Section V:

- a) Hold a Financial Interest in, or serve as an officer, director, or employee of, any business or organization that contracts with, sells goods or services to, leases property to or from, or otherwise transacts business with the School;
- b) Use School time, property, equipment, or proprietary information (including curriculum materials, student data, or vendor lists) for the benefit of an outside business, employer, or organization; or
- c) Participate in, recommend, or attempt to influence any decision by the School to select, retain, renew, or terminate a vendor, contractor, or service provider in which the employee or an Immediate Family Member has a Financial Interest.

Where a Financial Interest is disclosed, the relevant transaction may proceed only if (i) the material facts of the transaction and the employee's interest are disclosed to, and (ii) the transaction is reviewed and approved by, individuals or a body (such as the Board of Directors, a committee of the Board, or, for non-material transactions, the School Director) who do not share the conflicting interest, consistent with the standards set out in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 55A-8-31 for conflict of interest transactions involving nonprofit corporations.

Gifts, Gratuities, and Favors

Employees, and their Immediate Family Members, may not solicit or accept gifts, gratuities, favors, loans, discounts, or other things of more than nominal value (generally, items valued at \$[XX] or less) from any individual or entity that does, or seeks to do, business with the School, or that is regulated by or seeking action from the School, if the gift is given because of the employee's position with the School. Customary business courtesies such as modest meals, promotional items, or recognition gifts of nominal value are permitted, provided they are not frequent or part of a pattern. Gifts from students, parents, or families to individual classroom teachers in connection with holidays or end-of-year recognition, consistent with the School's separate gift policy (if any), are not subject to this section.

Procedure for Review and Resolution

Upon receipt of a disclosure under this policy, the recipient (supervisor, School Director, or designated compliance officer, as applicable) shall:

- 3. Determine whether an actual, potential, or apparent conflict of interest exists;
- 4. If a conflict exists, determine what steps are necessary to address it, which may include recusal of the employee from the matter, reassignment of duties, restructuring of the transaction or reporting relationship, additional oversight, or, where appropriate, referral to the Board of Directors for review; and
- 5. Document the disclosure, the determination, and any corrective action taken, and retain that documentation in accordance with the School's recordkeeping policies.

Disclosures and determinations involving the School Director or any other Supervisory or Decision-Making Employee whose conflict cannot be resolved at the supervisory level shall be referred to the Board of Directors (or a designated committee of the Board) for review and resolution in accordance with the Board's own conflict of interest policy.

Annual Disclosure and Training

Each employee shall, upon hire and annually thereafter, complete and sign a written disclosure statement in the form designated by the School, identifying any known conflicts of interest as of the date of the statement. The School shall provide training on this policy to all new employees during onboarding and to all employees periodically thereafter, as determined by the Board or School Director.

Confidentiality

Disclosures made under this policy will be shared only with those individuals who have a legitimate need to know in order to evaluate and address the disclosed conflict, and will otherwise be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law, including the North Carolina Public Records Act.

Violations and Enforcement

Failure to disclose a conflict of interest as required by this policy, or failure to comply with any restriction or corrective action imposed under this policy, constitutes a violation of School policy and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, in accordance with the School's personnel policies. Nothing in this policy is intended to create, or shall be construed as creating, any private right of action, contractual right, or property interest in continued employment.

Legal Authority and Related Policies

This policy is adopted pursuant to, and is intended to satisfy the requirements of, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-218.15(d) and the conflict of interest provisions of N.C. Gen. Stat. Chapter 55A (including § 55A-8-31). This policy should be read together with the Board of Directors' Conflict of Interest and Anti-Nepotism Policy, the School's Procurement Policy, and the School's Gift Acceptance and Crowdfunding on Behalf of the School Policy.