



# **Employee Handbook**

## **2024-2025**

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## Disclaimer

This employee handbook (“handbook”) provides general information about Research Triangle High School’s (“the School” or “RTHS”) human resources policies, practices, and benefits. It does not address every situation that may arise and, therefore, is not intended to serve as an exhaustive set of rules. This employee handbook supersedes all previous employee handbooks.

The School, at its sole option, may change, modify, alter, delete, suspend, or discontinue any part or parts of the policies, practices, and benefits in this handbook at any time with or without prior notice. Any changes made to this handbook will be distributed, either in hard copy or email to all School employees. This handbook, in its entirety, is available electronically on the School’s website. No oral statements or representations, whether in writing, by anyone at the School can in any way change, modify, or alter the policies, practices, or benefits in this handbook. The policies, practices, and benefits in this handbook may only be changed, modified or altered in writing by the Chief School Officer, with formal approval of the Board of Directors in accordance with the School’s bylaws, policies and state law, or Board of Directors. This Employee Handbook also describes the current benefit plans maintained by the School. Please refer to the actual plan documents and summary plan descriptions if you have specific questions regarding the benefit plan. Those documents are controlling.

**This handbook and its related policies, practices and procedures are not intended and do not create an employment contract between the School and its employees. No one is authorized to provide any employee with an employment contract or special arrangement concerning terms or conditions of employment unless the contract or arrangement is in writing and signed by the Chief School Officer of the School and approved by the School Board of Directors. This handbook does not limit an employee’s right or the School’s right to terminate employment at any time for any reason. The at-will relationship exists for all employees and the School or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time for any reason, other than those prohibited by law.**

Should any provision of this handbook be found to be unenforceable, or invalid, such a finding does not invalidate the entire handbook, but only the subject provision. If there is a discrepancy between the material in this employee handbook and the terms of official documents, the official documents will govern. Should any portion of this handbook conflict with local, state, or federal law, the appropriate law will govern. Any questions about the handbook or the School’s policies, practices or benefits should be directed to the Chief School Officer.

## **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**

- 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.

### **Board of Directors**

Research Triangle High School is a non-profit organization. As a non-profit, Research Triangle High School is governed by the Board of Directors. In accordance with the bylaws, the Board of Directors has between seven and twelve members and the purpose of the board is to ensure that the school is achieving its mission, create and follow board policies, oversee the strategic plan for the school, and approve and follow the annual budget. The board is also responsible for the hiring and evaluation of the Chief School Officer. The Board approves all hires and terminations of school employees based on the Chief School Officer's recommendations. The board usually meets on the third Wednesday of each month. All board meetings are open to the public and the agenda for each meeting is posted on the Research Triangle High School website seven days in advance of all regularly scheduled meetings.

## **Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity, and Anti-Harassment Policies**

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Research Triangle High School complies with all Federal, State, and Local non-discrimination laws including but not limited to race, color, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, natural hairstyle, status, disability, veteran status, genetic information or as otherwise may be prohibited by federal and state law. We want to maintain an employee relations climate, which promotes maximum personal development and achievement. We are an equal opportunity employer and do not discriminate on the bases of age, natural hairstyle, race, color, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity religion, creed, genetic information, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation or any other characteristic prohibited by law. We are dedicated to ensuring the fulfillment of this policy with respect to hiring, selection for training, promotion, transfer, layoff, termination, leaves of absence, rates of pay or any other term or condition of employment. When necessary, we will reasonably accommodate employees and applicants with disabilities and with religious requirements necessitating accommodation. We

expect everyone to show understanding and consideration to fellow employees and to respect and observe this policy.

## **Equal Opportunity Employment Policy**

Research Triangle High School is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any applicant, contractor, or employee on the basis of age, natural hairstyle, race, color, religion, sex, gender (including actual or perceived gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy/conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, genetic information, 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 Research Triangle High 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 of conditions of employment, including recruitment, hiring, compensation, promotions, demotions, assignments, trainings, layoffs, and terminations.

## **Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Harassment 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, the School prohibits any form of harassment or discrimination (including sexual harassment) on the basis of age, natural hairstyle, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, 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. The purpose of this policy is not to regulate our employees' personal morality. It is to assure that in the workplace, each employee is able to accomplish his or her job without being subjected to harassment.

While it is not easy to define precisely what harassment or discrimination is, it certainly includes verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct that denigrates, belittles, or puts down an individual or shows hostility, distaste, or aversion toward that individual based on that individual's age, natural hairstyle, race, color, national origin, religion, gender (including actual or perceived gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy/conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), sexual orientation, genetic information, disability, veteran status, any other protected class or participation in a protected activity.

Discrimination involves intentionally treating anyone in an unequal or disparate manner because of that person's inherent or natural personal characteristics, including age, natural hairstyle, genetic information, race, color, national origin, religion, gender (including actual or perceived gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy/conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), sexual orientation, 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 is any unwelcome offensive verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive as to significantly affect the conditions of one's employment or a student's learning. 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, unwelcome 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.

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

Of the various types of harassment, sexual harassment is worthy of special considerations beyond those applicable under the School's general Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy. No employee, student, volunteer or contractor shall engage in sexual harassment against any other student, employee, or another person in the School community.

*Sexual harassment* is a form of discrimination involving unwelcome sexual, or sex-based conduct that interferes with the employment of others. Sexual harassment is any unwanted or unwelcomed verbal or physical advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements, requests for sexual favors, or sexually discriminatory remarks made by someone in the workplace which is offensive or objectionable to the recipient or which causes the recipient discomfort or humiliation, or which interferes with the recipient's job performance. Harassing behaviors can be verbal, non-verbal, or physical, range from subtle innuendo of a sexual nature to coerced sexual activity, and other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that usually takes place under the following circumstances:

- When submission to such conduct is made, explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of instruction, participation in school activities, or employment;
- When submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions or benefits; or
- When such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic, extracurricular, or work performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment or working environment.

**Examples of Sexual Harassment.** Workplace behavior that is sexually harassing includes but is not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual remarks or inferences;
- Offensive comments about sex or gender-specific traits;
- Unwelcome sexual propositions, threats, bribes, written notes, or phone calls;
- Unwelcome gestures or sounds or the display of sexually suggestive objects, signals, or pictures;
- Unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature (e.g. touching, pinching, kissing, holding);
- Promise of promotion, favorable performance evaluations, etc. in return for sexual favors, known as "quid pro quo" or "this for that";
- Threatening or insinuating, whether explicitly or implicitly, that an employee's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the employee's employment, evaluation, wages, advancement, assigned duties, shifts or any other condition of employment;



- 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, or in the presence of, an individual or to describe an individual.

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. School 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 other administrator. Procedures established by the School for reporting suspected sexual harassment shall be followed in any instances involving such conduct.

### **Application**

People of any gender can be sexually harassed by someone of the same or a different gender, and the law protects all individuals equally from this discrimination. This policy applies to sexual harassment by staff, students, volunteers, vendors, and service providers of any gender against someone of the same or different gender.

### **Retaliation is Prohibited**

Research Triangle High School 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 in any other capacity. Employees should report any such retaliation to the Chief School Officer. This policy, however, shall not be used to bring frivolous or malicious complaints.

### **Procedure for Complaints of Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation under all local, state and federal laws except Title IX:**

- Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation should immediately discuss and report to: the School's human resource contractor, ALT HR(336-965-2827, or [contact@ALTHRPartners.com](mailto:contact@ALTHRPartners.com)), the Chief School Officer, or any other employee with a supervisory position with whom the person feels comfortable. While the person should report sexual harassment to ALT HR, a supervisor or the Chief School Officer, there is no requirement that the person report sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation to a particular supervisor.
- Any employee that operates in a supervisory capacity receiving a complaint of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation shall report such complaint to ALT HR and the Chief School Officer. If the Chief School Officer is the subject of such complaint, then the supervisor shall report to ALT HR and the Chair of the Board of Directors or to 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, the School 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 minor, may violate criminal laws. The School will cooperate with local authorities in the investigation of any alleged criminal activity.

### **Confidentiality of Records**

**Research Triangle High School 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.

### **Sexual and Other Types of 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 the School 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 included in the Parent/Student Handbook, which is sent to parents and students at the beginning of each school year.

## **Title IX Discrimination and Harassment Policies for Students and Staff Members**

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 the School 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 vis 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:

- in any school building or on any school premises before, during or after school hours;
- on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity;
- at any bus stop;
- during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity;
- at any time or place when the individual is subject to the oversight and authority of school personnel; at any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools; and
- 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., Snap chat 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 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:

- 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)
- 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)
- 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 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 are 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 policy, 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 school'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.

### **Title IX 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 Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy, and student conduct policies when Title IX does not apply.

The School's Title IX Coordinator is:

Mechia DuPree

Exceptional Children's Coordinator

[mdupree@rthighschool.org](mailto:mdupree@rthighschool.org)

## **Training and Programs**

The designated Title IX Coordinator shall establish training and other programs that are designed to help eliminate unlawful discrimination or harassment and foster an environment of understanding and respect for all members of the school community. Information about this policy and the related complaint procedure must be included in the training plan. The training or programs should:

- provide examples of behavior that constitutes unlawful discrimination or harassment;
- teach employees to identify groups that may be the target of unlawful discrimination, or harassment; and
- 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:

- On the definition of the definitions of prohibited conduct, including sexual harassment;
- The scope of the school's education program or activity;
- How to conduct an investigation;
- The grievance process including appeals, and informal resolution processes;
- How to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias;
- 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 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 the School 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 School'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 School'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**

For Students:

- 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 chair, Chief School Officer and/or Title IX coordinator immediately and file a complaint.
- 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 chair, or Chief School Officer, as soon as possible and within 24 hours.
- If the Chief School Officer is involved in the allegation, then another administrator will immediately inform the Chair of the Board of Directors.

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.

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.

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.

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**

As used in this and all other Title IX related policies, the following definitions shall apply.

- "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:

- The School will offer supportive measures to the person alleged to be the victim (referred to as the "complainant").
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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).
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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).
- 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 faculty member).

### **Supportive Measures, Remedies and Disciplinary Sanctions**

Supportive measures include: services, accommodations, and/or other assistance that the School puts in place 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, to receive appropriate medical attention, and to get the help they need to heal and to continue to access 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 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 is not already provided by the School, 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 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. Rather, 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 received 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 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.

The School, through the Title IX Coordinator or other authorized School official, 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, School employee or contractor to conduct the investigation. During the grievance process and when investigating, the Investigator shall comply with the following:

- The burden of gathering evidence and burden of proof must remain on the School, not on the parties.
- The School must provide equal opportunity for the parties to present fact and expert witnesses and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
- The School must not restrict the ability of the parties to discuss the allegations or gather evidence (e.g., no “gag orders”).
- Parties must have the same opportunity to select an advisor of the party’s choice who may be, but need not be, an attorney.
- The School shall send a written notice to the parties (complainant and respondent) of any investigative interviews, meetings, or hearings.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The School shall give the parties written notice of a dismissal (mandatory or discretionary) and the reasons for the dismissal.
- The School may, in its discretion, consolidate formal complaints where the allegations arise out of the same facts.
- The School shall protect the privacy of a party’s medical, psychological, and similar treatment records and shall not access or use such records unless the School 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- Use the preponderance of the evidence standard in reaching her/his decision.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The written determination must be sent simultaneously to the parties along with information about how to file an appeal.

## **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 is charged with ensuring 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 where 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, good 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 in 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 timely provide written notice of the outcome of the complaint to the relevant parties.

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:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter,
- Newly discovered evidence that could affect the outcome of the matter, and/or
- 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, or 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.

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

Research Triangle High School 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 a 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 the reasonable accommodation is needed due to the limitation.

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

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Research Triangle High School provides reasonable breaktime to any covered employee to express breast milk for their nursing child for one year after the child's birth each time such employee has need to express the milk.

In addition, Research Triangle High School fully complies with The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers Act ("The PUMP Act") which provides that nursing employees are entitled to a place to pump at work, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public. Please reach out to [contact@ALTHRPartners.com](mailto:contact@ALTHRPartners.com) for more information.

## Americans with Disabilities Act and Amendments and GINA

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

**Eligibility**

The School will engage in an interactive process to find reasonable accommodation 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 is requesting accommodation and can be reasonably accommodated without creating an undue hardship or causing a direct threat to workplace safety, he or she will be given the same consideration for employment as any other employee or applicant.

All employees are required to comply with the School 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 the School can make a lawful and reasonable decision in regard to continued employment. Individuals who are active illegal drug users are excluded from coverage under the School'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, which may require knowledge of disabilities, are advised that they are to treat the knowledge with confidentiality.

**Procedures**

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. All requests for reasonable accommodations should be presented to ALT HR (insert contact information) and the Chief School Officer or their designee.

Any employee or job applicant who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of disability should immediately bring the problem to the attention of their supervisor, ALT HR, or any other employee in a supervisory position with whom the individual feels comfortable, including ALT HR, the Chief School Officer or the Board of Directors. 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.



# Employment At-Will, Open Door and Grievance Policy and Procedure

## Employment-At-Will

Employment with the School is based on mutual consent; both the employee and the School have the right to terminate employment at any time, with or without notice, for any lawful reason, or for no reason at all. The most common circumstances under which employment is terminated include resignation, discharge, reduction-in-force, or retirement.

No provision in this handbook or any other personnel policy or procedure document shall be construed to the contrary or construed to limit this right in any way. No supervisor, employee or other representative of the School is authorized to alter the terminable at-will nature of employment with the School or make any agreement to the contrary. Any agreement altering or modifying the terminable at-will nature of employment with the School must be in writing signed by the Chief School Officer and approved by the School's Board of Directors.

## Open-Door Policy

The School is committed to fair and equitable treatment for all employees. Good-faith complaints, grievances, questions, comments, suggestions, or ideas are of interest to Research Triangle High School. The School encourages its employees to communicate such good-faith complaints, grievances, questions, comments, suggestions, or ideas to their supervisor, or the Chief School Officer.

## Grievance Policy and Procedures

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.

- 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 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, employee discipline or employee reviews unless a specific violation of law or policy is alleged. A grievance also does not include an ADA complaint, a GINA complaint, a Title IX complaint or a complaint of sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation under Title VI or VII. All complaints under those laws shall be handled pursuant to their policies as set forth in the Employee Handbook and consistent with state or federal laws.
- Time Limits: A grievance will only be heard if the complaint has been filed within fifteen days of the act that is being reported. The fifteen-day deadline may be extended at the discretion of the Chief School Officer.
- 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 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 or Vice 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.
- 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 5 business days of the initial response from the Director.
- 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 monthly 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. Prior to the meeting, at the Board's sole discretion, the Board may conduct an investigation or gather additional information regarding the grievance, including interviews, if needed. The individual filing the grievance or appeal will attend the meeting. 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, it may defer its decision until the next regularly scheduled board meeting or schedule a special meeting. Once the board reaches a decision, the Board will communicate that decision to the individual who filed the grievance within five school days. The Board's decision concerning the grievance is final. The Board reserves the right to appoint a Board Panel to address the grievance. In such cases, the Board Panel's decision is final and there is no appeal rights to the Board.

## **FERPA and Confidentiality**

### **FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all educational agencies and institutions that receive funds under any program administered by the Department of Education. The law prohibits a school from disclosing personally identifiable information from students' education records without the consent of a parent or eligible student unless an exception to FERPA's general consent rule applies.

Research Triangle High School employees, contractors and volunteers are exposed to confidential information daily. Information concerning children and their families should be treated as confidential information, including personally identifiable information from students' education records. The School staff with access to this information do not have the right to give this information to anyone who does not have a legitimate professional reason for access. Teachers or other staff members can be held liable for the individual release of information. Staff members are not permitted to discuss information about their students in open areas or where parents or other students have access. Anything said in meetings discussing students is considered confidential!

Please do not put a student's name in the subject box of an email. Treat their names as confidential as well. RTHS policy is to use "Student Confidential" as the subject.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." If you have questions regarding FERPA or have received a request for educational records, please contact the Chief School Officer. See FERPA: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

## Confidentiality

Respecting the privacy of our students, donors, staff, and volunteers of the Research Triangle High School itself is a basic value of Research Triangle High School. Confidential information should not be disclosed or discussed with anyone without permission or authorization from the Board of Directors. Care shall also be taken to ensure that unauthorized individuals do not overhear any discussion of confidential information and that documents containing confidential information are not left in the open or inadvertently shared.

Employees, volunteers and board members of Research Triangle High School may be exposed to information, which is confidential and/or privileged and proprietary in nature. It is the policy of Research Triangle High School that such information must be kept confidential both during and after employment or volunteer service. Staff and volunteers, including board members, are expected to return materials containing privileged or confidential information at the time of separation from employment or expiration of service.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or privileged information is a serious violation of this policy and will subject the person(s) who made the unauthorized disclosure to appropriate discipline, including removal/dismissal.

## Teaching Practices at Research Triangle High School

The teachers at RTHS will follow the best practices below, which are a part of the educational philosophy at our school.

Our teachers will:

- Be on time every day for every class.
- Show respect to all students, staff, and families.
- Set high expectations for themselves and their students and strive for excellence in all that they do.
- Teach their students in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Use a variety of teaching techniques to teach to all the learning styles of their students.
- Use positive reinforcement and encouragement as the main way of managing classroom

behavior, addressing issues on a one-on-one basis to get to the root of the issue. Students shall be developed in a way they become intrinsically motivated.

- Use brain-based learning strategies in their classroom daily.
- Encourage creativity in their classroom by using hands-on learning and project-based learning.
- Encourage students to do their best at all times.
- Strive after constant professional growth by keeping up with the latest educational research by participating in all the professional development opportunities offered through the school.
- Cultivate personal and appropriate relationships with their students and co-workers.
- Collaborate with their co-workers to create and develop the best possible educational program for the students at RTHS.
- Hold each student personally accountable for their education and their actions.
- Include students in conferences and take time to explain their academic progress to each student in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Develop the skills of classroom management: organization, time management, and setting clear expectations to establish a positive working/learning environment in teacher-directed lessons.
- Model integrity, responsibility, creativity, and respect for all persons as well as an appreciation for racial, cultural and gender diversity.
- Communicate in a meaningful way with each parent on a consistent basis.

### **Continuous Growth Model**

Research Triangle High School is a school that learns (Peter Senge). We focus on continuous improvement and iteration. Students, teachers and administrators constantly ask themselves how to best demonstrate and support our Core Values. In order to support this ever-changing model, teachers and administrators learn & use strategies to build skills in themselves and students which will lead to success in an evolving world. Students learn habits to direct their learning and set and reach goals.

The model is informed by the work of Michael Fullan, Charlotte Danielson, Peter Senge, Robert Marzano, Ellie Drago-Severson, The Stanford d. school, Larry Ainsworth, Jay McTighe, Elena Aguilar, Grant Wiggins, Doug Reeves, and Linda Darling-Hammond, among others.

### **School-Level Support**

RTHS believes that it is our teachers who define our culture of excellence and inclusivity. We are dedicated to continuous growth, and believe that teachers deserve to be supported in their continued efforts to improve. We have several structures in place to provide support:

- Instructional Coaches: Research Triangle High School has many teachers of varying backgrounds. This is one of our strengths, and our coaching and mentoring program has been established to foster an environment that encourages sharing diverse experiences and knowledge. It is critical for teachers to evaluate their happiness and success throughout the year and contact people with any questions that they have. Asking for advice is the most important trait of a new teacher, and we will attempt to foster this in all new members of our staff. Instructional coaches serve as beginning teacher mentors as well.
- Department PLCs: Departments meet in PLCs to share ideas, evaluate models of student work, plan for upcoming units or projects, and calibrate their ideas around rigor and student competency.
- Administrators: Each administrator has a specific role in terms of support, but these roles might flex during the year based on needs and situations. All administrators have open-door policies and will be visible in hallways and in classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to talk to administrators whenever they feel like they need to.

- Faculty Fridays/Workdays: Throughout the academic year, faculty meetings will include professional development components and time for meeting in groups. In addition, there may be staff development sessions on the workdays or after school. Faculty meetings and professional development generally take place Friday afternoons from 2:30 until 4:00pm.

### **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.

Exceptions to these policies will be determined by employees' unique departmental and professional needs, subject to approval by the Chief School Officer.

### **Duties of Teachers**

- Plan, prepare and implement daily lesson plans as directed by the Chief School Officer or any other school administrator.
- Chaperone, and be actively involved in, special events for the students and the community.
- Take and enter accurate attendance records daily.
- Share the responsibilities of keeping rooms and halls tidy.
- Supervise activities such as recess, carpool, lunch, and supporting any community service programs established by the school.
- Document parent emails, phone calls and parent conferences or meetings. Provide

written copies of conference notes, parent meetings, phone conversations and copies of emails to the Chief School Officer as requested.

- Attend open houses and professional programs as requested by the Chief School Officer or the school administrators whom you directly report
- Help in developing an agenda for unit meetings and recording decisions made.
- Respond to parents within 72 hours.

## Employee Parking

Parking facilities are limited. Employees are required to park in the specified employee parking areas. Please lock your car doors as the School is not responsible for loss, damage or theft of your vehicle or any personal property left inside.

## Staff Dress Code

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

## Staff Children Enrolled at RTHS

As a staff member it is a benefit to have your children attend RTHS. All children must be supervised by you prior to your workday beginning and after your work day ends.

## Parent and Student Communication

Teachers are expected to communicate with parents on a regular basis through ParentSquare. Teachers will also be expected to meet with parents once a quarter. At the parent conferences, teachers should review the academic progress of the student. Students will be included in each parent conference. Research Triangle High School believes it is important for the student to take personal responsibility for their own education. Students should be encouraged to tell their parents about their own educational progress. At the conferences, teachers should take the time to explain all academic data to the parents and answer any questions the parents might have about their child.

We expect that all staff will respond to parent emails or phone calls within 72 hours. Any electronic communication to groups of parents shall be done using the blind-copy function to protect the email addresses of parents. All email communications sent to parents must be done from ParentSquare or your school email address.

It is not appropriate for any Research Triangle High School employee to communicate with students or parents regarding personnel matters at the School. **Employees are prohibited from using class time to discuss personnel matters at the School unless expressly authorized to do so by the Chief School Officer or the Chief School Officer's designee.** Employees are also prohibited from emailing parents regarding non-instructional or personnel matters unless expressly authorized to do so by the Chief School Officer or the Chief School Officer's designee. Employees may not discuss any confidential student information with anyone except the legal parents/guardians. Employees should not text any parent, except through Google Chat. If you choose to text parents from your personal cell phone, your phone may be subject to legal search if there is an investigation. If an employee has any question regarding this policy, the employee should contact the Chief School Officer. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. This policy is not intended and should not be construed to prohibit or interfere with an employee/s exercise of any rights had under state or federal law,

including the NLRA.

## Building Access

The school offices will remain locked during all non-school times. Administrative staff members will be issued keys for building entry during non-school hours. All external doors will remain locked at all times. **Teachers should lock their classroom door when they are not in their classroom.** All staff must follow the Visitor Policy. Staff shall not allow any visitor into any building without a proper visitor badge. Any visitor that is on campus and does not have a visitor's badge shall be escorted to the front office. If any staff member has a concern about an unauthorized person on campus, they should contact an administrator immediately. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that all visitors are following the Visitor Policy, therefore all staff **MUST** report any unauthorized visitors to an administrator.

**At no time should the exterior doors on the building be propped open. They must be left locked at all times with the exception of the front door.**

## Key and Access Cards

Keys and access cards to Research Triangle High School's property or premises are issued to eligible employees for official Research Triangle High School business only and remain the property of Research Triangle High School only. Employees are not to copy, loan or make keys available to any other person. Lost or stolen keys and access cards should be reported immediately to the Chief School Officer.

## Personal Items Brought on Campus

Employees are responsible for any personal items brought on campus. Research Triangle High School will not be held responsible for any personal items belonging to employees that get damaged, lost or stolen. Valuable personal items, such as purses and all other valuables, should not be left in areas where theft might occur.

## Child Abuse Reporting

All school personnel are required to report any suspected abuse of any child as per the School's Child Abuse Reporting Policy consistent with N.C.G.S. § 7B-301. These reports should be made directly to the Department of Social Services in the county where the child resides. Reports can also be made by calling 919-560-8424 (Durham County). 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 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 Chief School Officer.

## Child Sexual Abuse and Sex Trafficking Training Policy

It is the intent to 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 Research Triangle High School 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:

- 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.
  - 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.
  - 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. The RTHS program under this policy shall be conducted in accordance with North Carolina law and supervised by the Director of Operations.

## **Care of School Equipment**

All employees, volunteers and students are expected to demonstrate proper care when using the School's property and equipment. No property may be removed from the premises without the proper authorization of the administration. If you lose, break or damage any property, report it to the Director of Digital Media at once. School copy machines and/or printers shall not be used for non- School related printing or copying. Teaching staff are responsible for the condition of their classroom and are expected to keep it clean, organized and decluttered at all times.

## **School Issued Technology**

Staff are responsible for the care and condition of any school issued technology issued to them or their classroom. Staff must account for and return all technology issued to them at the end of the year.



## Care of Staff Laptops

All staff will be provided by the school with a laptop should they need one. Apple cultists will also be accommodated: a limited number of Apple laptops are available for teacher use. All devices used by teachers will be supported to the best of IT but priority goes to school-owned and managed devices.

## Personal Technology & Furniture/Supplies

The school is not responsible for any personal items brought in by staff. Technology purchased and brought in by staff will not be supported by the school technology team. All furniture, refrigerators, microwaves, fans, or space heaters must be commercial grade and inspected by the Director of Operations.

## Classroom and School Supplies

The School maintains a stock of basic office and classroom supplies such as pens, paper clips, staples, note pads, etc. used on a day-to-day basis by employees. If a staff member needs additional supplies, they must request them from their supervisor at least two weeks in advance of the date that the supplies are needed. Staff members may be reimbursed for expenses if the reimbursement has been approved by their supervisor in advance. Check requests that did not receive prior approval will not be accepted.

Teachers may create wish lists for their classroom parents. **These lists must be approved by the Chief School Officer.**

All office and classroom supplies are for School use only and should not be removed from the School for non-business use. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge/termination.

## General Personnel Policies

### Employee Code of Conduct

Research Triangle High School's reputation for integrity is its most valuable asset and is directly related to the conduct of its administration, Board and staff. Therefore, employees must never use their positions with the School, or any of its students, for private gain, to advance personal interests or to obtain favors or benefits for themselves, members of their families or any other individuals, corporations or business entities. To that end, the School has adopted a **Conflict of Interest policy for staff, board members, committee members and administration, which is available upon request from the Chief School Officer.** A summary of that policy is as follows:

### Conflict of Interest Policy

All Research Triangle High School employees, contractors, and volunteers are expected to abide by the following conflict of interest policy. Employees shall avoid improper conduct arising from conflicts of interest and shall abide by all legal requirements governing conflicts of interests, including N.C.G.S. Section 55A-8-31.

A person shall not be disqualified from employment by the charter school's board of directors because of the existence of a conflict of interest, so long as the person's actions comply with this

conflict of interest policy and applicable law.

### **Definitions for the Purposes of this Policy**

- Interested Person - any director, principal officer, or member of a committee of the Board of Directors who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.
- Financial Interest - a person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
  - An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the School has a transaction or arrangement,
  - A compensation arrangement with the School or with any entity or individual with which the School has a transaction or arrangement, or
  - A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the School is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the Board of Directors decides that a conflict of interest exists.

### **Procedures**

- Duty to Disclose - in connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Board of Directors or members of a committee with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists - after disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, they shall leave the Board of Directors or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.
- Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest
  - An interested person may make a presentation at the Board of Directors or committee meeting, but after the presentation, they shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
  - The chairperson of the Board of Directors or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
  - After exercising due diligence, the Board of Directors or committee shall determine whether the School can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
  - If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Board of Directors or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the School's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

### **Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy**

- If the Board of Directors or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Board of Directors or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

### **Records of Proceedings**

The minutes of the Board of Directors and all committees with board-delegated powers shall contain:

- The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

### **Compensation**

A voting member of the Board of Directors who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the School for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

- A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the School for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- No voting member of the Board of Directors or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the School, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

### **Annual Statements**

Each director, principal officer and member of a committee with Board of Directors delegated powers shall annually sign a statement, which affirms such person:

- Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,
- Has read and understands the policy,
- Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- Understands the School is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities, which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

### **Periodic Reviews**

To ensure the School operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey

- information, and the result of arm's length bargaining, and
- Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the School's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in insurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

### **Use of Outside Experts**

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in this policy, the School may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Board of Directors of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

### **Nepotism**

RTHS recognizes that there are times when the most qualified candidate for a particular vacant position might be related to a current employee. RTHS further recognizes that an educational institution functions best when all staff members are free of situations which might encourage conflicts of interest in the supervision and evaluation of employees. The following guidelines shall be established to eliminate the possibilities of conflicts existing in the direct supervision and evaluation of an employee:

No administrator or employee shall directly supervise or evaluate an employee in that administrator's immediate family. For purposes of this policy, "immediate family" shall refer to father, mother, sister, brother, daughter, son, spouse, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, stepparent, step-child, step-sister, step-brother, or guardian.

No member of an immediate family of an employee will be shown preference for employment in either a temporary or permanent position because of that family relationship. No employee or Board of Directors member shall recommend the employment of immediate family without disclosure to the Chief School Officer or the Board.

Members of the immediate families of Board of Directors members may be considered for employment in either temporary or permanent positions subject to the Board's Nepotism policy and a Board decision that such employment is in the best interest of the organization. Board of Directors members must disqualify themselves from discussions or votes related to the employment of immediate family members and will be required to comply at all times with the School's Conflict of Interest policy.

### **Staff Evaluations**

The purpose of the employee formal evaluation is to improve job performance. One summative evaluation will be conducted annually for each employee. A number of intermediate formative evaluations will occur during the year depending on the employee's status and licensure requirements. All teachers will be observed at least twice. A copy of the evaluation will be recorded and stored in the employee's file, signed by the employee. At this time, the RTHS admin team is in the process of redesigning the school's evaluation procedure with the help of the school staff.

## Licensure

The Chief School Officer is responsible for the renewal of teaching licenses. Licensed staff need to take an active role in the renewal process. The School will reimburse employees for the cost of license renewal.

## Personnel Files/Address or Personal Status Changes

It is important that the Chief School Officer and Officer Manager have a correct home address and telephone number for each employee at all times. Employees should report any changes to the Chief School Officer and Officer Manager immediately.

If personal status, such as marital status, should change or if there is an addition to the family, employees should notify the Director of Operations. Because your benefits may be affected, you may need to change your insurance and/or tax records. RTHS 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.

## Relationships with Students

All Research Triangle High School employees are expected 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. We encourage staff members to set Facebook and Instagram profiles to private and should not allow students to follow them or friend them on social media. The School strongly discourages engaging individual students and parents via social media. Please refer to the School’s social media policy.

## Employment Reference, Verification, and Inquiries

All references, inquiries, or verifications of employment regarding any current or former employee of the School shall be directed to their direct supervisor. If there is a concern about the employee, the direct supervisor should have the Chief School Officer handle the reference. All employment verification requests should go to the Officer Manager or ALT HR. It is the School’s policy to provide only the following information for a reference for any current or former employee: dates of employment, position, salary, and whether the individual would be rehired.

## Participation in Political Activity

RTHS believes that employees have the right and obligation to be informed and politically active citizens, including the right to register, the right to vote, the right to be active members of the political party of their choice, the right to campaign for candidates and the right to seek, campaign for, and serve in public office provided there is no local, state or federal law prohibiting them from seeking a certain political office. No employee’s position will be in jeopardy due to his or her political activities as long as the employee adheres to the terms of this policy.

No person employed by RTHS shall engage in partisan political activity during the employee’s working hours or at any time the employee is performing his or her job duties. No employee may use school equipment at any time for partisan political activity.

### **Acceptance of Gifts**

All RTHS staff employees are not allowed to accept gifts (tokens of appreciation) from any parent, person, company, school, or other government official with a value (or equivalent) of more than \$25.00. In general, gifts are considered tangible or intangible items (e.g., stock certificates), including rebates for merchandise, merchandise gift cards, gratuities, and quid pro quo services. Any gift(s) which exceed this amount must be returned to the originator, and the Chief School Officer and Board of Directors must be notified. The high ethical standards of the school must be maintained in order to avoid conflicts of interest, perceived or real, in the local and education communities.

## **Communication Policies**

### **Cell Phone Use during School Hours**

Personal staff cell phone use should be limited to non-instructional time. It is our intention to provide multiple times during the day when calls can be placed to allow teachers to handle personal matters outside of classroom time. In the same way that we are asking our students to abstain from cell phone use during the school day so that they are completely present, we ask the staff to do the same. Teachers may NOT be on their cell phones during instructional time unless that use supports the instruction.

### **Contact with the Media and Outside Agencies**

All inquiries by the media and outside agencies regarding the School and its operations must be referred to the Chief School Officer and/or Chair of the Board of Directors. Only the Chief School Officer and/or Board of Directors or a person designated by the Chief School Officer, is authorized to make or approve public statements pertaining to the School or its operations. No employees, unless specifically designated by the Chief School Officer and/or Board of Directors, are authorized to make those statements. Any employee wishing to write and/or publish an article, paper, or other publication on behalf of the School must first obtain approval from the Chief School Officer and/or Board of Directors before publication.

Employees may not contract with an outside agency for field trips, presentations or other school business without the written permission of the Chief School Officer. All media utilizing the Research Triangle High School name or brand (e.g. Logo, mascot, etc.) must have approval by the Research Triangle High School Board of Directors and shall be linked to the School's official websites.

### **Solicitation and Distribution of Literature on School Premises**

To maintain efficient and safe operations and to encourage employees to give their full attention to their jobs, Research Triangle High School does not allow the solicitation and distribution of literature on School premises. Please help us to insure this by refraining from the following:

- Distribution of literature by employees in work areas on School property.
- Distribution of literature by employees during working time in non-work areas on School property, which in any way interferes with work.
- Solicitation by employees on School property during working time, which in any way interferes with work.
- Solicitation and/or distribution of literature by non-employees on School property.

## **Electronic Communications**

The School provides computers, electronic data storage, Internet services, email, and voicemail communications systems (referred to throughout this policy as “the School’s communication systems”) as important tools to support the School’s business and assist employees in performing their job responsibilities. It is the responsibility of every employee to ensure the School’s communication systems are used for authorized school purposes only and in a fashion that does not improperly disclose confidential, sensitive or proprietary information to unauthorized individuals.

Any communications in which the School’s communications systems are used including correspondence such as e-mail, constitute School property. The School’s communication systems are to be used for business-related purposes only during all working hours. Personal use is permissible on a reasonable basis provided it occurs during non-working hours and does not violate any School policy or local, state or federal law. Any unauthorized use of the School’s communication systems is strictly prohibited. Unauthorized use includes, but is not limited to:

- Any communications or use which violates the School’s non-solicitation, equal employment opportunity, harassment, or non-retaliation policies or any other School policy or procedure.
- Utilizing or accessing the School’s communication systems without proper authorization.
- Utilizing, accessing or sharing school information including parent and/or student email address for any purpose other than communicating academic or safety information about the School or the specific student.
- Disabling or otherwise interfering with the School’s communication security or data protections systems.
- Using the School’s communication system to disclose confidential, sensitive, proprietary information, or personnel information to unauthorized individuals.
- Using the School’s student lists to communicate personal matters to parents or students.

The School expressly prohibits the use of the School’s communication system for communicating with or sending emails to parents or students regarding personnel matters without the express written consent of the Chief School Officer or the Chair of the Board of Directors. The School reserves the right to monitor, audit, access, disclose and/or review any use of its communication system in its sole discretion, in the ordinary course of business. Employees should not consider the School’s communications systems as private. Please note, the use of a password or delete function does not restrict or in any way alter the School’s right and ability to monitor, audit, access, disclose and/or review the use of its communication systems in the School’s discretion in the ordinary course of business. Employees should also be aware that the School may, under certain circumstances, be compelled to monitor, audit, access, disclose and/or review the use of its communication systems. During employment with the School, employees may be provided with passwords, entry codes and/or access to the School’s communication systems. Employees are strictly prohibited from disclosing these passwords, or entry codes to any person without prior written authorization.

Employees are also prohibited from providing any unauthorized individuals with access to the School’s communication systems. Additionally, employees are prohibited from accessing the School’s communication systems without proper authorization. Employees are also prohibited from establishing intranet, Internet, or other data connections without prior written authorization. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including discharge/termination.

## **Social Media Policy**

Research Triangle High School understands that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to connect with family, friends, and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. The School has established the following guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

This policy applies to all persons who work or volunteer for Research Triangle High School.

### **Guidelines**

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including personal web logs or blogs, journals or diaries, personal websites, social networking or affinity Website, Web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the School, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in the School policies and these basic beliefs apply to employee activities online. Ultimately, employees are solely responsible for what they post online. Employees should consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved in creating online content. Any conduct that adversely affects job performance, the performance of fellow workers, or otherwise adversely affects students, parents, suppliers, volunteers, people who work on behalf of School or School's legitimate business/education interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Know and Follow the Rules**

Employees should carefully read these guidelines, the School's Employee Handbook, including the communications policy, confidentiality policy, the School's non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, and ensure postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Be Respectful**

Employees should always be fair and courteous to fellow teachers or staff, volunteers, students, parents, suppliers or people who work on behalf of School. Employees should also keep in mind that they are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with their co-workers or by utilizing our Open-Door Policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if they 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 suppliers, or that might constitute 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**

Employees should always be honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if mistakes are made, correct them quickly. Employees should be open about any previous posts altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Employees should never post any information or rumors known to be false about the School, fellow workers, students, parents, volunteers, suppliers, and people working on behalf



of the School.

### **Post Only Appropriate and Respectful Content**

Employees should maintain the confidentiality of School private or confidential information. Such information may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, know-how and technology. Employees should not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business/school-related confidential communications. Employees should not post information about individual students or families and be sure to maintain confidentiality, as is protected and required under state or federal law.

Employees should not create a link from a personal blog, website, or other social networking site to the School website without identifying as an employee or volunteer of the School.

Employees should express only personal opinions. Employees should never represent themselves as a spokesperson for the School. If the School is a subject of the content they are creating, they should be clear and open about the fact that they are an employee or volunteer and make it clear that their views do not represent those of the School, fellow workers, parents, students, suppliers, or people working on behalf of the School. If they do publish a blog or post online related to the work they do, or subjects associated with the School, they should make it clear that they 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 the School."

### **Using Social Media at Work**

Employees should refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment provided by the School unless it is work related as authorized by the Chief School Officer or consistent with the School Communication Policy. Employees should not use School email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use.

### **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 any other forms of media. Parents who do not wish to allow Research Triangle High School to use their child's picture or image must submit in writing a letter requesting that their student's image not be used.

### **Retaliation is Prohibited**

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

### **Media Contacts**

Employees and volunteers should not speak to the media on the School's behalf without contacting the School's Board or Chief School Officer. All media inquiries should be directed to them.

## Safety

### Smoking Policy

Research Triangle High School is a smoke-free school. In keeping with RTHS' intent to provide a safe and healthy work environment, smoking is prohibited on Research Triangle High School property at all times. Smoking is also prohibited by any employee or volunteer while working in any capacity for the school or with any student of Research Triangle High School. This policy applies equally to all employees, parents, students, volunteers and visitors. This policy also includes the use of e-cigarettes.

### Drug and Alcohol Use

Research Triangle High School is dedicated to maintaining a safe educational environment. Thus, Research Triangle High School has implemented a drug and alcohol-free work environment policy. Alcoholic beverages are never to be consumed on school grounds, during field trips or school events (whether on or off campus). 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.

No employee shall report to work while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The use, sale, transfer or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, hallucinogens, stimulants, sedatives, controlled substances, or drug paraphernalia on Research Triangle High School property or at any School event is prohibited. This includes the misuse of prescription drugs, including medical marijuana, or any mood-altering substances while on Research Triangle High School property, Research Triangle High School paid time (i.e. conferences, training sessions), at any School event or in circumstances the school believes will adversely affect Research Triangle High School's operation or safety.

If the School has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or impairment, Research Triangle High School can and will take immediate action, up to and including drug testing, suspension of the employee, with or without pay, termination of employment, or other adverse employment actions. "Impairment" means symptoms that a prospective employee or employee while working may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol that may decrease or lessen the employee's performance of the duties or tasks of the employee's job position, including symptoms of the employee's speech, walking, standing, physical dexterity, agility, coordination, actions, movement, demeanor, appearance, clothing, odor, irrational or unusual behavior, negligence or carelessness in operating equipment, disregard for the safety of the employee or others, involvement in an accident that results in serious damage to property, any injury to the employee or others or other symptoms causing a reasonable suspicion of the use of drugs or alcohol. Employees who refuse to submit to a drug/ alcohol test will be terminated. Likewise, employees who try to alter the results of a test will be terminated. Employees who have a positive drug test will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and/or notification of law enforcement authorities. The transferring, offering, selling or arranging for sale of any alcohol, narcotic, hallucinogen, stimulant, sedative, drug or prescription drug or any other mood-altering substance while on Research Triangle High School property, at a School event, or during Research Triangle High School's time will lead to immediate termination.

This policy shall apply to RTHS volunteers.

## Weapons

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 gasses 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 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, and
- 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, recreational area or athletic field.

## Threats and Violence Policy

Research Triangle High School strives to maintain a work 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 management's opinion, is inappropriate to the workplace. In addition, jokes or offensive comments regarding violent events will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary measures, up to and including termination.

Employees who feel they have been subjected to any of the behaviors listed above are requested to immediately report the incident to the Chief School Officer. Complaints will be promptly

investigated. Based upon the results, disciplinary action will be taken against the offender, if appropriate.

### **Internal Investigation and Search Policy**

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

Whenever necessary, RTHS reserves the right to search, without notice, work areas (i.e., desks, file cabinets, computers, etc.) and personal belongings (i.e., backpacks, purses, vehicles, etc.) if there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that any School policy or law is being or has been violated. The School may provide desks, computers, filing cabinets, and other items for the use by the School's employees. At all times, these items remain the property of the School. Employees are expected to cooperate with the School's workplace searches. If an employee uses their personal phone or computer for work, those may be subject to search based on reasonable suspicion. While the School will generally try to obtain an employee's consent before conducting a search of work areas or personal belongings, it may not always do so.

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

### **Unlawful Activity/Reporting of Arrests and Convictions**

Any employee who is arrested for, charged with, convicted of or pleads guilty to any offense other than a non-moving traffic violation must self-report that offense to the Chief School Officer and ALT HR within 24 hours. Failure to report an offense may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Allergy Policy**

The Chief Operations Officer will be responsible for ensuring that all staff, parent volunteers, and substitute teachers have the information needed regarding students with specific allergies. All staff will be trained in food allergy awareness. The administration team will be trained in the use of Epi-Pens.

### **School Safety Policy**

Research Triangle High School has a Crisis Management Team that creates and manages the following procedures by outlining the actions and responsibilities of staff and administration in addressing the following issues:

- Evacuation Response: Fire
- Evacuation Response: Non-Fire (life threatening)
- Lockout Response (threat outside building)
- Lockdown Response (threat inside the building)
- Severe Weather (tornado; hurricane; etc.)
- Return to Work During COVID-19 or Other Event
- Hazardous Materials
- Serious Individual Incident
- Public Health Emergency

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

The Director of Operations is also 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 School Officer or the Director of Operations. The Chief School Officer is responsible for communicating these procedures to the Board of Directors.

## **Emergency Protocols**

### **Reference RTHS Crisis Handbook**

## **Staff Criminal Background Check Policy**

According to NC Charter School law GS\_115C-238.29F (e) (1), all NC Charter Schools shall adopt a background check policy mirroring the local board of education policy that requires an applicant for employment to be checked for a criminal history, as defined in G.S. 115C-332. Research Triangle High School is required to apply its policy uniformly in requiring applicants for employment to be checked for a criminal history before the applicant is given an unconditional job offer.

According to NC charter school law, a charter school may employ an applicant conditionally while the board is checking the person's criminal history. The board can then make the decision based on the results of the check.

RTHS is required by the state of North Carolina to conduct criminal background checks for all staff including full-time, part-time, and substitutes, which will be done upon the acceptance of a conditional employment offer. In addition, we rerun criminal background checks every 2 years for all staff including full-time, part-time, and substitutes. A criminal background check may also be conducted on a selective, random or rotating basis for any current employees, annually rehired employees, and employees whose contracts are scheduled to be renewed.

The Chief School Officer will be required to also undergo a credit history check and civil records check in addition to the criminal background check and a Social Security Search.

To conduct an accurate check of criminal records, all applicants for employment and any current employee may be required to submit to fingerprinting as part of the background check process. The refusal to consent to criminal records check or fingerprinting will result in the applicant not being offered employment, or if a conditional offer has been made, the offer will be withdrawn or the employee's employment will be terminated, as applicable.

If a person omits information or gives false information concerning his or her criminal history on his or her employment application, background check form, resume or any other required or submitted application-related document, that person may not be offered employment. If the person has been: (a) hired, or (b) offered employment conditioned on the results of a criminal history check, the person will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or the offer of employment will be withdrawn, as applicable.

The Chief School Officer will review all criminal background checks. If a criminal history presents itself in a review, the RTHS Board of Directors shall review the criminal history it receives on a person. The Board shall determine whether the results of the review indicate that the applicant or

employee poses a threat to the physical safety of students or personnel or has demonstrated that they do not have the integrity or honesty to fulfill their duties as public school personnel and shall use the information when making employment decisions and decisions with regard to independent contractors. The Board shall make written findings with regard to how it used the information when making employment decisions and decisions with regard to independent contractors.

The Chief School Officer will notify applicants if any adverse results are found and the applicant will be given a chance to respond with any relevant explanation. Research Triangle High School shall apply its policy uniformly in requiring applicants for school personnel positions to be checked for a criminal history.

Each employee is required to notify their immediate supervisor within five calendar days after any felony or misdemeanor criminal conviction, guilty plea or plea of no contest. Any employee who is aware of any criminal conviction, guilty plea or plea of no contest of another employee should notify their supervisor or an administrator.

There shall be no liability for negligence on the part of the Research Triangle High School Board of Directors, or its employees, or the State Board of Education, or its employees, arising from any act taken or omission by any of them in carrying out the provisions of this section. The immunity established by this subsection shall not extend to gross negligence, wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing that would otherwise be actionable. The immunity established by this subsection shall be deemed to have been waived to the extent of indemnification by insurance, indemnification under Articles 31A and 31B of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes, and to the extent sovereign immunity is waived under the Tort Claims Act, as set forth in Chapter 31 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.

Any applicant for employment who willfully furnishes, supplies, or otherwise gives false information on an employment application that is the basis for a criminal history record check shall be guilty of a Class A1 misdemeanor. (1995, c. 373, s. 1; 2001-376, s. 1; 2012-12, s. 2(rr).)

Any staff members or coaches who will be driving students for school-related purposes will be required to have a Motor Vehicles Check performed in addition to the criminal background check stated above.

The Chief School Officers background check will be requested and reviewed by the Board's Governance Committee.

Information obtained through the implementation of this policy shall be kept confidential as provided in Article 21A of Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes, and NC GS §115C-332(e). However, the criminal history received on any person who is certificated, certified or licensed by the State Board of Education will be provided to the State Board as required by NC GS §115C-332(e).

## **Health Certificates**

Under North Carolina Law, N.C.G.S. § 115C-323, every new School employee and any employee returning after separation of more than one year shall be required to furnish an approved health certificate on the prescribed forms before assuming their duties.

Any employee who has been absent for more than 40 successive school days because of a communicable disease must, before returning to work, provide a physician' certificate on the prescribed form certifying that the employee is free of any communicable disease.

The Health Certificate Form can be obtained from the Front Office. Information on an employee's medical condition or history will be kept separate from other employee information and maintained confidentially.

## **Communicable Diseases**

The School attempts to provide a safe and secure environment for all students and employees. Therefore, any employee who has been diagnosed with or displays the symptoms of having a communicable disease must immediately notify the Chief School Officer so that appropriate decisions can be made on a case-by-case basis. The Chief School Officer shall maintain an appropriate balance between the rights of students and employees and the control of the potential spread of a communicable disease.

## **Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control**

It is the policy of the School to comply with Federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (29 U.S.C. 651) and with the Occupational Safety and Health Act of North Carolina (N.C. Gen. Stat. 95-126) and all rules and regulations promulgated there under. Specifically, it is the policy of the school to minimize and to prevent, when possible, the exposure of its employees to bloodborne pathogens i.e., disease-causing microorganisms transmitted through human blood.

## **Staff Hours, Attendance, Pay, Holidays, and Leave**

### **School Hours**

Teachers will be expected to spend the time before and after school and all scheduled planning time during the day to plan and gather all necessary supplies for the day so that all classroom time can be efficiently used. Without prior approval from the Administration, staff members are expected to be present on campus from 8:30 to 3:45 every day. If employees need to leave the campus at any time during their scheduled work times, the employee must notify their supervisor, in case of an on-campus emergency. All non-exempt employees, including salary non-exempt, time will be tracked by the Office Manager and reported monthly for payroll.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

#### **Absence**

"Absence" is defined as the failure of an employee to report for work when he or she is scheduled to work. The two types of absences are defined below:

Excused absence occurs when all the following conditions are met:

- The employee provides to his or her supervisor sufficient notice at least 48 hours in advance of the absence.
- The absence request is approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. The employee has sufficient accrued paid time off (PTO) to cover the absence.

An unexcused absence occurs when any of the above conditions are not met. If it is necessary for an employee to be absent or late for work because of an illness or an emergency, the employee must notify his or her supervisor no later than one (1) before the employee's scheduled starting time on that same day. If the employee is unable to call, he or she must have someone make the call. An unexcused absence counts as one occurrence for the purposes of discipline under this policy.



Employees with three or more consecutive days of excused absences because of illness or injury must give ALT HR proof of physician's care and a fitness for duty release prior to returning to work.

Employees must take earned PTO for every absence unless otherwise allowed by company policy (e.g., leave of absence, bereavement, jury duty).

### **Tardiness and Early Departures**

Employees are expected to report to work and return from scheduled breaks on time. If employees cannot report to work as scheduled, they must notify their supervisor no later than their regular starting time. This notification does not excuse the tardiness but simply notifies the supervisor that a schedule change may be necessary.

Employees who must leave work before the end of their scheduled shift must notify a supervisor immediately.

Tardiness and early departures are each one-half an occurrence for the purpose of discipline under this policy.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Excessive absenteeism is defined as two or more occurrences of unexcused absence in a 30-day period and will result in disciplinary action. Eight occurrences of unexcused absence in a 12-month period are considered grounds for termination.

### **Job Abandonment**

Any employee who fails to report to work for a period of three days or more without notifying his or her supervisor will be considered to have abandoned the job and voluntarily terminated the employment relationship.

### **Time Off After Notice Given**

Employees who have given their notice to leave RTHS will no longer be able to use any vacation or PTO days. If an emergency should arise and the employee must be out, the employee's final day of employment will be the last day worked.

## **Employee Status**

**Regular, Full-Time Employee** - An employee who is employed to work more than 30 hours or more a week. These employees are eligible for benefits as outlined in the benefits sections and benefits plans.

**Part-Time Employee** - An employee regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week. This person will only receive those benefits mandated by state or federal law.

**Temporary Employee** - An employee who has been hired for a limited period of time, which usually does not exceed three to six months. This person will only receive those benefits mandated by state or federal law.

In addition, all employees are classified, according to the Fair Labor Standards Act, as "Exempt" or "Non-Exempt."



- Non-exempt employees must maintain an accurate record of all hours worked and will be paid overtime for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) in the pay week. Non-exempt employees may be full-time, part-time, or temporary and are paid on an hourly basis. All overtime must be authorized in advance by the Executive Director.
- Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay and are paid a predetermined salary. Exempt employees may be full-time, part-time, or temporary. The predetermined salary may only be reduced for specific, lawfully permitted reasons.

If you believe that an improper deduction has been made from your predetermined salary, you must notify the Chief School Officer. The reason for the deduction will be thoroughly investigated and if it is determined that an error was made, you will be reimbursed.

#### Hourly/Non-Exempt Employees

All employees paid hourly must submit their timesheets to the front office on a weekly basis on the last day of each work week unless requested otherwise. This includes all salary non-exempt employees.

### Payroll

All RTHS employees are subject to the terms of employment and compensation contained in their individual employment contract. Unless otherwise noted, the employees will be paid on a twelve-month basis with checks being disbursed on the 1st of the month unless the pay date falls on a holiday or a weekend. In that event, paychecks will be disbursed the day before the holiday or weekend. Teachers starting employment after the beginning of the school year will be paid on a pro-rata basis.

#### 10-Month, 11-month and 12-month Employees

Whether an employee is considered a 10-month, 11-month or 12-month employee will depend on their work schedule for their position and will be set forth in their Employment Agreement with the School.

Research Triangle High School uses direct deposit. The Office Manager has the necessary paperwork for arranging accounts. All employees are paid on a twelve-month basis, including teachers who are ten-month employees.

#### How to Access Pay Stubs and W-2s

To view pay stubs:

- Go to [www.employeeing.linq.com](http://www.employeeing.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.

### 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.

### **Bereavement Leave**

The school provides 3 days of Bereavement leave for local leave and 5 days of Bereavement leave for out-of-town leave for the death of an immediate family member. 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 the Bereavement leave.

### **Personal Time Off**

Full-time teachers (10-month employees) accrue 6.67 hours 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 0.42 PTO days 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. For instance, if an employee takes three days in September, they have 7 days left; once they have exhausted the 10 days, their pay will be deducted accordingly. PTO days are subject to blackout periods as set by the school leader and/or school calendar. 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.**

### **Professional Time Off**

Professional days are taken at the discretion of the administration and consist of events and activities which complement the school and the employee professionally, such as presenting at a conference, attending school training, or serving on boards and statewide or national committees. These days do not count against an employee's PTO amount. Professional days must be approved in writing in advance by the Chief School Officer or their designee.

### **Partial-Day Leave**

Staff leave/PTO is calculated by the hour. Employees shall notify the Office Manager. In case of partial-day absence, the Office Manager will arrange coverage as needed. Substitute plans should also be provided to the Office Manager and the substitute.

### **Leave Without Pay**

Employees taking leave without pay will be docked their daily or hourly rate based on their individual salary. Leave without pay is provided at the discretion of the Chief School Officer and is not guaranteed.

### **Time Off/Leave Rules**

PTO/leave may not be used on the first day the employee is required to report for the school year, during the first month of the school year, on teacher workdays, on days scheduled for state 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 and the request is approved by the Chief School Officer. Further, an employee may not take unused PTO at the end of their employment with the School.

## **Procedures for All Leave, including PTO but not including FMLA or ADA.**

Use of any leave except FMLA or ADA, must be approved in advance. To request leave, notify the Office Manager who will forward the request to the Chief School Officer. The CSO will notify the employee requesting leave whether their leave is approved or not. Except for illness, injury or bereavement, leave requests shall be made at least 2 weeks prior to the requested leave date.

## **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

Research Triangle High School complies 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, Research Triangle High School provides eligible employees up to twelve weeks of leave (six weeks paid, six weeks unpaid) for family and medical reasons.

### **Guidelines**

#### Eligibility

Employees are eligible to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid family/medical leave within a 12-month period and be restored to the same or an equivalent position upon their return from leave provided they: a) have worked for Research Triangle for at least 12 months, and for at least 1250 hours in the last 12 months; and b) are employed at a worksite that has 50 or more employees within a 75-mile radius. 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave. Under the “rolling” 12-month period, each time an employee takes FMLA leave, the remaining leave entitlement would be the balance of the 12 weeks which has not been used during the immediately preceding 12 months.

#### Reasons for Leave

Eligible employees may take family/medical leave for any of the following reasons: a) the birth of a child within the first twelve months of birth; b) the placement of a child or other legal placement with the employee for adoption or placement; c) to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent (or individual to whom employee is otherwise in loco parentis who has with a serious health condition) d) because of their own serious health condition, which means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental health condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition which renders the employee unable to perform the essential functions of the position, e) In accordance with the National Defense Authorization Act, eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks family medical leave for a qualifying exigency related to a covered service member on active duty or who has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty. Covered family members include spouse, parent, and child. Or an eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member shall be entitled to a total of **26 work weeks** for military related medical treatment to care for the service member. Under the caregiver leave the twelve-month period will be calculated rolling forward from the first day of leave.

#### Notice of Leave

If the need for family/medical leave is foreseeable, the employee must give the Chief School Officer and ALT HR at least 30 days prior written notice. Failure to provide such notice may be grounds for delay of leave. Where the need for leave is not foreseeable, the employee is expected to notify the School within 1 to 2 business days of learning of their need for leave,

except in extraordinary circumstances. Employees must consult with the Chief School Officer (or their designee) and Alt HR regarding scheduling of any planned medical treatment or supervision as to minimize disruption to the operation of Research Triangle High School. Entitlement to FMLA coverage may not be invoked retroactively for previous absences from work. Family Medical Leave forms are available from ALT HR, the Chief School Officer or the Chief School Officer's designee. These forms must be used when employees request leave.

#### Medical Certification

If employees are requesting leave because of their own or a covered relation's serious health condition, the employee and the relevant health care provider must supply appropriate medical certification for Research Triangle High School to reasonably determine whether FMLA may apply to leave request. Depending on the situation, such information may include that that employee is incapacitated due to pregnancy, has been hospitalized overnight, is unable to perform the functions of the job, and/or that the employee or employee's qualifying family member is under the continuing care of a healthcare provider. Employees seeking leave for their own or their family members' serious health conditions will be provided a certification form, which must be completed by a qualified healthcare provider. Failure to submit the proper certification within fifteen (15) calendar days may revoke an employee's entitlement to continued leave or may result in denial of leave until it is provided.

The School has the right to request second or third medical opinions, at its expense. Medical Certification Forms are available from ALT HR, the Chief School Officer or the Director's designee. When an employee requests leave, the School will notify them of the requirement for medical certification and when it is due (at least 15 calendar days after the employee requests leave). Failure to provide requested medical certification in a timely manner may result in denial of leave until it is provided. The School may require subsequent medical recertification on a reasonable basis.

Employees requesting leave for a qualifying exigency related to a service member must provide a copy of the covered military member's active duty orders and certification providing the appropriate facts related to the particular qualifying exigency for which leave is sought, including contact information if the leave involves meeting with a third party. Employees requesting leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury may provide certification by an authorized health care provider or a copy of an Invitational Travel Order (ITO) or Invitational Travel Authorization (ITA) issued to any member of the covered service member's family. During the leave, employees are required to notify their supervisor/manager at least monthly, more frequently if requested, of the status of the leave.

#### Leave is Partly Paid

Family/medical leave is a paid leave for only the first six weeks of the leave (although the employee may use PTO/vacation/sick time or may be eligible for short or long-term disability payments and/or workers' compensation benefits under those insurance/benefit plans). The substitution of paid leave time for unpaid leave time does not extend the 12-week leave period.

#### Medical and Other Benefits

During an approved family/medical leave, RTHS will maintain the employee's health benefits, as if they had continued to be actively employed. If paid leave is substituted for unpaid family/medical leave, Research Triangle High School will deduct the employee's portion of the health plan premium as a regular payroll deduction. If the employee's leave is unpaid, the

employee must pay their portion of the premium by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month directly to the school. The employee's health care coverage will cease if the premium payment is more than 30 days late. An employee that is out on FMLA will continue to receive all of their other benefits while they are out on FMLA leave.

#### Intermittent and Reduced Schedule Leave

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 a 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.

#### **Reporting While on Leave.**

If an employee takes FMLA leave because of their own serious health condition or to care for a covered relation, the employee must contact ALT HR with updates regarding the status of the condition, and their intent to return to work.

#### Returning from Leave

A certification from a health care provider may be required at the conclusion of any leave for the employee's own serious health condition that the employee is able to resume his or her duties.

At the conclusion of leave covered by FMLA, employees will be reinstated to their former or an equivalent position with the same rights, benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment to the extent that they would be entitled to such continued employment without the FMLA leave. Benefits established on an accrual basis such as PTO will not accrue during unpaid FMLA leave. Benefits which accrued prior to the leave, however, will not be lost.

RTHS reserves the right to deny leave reinstatement to key employees, defined as salaried employees among the highest-paid 10 percent of all RTHS employees, where such denial is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous injury to the organization's operation. These employees will be notified of this decision as soon as it is determined such injury would occur, and will be given a reasonable opportunity to choose to return to work at that point. In the event the employee decides not to return to work when there is no guarantee of the same or equivalent position, s/he may remain on leave for the balance of the FMLA period and then may be terminated.

RTHS reserves the right to update and amend this policy consistent with state and federal law at any time. This policy should be construed to comply with the most current FMLA rules, regulations and statutes in effect.

### **Other Leave Required by Law**

The School provides employees with any other leave as required by state or federal law, including leave to exercise voting privileges, attend school conferences, or for jury duty.

Research Triangle High School encourages employees to accept and fulfill their civic duty in their community. Employees should notify the Chief School Officer upon receiving a notice of jury duty so that staffing provisions can be made. Employee should provide a copy of the summons to the Chief School Officer. Employees are encouraged to try to reschedule jury duty for months when school is not in session. Court leave for jury duty shall be granted to an eligible employee for absence during the employee's regularly scheduled hours including regularly scheduled overtime, to perform jury duty. An eligible employee who is under proper summons from a court to serve on a jury shall be granted court leave for the entire period of such service. The period of court leave extends from the date on which the employee is required to report to the court until the time they are discharged by the court. The employee must return to work for any reasonable time the court is closed during normal work hours. No adverse employment action will be taken against employees or applicants due to their service as a juror in state or federal courts. The School will pay the employee's regular salary for a maximum of 5 days of jury duty.

### **Military Leave**

RTHS employees who serve in the National Guard or the Reserves will be granted flexibility to drill on the weekends. When mobilized on active duty with the military, they are afforded all rights and privileges pursuant to USERRA 38 USC 4301-4335, The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994. The employee will be given credit for the period of military service towards their employment with the school.

### **Witness Duty**

An employee may be required by law to appear in court as a witness. The employee may be allowed to take unpaid time off for this purpose, but is expected to give RTHS reasonable advance notice of the absence and to provide evidence of the required appearance. Witness duty leave is available to all employees.

### **Jury Duty**

All School employees are responsible for complying with the laws pertaining to jury duty. The employee who has been notified of jury duty must report the dates of that duty to the director and will be paid their regular compensation during their service as a juror. Notify your supervisor as soon as you receive a notice of jury duty so that staffing provisions can be made. Your supervisor must also be provided a copy of your summons. Employees are encouraged to try and reschedule jury duty for months when school is not in session. Court leave for jury duty shall be granted to an eligible employee for absence during the employee's regularly scheduled hours including regularly scheduled overtime, to perform jury duty. An eligible employee who is under proper summons from a court to serve on a jury shall be granted court leave for the entire period of such service. The period of court leave extends from the date on which the employee is required to report to the court until the time he/she is discharged by the court. The employee must return to work for any reasonable time the court is closed during normal work hours. No adverse employment action will be taken against employees or applicants due to their service as a juror in state or federal courts. The school will pay the employee's regular salary for a maximum of 5 days of jury duty.

### **Parental School Leave**

In accordance with the North Carolina Parental Leave Law, the 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. The School reserves the right to request written verification from the school of the employee's attendance.

### **Other Leave Required by Law**

RTHS complies with any other leave required by law.

### **Benefits During FMLA or Other Approved Leave**

Group medical, dental, vision, short term disability, and long-term disability benefits as well as retirement plan contributions will continue for all qualifying employees during authorized leave on the same terms as if the employee continued to work. Employees whose group medical and/or dental insurance deductions are made through payroll on a pre-tax basis will continue to be responsible for payment of their premiums while on FMLA or unpaid leave, and employees must contact the Office Manager or her/his designee to make arrangements for premium payments.

If paid leave is substituted for unpaid family/medical leave, RTHS will deduct the employee's portion of the health plan premium as a regular payroll deduction. If the employee's leave is unpaid, the employee must pay their portion of the premium by the 1st of the month directly to the school. The employee's health care coverage will cease if the premium payment is more than 30 days late. An employee that is out on FMLA will continue to receive all of their other benefits while they are out on FMLA leave.

RTHS may discontinue the employee's benefits if and when an employee informs RTHS of an intent not to return to work at the end of the leave period, or if the employee fails to return to work when the authorized leave is exhausted. RTHS's obligation to maintain benefits will also stop if the employee's premium payment is more than 30 days late. RTHS shall require reimbursement of the employer-paid share of any premiums if the employee fails to return to work at the expiration of approved leave. In the event that an employee provides at least 30 days' notice of his/her intent not to return to work at the end of FMLA leave, RTHS may waive this repayment obligation in its sole discretion.

### **Accrual of paid time off during leave**

During any period of leave, accrual of paid time off will discontinue during such leave period unless otherwise required by law.

### **Other Leaves of Absence:**

All other requests for leaves of absence for personal reasons will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and the granting of such leave and its terms will be entirely within the discretion of the Chief School Officer. Requests for other leaves of absence should be limited to unusual circumstances requiring an absence of longer than two (2) weeks. Requests for other leaves of absence should be made in writing and include an explanation of why the time is needed and the dates requested. An employee granted a leave of absence under this policy may not work for another employer without RTHS's written permission. An employee who accepts such employment without RTHS's permission will be deemed to have resigned from employment at RTHS.



## **Employee Resignation**

Employees intending to resign from Research Triangle High School are asked to let ALT HR and the Chief School Officer know with as much advance notification as possible. Employees who resign are required to provide a written letter of resignation. Submitting this letter two weeks in advance is considered acceptable. The letter should include the intended resignation date and be submitted to ALT HR and the Chief School Officer.

## **Health and Welfare Benefits**

### **Staff Benefits**

The School has developed a comprehensive set of employee benefit programs to supplement our employees' regular wages. Subject to the specific benefit plan, all employees working an average of 30 hours a week or more will be eligible for benefits. Full time employees will have the option to purchase additional health, dental, vision, and life insurance for their spouse, children, or family. The School reserves the right to modify or discontinue any of its benefits at any time, for any reason, with or without prior notice. In the event the School does modify or discontinue any benefit set forth herein, employees will be informed. Nothing in this handbook is intended to modify the terms and conditions of any benefits plan. Please refer to the plan document for specific information on benefits, eligibility, costs and coverage.

### **Employee Benefits in the Summer**

All benefits will carry through the summer if the employee has signed their letter of agreement stating they are returning for the fall by June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. In the event a staff member is not returning for the subsequent year either by school choice or employee choice, the following will occur:

- Health insurance benefits end in June with the exception of staff leaving to go to another school with the NC State Health Plan. The employee must have a contract stating such by June 30, to maintain their health benefits throughout the summer.
- Staff leaving may choose to roll over dental, vision and life to their own policy by contacting the provider.
- All Benefits for employees who leave during the year, terminate the last day of the month the employee last worked.

### **Health Benefits**

RTHS will participate in the NC State Health Care plan. RTHS pays for 100% of the premium for individual coverage for full-time employees, and does not pay the premium expense for part-time employees, per state law. If an employee would like to add family/dependent coverage, the additional amount will be deducted from their paycheck. Health insurance is deducted one month in advance. For information on employee health plan please refer to the plan document.

### **Dental Benefits**

Dental insurance is available to all full-time employees. The full cost of the premium is the responsibility of the employee. Please refer to the plan documents for the specific details on the dental insurance.

### **Vision**



Vision insurance is available to all full-time employees. The full cost of the premium is the responsibility of the employee. Please refer to the plan documents for the specific details on vision insurance.

### **Group-Term Life Insurance**

Research Triangle High School provides an Employee Life Benefit Amount of \$20,000 at no cost to the employee. Employees will have the option to buy additional life insurance coverage for themselves and their dependents. Please refer to the plan documents for the specific details on the term life insurance.

### **Short-Term and Long-Term Disability**

Short-term disability insurance and/or life insurance may be available for purchase through the school benefits plan. Additional Vision and Dental may be available for purchase through the school benefits plan.

### **Retirement Plan**

RTHS offers the State 457(b) retirement plan for all employees. Employees can determine the amount they want deducted from their paycheck (pre-tax) for the plan. RTHS will match a percentage of this, which will be set at the beginning of each fiscal year, to be determined by the Board of Directors. For example, for 2022-2023, there is a 3% match. The school's ability to match will be determined based on budget and financial performance from prior years, so may vary.

### **Credit Union Membership**

RTHS employees are eligible to join the State Employees' Credit Union (SECU) with locations through the Triangle, for banking and other financial services. To open an account, a staff member needs proof of employment. For more information, access SECU at 888-732-8562 or [www.ncsecu.org](http://www.ncsecu.org).

### **Direct Deposit**

RTHS uses direct deposit. The Chief Operations Officer has the necessary forms in BambooHR for arranging accounts. All employees are paid on a twelve-month basis, including teachers who are ten-month employees.

## **Financial Policies**

### **Employee Expense Reimbursement Policy**

The following procedures have been established to assist each staff in following the proper steps for handling money:

- to protect all staff members from financial discrepancies;
- to provide an accurate picture of internal financial affairs; and
- to provide accurate information in the event of an audit.

### **Procurement Cards**

RTHS utilizes procurement cards through Bill.com (formerly Divvy) to aid in the purchase of goods and materials. Staff members who have a regular or recurring need to purchase items or

make online payments (e.g. club advisors, Athletic Director) may be issued a procurement card in their name and request funds for purchases as needed from the Chief Operations Officer.

It is the responsibility of the cardholder to upload receipts and provide detailed explanations and justifications for every purchase made on procurement cards.

## **Reimbursement Policy**

The preferred method for purchases at RTHS are Procurement Cards and staff members are strongly encouraged to make use of the school's procurement cards for all school-related purchases. In the event that a purchase needs to be made and a procurement card is unavailable, and approval has been provided by the COO and/or the CSO, RTHS will reimburse staff members for purchases of items necessary for classroom or club/activity use. All reimbursement requests must be accompanied by detailed receipts showing the item(s) purchased, and must be submitted within 30 days following the purchase. The Chief School Officer and Chief Operations Officer reserve the right to refuse reimbursement if 1) it is determined that the item(s) purchased are not related to a school class or activity, 2) The purchase was not preapproved by the COO or CSO, or 3) if the receipt is more than thirty (30) days old.

RTHS will reimburse staff members within 30 days of a reimbursement request submission.

## **Money Forms**

### Check Request Form

The Check Request Form, along with the attached invoice or receipt, is used to send payment directly to the vendor or for reimbursement for a purchase. All purchases in excess of \$20 need to be approved in advance by the Chief School Officer or Chief Operations Officer.

### Deposit Form

The Deposit Form, along with the attached copy of all checks, is used when any money is collected for a school-related purpose. All cash, checks, and forms are to be put in a blue deposit bag and given to the Chief Operations Officer or Office Manager daily.

Club-related deposits or check requests must be given to the Chief Operations Officer; all other deposits or check requests must be given to the Office Manager.

## **Vendor Contracts**

Employees are not permitted to sign any contracts on behalf of the School. There are state laws and auditing procedures that require the School follow a systematic approach. In addition, all state contracts require particular wording. Please contact the Chief School Officer or Office Manager if a contract needs to be signed. Only the Chief School Officer is authorized to sign contracts.

## **Fundraising Policy**

### **Purpose**

To provide parameters to ensure all fundraisers conducted at RTHS are directly related to assisting the School and/or enhance learning opportunities.

In order 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. In order to streamline this process, Research Triangle High School has created a subgroup of the Finance Committee specifically focused on fundraising with clearly outlined parameters and guidelines.

### **Approval**

All fundraisers must be approved by the school's Chief Operations Officer prior to implementation.

### **Purposes of Fundraising**

The following are acceptable fundraising purposes:

- Fundraisers where proceeds go towards enhancing Research Triangle High School facilities or other budget needs.
- Fundraisers where proceeds reduce field trip costs or other student costs as they pertain to educational opportunities.
- Fundraisers for charities or causes will only be conducted if there is a direct tie to a school service project in which Research Triangle High School students are involved.

### **Restrictions**

- Research Triangle High School marketing must be in compliance with the Community Partnership Plan.
- Students and parents are prohibited from soliciting RTHS staff and other families on school property.
- Students and staff will not be required to participate in selling any type of product in connection with school-approved fundraisers. All involvement in such selling activities by students and staff is voluntary (e.g. book fair, selling of RTHS spirit wear, student artwork etc...)

### **Clubs & Activities**

- Club and activity fundraisers are permitted with the approval of the Chief School Officer or their designate.
- 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 form at the end of each school day. Collection of money after the school's normal hours should be secured in a locked location until the next school day.
- Money should never be left in an unsecured location.
- Club funds are maintained only in the school's club account. Under no circumstance are employees or students allowed to use personal electronic cash accounts (e.g. CashApp) for money transactions.
- Staff are prohibited from the sale of any non-school related items to students.
- Staff are prohibited from depositing funds into a personal account.
- Failure to comply will result in discipline and up to termination.

### **Donors Choose Policy**

All fundraising, grants and monies intended to be raised for Research Triangle High School, or any classroom, activity, athletics or club or project, through organizations such as Donors Choose or any like organizations or other internet/social media/crowdsourcing must be pre-approved by the

School. Please contact the Chief School Officer for such approval. Only the Chief School Officer or their designee has the authority to approve such requests. All supplies, materials, technology and books received through the project will remain with the School if the teacher leaves. If the project is for technology or school equipment or books, the technology will remain with the School if the teacher leaves.

If the project is for technology or equipment, the technology will remain with the School if and when the teacher leaves. If the project is for items that are not considered technology or equipment, the teacher may request approval prior to submitting the project for the items to go with them if they leave RTHS to work at another public school.

## Acknowledgement of Handbook and At Will Employment

I acknowledge that I have received the RTHS Employee Handbook. I have read the Handbook and understand the contents of the Handbook. I agree to abide by all of RTHS's policies. I understand that this Employee Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior Employee Handbooks and any inconsistent verbal or written policy statements. I understand and agree to my at-will employment status as described in the Handbook, summarized as follows:

1. This Handbook does not in any way reflect a contract of employment, either express or implied between RTHS and me.
2. RTHS is an at-will employer. I am free to terminate the employment relationship with RTHS at any time; RTHS, in its sole discretion, also reserves the right to modify or terminate the employment relationship with me for any or no reason at any time. Specifically, RTHS may modify all terms of employment including any policy or practice and/or my hours, wages, working conditions, job assignments, position title, compensation rates and benefits in its sole discretion.
3. Nothing in this Handbook creates, or is intended to create, a promise or representation of continued employment or guaranteed terms and conditions of employment for me. Further, there is no agreement, express or implied, written or verbal, between the employee and RTHS for any specific period of employment, for continuing or long-term employment, or for guaranteed terms and conditions of employment.

I understand that this Employee Handbook refers to current benefit plans maintained by RTHS and that I must refer to the actual plan documents and summary plan descriptions as these documents are controlling.

I understand that other than the Chief School Officer with approval from RTHS's Board of Directors, no supervisor or representative of RTHS has the authority to enter into any agreement, express or implied, for employment for any specific period of time, or to make any agreement for employment other than at-will. I understand that only the Chief School Officer has the authority to make any such agreement and then only in writing signed by the Chief School Officer after approval by the School Board of Directors.

Employee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_