



Stargate School

Governance Board Business Meeting

Published on July 20, 2026 at 1:46 PM MDT

Date and Time

Tuesday July 21, 2026 at 6:00 PM MDT

Location

All meetings will be virtual unless otherwise noted.

Zoom Info: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/83148823532?pwd=qLJr9OMQdsLBsjht95dyr3CcdC5G4M.1>

Meeting ID: 831 4882 3532

Passcode: eagles

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
I. Opening Items			6:00 PM
A.	Call the Meeting to Order	Lindsey Paquette	
B.	Roll Call	Lindsey Paquette	1 m
C.	Reading of Stargate Mission	Any Board member	1 m

A volunteer from the Board reads the Stargate Mission:

Stargate School will provide a differentiated program designed specifically to meet the needs of identified intellectually gifted learners in order to challenge each student's

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
	academic abilities, support their unique emotional needs, promote individual character development and encourage a life-long love of learning.		
D.	Recognitions and Appreciations	Discuss	ED and/or Board Members
	Executive Director and/or Board Members may highlight special contributions or achievements of members of our community (students, staff, volunteers). (Optional participation)		
II.	Approve Consent Agenda Items		6:07 PM
A.	Approve Consent Agenda	Vote	Lindsey Paquette
	The Consent Agenda contains the routine, generally agreed upon meeting items to be approved with a single vote.		
	1) Agenda for July 21, 2026 Governance Board Meeting		
	2) Minutes from the June 16, 2026 Governance Board Meeting		
B.	Approve Minutes from June 16, 2026 Business Meeting	Approve Minutes	
III.	Board Member Oath and Officers		6:08 PM
A.	Oath of Office for new Board member	Discuss	President or Treasurer
	New Board Member Andrea Falken to take Oath of Office . President will collect and send to Adams County Clerk and Recorder @ recordingpublicpostings@adcogov.org.		
B.	Nominate and Select Board Officers for 2026-2027	Vote	
C.	Annual District Conflict of Interest Disclosure		
	All Board members to complete the District's Conflict of Interest disclosure annually. President will collect and send to District Liaison.		
IV.	School Operations		6:18 PM

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
A. 2026-2027 Employee Handbook	FYI	Jennifer Roach, Dir of HR	10 m
B. 2026-2027 Community Handbook	FYI	Dr. Robin Greene, Exec Dir	10 m
C. 2026-2027 Communications Pathways	FYI	Dr, Robin Greene, Exec Dir	10 m
D. Executive Director Report	FYI	Dr. Robin Greene, Exec Dir	10 m

V. Public Comment**6:58 PM**

Public Comments Reminder: The board meeting is structured to allow the Governance Board to conduct its business in a timely manner. Comments may not be immediately addressed but may be considered as future agenda items.

Comments are limited to 3 minutes each, and total time allotted for all public comments will not exceed 45 minutes. Those wishing to speak that do not get the opportunity to do so can submit their comments to governance@stargateschool.org or may attend the next board meeting to do so. Please note that time may not be donated to others and comments are expected to maintain professional courtesy, civility, and respect.

A. Public Comment	FYI	15 m
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Community members are offered an opportunity to sign up for Public Comment at the beginning of each meeting. Only those who have signed up are permitted to offer comment during this time. The "Public Comment Reminders" are read by a Board Member prior to any comments being heard.

Anyone wishing to speak must sign-in before the public comment portion of the meeting at [this link](#).

[Public Comment Sign Up](#)

B. Public Comment Response	FYI	Any Board Member	5 m
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The Board is given an opportunity, but is not required, to offer a response to any Public Comment.

VI. Committee Reports**7:18 PM**

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
A. Written Committee Reports	FYI		
Please post committee goals and signed Handbooks in Committees folder Monthly reports, if any, from the following committees will be posted here for pre-read. The Board will not spend time discussing these in detail, but may respond to specific questions presented within the report. 1. Elections Committee 2. Finance Committee 3. Fundraising Allocation Committee 4. Recruiting Committee 5. School Accountability Committee			

VII. Action Items (Discuss and/or Vote) 7:18 PM

Board Member votes will be taken on items requiring Board approval. Most of these items will have been reviewed and discussed during an earlier agenda item, so a motion to approve "as discussed" may be presented immediately, if appropriate.

A.	2026-2027 Employee Handbook	Vote	Lindsey Paquette	5 m
B.	2026-2027 Community Handbook	Vote	Lindsey Paquette	5 m
C.	2026-2027 Communication Pathways	Vote	Samantha Howorko	5 m
D.	2026-2027 Board Handbook	Vote	Lindsey Paquette	10 m
	2026-2027 Board Handbook			
E.	2026-2027 Board Calendar	Discuss	Lindsey Paquette	5 m
	Discuss preferred timing and format (virtual or in person) for 2026-2027 Board Calendar and timing of 26-27 Elections.			
	Assign Board member to draft full year calendar for approval next meeting.			
F.	2026-2027 Board Liaisons, Committees, & Assignments	Discuss	Lindsey Paquette	10 m
	2026-2027 Board Liaisons, Committees, & Assignments			
G.	Discussion of Bylaws next steps	Discuss	Lindsey Paquette	5 m
H.	Ongoing Monitoring of Key Board Responsibilities	FYI		
	2026-2027 District Deliverables Per Our Charter			

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
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Finance Budget & KPI Updates - See Finance presentations to Board each Aug, Jan, May, & Jun

Executive Director Evaluations - Executive Sessions with ED held each fall, mid-year, and June

[2025-2026 Strategic Plan](#) - To be updated Fall 2026

[2026-2027 Board Liaisons, Committees, & Assignments](#)

[2026-2027 Board Policy Review Tracker](#)

[2026-2027 Board Member Training](#)

VIII. Future Planning

8:03 PM

- | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---------|-------------------|-----|
| A. | Next Board Meeting Agenda and Board Packet | Discuss | Lindsey Paquette | 5 m |
| | Review proposed agenda for next month's meeting in Board On Track and suggest additions or changes. | | | |
| B. | Next Admin Sync Meeting | Discuss | Lindsey Paquette | 1 m |
| | Two (rotating) Board Members may be assigned to meet with our Executive Director at a specified time in the interim between Board meetings to maintain regular communication. Meetings are typically scheduled two weeks after each meeting on a Monday morning, if schedules permit. | | | |
| C. | Upcoming Events | Discuss | All Board Members | 1 m |
| | Board Members highlight any upcoming Key Events requiring our attendance or contribution. | | | |

IX. Closing Items

8:10 PM

- | | | | |
|-----------|--|------|------------------|
| A. | Adjourn Meeting | Vote | Lindsey Paquette |
| | Motion and vote to officially adjourn. | | |

Coversheet

Approve Minutes from June 16, 2026 Business Meeting

Section:	II. Approve Consent Agenda Items
Item:	B. Approve Minutes from June 16, 2026 Business Meeting
Purpose:	Approve Minutes
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Minutes for Governance Board Business Meeting on June 16, 2026

DRAFT



Stargate School

Minutes

Governance Board Business Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday June 16, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Location

All meetings will be virtual unless otherwise noted.

Zoom Info: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/83148823532?pwd=qLJr9OMQdsLBsjht95dyr3CcdC5G4M.1>

Meeting ID: 831 4882 3532

Passcode: eagles

Directors Present

H. Sonnenahalli, L. Challa, L. Paquette, L. Steele, M. Faulkner, S. Howorko

Directors Absent

None

Guests Present

R. Greene

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

L. Paquette called a meeting of the board of directors of Stargate School to order on Tuesday Jun 16, 2026 at 6:03 PM.

B.

Roll Call

C. Reading of Stargate Mission

D. Recognitions and Appreciations

Dr. Greene - Seniors earned over \$3MM in scholarships

LP - All of the staff that works through the summer

LC - All those involved in HOSA

II. Approve Consent Agenda Items

A. Approve Consent Agenda

B. Approve Minutes from May 20, 2026 Business Meeting

L. Paquette made a motion to approve the minutes from Governance Board Business Meeting on 05-20-26.

L. Challa seconded the motion.

S. Howorko abstained due to absence at last meeting

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

III. School Operations

A. Finance - Final Budget & Appropriations

See attachments. Note that fee schedule needs to be reviewed and approved by the Board annually.

B. Athletics Year In Review

D. Logan gave thanks to all of those who are involved in athletics at Stargate noting how much work goes into everything. MS participation is continuing to grow, adding a middle school boys soccer coach. He went through specific highlights for various sports and athletes in Secondary, including several athletes that signed to play in college.

C. Executive Director Report

D. 2026-2027 Admissions Policy

No changes since the board last reviewed.

IV. Public Comment

A. Public Comment

One parent discussed the current CRC/Fundraising structure and consideration of a PTO.
Dr. Greene will follow up.

B. Public Comment Response

V. Action Items (Discuss and/or Vote)

A. 2026-2027 Admissions Policy

L. Paquette made a motion to Approve the 2026-2027 Admissions Policy as discussed.
H. Sonnenahalli seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Final 2026-2027 Budget

S. Howorko made a motion to approve the 2026-2027 Budget as presented.
L. Challa seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C. 2025-2026 Supplemental Appropriations Resolution

S. Howorko made a motion to approve the 25-26 Supplemental Appropriations Resolution as presented.
L. Paquette seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. 2026-2027 Budget Appropriations Resolution

S. Howorko made a motion to approve the 26-27 Budget Appropriations Resolution as presented.
L. Paquette seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

E. Proposed Surplus Allocation FY26

S. Howorko made a motion to approve FY26 proposed surplus allocation as presented.
L. Challa seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

F. FAC Request: 2027 After Prom

S. Howorko made a motion to approve up to \$15,000 for after prom for 2027.
L. Paquette seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

G. Second Reading of Policy 1.11 Executive Director Succession_Draft Revision 5.2026

L. Paquette made a motion to Approve second reading of policy 1.11 Executive Director Succession.

S. Howorko seconded the motion.

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

H. Second Reading of Policy 1.21 Board Vacancy and Independent Director Appointments_Draft Revision 5.2026

L. Paquette made a motion to Approve second reading of policy 1.21 Board Vacancy and Independent Director Appointments.

S. Howorko seconded the motion.

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

I. Plan for July Meeting & Major Document Review

L. Steele will work with elections and recruiting

L.Challa & L.Paquette to review Governance Handbook

R.Greene will review Administrative Policies

All to be shared with Board by July 15th

J. Discussion of Bylaws next steps

Discuss strategy to increase participation, continued discussion.

K. Ongoing Monitoring of Key Board Responsibilities

VI. Future Planning

A. Next Board Meeting Agenda and Board Packet

B. Next Admin Sync Meeting

SH and HS to attend

C. Upcoming Events

VII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

S. Howorko

Coversheet

Oath of Office for new Board member

Section:	III. Board Member Oath and Officers
Item:	A. Oath of Office for new Board member
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Oath of Office.pdf



OATH OF OFFICE
COUNTY OF ADAMS
STATE OF COLORADO

I, _____ (printed board member name) do swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Colorado, and the laws of the State of Colorado, and will faithfully perform the duties of the office of Board Member of Stargate School upon which I am about to enter to the best of my ability.

Signature

Board Member subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, 202_.

Signature

Witnessing Official Printed Name _____

Coversheet

Annual District Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Section:	III. Board Member Oath and Officers
Item:	C. Annual District Conflict of Interest Disclosure
Purpose:	
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Charter School Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form.pdf

Charter School Board Member Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form

The purpose of this document is to provide disclosure regarding known or anticipated conflicts of interests. Charter school boards operate according to their School bylaws and applicable law, as well as contractual obligations with Adams 12 Five Star School District ("District"). This form is a public document that will be made available by school officials upon request. The form may be shared in person or electronically for review by other board members, school staff, parents or any other interested party. The form will also be provided to the District.

School Name: _____

Board Member Full Name: _____

Board Member Term Start Date: _____ Term End Date: _____

Please complete this form by hand. Circle your selected response to each prompt.

Affirmations

Age.

Yes / No I affirm that I am at least 18 years of age by the date of my appointment to the Charter School board.

Bylaws and Contract.

Yes / No I affirm that I have read the Charter School's Bylaws and the School's contract with the school district.

Illegal Personal Behavior.

Have you ever been convicted or pled "no contest" to one or more of the following:

Yes / No A misdemeanor related to honesty or trustworthiness, or

Yes / No A felony

Charter School Board Member Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form

If you answered yes to either, please provide details of the offense, the date, the disposition and related information here:

Illegal Financial Behavior.

Yes / No Have you ever entered into an settlement agreement, consent decree, adjournment in the contemplation of dismissal, assurance of discontinuance or other, similar agreement with the Securities Exchange Commission, Internal Revenue Service, the United States Attorney General or the attorney general of any state, or any other law enforcement or regulatory body concerning the discharge of your duties as a board member of a for-profit or non-profit entity or as an executive of such entity. If the answer was yes, please provide details of the agreement here.

Conflicts of Interests

Business Conflicts - General Business.

Do you, your spouse, or anyone in your immediate family (described in C.R.S. 7-128-501(5) as a spouse, descendant, ancestor, sibling, spouse or descendant of a sibling, or a designated beneficiary) meet either of the following conditions?

Yes / No Is currently doing or plans to do business with the Charter School, whether as an individual or as a board director, officer, employee or agent of any entity.

Yes / No Is partner to any entity in which one of the above described individuals has an interest in doing business or plans to do business with the Charter School.

Charter School Board Member Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form

If the answer was yes to either, please provide details of the agreement here.

Yes / No Are you, your spouse or other immediate family members currently conducting, or do you anticipate conducting any business with the Charter School or a contractor who is conducting business with the Charter School?

If the answer was yes, please provide details of the agreement here.

Business Conflicts - School Management Organizations.

Yes / No Are you, your spouse or other immediate family members currently or do you anticipate in the future being employed, offered employment or an ownership stake, whether direct or indirect, or any contractual or management interest in an education service provider (“ESP”), an educational management organization (“EMO”) or a charter management organization (“CMO”)?

Yes / No / Not Applicable If the Charter School currently works with an ESP, EMO or CMO, do you, your spouse or other immediate family members know beyond a casual or professional acquaintance any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of the provider?

Yes / No / Not Applicable If the Charter School currently works with an ESP, EMO or CMO, do you, your spouse, or any other immediate family member currently conduct, or do you anticipate conducting any business with the provider?

Charter School Board Member Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form

If you answered yes to any question(s) regarding ESP's, EMO's or CMO's, explain.

Relationships and Personal Conflicts.

Yes / No Are you aware of any potential ethical or legal conflicts of interest that currently exist, or are likely to exist, for you as a board director for the Charter School due to your relationship with another school (charter or otherwise) or with any non-profit or for profit entity?

Yes / No Do you have a close personal relationship with or within the School? Being a parent of a student at the Charter School, serving on another Charter School's board or being employed by or the spouse of an employee at the Charter School, does not typically prevent your service on the board of directors. However, such relationships may periodically require you to recuse yourself from conversations and decisions, and thus should be disclosed.

If you answered yes to either question, please explain.

I certify to the best of my knowledge and ability that the information I am providing to the School and the District regarding my application to serve as a member of the Charter School's board of directors is true and correct.

Printed name

School Name

Signature

Date Signed

Coversheet

2026-2027 Employee Handbook

Section:	IV. School Operations
Item:	A. 2026-2027 Employee Handbook
Purpose:	FYI
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Summary of Changes Made to Staff Handbook 26-27.pdf 2026-2027 Stargate Staff Handbook_Draft.pdf



14530 WASHINGTON STREET | THORNTON, CO 80023

OFFICE: 303.450.3936 | FAX: 303.450.3941 | INFO@STARGATESCHOOL.ORG

Summary of Changes to the 2026–2027 Stargate Staff Handbook

Below is an overview of updates and clarifications made to the Stargate Staff Handbook for the 2026–2027 school year:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Description of Change</u>
7	Welcome	Added verbiage about handbook revisions/living document
11	Hours of Work	Clarified expectations around work hours and faculty meeting times.
17	Holidays	Replaced Veterans Day w/Floating Holiday
18	Vacation Accrual	Increase the vacation accrual cap from 20 to 25 days and discontinue the annual December payout of excess vacation. Vacation accrual will cease at 25 days and automatically resume once the employee's balance falls below the cap.
20	Compensation for Paid Time Off	Revised the unused PTO incentive to better support employee attendance and continuity of instruction while maintaining compliance with Colorado leave requirements.
20	Black-Out Policy	Added the policy around PTO Black-Out Days
32	COFamli	Added policy around COFamli
33	LTD and STD Insurance	Added reference to COFamli
36	Staff attendance	Added verbiage around long-term sub approvals
42	Service for Students w/Diabetes	Kept link but removed referenced possible accommodations.



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- | | | |
|----|----------------------|--|
| 47 | Conflict of Interest | Added a limit on non-cash gifts of \$25.00 |
| 56 | Employment Departure | Added verbiage around school property and arrangements for collecting personal belongings |
| 68 | Visitors to Stargate | Added definition of “visitor” to include former students, former staff, and staff family members, check-out through raptor and that visitors must be accompanied by a staff member and wear a badge at all times |
| 71 | Employee Parking | Added information about the new staff-only parking lot. |



2026-2027 STAFF HANDBOOK

14530 Washington Street, Thornton, CO 80023

Website: www.stargateschool.org

Main: 303-450-3936

Fax: 303-450-3941

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Welcome to Stargate

Welcome to Stargate School, hereinafter referred to as “the School.” We look forward to working with you as a member of our educational team. We appreciate each of you and the skills and talents you individually bring to our school. We are committed to helping you achieve your highest level of service for the families and students of Stargate.

The Staff Handbook applies to all employees of the School and is intended to provide guidelines and summary information about Stargate School’s general policies, procedures, benefits, and rules of conduct. This edition of Stargate Staff Handbook replaces all previously issued editions. All policies set forth in this manual supersede those of Adams 12 Five Star District.

It is also imperative that you read the [Community Handbook](#) and the [Stargate School Staff Operations Manual](#), which includes Adams 12 policies as well as revised Stargate policies, to be aware of information shared with our Stargate families. It can be found on the Stargate website [here](#).

This handbook is a working document and may be revised, updated, or amended by the School at any time as policies, laws, or operational needs change. When revisions are made, the School will make reasonable efforts to notify staff of the changes, and the most current version will always be posted on the Stargate staff site.

Stargate Mission Statement

Stargate School will provide a differentiated program designed specifically to meet the needs of intellectually gifted learners in order to challenge each student’s academic abilities, support their unique emotional needs, promote individual character development and encourage a life-long love of learning.

Stargate Vision Statement

Stargate community will be a leader and innovator in intellectually gifted education by providing a learning environment to meet gifted students’ needs.

Stargate Governance Board

The School is governed by the Governance Board of Directors (“the Board”). The Board is composed of up to nine Directors, at least five of whom are parents or guardians, and up to four board-appointed independent directors. The current Board Members can be found [here](#).

The purpose of the Board is to set the general direction and policy of the School, not to manage it on a daily basis. The Board establishes and maintains fundamental school policies to ensure adherence to the vision and mission statements. Board Directors govern in a manner to ensure the adherence to the Stargate vision and mission statements. Their role is to oversee the financial stability of the School, to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, and to deal with school-related issues as prescribed in the bylaws. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the Board to foster positive relationships with school personnel, the school community, and with the community at large.

Administration makes day-to-day management decisions and is responsible for all education and operations duties for the School.

As with all charter schools, the School is an entity separate from the school district in the area of governance. Each Director shall guard this unique characteristic of the School and other charter schools. All board policies can be found on the [Stargate Governance Webpages](#).

Introduction

This handbook is designed to acquaint employees with the School and provide some information about working here. The handbook is not all inclusive, but is intended to provide employees with a summary of some of the School's guidelines and our expectations regarding your conduct.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question. After reading the handbook, employees who have questions should talk with their immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Director. In addition, the need may arise to revise, delete, or add to the provisions in this handbook. Staff will be alerted to changes via email. Except for the at-will nature of the employment, the school reserves the right to make such changes with or without prior notice. No verbal statements or representations can change the provisions of this staff handbook.

Employees should not interpret anything in this handbook as creating a contract or guarantee of continued employment. In addition, this handbook is not intended to cover all possible situations that may arise in your employment relationship with the School.

Many matters covered in this handbook, such as benefit plan descriptions, are also described in separate School documents. These School documents are always controlling over any statement made in this handbook or by any member of management.

This handbook is the property of the School, and it is intended for personal use and reference by the employees of the School.

Handbook Revisions

The School reserves the right to make changes to this handbook and to any employment policy, practice, work rule, or benefit, at any time without prior notice. Employees' at-will employment can only be changed as stated in the separate Employment At Will Policy contained in this handbook. Except as otherwise provided in this handbook, no one has the authority to make any promise or commitment contrary to what is in this handbook.

Handbook Acknowledgement

Employees must sign the acknowledgement form at the end of this handbook or by clicking [here](#). This will provide the School with a record that each employee has received, read and understood this handbook. Declination to sign does not release employees of obligations set forth in this handbook.

Employment at Will

All employment at the School is "at-will." This means that both employees and the School have the right to terminate employment at any time, with or without advance notice, and with or without cause. Employees also may be demoted or disciplined, and the terms of their

employment may be altered at any time, with or without cause, at the discretion of the School. No one other than an Executive Director of the School has the authority to alter this arrangement, to enter into an agreement for employment for a specified period of time, or to make any agreement contrary to this at-will status. Any such agreement must be in writing, must be signed by an officer of the School, and must express a clear and unambiguous intent to alter the at-will nature of the employment relationship. Nothing contained in this Handbook or any other documents provided to employees is intended to be, nor should it be, construed as a guarantee that employment (or any benefit) will be continued for a specific time period. For example, any salary figures provided to an employee in annual or monthly terms are stated for the sake of convenience. They are not intended to create an employment contract for one or more months. Employees should ask the Human Resources Director if they have any questions about their status as an employee at-will.

Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the School's policy to provide equal employment opportunity for all applicants and employees. The School does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived race (including hair texture and natural hair styles), color, religion, religious creed (including religious dress and religious grooming practices), sex (including pregnancy, perceived pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions), gender, gender identity (including transgender identity, status and transitioning), gender expression and sex stereotyping, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, physical or mental disability, legally protected medical condition or information (including genetic information), family care or medical leave status, military caregiver status, military status, veteran status, marital status, domestic partner status, sexual orientation, status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, enrollment in a public assistance program, engaging in protected communications regarding employee wages, requesting a reasonable accommodation on the basis of disability or bona fide religious belief or practice, or any other basis protected by local, state, or federal laws. Consistent with the law, the School also makes reasonable accommodations for disabled applicants and employees; for pregnant employees who request an accommodation with the advice of their health care providers, for pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions; for employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and for applicants and employees based on their religious beliefs and practices.

The School will endeavor to accommodate the sincere religious beliefs of its employees to the extent such accommodation does not pose an undue hardship on the School's operations. If employees wish to request such an accommodation, they should contact the Human Resources Director.

The School prohibits sexual harassment and the harassment of any individual on any of the other bases listed above. For information about the types of conduct that constitute impermissible harassment and the School's internal procedures for addressing complaints of harassment, and the legal remedies available through and complaint procedures of the appropriate state and federal agencies and directions on how to contact these agencies, please refer to the School's Policy Against Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation in this Handbook. This policy applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, compensation, benefits, transfer, disciplinary action, and social and recreational programs. It is the responsibility of every manager and employee to conscientiously follow this policy. Any employee having any questions regarding this policy should discuss them with the

Human Resources Director.

Applicants and Employees with Disabilities

The School is committed to providing equal employment opportunities for all qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act and applicable State disability laws. In accordance with these laws, the School strictly forbids all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against qualified applicants or employees with disabilities, and for pregnant employees who so request for pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, and requires reasonable accommodation if necessary for such individuals to perform the essential functions of their jobs safely and efficiently without undue hardship to the School and without serious risk to the health and safety of others.

Applicants and employees who require accommodation of any disability should inform the School of their needs. The School may have no way of knowing whether an individual requires an accommodation unless they bring it to the attention of the School. The School will engage in an interactive conversation to determine if there is a reasonable accommodation that can be provided that will not cause the School undue hardship and will treat all such information as confidential to protect privacy rights under laws such as HIPAA, but some disclosure will be necessary to fulfill the purposes of this policy.

Employees who are made aware that an applicant or employee has a disability should presume that the information is confidential and discuss it only with upper management and Human Resources, unless the employee has disclosed or consented to further disclosure.

Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against an individual because they are considered disabled or has been given accommodation for a disability is absolutely forbidden and grounds for immediate termination. Employees who believe they have been harassed in violation of this policy may file a complaint under the School's policy on Equal Employment Opportunity.

Employee Classifications

I. Regular Full-Time Employees

Employees scheduled to work more than thirty (30) hours or more per week.

II. Regular Part-Time Employees

Employees scheduled to work fewer than twenty-nine (29) hours or less per week; part-time employees may be regularly scheduled or scheduled on an 'as-needed' basis.

III. Temporary Employees

Employees who provide support on a temporary basis in a licensed or unlicensed capacity; includes substitute paraprofessionals and teachers.

IV. Seasonal Employees

Employees who work for a specific period of time for a specific season; includes head and assistant coaches.

V. Classified Employees

Employees who provide school support in unlicensed capacity; includes office administration, paraprofessionals, support and labor workers.

VI. Certified Employees

Employees required to maintain licensure to conduct services which includes teachers,

special service providers, and counselors.

VII. Administrative Employees

Employees providing school leadership from a licensed position or through advanced qualifications; includes executive directors, department directors, managers, principals, and assistant principals.

VIII. Nine-Month Employees

Employees scheduled for up to 199 workdays in one fiscal year.

IX. Ten-Month Employees

Employees scheduled to work between 200 and 219 days in one fiscal year.

X. Eleven-Month Employees

Employees scheduled to work between 220 and 246 days in one fiscal year.

XI. Twelve-Month Employees

Employees scheduled to work between 247 and 260 days in one fiscal year.

XII. Exempt/Nonexempt Employees

Exempt employees, by definition, are exempt from earning overtime compensation and generally receive the same weekly salary regardless of hours worked. Nonexempt employees are employees who are eligible to be paid for overtime work in accordance with the provisions of applicable wage and hour laws. Overtime pay requirements are set forth in the section of this Handbook/Manual entitled "Hours of Work, Overtime, and Pay Day". Employees will be informed of these classifications upon hire and informed of any subsequent changes to the classifications.

XIII. Salaried Employees

Salaried employees are employees who are paid a fixed amount on a periodic basis and not by the hour. Salaried employees are generally Exempt Employees.

XIV. Hourly Employees

Hourly employees are employees whose wages are paid by the hour. Their wages fluctuate according to the number of hours they work. Hourly employees are generally Nonexempt Employees.

XV. Change in Employment Status

The School may change the employment classification of any employee at any time based on the nature of the employment assignment.

Hours of Work, Overtime and Pay Day

I. Hours of Work

School **business** hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Monday through Friday. Full-time, certified employees are expected to be on campus between the hours of 7:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on school days, unless a faculty meeting is called that would require staff to come at 7:30 or stay after school until 4:15. Faculty meetings, including cadence, length, and time of day will be decided by the school level principal. Classified full-time and part-time employees will report for duty at times agreed upon with their supervisor.

II. Meal and Rest Periods

A. Rest Periods

The School authorizes and permits nonexempt employees a minimum of ten-minute, off-duty,

uninterrupted paid rest period for each four hours worked or major fraction thereof. Employees should take their rest periods in the middle of each work period to the extent it is practicable to do so, and not combine them with meal periods or skip them to leave work early.

Employees who feel they were not provided the opportunity to take all rest periods authorized and permitted under this policy should inform their supervisor or manager, and (if not corrected) the Human Resources Director immediately.

B. Meal Periods

Employees will be entitled to an uncompensated, uninterrupted meal break of 30 minute duration when shift exceeds 5 consecutive hours worked. To the extent practical, meal periods must be at least one hour after starting and one hour before ending shifts.

Employees are entitled, encouraged, and expected to take all meal periods provided under this policy, and all rest periods provided under this policy. During meal periods and rest periods, the School will relieve employees of all duty and will not exercise control over employees' activities. Employees are free to spend their meal period and rest period time as they choose and are not required to remain on-premises or "on-call" during off-duty meal periods and rest periods. Employees who have work-issued pagers or phones should turn those devices off while taking meal periods and rest periods. No School manager or supervisor may impede or discourage employees from taking meal periods and rest periods provided under this policy.

III. Overtime Pay

A. Overtime Definition and Rates of Pay

All nonexempt employees will be paid overtime at time and one-half of their regular rate of pay for any hours worked in excess of:

1. 40 per workweek;
2. 12 consecutive hours without regard to the starting and ending time of the workday (excluding duty-free meal periods), whichever calculation results in the greater payment of wages.

Overtime will be computed on actual minutes worked, adjusted to the nearest 15-minute increment. Only those hours that are actually worked are counted to determine an employee's overtime pay. Compensated holidays, for example, are not hours worked and therefore are not counted in making overtime calculations unless the employee actually worked on the holiday.

B. Workweek and Workday

Unless otherwise provided, for purposes of calculating overtime, each workweek begins at 12:00 a.m. MST on Sunday and ends at 11:59 p.m. MST on Saturday.

C. Pre-Authorization

Nonexempt employees may not work overtime without the express prior approval of their supervisor. If an emergency or unexpected situation arises, you should remain clocked in while completing your duties. Be sure to inform your supervisor of the time and reason for the incident as soon as possible. Nonexempt employees who fail to obtain approval prior to working hours that extend beyond their normal 8-hour workday or 40-hour workweek will be subject to disciplinary action. Overtime offenses may result in termination. During busy periods, the employer may require employees to work extended hours.

IV. Other Types of Pay

A. Reporting Pay

Nonexempt employees who report to work at the School's request will be paid for the time they are required or permitted to remain at the workplace waiting for a decision on job assignment or when waiting to begin work.

B. Travel Time for Non-Exempt Employees

Non-exempt employees are paid for mandatory work travel time in accordance with state law.

C. Holiday Pay

Eligible employees are paid their regular straight-time wages for School-paid holidays as set forth under the policy entitled "Holidays." To receive holiday pay, the employee generally must work the regularly scheduled workdays preceding and following the School holiday or receive prior approval from their supervisor to take the time off. Nonexempt employees who work during a School-paid holiday are paid as set forth under the policy entitled "Holidays" in this handbook.

D. Pay Advances

Loans and pay advances are not permitted.

E. Stipends

In certain cases, additional compensation may be available for tasks such as extra work, coaching, or supporting the school beyond regular duties. The decision to offer stipends is typically made at the end of the school year by the employee's supervisor and/or the Executive Director, based on available funds and the organization's needs as they align with the mission and vision for the upcoming year. Stipends are typically paid per semester unless otherwise notated, but they are not guaranteed and must be approved **before** the school year begins whenever possible.

Employees who accept a stipend are expected to fulfill all responsibilities associated with the stipend in a timely and professional manner in order to receive the full assigned amount, continue to meet all regular job duties, including grading, recording absences, submitting reports, and meeting deadlines, and ensure that the extra duty associated with the stipend does not interfere with the successful performance of their core responsibilities. If a staff member fails to meet the expectations of the stipend role, or if the extra duty negatively impacts their ability to fulfill the responsibilities of their primary position, the supervisor reserves the right to adjust or revoke the stipend.

V. Safe Harbor Policy for Exempt Employees

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

If the employee believes a mistake has occurred or if the employee has any questions, the employee should use the reporting procedure outlined below.

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

Under state law, salary is subject to certain deductions. For example, the employee's salary can be reduced for the following reasons:

- Full-day absences for personal reasons
- Full-day absences for sickness or disability, if the available paid sick leave has been exhausted;
- Intermittent absences, including partial-day absences, covered by federal Family and Medical Leave Act, if other available paid leave has been exhausted;
- To offset amounts received as payment for jury and witness fees or military pay;
- During the first or last week of employment in the event the employee works less than a full week; and
- Any work week in which the employee performs no work for the school.

Salary also may be reduced for certain types of deductions, such as the employee portion of health, dental or life insurance premiums; state, federal or local taxes, social security; or, voluntary contributions to a 401(k) or pension plan.

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

- Partial-day absences for personal reasons, sickness, or disability;
- Absence on a holiday when the facility is closed or because the facility is otherwise closed on the scheduled workday;
- Absences for jury duty, attendance as a witness or military leave in any week in which the employee has performed any work; and
- Any other deductions prohibited by state or federal law.

If an employee believes they have been subject to any improper deductions, they should immediately report the matter to the Human Resources Director. If the Human Resources Director is unavailable or if the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person (or if they have not received a prompt and fully acceptable reply), they should immediately contact the Executive Director.

Every report will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate, up to and including termination for any employee who violates this policy. In addition, the School will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report alleged violations of this policy or who cooperate in the investigation of such reports. Retaliation is unacceptable, and any form of retaliation in violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

VI. Place and Time for Payment of Wages

A. Regular Pay Days

Employees are paid monthly, on the last business day of the month. Non-exempt employees are paid for hours worked between the 16th of one month to the 15th of the next month. For example, hours worked between September 16th and October 15th will be paid to the employee on October 31st. Exempt, Certified Employees are paid their monthly salary rate where the payroll year runs from August through July. Exempt, Administrative Employees are paid their monthly salary rate where the payroll year runs from July through June.

Paychecks will automatically be deposited into employee accounts through direct deposit. The money will be deposited on the last banking business day of the month. Employees can view payroll information including gross pay, earnings, deductions, net pay, sick time availability on the Human Resources Information System. If there are any questions, please ask the Human Resources Director. If the Human Resources Director is unavailable, contact the Executive Director.

B. Payment on Resignation, Termination, or Completion of Assignment or Term

If an employee resigns, his or her paycheck will be available on the next regularly scheduled payday. Employees who are terminated involuntarily will be paid on the day of the discharge.

C. Garnishments

The School complies with applicable state and federal laws regarding the garnishment and assignment of wages. Repeated garnishments for multiple debts can be grounds for discipline as provided by applicable laws, which include termination.

D. Payroll Deductions

Deductions for federal Income Tax and Medicare are required by federal law. State Income Tax and State Disability Insurance deductions as required by the State of Colorado. Other deductions for insurance or other benefits may be specifically authorized by the employee in writing or by electronic signature. Each paycheck stub itemizes amounts that have been withheld. It is the employee's responsibility to confirm the accuracy of payroll deductions and personal information and to notify the Human Resource Director immediately of any changes. It is important that employees keep this information for tax purposes. Questions about deductions should be directed to the Human Resources Director.

Non-Exempt Employees' Time Reporting

(Use of time clocks/cards and Rounding Practices)

Accurate time recording is important for you and the School.

Do not punch "In" before starting a shift more than seven minutes before the normal start of that shift. For example, if your shift begins at 8:00 a.m., do not punch "In" before 7:53 a.m. unless

instructed otherwise by your supervisor. Punch "Out" as soon as possible following the completion of your shift. Normally, this should not be more than seven minutes following the end of your shift, unless you are authorized to work overtime. If you miss a punch in Paylocity, you will need to submit the correction in the payroll system. Your direct supervisor will approve the correction in the system.

Full-time, non-exempt employees who work five or more consecutive hours will be provided at least one uncompensated 30-minute meal break. During the break, employees will be relieved of all duties and permitted to pursue personal activities. If, however, circumstances exist that make an uninterrupted meal period impractical, the employee may consume an "on-duty" meal while performing duties without any loss of time or compensation. Employees must comply with all applicable timekeeping requirements, including recording the beginning and end time of their meal breaks, and clocking "Out" and "In" using the Paylocity time clock system.

You should not punch another person's time card or permit anyone else to punch yours. Time card falsification will not be tolerated.

These records are used by the School to calculate your pay. It is very important that they are accurate and complete. Employees are expected to submit accurate and complete time records reflecting all hours worked, review and approve monthly time cards by the end of day on the 15th of each month. Time card corrections received after this time may not be applied until the following pay cycle. If you also chose to keep your own personal time records, you must provide them to the School if you find a discrepancy between the School's records and your records. Contact your supervisor with any questions about how your pay is calculated. Promptly notify your supervisor if you notice any mistakes in your time records or your pay. Also notify your supervisor if you perceive that anyone is interfering with your ability to record your time accurately and completely. All reports will be investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken. The School will not tolerate retaliation against employees for making a report or participating in an investigation.

Paid Holidays

Currently all classified employees who are regularly scheduled to work twenty (20) or more hours per week shall receive the holidays as listed below. Part time, classified employees will receive 4 hours of holiday pay. Full time, classified employees will receive 8 hours of holiday pay. Employees must work the school day before and after the holiday in order to be eligible for holiday pay. With limited substitute teacher availability, it is critical that any employee who needs to take PTO before or after a paid holiday works with their supervisor for approval at least 2 weeks prior to the requested date. If an emergency or unexpected need arises, employees must work with their supervisor.

The following table contains the Federal Holidays observed by Stargate.

Holiday	Employee Type			
	12 month 247-260 days	11 month 220 - 246 days	10 month 200 - 219 days	9 month up to 199 days
Labor Day	X	X	X	X
Thanksgiving Day	X	X	X	X
Friday after Thanksgiving	X	X	X	X
Christmas Eve or day after Christmas	X	X	X	X
Christmas Day	X	X	X	X
New Year's Eve or day after New Year's Day	X	X	X	
New Year's Day	X	X	X	X
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	X	X	X	X
Presidents' Day	X	X	X	X
Friday of Spring Break	X	X*		
Memorial Day	X	X*	X*	
Juneteenth	X	X		
Independence Day	X			
Floating Holiday	X	X	X	X
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOLIDAYS	14	13*	11*	9
	*if eligible for holiday pay per the policy.			

Full-time certified employees receive a regular monthly salary that includes all of the foregoing paid holidays.

Part-time certified employees receive holiday pay at their usual rate based upon average hours worked per day.

Vacation Policy

The School provides vacation benefits to eligible employees (full time, 12-month employees) to enable them to take paid time off for rest and recreation. The School believes that this time is valuable for employees in order to enhance their productivity and make their work experience with the School personally satisfying.

I. Vacation Accrual

All regular full-time, 12-month employees are eligible to accrue vacation benefits. The accrual

rate is 1.67 vacation days for each month worked (normal annual accrual - 20 working days).

Employees who work on a school-year basis do not receive vacation pay or leave, as they are given ample time off in school breaks during which they can schedule vacation.

II. Maximum Vacation Accrual

A 12-month employee may carry forward 25 vacation days from one calendar year to the next. Employees accrue vacation based on their years of service, up to a maximum accrued balance of 25 days. Once an employee's accrued vacation balance reaches 25 days, additional vacation will not accrue until the employee uses accrued vacation and their balance falls below the 25-day maximum. Vacation accrual will automatically resume once the balance is below the cap.

III. Pay in Lieu of Vacation

No employee will receive pay in lieu of vacation, unless the employee has deferred their vacation at the School's request.

IV. Vacation Accrual During Leaves of Absence

Employees do not accrue vacation during an unpaid leave of absence or while on disability salary continuation. Vacation accruals recommence when the employee returns to work.

V. Vacation Pay on Termination

On termination of employment, employees are paid all accrued but unused vacation through their last day worked at their base rate of pay at the time of termination.

VI. Vacation Approval

All vacations must be approved in advance by the employee's immediate supervisor.

VII. Vacation Scheduling

Scheduling of vacations is to be done in a manner consistent with the School's operational requirements. Employees should submit their vacation requests to their immediate supervisor for approval at least two weeks prior to the commencement of a vacation period. Subject to supervisor approval, an employee may otherwise schedule and take vacation at any time once it has accrued.

VIII. Vacation Use

All vacation days generally should be taken no later than the calendar year immediately following the year in which they accrue, unless prior approval is obtained from the supervisor to carry over the vacation days to the subsequent year.

IX. Vacation Advances

An employee is not permitted to borrow on future accrual of vacation benefits, except with the approval of the Human Resources Director. In no case may new employees borrow or take vacation time before they become eligible to accrue vacation, as described in Paragraph A, above. Employees who use any vacation days before they have been accrued and then leave the employ of the School must repay any overdrawn amount to the School at the time of termination.

X. Holidays Occurring During Vacation

If an observed School holiday (see guideline entitled "Holidays") occurs during an employee's scheduled vacation, no deduction from accrued vacation will be made for the holiday. An employee may add to their vacation period by using the holiday in place of accrued vacation time.

XI. Vacation Increments

Eligible employees must take accrued vacation in increments of at least four (4) hours.

XII. Vacation for Family Care and Medical Leave Purpose

Employees who request family care or medical leave pursuant to the School's FMLA policy generally must apply any accrued vacation pay to the unpaid portion of their family or medical leave, as permitted by law; please see Human Resource Manager for more information.

Paid Time Off (Sick Pay/PTO leave) Policy (Rev. 3/2024)

The School's Sick Pay/PTO leave policy is designed to provide position and salary continuation in the event of illness or injury. Regular full-time and part-time employees are eligible for Sick pay/PTO leave. Additionally, Sick Pay/PTO leave allows continuation of base salary plus benefits when an eligible employee is required to be absent from work.

If an employee has used allotted Sick Pay/PTO leave for reasons listed below or otherwise, no additional time will be given to the employee.

I. Eligibility

An employee qualifies for Sick Pay/PTO leave under this policy upon the start of the employee's employment.

II. Leave Benefit

Beginning July 1, 2023, full-time employees will be granted 10 Sick Pay/PTO leave days. Part-time employees will be granted 1 hour of Sick Pay for every 30 hours worked. For purposes of complying with the Healthy Families Workplace Act (HFWA) the first six days (48 hours) will be considered Sick Pay. The remaining four days (days 7-10 or hours 49-80) will be considered PTO leave.

Sick Pay/PTO leave not used within the given fiscal year does not carry over to the following year.

III. Leave Usage

Sick pay used for illness may be used at any time. PTO leave for any non-illness related absence must be approved by the employee's supervisor.

Requests for PTO leave approval may not be granted if the request precedes/extends a break period, falls on a Professional Development day, or falls on a high absence day. See the Black-out Days Policy below.

Sick Pay/PTO leave used will be charged against the employee's annual allotment. If the employee's Sick Pay/PTO leave allocation has been exhausted, any time taken in excess of the allotment will be charged as unpaid leave at the employee's current pay rate. If an employee qualifies for vacation pay and has exhausted all available Sick Pay/PTO leave, the School reserves the right to apply accrued Vacation to those absences.

Sick Pay benefits used intermittently or for three days or more due to a serious health condition shall run concurrently with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Classified employees may use Sick Pay/PTO leave to supplement their unpaid time during breaks when the school is

closed (Fall Break, Thanksgiving Week, Winter Break, Mid-Winter Break, and Spring Break). Time allotted for this purpose is two (2) days per week.

Employees will be paid for Sick Pay/PTO leave no later than the payday for the next regular payroll period after the Sick Pay/PTO leave was taken.

When permitted by law, a supervisor may request a doctor's note certifying the medical necessity for an absence. The employee may be required to submit a return to work note from the treating physician prior to reporting back to the workplace.

To the full extent permitted by law, the School reserves the right to require that an employee submit to examinations by a health care provider of the Stargate's choosing for continuation of payments under this benefit.

Employees using Sick Pay/PTO leave may do so in minimum increments of one (1) hour. If a substitute teacher is required, the minimum increment is four (4) hours.

IV. Compensation For Paid Time Off

When an employee uses Sick Pay/PTO leave, it is paid at the employee's regular rate of pay. At the end of each school year, Certified and Administrative employees will receive \$175 for each unused Sick Pay/PTO day, up to a maximum of 10 days. Classified employees will receive payment for each unused Sick Pay/PTO day at their regular daily rate of pay, up to a maximum of \$175 per day, for up to 10 days. Previously accrued leave is not eligible for payout. Unused PTO and awarded Sick Pay/PTO are not paid out upon resignation or termination. **This practice is in compliance with HFWA (see Section II. Leave Benefit).** Employees are still encouraged to use their protected sick leave under HFWA.

V. Approval

If the need for Sick Pay/PTO leave is foreseeable (e.g., scheduled routine medical appointments), the employee must provide reasonable advance notice and request a substitute teacher if needed. If the leave is not foreseeable, the employee must provide notice of the leave as soon as practical. When requesting Sick Pay/PTO leave, employees should not disclose any private medical information or any other confidential personal information. For Sick Pay/PTO leave of four or more consecutive workdays, the School may require reasonable documentation that the paid sick leave is for a covered purpose under the law; however, documentation is not required for leave under the law's public health emergency provisions.

VI. Non-Retaliation or Discrimination

The School strictly prohibits any form of retaliation or discrimination against an employee for attempting to use or using Sick Pay/PTO leave under this policy, and for any other reason prohibited by applicable law. Employees who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against should report their concerns to the Human Resources Department.

Black-Out Days Policy

The School relies on full staffing during certain high-need periods to maintain instructional continuity, testing integrity, and student safety. This policy applies district-wide across all K-12

grade levels and applies uniformly to all Stargate employees; it is not determined at the individual building or department level.

I. Black-Out Periods

PTO, vacation, and other discretionary time off requests will not be approved during the following periods:

- All Professional Development (PD) days
- The last two weeks of the school year, including Field Day
- Finals weeks
- The first week of school
- Parent-Teacher Conference days
- Building/school-wide testing days and weeks
- The school day immediately before and immediately after each scheduled break (Fall, Thanksgiving, Winter, Mid-Winter, and Spring Break)

II. Exceptions

Time off during a black-out period will only be considered under the following circumstances:

- The request is to use HFWA protected sick days
- The request is submitted and approved one week in advance by the employee's supervisor, unless there is an emergency (e.g. death or sudden medical necessity)
- The employee provides a doctor's note documenting medical necessity
- Jury duty
- Staff who have conflicting professional development approved by their supervisor, or Stargate club sponsor activities, including, but not limited to competitions

Requests that do not meet one of these conditions will not be approved, regardless of available PTO balance.

III. Approval Process

Employees seeking an exception must submit their request to their supervisor as far in advance as possible but no later than one week in advance of the requested PTO time. Supervisors will evaluate exception requests based on staffing needs, substitute availability, and the operational impact of the absence..

IV. Unplanned Absences

This policy governs requests for planned, discretionary time off. It does not apply to legally protected leave (e.g., FMLA, jury duty, bereavement) or genuine emergencies, which will continue to be handled under their respective policies elsewhere in this handbook.

Leaves of Absence

I. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

(includes qualifying exigency and military caregiver leave)

The School will provide FMLA to its eligible employees. The School posts the mandatory FMLA Notice and upon hire, provides all new employees with notices required by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) on Employee Rights and Responsibilities under the Family and Medical Leave Act in both Elementary and Secondary buildings near the mailboxes.

The function of this policy is to provide employees with a general description of their FMLA rights. In the event of any conflict between this policy and the applicable law, employees will be afforded all rights required by law.

If you have any questions, concerns, or disputes with this policy, you must contact the Human Resources Director.

A. General Provisions

Under this policy, the School will grant up to 12 weeks (or up to 26 weeks of military caregiver leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness) during a 12-month period to eligible employees. The leave may be paid, unpaid or a combination of paid and unpaid leave, depending on the circumstances of the leave and as specified in this policy.

B. Eligibility

To qualify to take family or medical leave under this policy, the employee must meet all of the following conditions:

1. The employee must have worked for the school for 12 months or 52 weeks. The 12 months or 52 weeks need not have been consecutive. Separate periods of employment will be counted, provided that the break in service does not exceed seven years. Separate periods of employment will be counted if the break in service exceeds seven years due to National Guard or Reserve military service obligations or when there is a written agreement, including a collective bargaining agreement, stating the employer's intention to rehire the employee after the service break. For eligibility purposes, an employee will be considered to have been employed for an entire week even if the employee was on the payroll for only part of a week or if the employee is on leave during the week.
2. The employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave. The 1,250 hours do not include time spent on paid or unpaid leave. Consequently, these hours of leave should not be counted in determining the 1,250 hours eligibility test for an employee under FMLA.
3. The employee must work in a worksite where 50 or more employees are employed by the school within 75 miles of that office or worksite. The distance is to be calculated by using available transportation by the most direct route.

C. Type of Leave Covered

To qualify as FMLA leave under this policy, the employee must be taking leave for one of the reasons listed below:

1. The birth of a child and in order to care for that child.
2. The placement of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child.
3. To care for a spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition (described below).
 - a. Under the Colorado Family Care Act, this is expanded to recognize
 - i. Civil Unions under Colorado Law;
 - ii. Domestic Partnerships that are registered in the municipality in which the person resides or with the state; or
 - iii. Domestic Partnerships recognized by the employee's employer. These partners can be of the same or different sex.

4. The serious health condition (described below) of the employee.
 - a. An employee may take leave because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's position.
 - b. A serious health condition is defined as a condition that requires inpatient care at a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity or any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care or a condition that requires continuing care by a licensed health care provider.
 - c. This policy covers illnesses of a serious and long-term nature, resulting in recurring or lengthy absences. Generally, a chronic or long-term health condition that would result in a period of three consecutive days of incapacity with the first visit to the health care provider within seven days of the onset of the incapacity and a second visit within 30 days of the incapacity would be considered a serious health condition. For chronic conditions requiring periodic health care visits for treatment, such visits must take place at least twice a year.
 - d. Employees with questions about what illnesses are covered under this FMLA policy or under the school's sick leave policy are encouraged to consult with the Human Resource Manager. If an employee takes paid sick leave for a condition that progresses into a serious health condition and the employee requests unpaid leave as provided under this policy, the school may designate all or some portion of related leave taken as leave under this policy, to the extent that the earlier leave meets the necessary qualifications.
5. Qualifying exigency leave for families of members of the National Guard or Reserves or of a regular component of the Armed Forces when the covered military member is on covered active duty or called to covered active duty.
 - a. An employee whose spouse, son, daughter or parent either has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active military duty or who is already on covered active duty may take up to 12 weeks of leave for reasons related to or affected by the family member's call-up or service. The qualifying exigency must be one of the following:
 - i. short-notice deployment
 - ii. military events and activities
 - iii. child care and school activities
 - iv. counseling
 - v. rest and recuperation
 - vi. post-deployment activities, and
 - vii. additional activities that arise out of active duty, provided that the employer and employee agree, including agreement on timing and duration of the leave.

Eligible employees are entitled to FMLA leave to care for a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, or a member of the Armed Forces, the National Guard or Reserves who is on the temporary disability retired list, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty for which they are undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or otherwise in outpatient status; or otherwise on the temporary disability retired list. Eligible employees may not take leave under this provision to care for former members of the Armed Forces, former members of the National Guard and Reserves, and members on the permanent disability retired list.

In order to care for a covered servicemember, an eligible employee must be the spouse, son, daughter, or parent, or next of kin of a covered servicemember.

1. A “son or daughter of a covered servicemember” means the covered servicemember's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the covered servicemember stood in loco parentis, and who is of any age.
2. A “parent of a covered servicemember” means a covered servicemember's biological, adoptive, step or foster father or mother, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the covered servicemember. This term does not include parents “in law.”
3. Under the FMLA, a “spouse” means a husband or wife, including those in same-sex marriages, which were made legal in all 50 United States as of June 26, 2015.
4. The “next of kin of a covered servicemember” is the nearest blood relative, other than the covered service member's spouse, parent, son, or daughter, in the following order of priority: blood relatives who have been granted legal custody of the servicemember by court decree or statutory provisions, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins, unless the covered servicemember has specifically designated in writing another blood relative as his or her nearest blood relative for purposes of military caregiver leave under the FMLA. When no such designation is made, and there are multiple family members with the same level of relationship to the covered servicemember, all such family members shall be considered the covered servicemember's next of kin and may take FMLA leave to provide care to the covered servicemember, either consecutively or simultaneously. When such designation has been made, the designated individual shall be deemed to be the covered servicemember's only next of kin. For example, if a covered servicemember has three siblings and has not designated a blood relative to provide care, all three siblings would be considered the covered servicemember's next of kin. Alternatively, where a covered servicemember has a sibling(s) and designates a cousin as his or her next of kin for FMLA purposes, then only the designated cousin is eligible as the covered servicemember's next of kin. An employer is permitted to require an employee to provide confirmation of covered family relationship to the covered servicemember pursuant to § 825.122(k).

“Covered active duty” means:

1. “Covered active duty” for members of a regular component of the Armed Forces means duty during deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country.
2. (2) Covered active duty or call to covered active duty status in the case of a member of the Reserve components of the Armed Forces means duty during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country under a Federal call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation, in accordance with 29 CR 825.102.

The leave may commence as soon as the individual receives the call-up notice. (Son or daughter for this type of FMLA leave is defined the same as for child for other types of FMLA leave except that the person does not have to be a minor.) This type of leave would be counted toward the employee's 12-week maximum of FMLA leave in a 12-month period.

1. Military caregiver leave (also known as covered servicemember leave) to care for an injured or ill servicemember or veteran.

An employee whose son, daughter, parent or next of kin is a covered servicemember may take up to 26 weeks in a single 12-month period to take care of leave to care for that servicemember.

Next of kin is defined as the closest blood relative of the injured or recovering service member.

The term “covered servicemember” means:

1. a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves)

who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness; or

2. a veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) at any time during the period of 5 years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes that medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

The term “serious injury or illness” means:

1. in the case of a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves), means an injury or illness that was incurred by the member in line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces (or existed before the beginning of the member’s active duty and was aggravated by service in line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces) and that may render the member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member’s office, grade, rank, or rating; and
2. in the case of a veteran who was a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) at any time during a period when the person was a covered servicemember, means a qualifying (as defined by the Secretary of Labor) injury or illness incurred by a covered servicemember in the line of duty on active duty that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank or rating.
3. Outpatient status, with respect to a covered servicemember, means the status of a member of the Armed Forces assigned to either a military medical treatment facility as an outpatient; or a unit established for the purpose of providing command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients.

D. Amount of Leave

An eligible employee can take up to 12 weeks for the FMLA circumstances (1) through (5) above under this policy during any 12-month period. The school will measure the 12-month period as a rolling 12- month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any leave under this policy. Each time an employee takes leave, the school will compute the amount of leave the employee has taken under this policy in the last 12 months and subtract it from the 12 weeks of available leave, and the balance remaining is the amount the employee is entitled to take at that time. An eligible employee can take up to 26 weeks for the FMLA circumstance (6) above (military caregiver leave) during a single 12-month period. For this military caregiver leave, the school will measure the 12- month period as a rolling 12-month period measured forward. FMLA leave already taken for other FMLA circumstances will be deducted from the total of 26 weeks available.

If spouses both work for the school and each wishes to take leave for the birth of a child, adoption or placement of a child in foster care, or to care for a parent (but not a parent “in-law”) with a serious health condition, the spouses may only take a combined total of 12 weeks of leave. If spouses both work for the school and each wishes to take leave to care for a covered injured or ill servicemember, the spouses may only take a combined total of 26 weeks of leave.

E. Employee Status and Benefits During Leave

While an employee is on leave, the school will continue the employee's health benefits during the leave period at the same level and under the same conditions as if the employee had continued to work.

If the employee chooses not to return to work for reasons other than a continued serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member or a circumstance beyond the employee's control, the School will require the employee to reimburse the School the amount it paid for the employee's share of the health insurance premium during the leave period.

Under current school policy, the employee pays a portion of the health care premium. While on paid leave, the employer will continue to make payroll deductions to collect the employee's share of the premium. While on unpaid leave, the employee must continue to make this payment, either in person or by mail. The payment must be received in the Accounting Department by the 15th day of each month. If the payment is more than 30 days late, the employee's health care coverage may be dropped for the duration of the leave.

The employer will provide 15 days' notification prior to the employee's loss of coverage.

If the employee contributes to a life insurance or disability plan, the employer will continue making payroll deductions while the employee is on paid leave. While the employee is on unpaid leave, the employee may request continuation of such benefits and pay his or her portion of the premiums, or the employer may elect to maintain such benefits during the leave and pay the employee's share of the premium payments. If the employee does not continue these payments, the employer may discontinue coverage during the leave. If the employer maintains coverage, the employer may recover the costs incurred for paying the employee's share of any premiums, whether or not the employee returns to work.

F. Employee Status After Leave

An employee who takes leave under this policy may be asked to provide a fitness for duty (FFD) clearance from the health care provider. This requirement will be included in the employer's response to the FMLA request. Generally, an employee who takes FMLA leave will be able to return to the same position or a position with equivalent status, pay, benefits and other employment terms. The position will be the same or one which is virtually identical in terms of pay, benefits and working conditions. The school may choose to exempt certain key employees from this requirement and not return them to the same or similar position.

G. Use of Paid and Unpaid Leave

An employee who is taking FMLA leave because of the employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member must use all paid vacation, personal or sick leave prior to being eligible for unpaid leave. Sick leave may be run concurrently with FMLA leave if the reason for the FMLA leave is covered by the established sick leave policy.

Disability leave for the birth of the child and for an employee's serious health condition, including workers' compensation leave (to the extent that it qualifies), will be designated as FMLA leave and will run concurrently with FMLA. For example, if an employer provides six weeks of pregnancy disability leave, the six weeks will be designated as FMLA leave and counted toward the employee's 12-week entitlement. The employee may then be required to substitute accrued (or earned) paid leave as appropriate before being eligible for unpaid leave for what remains of the 12-week entitlement. An employee who is taking leave for the adoption or foster care of a child must use all paid vacation, personal or family leave prior to being eligible for unpaid leave. An employee who is using military FMLA leave for a qualifying exigency must use all paid vacation and personal leave prior to being eligible for unpaid leave.

An employee using FMLA military caregiver leave must also use all paid vacation, personal leave or sick leave (as long as the reason for the absence is covered by the school's sick leave policy) prior to being eligible for unpaid leave.

H. Intermittent Leave or a Reduced Work Schedule

The employee may take FMLA leave in 12 consecutive weeks, may use the leave intermittently (take a day periodically when needed over the year) or, under certain circumstances, may use the leave to reduce the workweek or workday, resulting in a reduced hour schedule. In all cases, the leave may not exceed a total of 12 workweeks (or 26 workweeks to care for an injured or ill servicemember over a 12- month period).

The school may temporarily transfer an employee to an available alternative position with equivalent pay and benefits if the alternative position would better accommodate the intermittent or reduced schedule, in instances of when leave for the employee or employee's family member is foreseeable and for planned medical treatment, including recovery from a serious health condition or to care for a child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care. For the birth, adoption or foster care of a child, the school and the employee must mutually agree to the schedule before the employee may take the leave intermittently or work a reduced hour schedule. Leave for birth, adoption or foster care of a child must be taken within one year of the birth or placement of the child.

If the employee is taking leave for a serious health condition or because of the serious health condition of a family member, the employee should try to reach agreement with the school before taking intermittent leave or working a reduced hour schedule. If this is not possible, then the employee must prove that the use of the leave is medically necessary.

I. Certification for the Employee's Serious Health Condition

The school will require certification for the employee's serious health condition. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave. Medical certification will be provided using the DOL Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee's Serious Health Condition.

The school may directly contact the employee's health care provider for verification or clarification purposes using a health care professional, an HR professional, leave administrator or management official. The school will not use the employee's direct supervisor for this contact. Before the school makes this direct contact with the health care provider, the employee will be given an opportunity to resolve any deficiencies in the medical certification. In compliance with HIPAA Medical Privacy Rules, the school will obtain the employee's permission for clarification of individually identifiable health information.

The school has the right to ask for a second opinion if it has reason to doubt the certification. The school will pay for the employee to get a certification from a second doctor, which the school will select. The school may deny FMLA leave to an employee who refuses to release relevant medical records to the health care provider designated to provide a second or third opinion. If necessary to resolve a conflict between the original certification and the second opinion, the school will require the opinion of a third doctor. The school and the employee will mutually select the third doctor, and the school will pay for the opinion. This third opinion will be considered final.

The employee will be provisionally entitled to leave and benefits under the FMLA pending the second and/or third opinion.

J. Certification for the Family Member's Serious Health Condition

The school will require certification for the family member's serious health condition. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave. Medical certification will be provided using the DOL Certification of Health Care Provider for Family Member's Serious Health Condition.

The school may directly contact the employee's family member's health care provider for verification or clarification purposes using a health care professional, an HR professional, leave administrator or management official. The school will not use the employee's direct supervisor for this contact. Before the school makes this direct contact with the health care provider, the employee will be given an opportunity to resolve any deficiencies in the medical certification. In compliance with HIPAA Medical Privacy Rules, the school will obtain the employee's family member's permission for clarification of individually identifiable health information.

The school has the right to ask for a second opinion if it has reason to doubt the certification. The school will pay for the employee's family member to get a certification from a second doctor, which the school will select. The school may deny FMLA leave to an employee whose family member refuses to release relevant medical records to the health care provider designated to provide a second or third opinion. If necessary to resolve a conflict between the original certification and the second opinion, the school will require the opinion of a third doctor. The school and the employee will mutually select the third doctor, and the school will pay for the opinion. This third opinion will be considered final. The employee will be provisionally entitled to leave and benefits under the FMLA pending the second and/or third opinion.

K. Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave

The school will require certification of the qualifying exigency for military family leave. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay.

Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave. This certification will be provided using the DOL Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave.

L. Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Covered Servicemember for Military Family Leave

The school will require certification for the serious injury or illness of the covered servicemember. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave. This certification will be provided using the DOL Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Covered Servicemember.

M. Recertification

The school may request recertification for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member no more frequently than every 30 days unless circumstances have changed significantly, or if the employer receives information casting doubt on the reason given for the absence, or if the employee seeks an extension of his or her leave. Otherwise, the school

may request recertification for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member every six months in connection with an FMLA absence. The school may provide the employee's health care provider with the employee's attendance records and ask whether the need for leave is consistent with the employee's serious health condition.

N. Procedure for Requesting FMLA Leave

All employees requesting FMLA leave must provide verbal or written notice of the need for the leave to the HR manager. Within five business days after the employee has provided this notice, the HR manager will complete and provide the employee with the DOL Notice of Eligibility and Rights.

When the need for the leave is foreseeable, the employee must provide the employer with at least 30 days' notice. When an employee becomes aware of a need for FMLA leave less than 30 days in advance, the employee must provide notice of the need for the leave either the same day or the next business day. When the need for FMLA leave is not foreseeable, the employee must comply with the school's usual and customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave, absent unusual circumstances.

O. Designation of FMLA Leave

Within five business days after the employee has submitted the appropriate certification form, the HR manager will complete and provide the employee with a written response to the employee's request for FMLA leave using the DOL Designation Notice.

P. Intent to Return to Work From FMLA Leave

On a basis that does not discriminate against employees on FMLA leave, the school may require an employee on FMLA leave to report periodically on the employee's status and intent to return to work.

II. Other Disability Leaves

In addition to medical or pregnancy-related disability leaves described in Sections II and III, employees may take a temporary disability leave of absence if necessary to reasonably accommodate a workplace injury or a disability under the ADA. Any disability leave under this section will run concurrently with any medical leave to which the employee is entitled to.

Disability leaves under this section will be unpaid.

Employees taking disability leave must comply with the Family Care, Medical and Military Family Leave provisions regarding substitution of paid leaves, notice, and medical certification. For the purpose of applying these provisions, a disability leave will be considered to be a medical leave.

If a disability leave under this section extends beyond 12 weeks in a 12-month period, the employee will not be entitled to any continued employer contributions towards any employee benefit plan unless otherwise required by law. An employee, however, may elect to continue participating in such benefit plans, at the employee's own expense, to the extent permitted by such plans.

The duration of a leave under this section shall be consistent with applicable law, but in no event shall the leave extend past the date on which an employee becomes capable of performing the essential functions of their position, with or without reasonable accommodation. For a full

explanation of leave duration and reinstatement rights, employees should contact the Human Resources Department.

III. Other Leaves of Absence Military Leave of Absence

The School will grant employees a military leave of absence up to 15 days of unpaid leave each calendar year for military training for members of the Colorado National Guard or US military reserve forces. Upon satisfactory completion paperwork presented to the School, the employee is entitled to be restored to his or her former or similar position with no loss of benefits.

This also applies to members of the National Guard who are absent for any length of time in order to engage in active service.

Private employees returning from state National Guard or US reserve training are entitled to reinstatement to their pre-leave, non temporary job or a job with similar status, pay and seniority, with full retention of benefits, provided the employee gives evidence of satisfactory completion of service and is still qualified to perform the duties of his or her job.

A private employee who is a member of the state National Guard and who is absent from work (regardless of the length of absence) for active service for state purposes must receive the same reinstatement rights described above, as long as the employee gives evidence of satisfactory completion of service and is still qualified to perform the duties of the job.

An employee's absence will not affect the employee's right to receive normal vacation, sick leave, bonus, advancement or other advantages of employment normally afforded to that employee's position.

The School prohibits discrimination against an employee because they take time off under this policy.

Volunteer Civil Air Patrol Mission Leave

Employees who serve as volunteers for a qualified volunteer organization, who are requested to respond to a disaster emergency, or are members of the Civil Air Patrol, Colorado Wing, who are called to duty for a civil air patrol mission, are entitled to an unpaid leave of absence of up to 15 days in any calendar year. This leave is not available to temporary employees.

Upon return to work, the employee must provide the school with evidence of the satisfactory completion of the disaster response or civil air patrol service. Employees taking qualified leave under this policy will be restored to the same or similar position held prior to the leave of absence.

Exempt employees may be provided time off with pay when necessary to comply with state and federal wage and hour laws.

The school is permitted to deny leave if more than 20% of the workforce requests it at one time.

I. Jury Duty

The School supports employees in their civic duty to serve on a jury, and commits to provide

income protection while an employee carries out their civic responsibility. The School provides regular pay for the first three days of jury duty if they were scheduled to work. Beginning the fourth day and thereafter, employees, as jurors, are paid \$50.00 per day by the State of Colorado for state, district, or county court jury duty.

Additional income-protected time away from the workplace for this purpose will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

However, exempt employees who work any portion of a workweek in which they also serve on jury duty or appear as a witness will receive their full salary for that workweek. Employees are required to provide reasonable advance notice of the need for jury/witness leave. Employees also are expected to report to work each day or portion of a day they are not performing jury/witness duty. A letter from the courts must be submitted for verification of service.

II. Voting Time Off

Voting is an important responsibility we all assume as citizens. We encourage employees to exercise their voting rights in all municipal, state, and federal elections.

Under most circumstances, it is possible for employees to vote either before or after work. If it is necessary for employees to arrive late or leave work early to vote in any election, employees should arrange with their supervisor/manager no later than the day prior to Election Day.

III. Bereavement Leave

The Bereavement Leave Policy establishes uniform guidelines for providing paid time off to employees for absences related to the death of immediate family members and fellow employees or retirees of the School.

All full-time, active employees are eligible for benefits under this policy. An employee who wishes to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify their supervisor as soon as possible. If an employee leaves work early on the day they are notified of the death, that day will not count as bereavement leave.

In addition to bereavement leave, an employee may, with their supervisor's approval, use any available PTO/vacation for additional approved time off as necessary. Employees under discipline for attendance issues may be required to provide documentation with regard to their bereavement leave.

Bereavement pay is calculated based on the base pay rate at the time of absence, and it will not include any special forms of compensation such as incentives, commissions, bonuses, overtime or shift differentials.

Paid bereavement leave will be granted according to the following schedule:

- Employees are provided bereavement time from regularly scheduled duty with regular pay in the event of the death of the employee's current spouse or domestic/civil union partner, child, stepchild, parent, stepparent, current father-in-law, current mother-in-law, current son-in-law, current daughter-in-law, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, grandparent, grandchild, or an adult who stood in loco parentis to the employee during childhood.
 - In State- 3 working days
 - Out of State- 5 working days

- Employees are allowed one day off from regular scheduled duty with regular pay in the event of death of the employee's brother-in-law, sister-in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or current spouse's or domestic/civil union partner's grandparent.

IV. Leave for Professional Improvement and In-service

The Governance Board of Directors and Administration recognizes that professional improvement of employees during the academic year is desirable. This improvement can be achieved when an employee visits other schools or classrooms, attends in-service programs, or participates in conferences, workshops, or conventions. Such experiences will benefit not only the employee but also the School's educational program. Leave requests must be submitted to the individual's supervisor at least two weeks in advance of the leave day(s). The individual's supervisor shall respond to the leave request within five (5) school days whenever possible. Employee PTO will not be charged for professional development once approved. Approved professional development will be recorded in the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) as PRO, any unapproved requests will be submitted as PTO/UPTO.

Colorado Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI)

Stargate Charter School is a local government employer under the Colorado Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Act. As permitted by law, the School has formally opted out of the state FAMLI program. As a result, the School does not withhold FAMLI premiums from employee wages, and employees are not automatically enrolled in or eligible for state FAMLI benefits through their employment with the School.

Individual Enrollment

Because the School has opted out, individual employees may elect to participate in FAMLI on their own, at their own cost and according to the state's enrollment rules and deadlines.

Employees who wish to enroll individually must notify the Human Resources Director before enrolling. This advance notice allows Human Resources to confirm the School's opt-out status, provide any information the state requires from the employer, and explain how the School's Short-Term Disability benefit coordinates with an individual FAMLI election (see Employee Benefits, Section I.B, Long-Term and Short-Term Disability Insurance) before the employee enrolls.

Employees considering individual enrollment are encouraged to review current program details directly at famli.colorado.gov, as enrollment windows, premiums, and benefit terms are set and updated by the state.

Employee Benefits

The School recognizes the value of benefits to employees and their families. The School supports employees by offering a comprehensive benefits program. For more information regarding benefit programs, including the terms, conditions, or eligibility requirements, please refer to the [Stargate Staff Site](#) under Human Resources Information. If you have questions or need further information, contact the Human Resources Director.

The School reserves the right to change providers and/or benefit plans as needed to maintain fiscal responsibility and continued coverage for employees of the School.

I. Insurance Benefits

A. Workers Compensation

The School complies with applicable state and federal laws concerning leaves and benefits for work-related illness or injury. In the event of a work-related illness or injury, it is imperative that an employee complete and submit the required forms within 24 hours in order to preserve any rights they may have under the law. Forms are available at the Elementary and Secondary Front Desks and from the Human Resources Director.

Any leave of absence due to a workplace injury runs concurrently with all other School leaves of absence. Employees who need to miss work due to a workplace injury must also request a formal leave of absence. See the Leave of Absence sections of this handbook for more information.

The School does not provide workers compensation benefits, or accept any liability, for any illness or injury that arises from an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity or event that is not an expected or required as part of the employee's work-related duties. Employees who choose to participate in any such off-duty activities may be required to sign a written agreement to confirm that they voluntarily assume the risk of injury or illness and release the School from any such liability.

B. Long-Term and Short-Term Disability Insurance (School-Provided Benefit)

Eligible employees may participate in the School's short- and long-term disability insurance plan. The insurance carrier makes all benefit and eligibility determinations.

For employees who individually enroll in Colorado FAML (see Leaves of Absence, Colorado Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAML)), the School's Short-Term Disability benefit will coordinate with FAML rather than pay in addition to it. The School's Short-Term Disability benefit will pay only the remaining gap between the employee's FAML benefit and their normal wage replacement, in accordance with the FAML benefit formula in effect at the time of the claim and the terms of the Short-Term Disability plan. Employees who do not enroll in individual FAML coverage remain eligible for the full Short-Term Disability benefit under the plan's standard terms.

Employees must notify the Human Resources Director before enrolling in individual FAML coverage so that Human Resources can explain how Short-Term Disability benefits will coordinate with the employee's FAML election in advance of enrollment.

C. Medical, Dental, and Vision Insurance

Eligible employees and their eligible dependents may participate in the School's medical, dental, and vision insurance plans starting the first day of the month following the employee's hire date. The premium cost for eligible employees will be provided to you separately. You also may contact the Human Resources Director to obtain the current premium schedule.

D. Life Insurance

Eligible employees may participate in the group life insurance plan on the first day of the month following the employee's hire date. The premium cost will be provided to you separately. You

also can contact the Human Resources Director to obtain the current premium schedule. You may be taxed on a portion of the value of this coverage under IRS rules.

E. Accidental Death and Dismemberment

Eligible employees may participate in the accidental death and dismemberment insurance plan the first day of the month following the employee's hire date. The premium cost will be provided to you separately. You also can contact the Human Resources Director to obtain the current premium schedule.

F. Premium Payments for Employees on Leave

The School will pay the employer's portion of premiums for continuation of School-sponsored group health plan benefits during the first 90 days of any authorized leave. Thereafter, the employee may only continue coverage under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) and must pay the full cost of doing so.

If an employee is on an approved FMLA, the School will permit the employee to continue coverage under School-sponsored group health plans by paying only the amount charged to similarly situated active employees. If an employee does not return to work at the expiration of an FMLA leave, regardless of whether they continued coverage during the FMLA leave, they normally will be eligible to elect COBRA continuation coverage with respect to School-sponsored group health plans, with the COBRA qualifying event normally being the expiration of the leave.

G. Conversion/Post-Employment Insurance Options

Pursuant to COBRA, eligible employees and their dependents may be entitled to continue certain benefit coverage after employment with the School ceases or certain other qualifying events occur. COBRA information is provided separately. In addition, you also can contact the Human Resources Director to obtain COBRA information.

H. Insurance Coverage Information

Eligibility requirements and further information concerning insurance coverage are fully explained in the applicable plan documents, summary plan descriptions, and any applicable summaries of material modification, available from the Human Resources Director. In all cases, however, the applicable plan document controls over any summary or other communication for purposes of determining your rights and benefits.

II. Retirement Programs

A. PERA - Public Employees Retirement Association

Employees contribute to the Public Employees Retirement Association of Colorado (PERA). PERA serves as a substitute for Social Security and provides benefits to state employees when they retire or are disabled. Employees and the School will contribute a percentage of each employee's earnings to a PERA account for each employee. The current employee contribution rate is 11%, and the School's current rate of contribution is 21.4% of earnings. PERA members may take advantage of voluntary programs such as life insurance, a 401K Plan, and long-term disability. Employees will be enrolled with PERA during hire and will receive additional information from PERA. PERA Customer Service may be contacted directly at 303-832-9550.

B. 401(k) and 457 Retirement Plans

PERA encourages employees to make additional savings toward their retirement needs. The PERA 401(k) and 457 retirement plans allows employees to obtain tax savings, retirement, and loan benefits in an investment package. Employees may enroll, discontinue contributions, or make changes in contributions or investment funds at any time. Additional information may be obtained on the [PERA Plus Information website](#).

C. 403(b) Retirement Plans

Stargate School recognizes the importance of saving for retirement and works with Equitable to provide an 403(b) retirement plan option. Please contact Jamie Winger, Financial Consultant with Equitable for more information:

Email: jamie.winger@equitable.com

Mobile: 303-908-3689

Direct: 303-305-5425

III. Employee Assistance Program

The employee assistance program (EAP) is a resource designed to provide highly confidential and experienced help for employees in dealing with issues that affect their lives and the quality of their job performance. The School wants employees to be able to maintain a healthy balance of work and family that allows them to enjoy life. The EAP is a confidential counseling and referral service that can help employees successfully deal with life's challenges.

The School encourages employees to use this valuable service whenever they have such a need. Employees who choose to use these counseling services are assured the information disclosed in their sessions is confidential and not available to the School, and the School is not given any information on who chooses to use the services. For more information and to access EAP benefits, call toll free 800-854-1446, visit www.unum.com/lifebalance or contact the Human Resources Director.

IV. Other Benefits

In addition to the above, the School also provides or makes available the following benefits to eligible employees:

- Flexible Spending Accounts;
- Hospital Indemnity Insurance;
- Accident Insurance;
- Critical Illness Insurance; and
- LifeLock Identity Theft Protection

Additional information on these benefits can be obtained from Human Resources.

Workplace Guidelines**I. Collegiality**

The School staff assumes a shared-responsibility to provide an atmosphere that engenders courtesy, respect, and genuine regard for others. In order to maximize the quality and effectiveness of our students' learning experiences, interpersonal interactions among students,

staff, volunteers, and parents should model a collegial conduct that reflects the highest personal and professional standards.

II. Conduct

The School holds itself and its employees to the highest standards of professionalism, honesty, integrity, and public trust. All School employees are expected to serve as positive role models for our students. Accordingly, employees should conduct their actions in a professional, courteous, collegial and respectful manner. This requirement extends to each employee's general demeanor and willingness to accept and carry out assigned responsibilities and tasks. All employees must adhere to the adopted School policies.

The School absolutely prohibits any employee/student relationship that could lead to unprofessional conduct and/or the possibility of a staff member's judgment or job performance being affected.

Employees are also ambassadors in the community at large and are encouraged to positively communicate information to community members about our mission, programs, and operations in a supportive and constructive manner.

Employees should also conduct themselves in a law-abiding manner that replicates accepted professional competencies.

Confidentiality Reminder: To maintain privacy and professionalism, staff members are reminded not to discuss personnel matters, financial information, or FERPA-protected data with parents, students, friends, family, the media, or one another. Protecting confidentiality ensures trust and compliance with legal standards.

Employees are expected to maintain professionalism and not discuss confidential school business or vent frustrations to students or parents. Maintaining a positive and constructive learning environment includes fostering appropriate communication channels.

Occasionally performance or other behavior falls short of our standards and/or expectations. Management will address any instances where performance or behavior fails to meet established standards through appropriate corrective measures.

Disciplinary actions can range from an informal discussion with the employee about the matter to immediate discharge. Action taken by management in an individual case does not establish a precedent in other circumstances.

III. Code Of Business Conduct

- All employees of the School must fully comply with the laws and regulations that apply to the School.
- Employees have a responsibility to promptly notify their supervisor of any activity that appears illegal, unethical, unsafe, or inconsistent with school policies and professional standards.
- No employee may ever use school funds or assets for any private use of gain or for any purpose that would be in violation of any applicable law(s) or regulation(s).
- All required reports submitted to the School and/or any public authority concerning

- enrollment, attendance, and/or participation in our program must be completely accurate.
- No fund or asset may exist which is not fully and properly recorded on the books and records of the School.
- No funds or assets of the school may be used as payments, gifts, or favors to government officials or employees, including members of the School's Governance Board.
- Gifts may be made to individuals representing entities with which the school has a business interest providing the following conditions are met:
 - Gifts in the form of cash or its equivalent are not given
 - Gifts are legal
 - Gifts to an individual do not exceed \$25.00 in any one-year period
 - Gifts are recorded accurately in the records of the school

Teachers and administrators should not accept gifts of more than nominal value from students and/or parents. Teachers and administrators should not accept any gift(s) that might create an appearance of a conflict of interest or otherwise create an appearance of favoritism.

This is in no way intended to be an exhaustive list. Failure to comply with any of these guidelines may result in corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

IV. Staff Attendance

All employees are expected to be on time and punctual for work. In addition, regular attendance is considered an essential function and is necessary for the efficient operation of the business.

If an employee knows about an absence in advance, they should inform the supervisor as soon as possible. All employees must complete a time off request via Paylocity (includes Administration, Certified, and Classified staff). Certified Teaching staff must also procure a substitute via Frontline Absence Management if needed using the instructions under the [Staff Site](#). It is the teacher's responsibility to secure a substitute for any known absence as soon as the absence is identified, ensuring the substitute has the appropriate skills and qualifications to teach the class. For long-term absences, the substitute assignment must be approved by the teacher's supervisor.

If you must be absent from work for any reason that makes advance notice impossible, you must follow these steps:

- **Employees must** personally notify their supervisor, submit time off in the HRIS, and request a substitute teacher as soon as they become aware that they will be absent and the reason for absence. This should be no later than 1 hour before school opens or prior to the start of their regular scheduled shift.
- If the employee cannot reach their supervisor, they must personally notify the Front Office Staff or Administration. **Leaving a voicemail is not sufficient.**
- The employee must call each day that they will be absent from work, unless prior arrangements have been made as to the date of return. An employee who fails to report to work for three (3) days and fails to provide notice as required may be terminated.

V. After School for Staff Meetings and Staff Development

After school, Certified employees are to be available from release of students until 4:00PM. Meetings may extend beyond 4:00 p.m. when necessary. It is expected that all certified employees attend every team level meeting, every staff meeting, and every staff development.

Any exceptions must be discussed in advance with the individual's direct supervisor and/or administration.

VI. Timely Communication

It is the School's standard and expectation that employees will check voicemail and email messages each school day, at a minimum, in order to maintain effective student, parent, colleague, and public communications. Employees will return all communications within three school days or make appropriate arrangements when more time is needed. Clear and timely communications regarding assignment due dates or grade drop/changes is also a School expectation. Teachers are expected to further utilize other communication avenues, such as Infinite Campus, Google calendar, teacher web pages and content blogs to regularly notify families of upcoming assignments, class projects, field trips, needed resources, etc.

VII. Guidelines for School Travel and Professional Development

Stargate school has developed processes and procedures related to staff travel, school related activities, and professional development.

- [Travel and Professional Development Procedure](#)

Community Handbook

The Stargate Community Handbook is the School's reference guide for parents, students and staff. All staff must be familiar with the rules and protocols discussed in the Community Handbook. The Community Handbook is available on the [Stargate School Website](#) and [Stargate Staff Site](#).

Stargate Staff Site

The School provides a wide variety of communication tools and resources to employees for use in running day-to-day school business activities. Therefore, it is highly encouraged to view all the information found on the [Stargate Staff Site](#).

Policy Against Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation

I. Purpose of Policy

The School is committed to providing a workplace free of unlawful harassment and discrimination. This includes sexual harassment (which includes harassment based on pregnancy, perceived pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions) and harassment based on actual or perceived gender, gender identity (including transgender identity, status and transitioning), gender expression and sex stereotyping, as well as harassment based on such factors as race (including hair texture and natural hair styles), color, religion, religious creed (including religious dress and religious grooming), national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, physical or mental disability, legally-protected medical condition or information (including genetic information), family care or medical leave status, military caregiver status, military status, veteran status, marital status, domestic partner status, sexual orientation, status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, enrollment in a public assistance program,

engaging in protected communications regarding employee wages, requesting a reasonable accommodation on the basis of disability or bona fide religious belief or practice, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local laws. The School strongly disapproves of and will not tolerate harassment of or discrimination against applicants, employees, interns, or volunteers by managers, supervisors, co-workers or third parties with whom employees come into contact. Similarly, the School will not tolerate harassment by its employees of non-employees with whom the School employees have a business, service, or professional relationship.

II. Harassment Defined

Harassment includes verbal, physical, and visual conduct that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile working environment or that interferes with an employee's work performance. Such conduct constitutes harassment when (1) submission to the conduct is made either an explicit or implicit condition of employment; (2) submission or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision; or (3) the harassment interferes with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Harassing conduct can take many forms and may include, but is not limited to, the following: slurs, jokes, insults, statements, gestures, teasing, assault, impeding or blocking another's movement or otherwise physically interfering with normal work, pictures, posters, symbols, drawings, or cartoons, violating someone's "personal space" (for example by blocking someone's way) foul or obscene language, leering, stalking, staring, unwanted or offensive letters or poems, offensive email or voicemail messages, or any kind of verbal, visual or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual because of any protected characteristic.

Sexually harassing conduct in particular may include all of these prohibited actions, as well as other unwelcome conduct, such as requests for sexual favors, conversation containing sexual comments, and other unwelcome sexual advances. Sexually harassing conduct can be by a person of either the same or opposite sex. Sexually harassing conduct need not be motivated by sexual desire to be violative of this policy.

III. Reporting and Investigating Harassing, Discriminatory and Retaliatory Conduct

All employees, independent contractors, interns, and volunteers of the School must promptly report any incidents of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation so that the School can take appropriate action.

A. Complaint Reporting Process

It is the responsibility of all of us to contribute to a work environment that is free of unlawful bias, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. Failure to bring forth a complaint prevents the School from having the opportunity to correct the situation.

Any incidents of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, including work-related harassment by any School personnel or any other person, or any conduct believed to violate this policy, must be reported immediately to the Human Resources Director, who is responsible for investigating harassment complaints. An individual is not required to bring a complaint to the Human Resources Director if the individual is uncomfortable doing so for any reason. In that case,

complaints should be reported to the Executive Director.

Managers and supervisors have a special responsibility under this policy. All levels of management and all supervisors are responsible for compliance with this Policy Against Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation AND for ensuring that everyone in their department is aware of, understands and adheres to this policy. Supervisors and managers who receive complaints or who observe or learn of discriminatory, harassing, or retaliatory conduct must immediately inform the Human Resources Director or other appropriate school official so that an investigation may be initiated.

If you believe there has been a violation of this policy or the [Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Policy](#) or have experienced harassment based on a protected class, including sexual harassment, please report this immediately to your supervisor and/or Human Resources. You may also complete a Reporting Form that can be found on the [Stargate School website](#). The School expects employees to make a timely complaint to enable the School to investigate and correct any behavior that may be in violation of this policy. Anyone who believes a student, parent, guardian, or employee has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, creed, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy-related conditions), gender identity or expression (including transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, genetic information, service in the military, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws and ordinances may file a complaint/report with the School.

Report the incident to:

Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator

titleix@stargateschool.org

Stargate Charter School

14530 Washington Street

Thornton, CO 80023

(303)450-3936

IV. Corrective Action

The School prohibits retaliation against an employee for filing a complaint under this policy or for assisting in a complaint investigation. If you perceive retaliation for making a complaint or for your participation in the investigation, please follow the complaint procedure outlined above. The situation will be investigated.

As a result, the School will take prompt, appropriate, and effective corrective action (e.g., remedial measures) any time it is established that discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in violation of this policy has occurred—whether or not such violation also violates the law. If the School determines that an employee's behavior is in violation of this policy, disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including termination of employment.

The school will not tolerate retaliation against any employee for making a good faith complaint of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, or for cooperating in an investigation.

V. Zero Tolerance

The School does not tolerate and prohibits discrimination, harassment or retaliation of or against

job applicants, contractors, interns, volunteers or employees by another employee, supervisor, vendor, customer or any third party on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, age, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression (including transgender status), national origin, ancestry, marital status, protected medical condition as defined by state law (cancer or genetic characteristics), physical or mental disability, military and veteran status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local laws and ordinances. The School is committed to a workplace free of discrimination, harassment and retaliation.

Our management team is dedicated to ensuring the fulfillment of this policy as it applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruitment, hiring, placement, promotion, transfer, training, compensation, benefits, employee activities and general treatment during employment.

Bullying

[District Policy 5110](#) addresses the negative impact that bullying has on student health, welfare and safety and on the learning environment. Bullying, as defined by state law, is any written or verbal expression, or physical act or gesture, or a pattern thereof, intended to cause distress upon one or more students. Bullying based upon a student's race, gender, religion or creed, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability may actually constitute harassment. Harassment is specifically prohibited by [District Policy 8400 \(Nondiscrimination/Harassment\)](#), a summary of which may be found elsewhere in this handbook.

All administrators, teachers, classified staff, parents and students shall take all reasonable steps to prevent and/or address bullying.

- Students who have been bullied should report the situation to an administrator or teacher.
- Students who witness bullying should report it to a staff member.
- Staff who witness bullying should take action to stop the bullying and to report the situation for appropriate administrative intervention.
- Administrators should promptly investigate and respond to bullying reports.

Students who bully others will be subject to disciplinary action as described in [District Policy 5000. Student Code of Conduct](#). In addition to discipline sanctions, schools may implement intervention strategies as appropriate.

Guidelines Regarding Students With Diabetes

I. Nondiscrimination

The School is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination/harassment in relation to race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation and disability. This policy extends to all students with disabilities and includes students with diabetes. The School has adopted policies on nondiscrimination aligned with Adams 12 Five Star Schools District ("District") Policy 8400. For further reference regarding the School's policies regarding nondiscrimination, please refer to the Stargate Community Handbook. Consistent with these policies, students with diabetes are entitled to appropriate educational opportunities consistent with their individualized needs. The School will provide students with diabetes who are eligible

for an IEP or Section 504 plan with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) as that term is defined by law. In addition the School will comply with Section 504's procedural requirements and all other rights and obligations of any student with a disability, including provision of FAPE, and specifically including students with diabetes, regardless of whether the student is or is not on a health care plan, a Section 504 plan, and/or an IEP.

II. Services for Students with Diabetes

The School also works to ensure a learning environment for students with diabetes that is consistent with individual student needs as well as state and nationally recognized standards of practice. A student with diabetes may have an IEP, a Section 504 Plan, and/or a Health Care plan that addresses student needs.

Health Care Plans may be developed by the registered nurse under the District training manual for school health aides. Health Care Plans are written to address a student's particularized healthcare needs within the school environment after consultation with the student's family, healthcare providers, and occasionally the student themselves. In drafting a suitable healthcare plan for a student with diabetes, the registered nurse used as a guideline [Standards of Care for Diabetes Management in the School Setting & Licensed Child Care Facilities – Colorado 2021](#).

A Section 504 plan (or IEP) details any accommodations, modifications, and educational or related services needed to ensure the student's access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Section 504 plans (or an IEP) and Health Care Plans may both be required to meet the needs of a particular student. Section 504 plans will be written for any qualified student, including students with diabetes.

School staff and parents may also reference the [American Diabetes Association sample 504 Plan](#) for possible accommodations.

III. Staff Training

The School is committed to maintaining appropriate staff, such as ensuring the availability of a school registered nurse, to meet the needs of students with disabilities, including students with diabetes. The School will ensure that all relevant staff are trained to meet the needs of students with diabetes in the school environment and at school-sponsored events (such as field trips) by requiring staff to comply with all school, District, state, and federal regulatory requirements, as well as completing approved, diabetes-specific training as provided by the American Diabetes Association.

IV. Records

Health records for students with diabetes will be kept in accordance with District policy pertaining to health records. Student health records maintained for individual students are considered part of the student's educational record and are subject to the confidentiality and parental access requirements of The Family Education Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA). Sharing health record information among appropriate staff may only be conducted for "legitimate educational interests." Such records will be maintained in the school health office under the direction of the school nurse. All staff will work to ensure the confidentiality of such records.

Health records of students with diabetes will be maintained as appropriate in accordance with the student's healthcare plan. Such records may include tracking of blood glucose,

carbohydrates, and insulin administration, including necessary interventions and parental contacts, on the School Health Office Diabetes Record and/or Diabetes Care Log. Appropriate releases, such as a parent release to allow a student to self carry diabetes-related supplies, will also be maintained as required.

V. Contact

The contacts for these guidelines are K-12 Director of Student Support Services, Angela Fundaro, at angela.fundaro@stargateschool.org and/or Stargate School Nurse, Justine Begley BSN, RN-BC, at justine.begley@stargateschool.org.

Physical Restraint/Force

Physical restraint means the use of bodily, physical force to involuntarily limit a student's freedom of movement. Seclusion is a form of restraint in which the student is placed alone in a room and the student's egress is involuntarily prevented.

Physical restraint or seclusion are to be used only in an emergency and with extreme caution: when there appears to be imminent danger of injury to the student, other students, or staff; to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects upon a student or within the control of a student; and when alternative interventions are determined to be inappropriate or are unlikely to be effective under the circumstances. Alternative interventions shall include the use of positive behavior supports; constructive, non-physical de-escalation; and restructuring of the environment. Only trained staff should initiate and assist in the application of student restraint.

Staff should use no more force than necessary to limit the student's freedom of movement, should impose restraint for no longer period of time than necessary to accomplish its purpose, and will prioritize the prevention of harm to the student. Any instances of physical restraint must be documented and submitted to the appropriate administrator (Consistent with [District Policy 5150](#)).

Reporting Child Abuse

As a Mandatory Reporter, when an employee has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, the school employee must make a report to the appropriate county Child Protective Services (CPS), local law enforcement agency (including the School Resource Officer), or the Child Abuse Reporting Hotline as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours after becoming aware of the situation. The reporting individual may request the support of their supervisor when making a report. The reporting individual shall promptly follow any verbal reports with a written report setting forth, in as much detail as possible, information required by statute or the appropriate agency. Should the suspected abuse involve or is suspected to involve a School employee, the Human Resources Director should be notified as well. [Mandated Reporter tip sheet](#).

Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act (EPEWA)

Stargate School complies with the Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act (EPEWA), which

promotes pay equity and transparency in the workplace. The law requires employers to provide notice of job opportunities, maintain detailed pay records, and evaluate compensation practices to help ensure that all employees are paid fairly for equal work

I. Pay Equity, Transparency Protections

Employees are protected against sex-based pay discrimination for work requiring similar skill, effort, and responsibility. However, the law permits pay differences arising from:

- A seniority system
- A merit system
- A system that measures earnings by quantity or quality of production
- The geographic location where the work is performed
- Education, training, or experience reasonably related to the work
- Travel that is a regular and necessary condition of the job

Employers can't prevent employees from discussing their own compensation information with other employees or require employees to sign a waiver preventing them from discussing their compensation. The law also prohibits employers from asking about job candidates' wage history or relying on wage history to determine a wage rate. Employers can't discriminate or retaliate against a prospective employee for failing to disclose wage history.

II. Job-Posting Notices and Recordkeeping

New notice requirements will help current and prospective employees learn about job opportunities:

- The School will make reasonable efforts to “announce, post, or make known all opportunities worldwide for promotion” to all current employees on the same calendar day.
- Each job-vacancy posting will disclose the hourly wage or salary, or the hourly wage or salary range, along with a general description of all benefits and other compensation offered.

A “promotional opportunity” exists when an The School has or anticipates a vacancy in an existing or new position that could be considered a promotion for one or more employee(s) in terms of compensation, benefits, status, duties, or access to further advancement. Even where a promotion is specific to an individual employee’s career trajectory (e.g., from junior to senior positions, or from training to full positions), notice of such advancement lets others similarly qualified, who may not know the employer is open to promotion requests, seek the same advancement.

Employees can report posting violations to the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment within one year of learning of the violation.

Proof of Right To Work

Under federal law, all new hires must produce original documentation establishing their identity and right to work in the United States, and complete INS Form I-9, swearing that they

have a right to work in the United States. New hires may establish their identity and right to work in the United States by (1) providing documentation that establishes both their identity and employment authorization ("List A" documents) or (2) providing documentation that separately establishes their identity ("List B" documents) and their employment authorization ("List C" documents). All documents must be unexpired. Documentation must be produced within three business days of hire, or on the first day of any employment that is less than three business days. Required documentation must be presented to the Human Resources Department, which will be responsible for processing the documents.

Any one of the following documents may be used to establish both identity and employment authorization ("List A" documents):

1. United States passport;
2. Permanent Resident Card (Form I-551); Alien Registration Receipt Card (I-551);
3. Foreign passport that contains a temporary I-551 stamp or temporary I-551 printed notation on a machine-readable immigrant visa;
4. An Employment Authorization Document that contains a photograph (Form I-766);
5. In the case of a nonimmigrant alien authorized to work for a specific employer incident to status, a foreign passport with (Form I-94 or Form I-94A) bearing the same name as the passport and containing an endorsement of the alien's nonimmigrant status, as long as the period of endorsement has not yet expired and the proposed employment is not in conflict with any restrictions or limitations identified on the form; or
6. Passport from the Federated States of Micronesia or Republic of the Marshall Islands with Form I-94A indicating non-immigrant admission under the Compact of Free Association between the U.S. FSM or RMI.

If an applicant cannot produce one of the documents listed above, two documents are required: one to prove identity and another to prove employment authorization.

The following documents are acceptable as proof of identity, but not employment authorization ("List B" documents):

1. A driver's license or I.D. card issued by a state or outlying possession of the United States, provided it contains a photograph or identifying information such as name, date of birth, gender, height, eye color, and address;
2. I.D. card issued by federal, state, or local government agencies or entities provided it contains a photograph or identifying information such as name, date of birth, gender, height, eye color, and address;
3. School I.D. card with photograph;
4. Voter's registration card;
5. U.S. military card or draft record;
6. Military dependent's ID card;
7. Merchant Mariner Card issued by the United States Coast Guard;
8. Native American tribal document;
9. Canadian driver's license; or
10. Individuals under the age of 18 who are unable to produce any of the identification documents listed in (1)-(9) may present a: a) school record or report card, b) daycare

or nursery school record, or c) clinic doctor or hospital record only.

The following documents are acceptable to establish employment authorization, but not identity ("List C" documents):

1. A social security card, other than one that specifies on the face that the issuance of the card does not authorize employment in the U.S.;
2. A Certification of Birth Abroad issued by the Department of State (Form FS-545); 3. A Certification of Report of Birth issued by the Department of State (Form DS-1350); 4. An original or certified copy of a birth certificate issued by a state, county, municipal authority, or outlying territory of the United States, and bearing an official seal;
5. A Native American tribal document;
6. A United States Citizen Identification Card (INS Form I-197);
7. An Identification card for use of resident citizens in the United States (INS Form I-179); or 8. An employment authorization document issued by the Department of Homeland Security.

Authorization documents will be copied and placed with the employee's Form I-9 in a special file separate from the employee's Personnel File. These documents will be retained at least three years after the date of hire or one year after an employee's employment terminates, whichever is later.

Employment of Relatives

Relatives of present employees may be hired by the School only if (1) the individuals concerned will not work in a direct supervisory relationship with one another, and (2) the employment will not pose difficulties for supervision, security, safety, or morale. "Relatives" are defined as spouses, children, sisters, brothers, mothers, or fathers, and persons related by marriage. Present employees who marry or who become related by marriage will be permitted to continue employment with the School only if they do not work in a direct supervisory relationship with one another, or otherwise pose difficulties for supervision, security, safety, or morale. If employees who marry or who become related by marriage do work in a direct supervisory relationship with one another, the School will attempt to reassign one of the employees to another position for which they are qualified, if such a position is available. If no such position is available, then one of the employees will be required to leave the School. The decision as to which employee leaves will be left solely to the employees. In the event that no alternative position is available and neither employee voluntarily leaves the School, the employee with lesser seniority will be terminated.

Employment Applications

The School relies upon the accuracy of information provided by an applicant in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentation, falsification, or material omission by an applicant in any of this information or data may result in revocation of any offer or immediate termination of employment, regardless of when it is discovered.

Rehire Eligibility and Service Recognition

Where business needs dictate, it is the policy of School to rehire former employees who: a) voluntarily left school employment or b) were laid off due to business slowdown(s). To be eligible for rehire, former employees must have possessed a satisfactory record of service. This policy sets forth the school's philosophy governing eligibility for reemployment and associated bridging of service (service recognition), where appropriate.

I. Eligibility for Rehire

Employees who completed their school introductory period (90 Days) and who were part of a reduction in force, as well as those employees who voluntarily resigned, will be eligible for rehire as long as they had a satisfactory work record while employed by the School.

II. Ineligibility for Rehire

Former employees who had a less-than-satisfactory work record appropriately noted at termination as not being eligible for rehire are excluded from rehire consideration.

Employees who were involuntarily terminated by the School or who were laid off (with a less-than satisfactory work record) or who failed to complete their school introductory period (90 days) will not be considered for rehire.

Non-Fraternization

In order to promote the efficient operation of the School's business and to avoid misunderstandings; complaints of favoritism; other problems of supervision, security and morale; and possible claims of sexual harassment, managers and supervisors are forbidden from dating or pursuing romantic or sexual relationships with employees whom they supervise, directly or indirectly. Employees who violate this guideline will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest occurs whenever an employee permits the prospect of direct or indirect personal gain to improperly influence her or his judgment or action in conflict with the best interests of the School. The following are representative, but not inclusive;

- No employee shall do business with a member of their family on behalf of the School, unless the circumstances of the proposed relationship have been clearly reviewed by Administration and Governance Board and have been deemed to have no potential or inherent conflict of interest qualities.
- All employees must deal with suppliers, contractors, customers, and all other persons doing business with the School in the best interest of the school without favor or preference based on personal consideration.
- No employee shall misuse privileged information or reveal confidential data to outsiders for the purpose of personal gain or for any reason other than legitimate school purposes as defined in the School's Confidentiality Policy.
- No employee shall deal with the School or with parents, students, or suppliers as a representative of another firm or for their own account.

- No employee shall misappropriate school funds for personal or other use, including the use of school credit card(s) for personal use.
- No employee shall participate in the selection, award or administration of a contract which to the employee's knowledge they, or the employee's immediate family has a financial interest.
- No employee shall individually solicit or accept gifts, money, services, or gratuities from students, parents, vendors, or contractors for personal gain. Non-cash gifts of nominal value (e.g., holiday cards, baked goods) are permitted up to \$25 per gift; cash, gift cards, or gifts exceeding \$25 must be declined or redirected as a donation to the School.
- No employee or immediate family member shall benefit by gaining or expanding outside employment through the referral of students, parents, or associated service needs. Outside employment during the school year must be approved by the Administration and must not conflict with the employee's duties within the School. In this regard, employees are prohibited from holding outside employment during normal working hours. Employees are reminded that the work of the School may require attendance at evening meetings and occasional attendance at weekend meetings.
- An employee's job at the School must take precedence over outside employment.
- Outside employment should not conflict with the use, purpose, or intent of the School's employment policies. Questions regarding specific circumstances should be referred to the Administration for a determination.
- During hours of employment, on school property, or with the use of school funds, employees of the School are prohibited from the following:
 - Participation in any partisan or non-partisan political activity or any other political activity associated with a candidate, or contending faction or group, for an election for public or party office.
 - Participation in any activity to provide voters or prospective voters with transportation to the polls or similar assistance in connection with any such election.
 - Participation in any voter registration activity.
 - Attempts to solicit, proselytize or encourage religious activity.

Confidentiality

This Confidentiality Policy has been adopted to assure confidentiality and protection of individual rights to privacy for students, families, employees of the School and the business interests of the School. The individual dignity of students, families, and employees shall be respected and protected at all times in accordance with legitimate educational purposes and applicable laws, as defined by FERPA, HIPAA, and associated regulations, all of which can have significant consequences for the School. In addition, appropriate respect for confidentiality is an ethical standard in teacher licensing.

Information about students, families, or employees should not be divulged to anyone other than persons who are authorized to receive such information. This policy extends to both internal and external disclosure, including disclosing confidential information to students. It applies to employees, parents/family members, and volunteers.

I. Confidentiality of Student and Family Information

- All student records must be maintained in a secure location.
- Access to student records is limited to appropriate employees.
- Student records must not be removed from the secure location where they are maintained.

- Student records must never be left unattended on desks, tables, etc. where other people may have access to them.
- Student or family private information must never be discussed among employees except on a “need-to-know” basis. Employees must be particularly aware of their surroundings when discussing this information. Special caution must be taken to be sure that other students, families, or employees do not overhear information which is private.
- Discussion of student or family information with volunteers, other families, friends, or community members is prohibited.
- Information and documents which are considered confidential are medical records, educational records, special needs records, family records, financial records, and any other private information about the students or their families.
- All requests for release of information will be coordinated by the Administration.
- External requests for information will only be released with the express written consent of the student’s parent or legal guardian.

II. Confidentiality of Employee Information

- All employee records must be maintained in a secure location.
- Access to an employee’s records is limited to employees with a need to know.
- An employee’s records must not be removed from the secure location where they are maintained.
- An employee’s records must never be left unattended on desks, tables, etc. where other people may have access to them.
- An employee’s private information must never be discussed among employees except on the “need-to-know” basis. Employees must be particularly aware of their surroundings when discussing this information. Special caution must be taken to be sure that other children, families, or employees do not overhear information which is private.
- Discussion of an employee’s information with volunteers, families, friends, or community members is prohibited.
- Information and documents which are considered confidential are medical records, educational records, employment records, criminal history records, financial or pay records, and any other private information about the employee.
- All requests for release of information will be coordinated by the Human Resources Director.
- Apart from references; standard requests for verification of employment; or information requested by governmental agencies or under subpoena, freedom of information request or court order; employee information will only be released with the express written consent of the employee.

Failure to maintain confidentiality could be a violation of federal or state law or district policy. Breach of confidentiality will not be tolerated. With this in mind, all School employees should remember to conduct need-to-know conversations in a location that provides complete privacy.

Intellectual Property

All curricula, writing, lesson plans, or research prepared by an employee within the scope of employment is owned by the School. In the language of copyright law, such work is called “work made for hire”. Such work prepared by a teacher who is employed by the School is owned by the School. That the work was done outside normal working hours or outside of the employee’s office or classroom does not affect the employer’s ownership of the work. If the School chooses

to publish such work, the teacher or team which developed the work shall be credited. Accordingly, when an employee departs the School, all work developed by that staff member, while at school, shall remain at school.

Open Door Policy

The School has a specific procedure detailed in the separate Policy Against Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation that should be used to report concerns or complaints related to possible sexual harassment, or other forms of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation based on a protected category. Separately, the School has an Open Door Policy that encourages employees to participate in decisions affecting them and their daily professional responsibilities. Employees who have job-related concerns or complaints are encouraged to discuss them with their supervisor or any other management representative with whom they feel comfortable. The School believes that employee concerns are best addressed through this type of informal and open communication.

Employees are encouraged to raise work-related concerns with their immediate supervisor, or with a supervisor or other management representative of their choice, as soon as possible after the events that cause concern. Employees are further encouraged to pursue discussion of their work-related concerns until the matter is fully resolved. Although the School cannot guarantee that in each instance the employee will be satisfied with the result, the School will attempt in each instance to explain the result to the employee if the employee is not satisfied. The School will also attempt to keep all such expressions of concern, the results of any investigation, and the terms of the resolution confidential. In the course of investigating and resolving the matter, however, some dissemination of information to others may be necessary or appropriate. No employee will be disciplined or otherwise penalized for raising a good-faith concern.

Employees who conclude that work-related concerns should be brought to the attention of the School by written complaint and formal investigation may avail themselves of the "Dispute and Conflict Resolution Processes" set forth in this Handbook/Manual.

Dispute Resolution Process

Stargate School believes parent concerns, complaints, or grievances should be addressed in a timely manner. The Governance Board of Directors provides the appropriate direction and guidelines to ensure the school's administration and faculty are competent, ethical, and responsible professionals who want to ensure that they are free from unnecessary, spiteful, or destructive criticism and complaints. Therefore, whenever a complaint about administration or faculty is made directly to the Board as a whole, or to a Board member as an individual, the complaint will ***in all circumstances*** be referred back through the proper channels or to the Executive Director for appropriate processing and response.

All complaints must be in writing. Also, thorough documentation is required as parties proceed toward the solution of the grievance.

The proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline, or learning materials will be as follows:

Level One

Teacher. The parent must make an appointment to discuss the specific issue with his/her/their child's teacher. At the appointment, the parent and teacher must decide on a course of action to remedy the situation and provide a set of actions and a timeline for accomplishing the agreed upon actions. If an agreement on an appropriate course of action cannot be met, parents should consult the elementary, middle, or high school Assistant Principal to assist the parent and teacher in resolving the dispute and develop a plan of action.

Level Two

Administration. If after the plan of action has been completed with the teacher, the parent still feels as though the situation has not improved, then the parent must make an appointment to discuss the issue with a Principal. The Governance Board of Directors recommends that the teacher be included in this meeting; however, this is not required. The purpose of Level 2 is to either concur with the plan of action developed in Level 1 or develop a new plan as agreed to by all parties. The Principal should also follow-up with the parent to keep him/her abreast of the situation.

If, after working with the Principal, the situation has not been resolved, the parent may request to meet with the Executive Director to assist in resolution. The involved Principal and/or the teacher may be included in this meeting.

Level Three

Stargate Governance Board of Directors. If the parent continues to be dissatisfied with the process of resolving the issue, then the parent may bring this to the attention of the Board. If the issues continue to be unresolved, a two party panel of board-approved board members will hold meetings with both parties and render a recommendation to the entire Board of Directors within 7 school days of the final meeting. The Board will then issue a final, written decision in a timely manner. All decisions are considered to be final.

Level Four

District. In the event the parent continues to be dissatisfied with the process of resolving the issue, the parent may bring his/her complaint to the attention of the District or Board of Education. The Adams 12 Board of Education does not accept parental grievances without written documentation demonstrating Levels One through Three in the grievance process has been followed.

All meetings will follow the guidelines of the Colorado State Statutes. If at any time a parent believes that any action taken by a staff member or administrator is illegal, they are to immediately take their concern to the Board.

Conflict Resolution

Employees who are experiencing interpersonal conflict with another employee should address the concern with the involved party. It is best for this discussion to be held within a timely manner to support an effective outcome.

Employees who are unable to resolve conflict directly or who have concerns with a school policy or practice should promptly discuss the matter with their immediate supervisor, where appropriate.

Employees may also choose to include the Human Resources Director, or a designee, who will act as a neutral mediator to help facilitate a resolution. If a resolution is still not reached, employees may escalate their concern to the Executive Director for further review.

After following the proper dispute resolution process outlined above and an appropriate resolution has not been reached, employees may submit a written complaint to the President of the Board of Directors for review and final decision.

The [Communication Pathways](#) and [Communication and Complaint Board Policy](#) can be found on the School website.

Performance Evaluation Process – Certified and Classified Employees

An annual performance evaluation is recognized as an effective measure of satisfactory job performance and as a means of continuous growth. Certified Employees will be evaluated bi-yearly based on Colorado Teacher Quality Standards and school-wide initiatives and goals. Classified employees will be evaluated annually utilizing the procedures of the School. Evaluations will be conducted by direct supervisors and may include input from other personnel with first-hand knowledge of the required duties and/or the employee's performance. Employees whose performance requires a formal improvement plan will be notified of the existence of such a plan and the metrics on which success or failure of improvement are measured.

The adherence to federal, state, district, or the School policies is an essential component of a satisfactory or exemplary job performance. The School utilizes a written improvement procedure designed to offer the employee a reasonable opportunity to rectify performance deficiencies. No actions taken in the implementation of the performance evaluation process shall be deemed to change the at-will status of employment.

Record Retention

The School acknowledges its responsibility to preserve information relating to litigation, audits

and investigations. Failure on the part of employees to follow this policy can result in possible civil and criminal sanctions against the School and its employees and possible disciplinary action against responsible individuals (up to and including discharge of the employee). Each employee has an obligation to contact an Executive Director to inform them of potential or actual litigation, external audit, investigation or similar proceedings involving the School that may have an impact on record retention protocols.

Business Expense Reporting

Employees will be reimbursed for all pre-approved business-related expenses upon submission to the Finance Department of accurate receipt reports along with a Reimbursement Form, which can be found on the [Stargate Staff Site](#). Employees are requested to submit these reports by the end of month to ensure proper accounting and prompt reimbursement.

Classroom/Department Budget

Teachers/Departments are responsible for managing their budgets. Orders will not be placed by the Finance Department and reimbursement will not be made for overspending of the budget. Individual reports of your budget are available from the Finance Department. All non-consumable items ordered within classroom/department budgets are to be labeled or stamped as Property of the School upon receipt and shall remain with the School upon employee departure.

Educational Assistance and Professional Memberships

Requests for payment of expenses related to educational programs and professional organizations must be approved in advance by Administration or designee. Please complete and submit the Request for Staff Development/Professional Improvement. To maintain fiscal responsibility, limitations may apply.

Personnel Records

The information in an employee's personnel file is permanent and confidential and must be kept up to date. Employees should update Paylocity and inform the Human Resources Director immediately whenever there are changes in personal data such as address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents, and person(s) to notify in case of emergency. Employees also should inform the Human Resources Director of any specialized training or skills they acquire. Employees are also responsible for maintaining a current group life insurance beneficiary designation. Unreported changes of address, marital status, etc. can affect withholding tax and benefit coverage.

Current employees have the right to inspect and copy their personnel files at reasonable times and on reasonable notice once a year, upon request. An employee may inspect only his or her own personnel file and only in the presence of the Human Resources Director on School property.

Personnel files are the property of the School and may not be removed from the School's premises without written authorization from the Human Resources Director.

Lactation Accommodation

In compliance with the Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act, the School will provide a reasonable amount of break time to accommodate an employee desiring to express breast milk for the employee's infant child for up to two years after the child's birth. Employees needing breaks for lactation purposes may use ordinary paid rest breaks or may take other reasonable break time when needed. The School will provide a room or other location in close proximity to the work area, other than a toilet stall, where the employee can express breast milk in privacy. If possible, the lactation break time should run concurrently with scheduled meal and rest breaks already provided to the employee. If the lactation break time cannot run concurrently with meal and rest breaks already provided or additional time is needed for the employee, the lactation break time will be unpaid for nonexempt employees.

Should you require lactation accommodations, please advise the Human Resource Manager so that accommodations may be made.

Pregnancy Accommodation

Employees have the right to be free from discriminatory or unfair employment practices because of pregnancy, a health condition related to pregnancy, or the physical recovery from childbirth.

Employees who are otherwise qualified for a position may request a reasonable accommodation related to pregnancy, a health condition related to pregnancy or the physical recovery from childbirth. If an employee requests an accommodation, the School will engage in a timely, good-faith, and interactive process with the employee to determine whether there is an effective, reasonable accommodation that will enable the employee to perform the essential functions of her position. A reasonable accommodation will be provided unless it imposes an undue hardship on the School's business operations.

The School may require that an employee provide a note from her health care provider detailing the medical advisability of the reasonable accommodation. Employees who have questions about this policy or who wish to request reasonable accommodation under this policy should contact the Human Resources Director. If the Human Resources Director is not available, contact an Executive Director.

The School will not deny employment opportunities or retaliate against an employee because of an employee's request for a reasonable accommodation related to pregnancy, a health condition related to pregnancy, or the physical recovery from childbirth. An employee will not be required to take leave or accept an accommodation that is unnecessary for the employee to perform the essential functions of the job.

Termination, Discipline, and Rules of Conduct

I. Termination

A. Voluntary Termination

The School will consider an employee to have voluntarily terminated their employment if an employee does any of the following:

1. Elects to resign from the School;
2. Fails to return from an approved leave of absence on the date specified by the School;
3. Fails to report for work without notice to the School for three (3) consecutive work days.

B. Involuntary Termination

An employee may be terminated involuntarily for reasons that may include poor performance, misconduct, or other violations of the School's rules of conduct as set forth below. Notwithstanding this list of rules, the School reserves the right to discharge or demote any employee with or without cause and with or without prior notice.

C. Termination Due to Reorganizations, Economics, or Lack of Work

From time to time, the School may need to terminate an employee as a consequence of reorganizations, job eliminations, economic downturns in business, or lack of work. Should the School consider such terminations necessary, the School will attempt to provide all affected employees with advance notice when practical. Layoff benefits associated with such terminations, if any, will be as specified in the notice.

II. Discipline and Rules of Conduct

Employees are expected to observe certain standards of job performance and good conduct. When performance or conduct does not meet School standards, the employee will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

The rules set forth below are intended to provide employees with notice of what is expected of them. Necessarily, however, such rules cannot identify every type of unacceptable conduct and performance. Therefore, employees should be aware that conduct not specifically listed below but which the School determines adversely affects or is otherwise detrimental to the interests of the School, other employees, or customers, may also result in disciplinary action.

A. Job Performance

Employees may be disciplined for poor job performance, including but not limited to the following:

1. Unsatisfactory work quality or quantity;
2. Excessive absenteeism, tardiness, or abuse of rest break and meal period policies;
3. Failure to follow instructions or School procedures, protocols, or policies; or
4. Failure to follow established safety regulations.

B. Misconduct

The following are examples of some, but not all, conduct which can be considered unacceptable:

1. Obtaining employment on the basis of false or misleading information.
2. Stealing, removing or defacing School property or a co-worker's property, and/or disclosure of confidential information.
3. Completing another employee's time records.
4. Violation of safety rules and policies.
5. Violation of the School's Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy.
6. Fighting, threatening or disrupting the work of others or other violations of the School's

Workplace Violence Policy.

7. Failure to follow lawful instructions of a supervisor.
8. Failure to perform assigned job duties.
9. Violation of the Punctuality and Attendance Policy, including but not limited to irregular attendance, habitual lateness or unexcused absences.
10. Gambling on School property.
11. Willful or careless destruction or damage to School assets or to the equipment or possessions of another employee.
12. Wasting work materials.
13. Performing work of a personal nature during working time.
14. Violation of the Solicitation and Distribution Policy.
15. Violation of the School's Harassment or Equal Employment Opportunity Policies.
16. Violation of the Communication and Computer Systems Policy.
17. Unsatisfactory job performance.
18. Any other violation of School policy.

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

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

C. Staff-Student Professional Boundaries

Purpose Stargate Charter School is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for all students in compliance with Colorado law. This policy establishes procedures to prevent, identify, and respond to inappropriate conduct and boundary violations between staff members and students, ensuring the maintenance of professional relationships that protect student welfare and safety.

The school maintains a zero tolerance policy for any inappropriate conduct, boundary violations, or sexual misconduct involving staff members and students, and will take appropriate disciplinary and legal action in response to any violations of this policy.

- [Stargate Staff-Student Professional Boundaries Policy](#)

D. Attendance

In addition to the general rules stated above, employees may be disciplined for failing to observe the following specific requirements relating to attendance:

1. Reporting to work on time, observing rest break and meal period policies, recording all time worked, and obtaining approval to leave work early; and
2. Notifying the supervisor in advance of anticipated tardiness or absence.

E. Discipline Procedure

Except as set forth below, discharge or demotion for poor performance is generally preceded by a progressive discipline process.

The School reserves the right to proceed directly to a written warning, demotion, or termination

for misconduct or performance deficiency, without resort to prior disciplinary steps, when the School deems such action appropriate.

III. Employment Departure - Security of School Inventory

Upon departure from the School for any reason, the employee shall inventory their office, classroom, or work area.

Only the departing employee's personal belongings may be removed from Stargate School. All items purchased with classroom budgets, grant funds, or other School funds; regardless of who selected or requested them, remain the property of the School and may not be removed.

Departing employees may not remove items from the building outside of normal school hours or on weekends without prior arrangement. Any collection of personal belongings outside of standard school hours must be scheduled in advance with the HR Director and must occur during business hours (e.g., before or after the instructional day but while administrative staff are present), not on evenings or weekends.

IV. Exit Interview

Employees who leave the School for any reason may be asked to participate in an exit interview. This interview is intended to permit terminated employees the opportunity to communicate their views regarding their work with the School, including job duties, job training, job supervision, and job benefits. At the time of the interview, employees are expected to return all School-furnished property, such as uniforms, tools, equipment, I.D. cards, keys, credit cards, documents, and handbooks. Arrangements for clearing any outstanding debts with the School and for receiving final pay also will be made at this time.

V. Employment at Will

Nothing in this Guideline is intended to alter the at-will status of employment with the School. Either you or the School may terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without cause and with or without prior notice. The School reserves the right to terminate any employment relationship, to demote, or to otherwise discipline an employee without using the above disciplinary procedures.

Drug-Free Workplace

I. Purpose of Guideline

It is the intent of the School to maintain a workplace that is free of drugs and alcohol and to discourage drug and alcohol abuse by its employees. Employees who are under the influence of a drug or alcohol on the job compromise the School's interests and endanger their own health and safety and the health and safety of others. Substance abuse in the workplace can also cause a number of other work-related problems, including absenteeism and tardiness, substandard job performance, increased workloads for co-workers, behavior that disrupts other employees, and inferior quality in products or service.

To further its interest in avoiding accidents, to promote and maintain safe and efficient working conditions for its employees, and to protect its business, property, equipment, and operations, the School has established this Guideline concerning the use of alcohol and drugs. As a condition of continued employment with the School, each employee must abide by this

Guideline.

II. Definitions

For purposes of this Guideline:

- “Illegal drugs or other controlled substances” means any drug or substance that (a) is not legally obtainable; or (b) is legally obtainable but has not been legally obtained; or (c) has been legally obtained but is being sold or distributed unlawfully.
- “Legal drug” means any drug, including any prescription drug or over-the-counter drug, that has been legally obtained and that is not unlawfully sold or distributed.
- “Abuse of any legal drug” means the use of any legal drug (a) for any purpose other than the purpose for which it was prescribed or manufactured; or (b) in a quantity, frequency, or manner that is contrary to the instructions or recommendations of the prescribing physician or manufacturer.
- “Reasonable suspicion” includes a suspicion that is based on specific personal observations such as an employee's manner, disposition, muscular movement, appearance, behavior, speech or breath odor; information provided to management by an employee, by law enforcement officials, by a security service, or by other persons believed to be reliable; or a suspicion that is based on other surrounding circumstances.
- “Possession” means that an employee has the substance on their person or otherwise under their control.

III. Prohibited Conduct

A. Scope

The prohibitions of this section apply whenever the interests of the School may be adversely affected, including any time an employee is:

1. On School premises;
2. Conducting or performing School business, regardless of location;
3. Operating or responsible for the operation, custody, or care of School equipment or other property; or
4. Responsible for the safety of others in connection with, or while performing, School-related business.

B. Alcohol

The following acts are prohibited and will subject an employee to discharge:

1. The unauthorized use, possession, purchase, sale, manufacture, distribution, transportation, or dispensation of alcohol; or
2. Being under the influence of alcohol from unauthorized consumption.

C. Illegal Drugs

The following acts are prohibited and will subject an employee to discharge:

1. The use, possession, purchase, sale, manufacture, distribution, transportation, or dispensation of any illegal drug or other controlled substance; or
2. Being under the influence of any illegal drug or other controlled substance.

Despite many states' recent legalization of medical and/or recreational marijuana, the School's zero tolerance policy prohibits any employee from having marijuana in their system while working and also prohibits any employee from possessing marijuana while on school property.

D. Legal Drugs

The following acts are prohibited and will subject an employee to discharge:

1. The abuse of any legal drug;
2. The purchase, sale, manufacture, distribution, transportation, dispensation, or possession of any legal prescription drug in a manner inconsistent with law; or
3. Working while impaired by the use of a legal drug whenever such impairment might:
 - a. Endanger the safety of the employee or some other person;
 - b. Pose a risk of significant damage to School property or equipment; or
 - c. Substantially interfere with the employee's job performance or the efficient operation of the School's business or equipment.

IV. Disciplinary Action

A. Termination for Violation of Guideline

A first violation of this Guideline will result in immediate discharge whenever the prohibited conduct:

1. Caused injury to the employee or any other person, or, in the sole opinion of management, endangered the safety of the employee or any other person;
2. Resulted in significant damage to School property or equipment, or, in the sole opinion of management, posed a risk of significant damage;
3. Involved the sale or manufacture of illegal drugs or other controlled substances;
4. Involved the possession, distribution, or dispensation of illegal drugs or other controlled substances or alcohol in a quantity greater than for personal use;
5. Involved an employee who was a casual, seasonal, or temporary employee; or
6. Involved the failure of an employee to report a criminal conviction, as required by below policy.

B. Discretion Not to Terminate

In circumstances other than those described above, the School, in the discretion of management, may choose not to discharge an employee for a first violation of this Guideline if the employee satisfactorily participates in and completes an approved drug or alcohol abuse 'assistance' or rehabilitation program when recommended by the School or the employee contacts the Employee Assistance Department within two working days after being referred there by management and follows the recommendations made by the Employee Assistance Department, including satisfactory participation in and completion of an approved drug or alcohol abuse, assistance, or rehabilitation program.

C. Effect of Criminal Conviction

An employee who is convicted under a criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace or during any School-related activity or event will be deemed to have violated this Guideline.

D. Written Warning

An employee who is not terminated for a first violation of this Guideline may receive a final written warning and/or immediate suspension without pay for a period up to 10 calendar days.

E. Effect of Second Violation

A second violation of this Guideline at any time will result in immediate termination.

F. Effect of Discharge on Eligibility for Rehire

Employees who are terminated for a violation of this Guideline will not be eligible for rehire by the School.

V. Drug-Free Awareness**A. Management Awareness**

Managers and supervisors should be attentive to the performance and conduct of those who work with them and should not permit an employee to work in an impaired condition or to otherwise engage in conduct that violates this Guideline. When management has reasonable suspicion to believe that an employee or employees are working in violation of this Guideline, prompt action will be taken. If the employee occupies a designated safety-sensitive position, such action may include drug testing in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

B. Criminal Convictions

Employees must notify the School of any conviction under a criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace or during any School-related activity or event. Employees must notify the School within five days after any such conviction. When required by federal law, the School will notify any federal agency with which it has a contract of any employee who has been convicted under a criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace.

VI. Use of Legal Drugs

The School recognizes that employees may, from time to time, be prescribed legal drugs that, when taken as prescribed or according to the manufacturer's instructions, may result in impairment. Employees may not work while impaired by the use of legal drugs if the impairment might endanger the employee or someone else, pose a risk of significant damage to School property, or substantially interfere with the employee's job performance. If an employee is so impaired by the appropriate use of legal drugs, they may not report to work. To accommodate the absence, the employee may use PTO. The employee may also contact the Human Resources Director to determine whether or not they qualify for an unpaid leave of absence, such as family care or medical leave. Nothing in this Guideline is intended to sanction the use of accrued sick leave or vacation time to accommodate absences due to the abuse of legal drugs. Further, nothing in this Guideline is intended to diminish the School's commitment to employ and reasonably accommodate qualified disabled individuals. The School will reasonably accommodate qualified disabled employees who must take legal drugs because of their disability.

VII. Unregulated or Authorized Conduct**A. Customary Use of Over-the-Counter Drugs**

Nothing in this Guideline is intended to prohibit the customary and ordinary purchase, sale, use, possession, or dispensation of over-the-counter drugs, so long as that activity does not violate any law or result in an employee being impaired by the use of such drugs in violation of this Guideline.

B. Off-the-Job Conduct

Unless an employee is in a designated safety-sensitive position, this Guideline is not intended to regulate off-the-job conduct, so long as the employee's off-the-job use of alcohol or drugs does not result in the employee being under the influence of or impaired by the use of alcohol or drugs in violation of this Guideline. If an employee is in a designated safety-sensitive position,

they will be subject to drug testing as described in Section X of this Guideline.

C. Authorized Use of Alcohol

The School may provide alcohol for consumption at certain events, such as social functions. The consumption of alcohol at these events does not violate this Guideline.

VIII. Confidentiality

Disclosures made by employees to the Human Resources Director concerning their use of legal drugs will be treated confidentially and will not be revealed to managers or supervisors unless there is an important work-related reason to do so in order to determine whether it is advisable for the employee to continue working. Disclosures made by employees to the Human Resources Director concerning their participation in any drug or alcohol rehabilitation program will be treated confidentially.

IX. Counseling/Employee Assistance

The School maintains an Employee Assistance Program, administered by Unum, which provides help to employees who seek assistance for drug or alcohol abuse, as well as for other personal or emotional problems. Employees who suspect that they may have alcohol or drug problems, even in the early stages, are encouraged to voluntarily seek diagnosis and to follow through with the treatment as prescribed by qualified professionals. Employees should be aware that participation in the Employee Assistance Program will not necessarily shield them from disciplinary action for a violation of this Guideline, particularly if discipline is imposed for a violation occurring before the employee seeks assistance.

X. Drug Testing

A. Reasonable Suspicion Testing

If a supervisor or manager has a reasonable suspicion that the employee is working in an impaired condition or otherwise engaging in conduct that violates this Guideline, the employee will be asked about any observed behavior and offered an opportunity to give a reasonable explanation. If the employee is unable to explain the behavior, they will be asked to take a drug test in accordance with the procedures outlined below. If the employee refuses to cooperate with the administration of the drug test, the refusal will be handled in the same manner as a positive test result.

B. Procedures for Drug Testing

The School will refer the applicant or employee to an independent, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)-certified medical clinic or laboratory, which will administer the test. The School will pay the cost of the test and reasonable transportation costs to the testing facility. The employee will have the opportunity to alert the clinic or laboratory personnel to any prescription or non-prescription drugs that they have taken that may affect the outcome of the test. All drug testing will be performed by urinalysis. Initial screening will be done by EMIT II. Positive results will be confirmed by gas chromatography/mass spectrometry.

The clinic or laboratory will inform the School as to whether the applicant passed or failed the drug test and may include a detailed testing report. If an employee fails the test, they will be considered to be in violation of this Guideline and will be subject to discipline accordingly.

C. Acknowledgment and Consent

Any employee subject to testing under this policy will be asked to sign a form acknowledging the procedures governing testing and consenting to (1) the collection of a urine sample for the purpose of determining the presence of alcohol or drugs, and (2) the release to the School of medical information regarding the test results. Refusal to sign the agreement and consent form, or to submit to the drug test, will result in the revocation of an applicant's job offer, or will subject an employee to discipline up to and including termination.

D. Confidentiality

All drug testing-records will be treated as confidential.

Business Related Events and Functions

Alcoholic beverages may be available for consumption at certain business-related events, meetings and social occasions, as well as industry meetings and conferences, which an employee may attend in the course and scope of his/her employment. In addition, alcohol may be available for consumption at certain business-related special events and functions that are authorized or sponsored by The School.

The purchase and/or consumption of alcohol at these events outside of typical working hours does not violate The School's Drug and Alcohol Use policy. However, being under the influence of alcohol such that judgment and/or job performance is impaired, which results in offensive and/or unprofessional conduct, and/or behavior that endangers and/or compromises the welfare and/or safety of the employee or others, or is harmful to The School's business relationships, is specifically prohibited by this policy. Violation of the above rules and standards of conduct will not be tolerated. Employees may be disciplined, up to and including discharge, for violating these policies without prior notice or warning. The School also may bring the matter to the attention of appropriate law enforcement authorities. Additionally, the School strictly prohibits the consumption, possession, or distribution of alcohol by individuals under the age of 21 in accordance with Colorado state law.

Smoking

State law prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco on all school property. This prohibition includes the use of any tobacco products (including chewing tobacco), electronic smoking devices, and e-cigarettes. Violators are subject to penalty.

Inspections and Searches on School Premises

I. Purpose of the Guideline

School believes that maintaining a workplace that is free of drugs, alcohol, and other harmful materials is vital to the health and safety of its employees and to the success of the School's business. The School also intends to protect against the unauthorized use and removal of School property. In addition, the School intends to assure its access at all times to School premises and School property, equipment, information, records, documents, and files. At times, it may be necessary for the School to provide records, information or assistance to a government entity in accordance with the terms of a warrant, court order, or other order issued

by law. Accordingly, the School has established this Guideline concerning inspections and searches on School premises. This Guideline applies to all employees of the School.

II. Definitions

For purposes of this Guideline:

1. "Prohibited materials" means firearms or other weapons; explosives and/or hazardous materials or articles; illegal drugs or other controlled substances as defined in the School's Drug-Free Workplace Guideline; drug-related paraphernalia; the unauthorized use or consumption of alcoholic beverages on School property; or School property and/or proprietary and confidential information belonging to a third party that an employee is not authorized to have in their possession.
2. "School property" includes all documents, records, software, electronic codes, data, and files, in both hard copy and electronic form, relating to the School's business; and all equipment, hardware, and other property of any kind, whether owned, leased, rented, or used by the School.
3. "School premises" includes all premises and locations owned or leased by the School or under the control of the School, including parking lots, lockers, and storage areas.
4. "Reasonable suspicion" includes a suspicion that is based on specific personal observations such as an employee's manner, disposition, muscular movement, appearance, behavior, speech or breath odor; information provided to management by an employee, by law enforcement officials, by a security service, or by other persons believed to be reliable; or a suspicion that is based on other surrounding circumstances.
5. "Possession" means that an employee has the prohibited material or School property on their person or otherwise under their control.

III. Inspections and Searches

A. Access to School Property

1. In order to ensure access at all times to School property, and because employees properly in possession of School property or information related to School business may not always be available to produce the property or information when needed in the ordinary course of the School's business, the School reserves the right to conduct a routine inspection or search at any time for School property on School premises. In addition, the School reserves the right to access at all times information and communications stored in School computer files, on School mobile devices and in employee voicemail boxes and electronic-mail systems.
2. Routine searches or inspections for School property may include an employee's office, desk, file cabinet, closet, computer files, voice mail, electronic mail, School-issued mobile device or similar places where employees may store School property or school-related information, whether or not the places are locked or protected by access codes and/or passwords.
3. Because even a routine search for School property might result in the discovery of an employee's personal possessions, all employees are encouraged to refrain from bringing into the workplace any item of personal property that they do not wish to reveal to the School.

B. Inspections and Searches for Prohibited Materials

1. Inspections or searches for prohibited materials in or on School premises also will be conducted whenever the School has reasonable suspicion to believe that a particular

employee or group of employees may be in possession of materials in violation of this Guideline.

2. Inspections or searches for prohibited materials may be conducted by an independent security service or by School personnel.
3. Inspections or searches for prohibited materials may be conducted on a regular or random basis at locations where employees enter or exit School premises, without regard to whether there is reasonable suspicion that any employee may be in possession of prohibited materials in violation of this Guideline.
4. Inspections or searches for prohibited materials may be conducted from time to time even when there is no immediate reason to suspect the presence of the materials. In such cases, the School may announce the inspection in advance, except for inspections or searches conducted at locations where employees enter or exit School premises.
5. Inspections or searches for prohibited materials may include an employee's office, desk, file cabinet, closet, computer, school-issued mobile device or similar places where employees may place personal possessions or information, whether or not the places are locked or password protected. Inspections or searches for prohibited materials also may include an employee's locker, or an employee's pockets, purse, briefcase, lunch box, or other item of personal property that is being worn or carried by the employee while on School premises.
6. In cases involving an inspection or search of an employee's pockets, purse, briefcase, or other item of personal property that is being worn or carried by the employee, the employee will be requested to conduct a self-search (i.e., by turning out or emptying pockets, purses, etc.) in the presence of an observer who will be a person of the same gender.
7. Employees who refuse to cooperate during an inspection or search will not be forcibly detained or searched. They will be informed, however, that the School will base any disciplinary decision on the information that is available, including their refusal to consent to the search as well as the information that gave rise to a reasonable suspicion that the employees were in possession of prohibited materials, if applicable, and that their failure or refusal to cooperate could deprive the School of information that may clear them of suspicion. In addition, the School reserves the right to take appropriate action to prevent the unauthorized removal from School premises of School property.

IV. Approvals for Inspections

1. In instances in which the inspection or search is conducted because there is reasonable suspicion that a particular employee or group of employees may be in possession of prohibited materials in violation of this Guideline or may be using School property in an unauthorized manner, and in instances in which an item of the employee's personal property will be searched, the inspection or search will be approved in advance by the highest ranking member of management in the Division who is available at the time the inspection or search is to be conducted and by the Human Resources Director or their designated alternate(s) in the event of unavailability.
2. All inspections or searches that are conducted as part of the School's program of periodic (and unannounced) inspections will be approved in advance by the Human Resources Director, who will inform the Executive Director(s) of the impending inspection prior to its occurrence.

V. Disciplinary Action

Employees who are found to be in possession of prohibited materials in violation of this Guideline and/or in violation of School Property; Proprietary and Confidential Information Guideline, the Technology Use and Privacy Guideline, and the Drug-Free Workplace Guideline, or employees who are found to have used School property in an unauthorized manner, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, regardless of the School's reason for conducting the search or inspection.

VI. Confidentiality

Managers and supervisors will make their best effort to restrict communications concerning a violation or possible violation of this Guideline to persons who have an important work-related reason to know.

Cooperation with Investigations

From time to time, the School and/or a duly authorized outside agency (or agencies) may investigate allegations of misconduct and/or violations of school policy, applicable laws, and/or regulations. Employees must cooperate fully with any investigation the School may conduct at its sole discretion. Employees are also expected to cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by a duly authorized external agency.

This requires employees in such circumstances to be fully truthful and forthcoming. It also requires that no employee attempt to induce another person to be less than fully truthful and forthcoming with the School and/or the outside agency.

An employee under investigation by the School and/or any duly authorized external agency may be transferred at their regular rate of pay to a position within the School whose responsibilities do not include unsupervised contact with students, or may be suspended with or without pay and benefits until the School makes a final determination concerning the employee's status. If the employee is found not to have engaged in misconduct, they will be reinstated with pay and benefits retroactive to the date of suspension.

Workplace Safety**I. Anti-Violence-Public Employer with Searches**

Employees must not engage in intimidation, threats, or hostile behaviors, physical/verbal abuse, vandalism, arson, sabotage, bullying, or any other act, which, in the School's opinion, is inappropriate to the workplace.

The School prohibits the possession or use of weapons, whether unconcealed or concealed, on school property, except as required by law. This guideline applies to all school employees, contract and temporary employees, visitors and customers on school property, regardless of whether they are licensed to carry a concealed weapon.

"School property" covered by this guideline includes all school-owned or leased buildings and surrounding areas such as sidewalks, walkways, driveways, and parking lots under the school's ownership or control. This guideline also applies to all school-owned or leased vehicles and all vehicles that come onto school property.

“Weapons” include, but are not limited to, handguns, firearms, explosives, and knives. If employees have a question regarding whether an item is covered by this guideline, they should call Human Resources. Employees have a responsibility to make sure that any item not specifically listed above that is possessed by the employee is not prohibited by this guideline.

The School reserves the right at any time and at its discretion to search all school-owned or leased vehicles, and all vehicles, packages, containers, briefcases, purses, lockers, desks, enclosures, and persons entering its property, for the purpose of determining whether any weapon has been brought onto its property or premises in violation of this guideline. Any employee failing or refusing to promptly permit a search under this guideline will be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

Any behavior listed above should be immediately reported to a supervisor, Administration, or Human Resources. Complaints will receive attention and the situation will be investigated. Based on the results of the inquiry, action will be taken which management believes is appropriate. Employees should directly contact law enforcement personnel if they believe there is an imminent threat to the safety and health of employees or property.

II. Emergency Procedures

It is imperative that employees read and familiarize themselves with the contents of the red Adams 12 Five-Star District Emergency Handbook by the classroom door or front office. Please refer to this Handbook for all emergency procedures and let the Administration know immediately if you do not have access to this Handbook.

III. Emergency School Closures or Delays

Based on the [District Policy 5710](#), the Adams 12 Five-Star District Superintendent will determine when it is necessary to close or delay district schools or dismiss students early in the event of hazardous conditions which threaten the safety or health of students or staff members. Please refer to the major news channels or the district website at www.adams12.org for closure information.

Natural Disasters / Unsafe Facility

In the event of a natural disaster or unsafe facility the school may be closed if the building is damaged or roadways leading to the office or facility are damaged. Employees will receive notification with instructions for reporting to another location.

Safety Program

The School is committed to providing and maintaining a healthy and safe work environment for all employees. Every employee will receive health and safety training.

You are required to know and comply with the School's General Safety Rules and to follow safe and healthy work practices at all times. You may be subject to discipline for engaging in any unsafe or unhealthy work practice or for violating established safety rules. You also are required to report immediately to your supervisor any potential health or safety hazards, and all injuries or

accidents. First aid supplies are located at Health Aide Offices in both Elementary and Secondary Buildings.

Infectious Disease Control Policy

The School will ensure a clean workplace, including the regular cleaning of objects and areas that are frequently used, such as bathrooms, break rooms, conference rooms, door handles and railings. A committee may be designated to monitor and coordinate events around an infectious disease outbreak, as well as to create work rules that could be implemented to promote safety through infection control.

We ask all employees to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of infectious disease in the workplace. The best strategy remains the most obvious—frequent hand washing with warm, soapy water; covering your mouth whenever you sneeze or cough; and discarding used tissues in wastebaskets. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are installed throughout the workplace and in common areas.

Unless otherwise notified, our normal attendance and leave policies will remain in place. Individuals who believe they may face particular challenges reporting to work during an infectious disease outbreak should take steps to develop any necessary contingency plans. For example, employees might want to arrange for alternative sources of child care should schools close and/or speak with supervisors about the potential to work from home temporarily or on an alternative work schedule.

I. Staying Home When Ill

Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to work even though they feel ill. We provide certain time off benefits to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness. Information on time off benefits can be found in the time off policies in this handbook.

It is critical that employees do not report to work while they are ill and/or experiencing the following symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and/or fatigue. Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people with an infectious illness such as the flu remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. Employees who report to work ill will be sent home in accordance with these health guidelines.

II. Requests for Medical Information and/or Documentation

If you are out sick or show symptoms of being ill, it may become necessary to request information from you and/or your healthcare provider. In general, we would request medical information to confirm your need to be absent, to show whether and how an absence relates to the infection, and to know that it is appropriate for you to return to work. As always, we expect and appreciate your cooperation if and when medical information is sought.

III. Confidentiality of Medical Information

Our policy is to treat any medical information as a confidential medical record. In furtherance of this policy, any disclosure of medical information is in limited circumstances with supervisors, managers, first aid and safety personnel, and government officials as required by law.

IV. Social Distancing Guidelines for Workplace Infectious Disease Outbreaks

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, the School may implement social distancing guidelines to minimize the spread of the disease throughout the School.

Computers, Telephones, Cellphones, and School Email

Most employees are provided with a school computer, classroom telephone and email account. These tools are intended to be used primarily for instruction and for communication with stakeholders. However, they may be used for communication between the office and classrooms or among classrooms. Teachers are required to answer the classroom phone if the call originates from the office or an administrator. We appreciate everyone's efforts to prevent interruptions of instructional time. Email may not be used to proselytize personal viewpoints, for solicitation purposes as described above under solicitation, or any unlawful or unprofessional manner.

Employees with School-issued cell phones are reminded that occasional, personal use of School cell phones shall in no way increase the expense to the School for the cell phone account. All cell phones are to be turned off or placed in "silent" mode during meetings and instructional settings.

Visitors to Stargate School

Definition: A visitor is any individual on School property who is not a current Stargate student or employee. This includes, but is not limited to, parents/guardians, vendors, contractors, prospective families, former students, governance board members, and family members of current staff. Former students, former staff, and family members of current staff are not exempt from this policy, **regardless of familiarity with School staff.**

All visitors must check in and sign in at the front office before continuing onto campus. Visitors must present a valid ID to front office staff and complete the Raptor visitor management process. Once checked in, visitors must wear a visitor badge and be accompanied by a staff member at all times while on campus.

If a staff member encounters a visitor without a badge, the staff member must either escort the visitor to the front office or call the front office to request an escort.

All visitors are required to check out at the front office through Raptor prior to leaving the facility..

Mailboxes

Boxes for notes, packages, and phone messages are located in the front offices of both the Elementary and Secondary buildings. Employees with mailboxes are expected to check these boxes daily (at minimum) to assure timely communications. Primary Calendar of Events

The Primary Calendar of Events is communication to parents. It notifies them of upcoming school activities. To include information on the Primary Calendar of Events, please submit the request for inclusion in the Calendar via the School Event form.

Staff Children on Premises During Working Hours

At the School we understand that it is sometimes difficult for employees to find childcare for their children. The School will allow children of employees in the school before and after school with prior approval of Administration. Staff children will remain with the employee in their work area and may not be unsupervised in the building. Staff children should not be brought to school during an instructional day. Employees are responsible for making appropriate arrangements for the care and supervision of their children. The School would ask for employees to be thoughtful of the confidentiality of other students and staff members while their children are present. At any time Administration reserves the right to revoke these privileges as they deem necessary due to safety, confidentiality, or any other applicable concern. Before and after school care and child care during staff meetings will be provided at no cost to staff, providing that this does not negatively impact the ratio of adults to children in the child care program.

Pets in the Classroom

Recognizing that animal care is a valid learning experience, please survey students for animal allergies prior to having classroom pets. Staff pets will not be allowed in the building due to the Health Department standards. Please consider carefully the health/sanitation implications of classroom pets and other possible parent concerns before bringing these into your classroom.

Any employee choosing to have a classroom pet must first complete a hygiene plan as prescribed by the Adams 12 Guidelines for Classroom Pets. This plan can be found with the Health Office team and must be submitted to Administration for approval. All other guidelines must be met prior to the introduction of the pet(s) in the classrooms. It is the building administrator's decision to allow or not allow pets in their building.

Stargate Classroom Pet Guidelines:

Classroom pets can enrich learning when handled responsibly. To ensure the safety of students, staff, and animals, the following rules apply:

Animal Restrictions: No reptiles, amphibians, ferrets, rodents, or poultry are allowed in elementary classrooms with students under age 5. Wild animals and venomous or toxin-producing spiders, insects, reptiles, or amphibians are not permitted in any elementary or secondary classrooms.

Educational Purpose: Pets must have a clear educational purpose connected to the curriculum, not just serve as classroom entertainment.

Supervision and Handling: Children must be supervised by an adult when interacting with classroom pets and taught to handle animals gently and appropriately. Animals should not roam freely in the classroom.

Handwashing: All students and staff must wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling pets, their cages, or supplies.

Animal Bites: If an animal bites or scratches someone, follow first aid protocols and report the incident immediately to the school health office. Refer to [CDC guidelines](#) for next steps.

For more information, staff should consult the [CDC's Healthy Pets, Healthy People](#) resources.

School Property; Confidential and Personal Information

The security of School property is of vital importance to the School. School property includes not only tangible property, like desks and computers, but also intangible property such as confidential information. It is critical for the School to preserve and protect its confidential information, as well as the confidential information of customers, suppliers, and third parties. All employees are responsible for ensuring that proper security is maintained at all times.

Nothing in this policy or in related policies is intended to interfere with an employee's right to discuss working conditions within the organization or with members of the public nor is there any restriction on an employee's right to labor organize.

I. Confidential and Personal Information

"Confidential Information" means all information, not generally known, belonging to, or otherwise relating to the business of the School or its students, customers, suppliers, vendors, affiliates or partners, regardless of the media or manner in which it is stored or conveyed, that the School has taken reasonable steps to protect from unauthorized use or disclosure. Confidential Information includes but is not limited to trade secrets as well as other proprietary knowledge, information, and know-how; non-public intellectual property rights, including business plans and strategies; manufacturing techniques; formulae; processes; designs; drawings; discoveries; improvements; ideas; conceptions; test data; compilations of data; and developments, whether or not patentable and whether or not copyrightable.

"Personal Identification Information" includes individually identifiable information about employees, students, consultants, or other individuals, such as Social Security numbers, background information, credit card or banking information, health information, or other non-public information entrusted to the School regarding an individual's personal identity. There are laws in the United States and other countries that protect certain types of Personal Identification Information, and employees should not disclose such protected Personal Identification Information that has been acquired and retained by the School about other individuals to any third party or from one country to another without prior managerial approval.

Given the nature of the School's business, protecting Confidential Information and Personal Identification Information is of vital concern to the School. This information is one of the School's most important assets. It enhances the School's opportunities for future growth, and indirectly adds to the job security of all employees.

Failure to take reasonable measures to protect the School's Confidential Information may jeopardize its status as a trade secret. While employed by the School, employees must not use or disclose any Confidential Information or Personal Identification Information that they produce or obtain during employment with the School, except to the extent such use, or disclosure is required in connection with performing their jobs. Employees may not use or disclose

Confidential Information or Personal Identification Information for any reason after the employment relationship with the School ends. Misuse or unauthorized disclosure of Confidential Information or Personal Identification Information may result in immediate termination, as well as potential personal and criminal liability. Nothing in this Guideline restricts an employee from discussing their wages or other terms and conditions of employment with coworkers or others, to the extent protected by law.

II. Obligations on Termination

On termination of employment, whether voluntary or involuntary, all tangible and intangible School property must be returned to the School immediately. This includes documents, materials, data files, and records of any kind, including any that contain Confidential Information or Personal Information, and any copies thereof. Also, the terminated employee must immediately notify the School if the employee has Confidential Information or Personal Information stored in the employee's personal computer, or in a mobile, cloud, or other storage medium, and work with the School to identify all such Information and its location and help ensure it is retrieved and/or permanently deleted by the School (or the School's designated agent).

III. Security

To avoid loss of School property, the Operations and Facilities Teams maintains and promulgates security procedures, which include maintaining control of entrances, exits, restricted areas, document control, and record keeping. Specific procedures regarding the protection of School property, traffic throughout the facilities, and designation of restricted areas are issued by the Operations and Facilities Teams and posted on School bulletin boards. In addition, employees are expected to comply with School policies regarding the authorized and secure use of the School's computer technology, as described in the School's Security Regulations and in the Technology Use and security guideline of this Manual. Employees are expected to abide by all of the school's security procedures.

Avoiding loss or theft of Confidential Information or Personal Identification Information is an important part of each employee's job. Accordingly, employees must observe good security practices. Employees are expected to keep Confidential Information secure from outside visitors and all other persons who do not have legitimate reason to see or use such information. Employees are not to remove School property without authorization. Failure to adhere to School policies regarding Confidential Information and Personal Identification Information will be considered grounds for termination.

Given the sensitivity of Confidential Information and Personal Identification Information, employees may only dispose of such information by secure methods approved by the School. If an employee has any doubt or question about how to handle Confidential Information or Personal Identification Information, the employee should consult with the School's Director of Human Resources.

IV. Lost and Found

Employees should not bring large sums of money, jewelry, or other valuables to work. The School will not be responsible for personal property that is lost, damaged, stolen, or destroyed. If an employee finds personal belongings that have been lost by another person, please give them to the school office. Failure to adequately protect school property may result in disciplinary action.

V. Employee Parking

Employees park at their own risk, and the School will not be responsible for theft or damage to any vehicles parked on or near School property. Also, the School will not be responsible for personal property left in vehicles that are lost, damaged, stolen, or destroyed. Staff parking permits will be issued. A new staff-only lot will be established south of the elementary building.

VI. Access to School Property

It is important that Administration and designated operations staff have access at all times to the School property, as well as to records, documents, and files. As a result, the School reserves the right to access teacher classrooms, offices, workstations, filing cabinets, desks, and any other school property at its discretion, with or without advance notice or consent.

Personal and School-Provided Portable Communication Devices

School-provided portable communication devices (PCDs), including cell phones, should be used primarily for business purposes. Employees have no reasonable expectation of privacy in regard to the use of such devices, and all use is subject to monitoring, to the maximum extent permitted by applicable law. This includes, as permitted, the right to monitor personal communications as necessary.

Some employees may be authorized to use their own PCD for business purposes. These employees should work with the IT department to configure their PCD for business use. Communications sent via a personal PCD also may be subject to monitoring if sent through the School's networks and the PCD must be provided for inspection and review upon request.

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

Please note that whether employees use their personal PCD or a School -issued device, the School's electronic communications policies, including but not limited to, proper use of communications and computer systems, remain in effect.

Use of Computers, the Internet, and Electronic Communications Policy

To review full board policy, go to [Stargate School Governance Board Policies](#).

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Employee Use of Computers, the Internet and Electronic Communications Policy is to establish employee guidelines for acceptable use of computers, the Internet, and electronic communications.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all School employees and any individual with a School email address, excluding Students covered by [District Policy 5035, Student use of District Technology and the Internet](#).

III. Policy

The School supports the use of the Internet and electronic communications by all employees to improve teaching and learning through interpersonal communication, access to information, research, training and collaboration and dissemination of successful educational practices, methods and materials.

The Internet is a fluid environment in which information is constantly changing. The School will make every reasonable effort to ensure that this educational resource is used appropriately and responsibly. Administrators, teachers, and staff have a professional responsibility to work together to help students develop the intellectual skills needed to evaluate and choose information sources, to identify information appropriate to their age and developmental levels, create effective and appropriate information, and to evaluate and use information to meet their educational goals.

Employees shall take responsibility for their own use of the School computers and computer systems. Employees shall use the School computers and computer systems in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner. Employees are responsible for exercising good judgment when utilizing the School resources and should be wary of unknown email solicitations, pop-up boxes or writing anything in an email message that is inappropriate to say to others face-to-face.

A. Employee Use is a Privilege

Use of the School computers, the Internet and electronic communications demands personal responsibility and an understanding of the acceptable and unacceptable uses of such tools. Employee use of the School computers, the Internet and electronic communications is a privilege, not a right. Violations of this policy will not be tolerated. The School may deny, revoke or suspend access to the School technology or close accounts at any time and without notice.

B. No Expectation of Privacy

The School computers and computer systems are owned by the School and are intended for educational purposes and the School business at all times. Employees shall have no expectation of privacy when using the School computers, the Internet or electronic communications. The School reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store, at any time and without prior notice, all usage of the School computers and computer systems, including all Internet and electronic communications access and transmission/receipt of materials and information. All material and information accessed/received through the School computers and computer systems shall remain the property of the School. Electronic messages sent or received by the Board, the School's employees or students, including electronic mail on School-owned equipment, as well as other documents generated through use of the School's system may be considered a public record subject to disclosure or inspection under the Colorado Open Records Act.

C. Accounts and Passwords

Employees are expected to protect personal login and password information, and should not share access with anyone, including other staff members, administration, board members, students, parents/guardians or volunteers. When necessary to conduct the business affairs of the School, Administrators or designee may grant permission to share access. Employees may be directed to disclose login and password information by a supervisor.

D. Prohibited Use

Because technology and methods of using technology are constantly evolving, every unacceptable use of the School computers and computer systems cannot be specifically described in policy. Therefore, examples of unacceptable uses include, but are not limited to, the following. No employee shall access, create, transmit, retransmit or forward material or information that:

1. Promotes violence or advocates destruction of property including, but not limited to, access to information concerning the manufacturing or purchasing of destructive devices or weapons.
2. Contains pornographic, obscene or other sexually oriented materials, either as pictures or writings, or material that is harmful to minors.
3. Harasses, bullies, intimidates, threatens, demeans, or promotes violence or hatred against another person or group of persons with regard to race, color, sex, age, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or any other status protected by state or local law.
4. Plagiarizes the work of another.
5. Uses inappropriate or profane language or depictions.
6. Is knowingly false.
7. Violates any federal or state law, including but not limited to copyright or material that contains personal information, including information protected by confidentiality laws.
8. Impersonates another person.
9. Is intended to solicit, proselytize, advocate, or communicate the views of a non- school sponsored organization.

The following activities are also prohibited:

- Using information systems or resources for personal gain or outside the scope of employment.
- Attempting to gain unauthorized access to any other computer, network or security account including attempts to log in as a system administrator.
- Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy Stargate School data, data of another user, or other the School computing facilities.
- Using or attempting to use proxy servers, or otherwise evade, disable, or "crack" passwords or other security provisions of the systems on the network or intercepting or altering network packets.
- Downloading, installing, storing or using malicious software, viruses, "cracking," and keystroke monitoring software.
- Intentionally interfering with or disrupting another information technology user's work as well as the proper function of information processing and network services or equipment.
- Leaving an active system unattended, thereby allowing an unauthorized person to gain access to the School resources through the user's login session.
- Using a computer for unlawful purposes.
- Altering technology equipment (hardware or software) without permission from the I.T. department.
- Taking home technology equipment (hardware or software) without permission of the employee's supervisor or designee.

E. Electronic Communications

The School may provide electronic communication services for employees. The School reserves the right to, at any time and without prior notice, monitor, inspect, copy, review and store all electronic communication content composed, sent over, by, or through the School computers or computer systems or with a the School-provided account, even if composed and sent during non-work/school hours or from a non-School site, and to disclose the information to law enforcement or other third parties, as appropriate.

1. Employees shall use School-provided electronic communications accounts and not personal accounts when acting in the course and scope of employment and conducting business on behalf of School.
2. Having a consistent signature and email from everyone in the organization shows a strong level of professionalism and unity to our community and colleagues. [These guidelines](#) comply with the Stargate School Brand Guidelines and are to be used by all employees.
3. The School has a hard code confidentiality disclaimer footer block in email messages.

F. Security

Security and integrity of the School computer systems and information is a high priority and requires participation of all employees. Employees who identify a security problem while using the Internet or electronic communications should immediately notify IT Support at support@stargateschool.org and avoid demonstrating the problem to other users. Student or employee information stored in electronic format shall not be taken home on a laptop or transferred to an external device for home or outside use unless the School data security and encryption procedures are followed.

1. To protect hardware, software, and information, employees must follow security procedures and standards created by the School's Information Technology Department when working at home or an alternative workplace.

G. Confidentiality

Employees shall only access, receive, transmit or retransmit material regarding students, parents or the School employees that is protected by confidentiality laws in accordance with law and the School Policy. Employees shall handle all employee, student and the School records in accordance with Adams 12 Policies [8300 RECORDS MANAGEMENT](#), [5300 STUDENT SCHOOL RECORDS](#), and [1800 PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS](#).

H. Unauthorized Software

Employees are prohibited from using or possessing any software that has been downloaded or is otherwise in the user's possession without appropriate registration and payment of any fees owed to the software owner.

I. Social, Collaborative, Interactive, and Responsive Technologies

The School supports the use of technologies such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, and online photo management software for educational purposes and communicating with the community. These technologies are considered an extension of the classroom and are approved for use to convey information about the School services; promote and raise awareness of School; and communicate with employees, students, and community members. Use of school electronic communication resources to participate in activities including, but not limited to, news groups, wikis, blog discussions, and social networking must be for bona fide educational purposes only.

1. The School also acknowledges that employees may choose to utilize these technologies – such as the Platform X (formerly) Twitter, Instagram and Facebook on their own time as

well as during work time for educational purposes. Personal social networking sites must not be used to encourage inappropriate personal nonprofessional relationships with current or recent students. When utilizing personal social networking sites, School employees are strongly encouraged to consider whether what is posted will impair the employee's professional effectiveness or reputation. No confidential information about students, staff, or community members should be shared.

2. Employees are responsible for content shared by students when the employee is supervising students engaged in educational activities or sponsoring a student organization pursuant to Adams 12 Policies [5260 CHOICE OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL TRANSFERS](#), [5650 DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS ON SCHOOL PREMISES](#) or [6260 STUDENT PRESS](#).

J. Stargate School Makes No Warranties

The School makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, related to the use of School computers and computer systems, including access to the Internet and electronic communications services. Providing access to these services does not imply endorsement by the School of the content, nor does the School make any guarantee as to the accuracy or quality of information received. Stargate School shall not be responsible for any damage, loss or cost incurred by an employee in using the Internet and electronic communications, including loss of data and service interruptions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet and electronic communications is at the employee's own risk.

Temporary Telecommuting

In the event of an emergency such as a weather disaster or pandemic, the School may allow or require employees to temporarily work from home to ensure organization and student learning continuity.

These employees will be advised of such requirements by their direct supervisor and/or the Executive Directors. Preparations should be made by employees and supervisors well in advance to allow remote work in emergency circumstances. This includes appropriate equipment needs, such as hardware, software, phone and data lines. The IT department is available to review these equipment needs with employees and to provide support to employees in advance of emergency telework situations.

For voluntary telework arrangements, either the employee or supervisor can initiate a temporary telecommuting agreement during emergency circumstances. The employee and supervisor will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement, including equipment needs, workspace design considerations and scheduling issues.

Employees should not assume any specified period of time for emergency telework arrangements, and the School may require employees to return to regular, in-office work at any time.

I. Telecommuting Location and Workspace

The employee should have a suitable work space at the telecommuting location. A desk, chair, lighting, access to reliable internet and phone service are expected to be provided by the employee. Costs incurred by an employee to create a worksite space to telecommute are at the employee's expense and will not be reimbursed, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space.

II. Technology

The School will determine the equipment needs for each employee on a case-by-case basis. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only.

Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working on the school premises, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of the organization's proprietary information and student or staff information accessible from their home office.

III. Telecommuting Schedule

Unless otherwise agreed to or required by the supervisor, an employee's work schedule shall be the same as the employee's schedule in the customary worksite, including meal breaks and rest periods. Employees shall conform to established school policies and procedures as they relate to work hours, including leave usage. Non-exempt employees will get prior approval from the supervisor regarding how to clock in and clock out while telecommuting. While the employee is telecommuting, the employee must be available via telephone, email or virtually/by teleconference or videoconference. At the discretion of the supervisor, an employee may be asked to work from their customary worksite if needed. Virtual meetings conducted while telecommuting using Stargate software are to be used for business and operational purposes only.

IV. Work Performance

The quantity and quality of work performed while telecommuting should be comparable to the work completed at the school. In situations where a comparison cannot be made, the employee must adhere to deadlines and meet established objectives. Supervisors may require employees to provide reports, artifacts or other work products that demonstrate work performed or accomplished on telecommuting work days.

V. Standards of Conduct

Employee expectations within the Staff Handbook, school and district policies, standard practices for Colorado Educators continue to apply when providing remote learning and in virtual meetings. In addition, all staff are expected to maintain student confidentiality in accordance with FERPA during remote learning.

VI. Reimbursement and Property Damage

The School will not be responsible for operating costs, home maintenance, or any other incidental costs (e.g., utilities, insurance, telephone, internet connections, travel mileage, etc.) associated with the use of employees' residences. Employees should consult with their supervisors if they have additional questions or concerns. Employees agree that Stargate shall not be liable for damages to employees' personal or real property while employees are working at the off-site work location.

Electronic Surveillance

The School reserves the right to install security cameras in work areas for specific business reasons, such as security, theft protection or protection of proprietary information. The School may find it necessary to monitor work areas with security cameras when there is a specific job or business-related reason to do so. The School will do so only after first ensuring that such action is in compliance with state and federal laws. Employees should not expect privacy in

work-related areas. Employee privacy in nonwork areas will be respected to the extent possible. The School's reasonable suspicion of an onsite drug use, physical abuse, theft or similar circumstances would be possible exceptions. Employees should contact their supervisor or the Human Resources Department if they have questions about this policy.

External Communications

Occasionally employees may be contacted by outside sources requesting information about School matters, including information regarding current or former employees, school projects, or other workplace issues. In order to avoid providing inaccurate or incomplete information to outside sources, and the possible negative exposure that may result from providing information about the School to outside sources, any employee asked to speak for or on behalf of the School by any outside source should immediately contact the appropriate School official, as detailed below.

Employees violating this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

This policy is in no way intended to prohibit an employee from documenting and speaking with outside third parties regarding perceived or alleged unacceptable or illegal working conditions. The policy is also in no way intended to deter any employee from speaking with any individual regarding labor organizing.

I. Media Contacts

The School will respond to media inquiries in a timely and professional manner only through the designated spokesperson. If an employee is contacted by a representative from any media organization (e.g., television, radio, or newspaper reporters) to speak for or on behalf of the School, the employee should notify the media representative that they are not authorized to make a public comment on behalf of the School and immediately refer the media representative to the Executive Director. No employee may communicate with media agents on behalf of the School without prior authorization from the Executive Director.

II. Outside Attorneys and Investigators

If an employee is contacted by an outside attorney or investigator regarding School business, including information regarding current or former employees, School projects, or other workplace issues, the employee should inform the inquiring party that they are not authorized to speak on behalf of the School and immediately obtain the individual's name and telephone number. School employees will comply with any subpoena or court order. The individual's name and telephone number should then be provided to the Executive Director and Human Resources Director. Nothing in this policy restricts an employee from discussing their wages or other terms and conditions of employment with coworkers or others, to the extent protected by law.

III. References and Verifications of Employment

To protect the rights to privacy of current and former employees, and the School and its authorized supervisors and managers from legal liability, the School strictly limits information provided to outside parties.

The School will provide verifications of employment to prospective employers, financial institutions, mortgage and credit agencies and employment references to prospective employers concerning past or current employees, only if the school receives a written authorization and release signed by the employee or former employee.

The Human Resources Director is authorized to respond to requests for verification of employment. Such verifications will be limited to: confirmation of employment, dates of hire and termination of employment, job title(s), and verification of base pay.

Persons authorized to provide an employment reference include the direct supervisor, Human Resources Director and Administration. Every effort will be made to reflect a fair and factual accounting of job content and performance, conduct, attendance, and dates of employment. If a former employee was involuntarily terminated due to misconduct, the authorized, inquiring party will be informed that the individual is ineligible for rehire. The School will not limit its response to ineligibility for rehire, however, where an adverse impact on the safety and security of children in a potential work environment might result.

If a co-worker is contacted by a potential employer to provide a reference, they are expected to refer the call to the employee's direct supervisor, Human Resources Director, or Administration. A co-worker who wishes to provide a personal reference must do so on their own time and must clearly inform the prospective employer that they are not or was not the employee's direct supervisor and that they are not representing the School in any authorized capacity. Any co-worker providing such a personal reference does so at their own risk. If employees receive a call inquiring about a former employee, please refer it to the Human Resources Director. Only the Human Resources Director or designee has the authority to respond to such inquiries. This restriction includes recommendations on social media sites.

Professional Dress

Appropriate employee appearance should generate a professional image for the individual staff member and the School educational community as a whole. Employees are expected to take pride in their professional dress and strive to achieve a positive educational and business-like appearance in the work environment; hence, the minimum standard established for the student dress code is not sufficient for the School professionals. Employees should use good judgment in their choice of appearance for work or related activities by always appearing in a manner:

- Appropriate to the situation as a professional educator/staff member;
- Reflects community-accepted standards and guidelines to which we hold students;
- Provides appropriate and professional role modeling for students;
- Promotes a working and learning environment that is free from unnecessary interruption or distraction; Consistent with [Adams 12 Five Star District's District Policy 4100](#), Staff Dress, Accessories and Grooming.

Additionally, all employees are required to wear a school-issued identification card at all times while on School or district property, or when acting as a school employee. School staff members have the option of purchasing and wearing attire/gear which includes the School logo. Please wear it with pride. Remember you are a representative of the School when wearing school attire. We require all employees associated with School to conduct themselves in a professional manner that results in a favorable impression by the community and be respectful when representing the School in public at all times.

The School recognizes that some classroom activities and field trips may require alternative teacher attire that would not normally meet School standards.

Nothing in this dress code is intended or should be construed to violate, restrict or discriminate against any employee's actual or perceived race (including hair texture and natural hair styles),

religion, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or status, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, age, nursing mothers, or any other basis protected by local, state, or federal laws. If any employee believes that their protected rights based upon a protected class are being restricted or violated in some manner by the dress code, please contact your supervisor or human resources so that these concerns can be addressed. Any employee who needs a medical or religious accommodation to the School's dress and grooming standards should contact the Human Resources Department.

Solicitation on School Property or Using School Systems

Employees, parents/guardians, and students should not be put in a position of feeling compelled to donate money or participate in unwanted solicitation. Accordingly, the School does not allow solicitation on school property or using school operated systems by employees:

- In any work area in which work is in progress
- During the work time of the soliciting employee or of the employee being solicited (work time does not include authorized breaks or meal time)
- Using school email, Google applications, or any other school operated system
- When such solicitation may result in violence, damage to school property, the disruption of work, or the orderly operation of school activities

An employee who wishes to take up a collection from other employees on school property or using school operated systems, must first get permission from Administration, and then must conduct the activity on their own time. The only collections that may be approved are those for the benefit of other employees; for example: anniversary of an employee's service to the School, or to honor the occasion of an employee's retirement or voluntary departure from the service of the School.

If an employee seeks school participation (direct or indirect) in solicitation for, or cooperation with, an organized charity, they must first obtain the approval of the Administration. Such activities will generally be limited on school premises because of the large number of non-profit agencies in the community and to ensure that school operations are not disrupted.

Parents may engage in fundraising activities on school property to benefit the School and/or its foundation at times and in a manner that does not disrupt school operations and with the prior approval of the Administration.

Non-employees, with the sole exception of parents engaging in approved fundraising activities to benefit the School and/or its foundation, may not solicit on school property at any time.

Any violation of this policy may result in corrective action, including termination of employment and/or the lawful ejection from school property of the offending individual(s).

Bulletin Boards

Posted information on staff bulletin boards (common work areas) is for the benefit of all employees. Employees will find posters that explain state and federal law, as well as updated information about Stargate policy and procedures in the front office near the mailboxes. Employees are responsible for checking bulletin boards on a regular basis and for reading all

posted materials.

Acknowledgment of Receipt of Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Stargate Staff Handbook. I understand that I am responsible for reading the Handbook and for familiarizing myself and complying with the policies set forth in the Handbook during my employment with the School.

I further understand, however, that the guidelines contained in the Handbook are guidelines only and are not intended to create any contractual rights or obligations, express or implied, and shall not be construed to create any type of right to a "fair procedure" prior to termination or other disciplinary action. I also understand that, except for the School's at-will employment policy, the School may amend, interpret, modify, or withdraw any of the provisions of the Handbook at any time in its sole discretion, with or without notice. Furthermore, I understand that, because the School cannot anticipate every issue that may arise during my employment, if I have any questions regarding any of the School's guidelines or procedures, I should consult the School's Human Resources Department.

I understand and agree that my relationship with the School is "at-will," which means that my employment is for no definite period and may be terminated by me or by the School at any time and for any reason, with or without cause or advance notice. I also understand that the School may demote or discipline me or otherwise alter the terms of my employment at any time at its sole discretion, with or without cause or advance notice.

I understand and agree that the terms of this Acknowledgment may not be modified or superseded except by a written agreement signed by the President of the Governance Board, that no other employee or representative of the School has the authority to enter into any such agreement, and that any agreement to employ me for any specified period of time or that is otherwise inconsistent with the terms of this Acknowledgment will be unenforceable unless in writing and signed by the President of the Governance Board. I further understand and agree that if the terms of this Acknowledgement are inconsistent with any guideline or practice of the School now or in the future, the terms of this Acknowledgement shall control.

Finally, I understand and agree that this Acknowledgment contains a full and complete statement of the agreements and understandings that it recites, that no one has made any promises or commitments to me contrary to the foregoing, and that this Acknowledgment supersedes all previous agreements, whether written or oral, express or implied, relating to the subjects covered in this Acknowledgment.

I have carefully read this Acknowledgement of Receipt.

Submit your acknowledgement through [this form](#).

Coversheet

2026-2027 Community Handbook

Section:	IV. School Operations
Item:	B. 2026-2027 Community Handbook
Purpose:	FYI
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Summary of Changes Made to Community Handbook 26-27.pdf 2026-2027 Community Handbook_DRAFT.pdf



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Summary of Changes to the 2026–2027 Stargate Community Handbook

Below is an overview of updates and clarifications made to the Stargate Staff Handbook for the 2026–2027 school year:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Description of Change</u>
12	Emergency Protocols	Language added to explain Stargate's use of RedBag
12	Emergency Protocols	Clarifying language and reinforced difference between a secure and lockdown
18	Guidelines Regarding Students with Concussions	Concussion Protocol changed to require communication with the Health Office <i>and</i> the student's counselor.
26	Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Grades 9-12	Policy changed from 6-12th grades to 9th-12th grades
26	Appropriate Technology & Internet Use Policy	Language added to clarify that we follow the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).
30	Gifting	Added language and limits to family and student gifting



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2026-2027

COMMUNITY HANDBOOK

A reference guide for Parents/Guardians, Students & Staff

Stargate School
www.stargateschool.org
14530 Washington Street
Thornton, CO 80023
Voice: (303) 450-3936 **Fax:** (303) 450-3941
Email: info@stargateschool.org

Grades served: Kindergarten through Grade 12

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Please note: Stargate follows all Adams 12 Five Star Schools (“Adams 12” and “District”) Policies unless otherwise noted. At the request of the district and for your convenience we have included District policies in this handbook. Where these policies are inserted within the general content, we have clearly labeled them as such.

Please read all parts of this document and discuss them with your student so that you may be fully informed of any/all changes and applicable district policies.

These policies are in force through the 2026-2027 academic year.

Stargate reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any provision, benefit or policy from time to time as it deems necessary or appropriate

Stargate Mission

Stargate School will provide a differentiated program designed specifically to meet the needs of identified intellectually gifted learners in order to challenge each student's academic abilities, support their unique emotional needs, promote individual character development and encourage a life-long love of learning.

Vision Statement

Stargate community will be a leader and innovator in intellectually gifted education by providing a learning environment to meet gifted students' needs.

Educational Philosophy

Gifted students have unique needs that should be supported using a variety of instructional strategies to support their growth. Stargate aligns its instructional expertise with the Colorado Academic Standards, National Association of Gifted Students (NAGC) standards, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) standards, and industry specific standards.

Partnership

Students are most successful when their school community works in partnership to provide them with the instruction, support, and resources they need. Our community consists of families, professionals, board members, and students. Each plays a critically important and significant role in student success. It is imperative that community members work respectfully and productively to support Stargate students with the understanding that each member has a unique perspective to share.

The Governance Board operates through the lens of school stewardship and through their legal and financial obligations.

Staff supports students through the lens of professional expertise.

Parents/guardians support their students through the lens of parental expertise.

Students support themselves and each other through the lens of learning, growing, and self-advocacy.

Individual Rights and Responsibilities

As education is a joint responsibility between the school, district, and families, we

are guided by [District Policy 8900](#), in which a family's rights and responsibilities are outlined.

Who is Who in Our Community?

I. Governance Board of Directors

The School is governed by the Governance Board of Directors (“the Board”). The Board is composed of up to nine Directors, at least five of whom are parents or guardians, and up to four board-appointed independent directors. The current Board Members can be found [here](#).

The purpose of the Board is to set the general direction and policy of the School, not to manage it on a daily basis. The Board establishes and maintains fundamental school policies to ensure adherence to the vision and mission statements. Board Directors govern in a manner to ensure the adherence to the Stargate vision and mission statements. Their role is to oversee the financial stability of the School, to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, and to deal with school-related issues as prescribed in the bylaws. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the Board to foster positive relationships with school personnel, the school community, and with the community at large.

Administration makes day-to-day management decisions and is responsible for all education and operations duties for the School.

As with all charter schools, the School is an entity separate from the school district in the area of governance. Each Director shall guard this unique characteristic of the School and other charter schools. All board policies can be found on the [Stargate Governance Webpages](#).

A. Stargate Governance Board of Directors Meetings

1. Guide to Board Meeting Protocols

In accordance with Colorado Sunshine Laws, the Board conducts its business in public unless it is required to do otherwise. The Board typically meets every month for an open-forum meeting and conducts additional work sessions and executive sessions as needed. The schedule for these meetings is posted on the website.

2. What to Expect at Board Meetings

The President or highest-ranking officer present typically facilitates the meetings. At least three Board members must be present in order for a decision-making quorum to be present. Agendas are available via the website at least 24 hours before a meeting, and copies will be available in person upon request.

The Board wishes to hear viewpoints of the school community and considers the responsible and respectful presentation of these

viewpoints vital to the efficient operation of the school. During the time reserved for public comment at each business meeting, members of the community may address the Board on any matter. Speakers will be asked to limit their comments per the time specified on the agenda. While the Board cannot act on or respond to matters presented during the public comment segment, those commenting can request a follow-up communication, recognizing that the Board is under no obligation to provide such follow up. This communication may come from a designated member thereof assigned to respond; or if the topic relates to operations issues, a designated member of the administration.

Items on the agenda may have an opportunity for public discussion when noted on the agenda.

As allowed by Colorado Revised Statute, the Board may need to meet in an executive session to discuss private matters. The Board will only do so when the topic is on the agenda and the statute is referenced.

II. Stargate Leadership

[Stargate's Leadership Team](#) provides guidance and structure to ensure the successful implementation of educational programming. Their role is to operationalize our school's Mission and Vision.

III. Stargate Families and Extended Community

We welcome our community to join us for family fun events, learning forums, and as volunteers.

In addition to school events, we will connect to our community through:

- Parent Education Presentations
- Newsletter(s)
- Social Media
- Scheduled Individual Conferences

IV. Volunteers

From sharing time, skills and talents to financial support, our families support more educational opportunities for our students. There are numerous ways to get involved in our community. All volunteers will be vetted for safety prior to any school interaction.

A. Opportunities for Parent Participation

- Volunteering on the governance board (positions filled by election)
- Volunteering on school committee(s)

- Volunteering for library, playground, and lunchroom support
- Providing networking with external partners
- Provide extended learning opportunities for students including guest speaking, guest projects, internship opportunities, etc.
- Other areas of interest that may benefit our students, if approved by school administration
- Voting in elections

B. Community Development Committees

Work with our Community Development Manager to support our committees working to build community ties. School Committees are: Fundraising, Community Relations Committee, and Grants.

C. Board Committees

Visit the [Governance Board Committees](#) on the Stargate Website for more information about getting involved in Board Committees. Board committees consist of, but are not limited to:

- Elections
- Finance
- Fundraising Allocation Committee (FAC)
- Recruiting
- School Accountability Committee (SAC) (positions filled by election)
- Adhoc Committees

D. Volunteer Safety

Trusted adults are welcome to support our students in multiple ways throughout the school. As a safety measure, all volunteers who will interact with students must complete the volunteer approval process which includes a background check, and check in with the front office to present a photo ID and receive a visitor sticker during each visit. [General Guidelines for Volunteering at Stargate.](#)

- Staff members have final authority at all times.
- Volunteers must sign a Confidentiality Agreement not to discuss student achievement or behavior in accordance with FERPA, HIPAA, or any other protected information. [Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement & Waiver.](#)
- Volunteers are not permitted to grade papers or record grades.
- The sign-up for volunteer opportunities can be accessed [here](#).
- If you have made a volunteer commitment, please honor the commitment.
- Notify the activity/event coordinator in advance if you are
- unable to fulfill your commitment on a particular day.
- Volunteers must turn off all electronic devices that may cause a distraction to the school environment.
- Volunteer attire must be safe and appropriate for the volunteer assignment and free from political or offensive content.
- Siblings of Stargate students may not accompany parent volunteers.

E. School Fundraisers:

As a charter school, Stargate receives the state Per Pupil Revenue (PPR) as allocated to public schools for operations. Stargate also subscribes to Central Administrative Services from Adams 12 at an additional cost. Supplementary financial support through fundraising from our community is important to ensure the highest level of educational service to our students.

- Opportunities to give to Stargate can be found on the [Fundraising website](#). Your potentially tax-deductible gifts help make up the difference between district and state funding allocations.
- Families can give directly to the Stargate Giving [Platform](#) or make a tax deductible donation directly to the school. It's just one way that we help maintain Stargate's strong financial position.
- Visit our [Fundraising webpage](#) for additional fundraising events such as dining night out, spirit wear sales, retail rewards programs and other fun events.

Communication

Respectful and productive communication is essential to working in partnership toward student success. It is the expectation of each community member that communication will be courteous, civil, and solution oriented. When utilizing social media, the expectation is that our community (staff, families, Governance Board) maintains confidentiality; and is courteous, civil, and solution oriented. When appropriate the community should direct one another back to the [Communication Pathways](#). We ask that the community comes with the "spirit of curiosity" when engaging with one another and seek to understand first.

The following outlines expectations for Stargate staff, parents/guardians, and community members engaged in written or oral communication. Communication that does not meet our community standards will not receive a response, other than a reference to our [Community Compact](#) and a request to re-communicate in a more appropriate manner.

I. Regular Communication and Timely Response

Weekly newsletters are sent by email to parent/guardian emails officially recorded in Infinite Campus for K-5 grades. Families in grades 6-8 will typically receive communication through Google Classroom or specific teacher updates through Infinite Campus Messenger. Additionally, each teacher has a telephone extension, voicemail and email. The preferred method of contact and communication with staff is via email. The staff email directory can be found [here](#). At no time will phone calls be transferred into classrooms during instructional time.

Please respect staff instructional time and availability by contacting the teacher to set an appointment. Teachers are unavailable to meet with you during drop-off, pick-up or instructional time. School staff will be able to meet by appointment only.

Classroom teachers will respond to emails in a timely manner and **within three (3) business days**. Administrators will respond to emails in a timely manner based on the urgency of the message and generally within three (3) business days. Please respect these response timelines and allow staff sufficient time to respond before sending additional emails.

We encourage you to call only in cases of urgency and/or emergency.

II. Communication Pathways and Complaint Process

Stargate Administration and staff make a genuine effort to be available and respond to parent needs and have developed Communication Pathways to support community communication. These pathways should be used at all times. In the event that a community member does not follow the Communication Pathway, the community member will be referred to the appropriate staff member for a response. If you have a classroom or student-related concern or problem, please follow the Stargate Communication Pathways. The [Communication Pathways](#) and [Communication and Complaint Board Policy](#) can be found on the Stargate website.

Safety

It is the first responsibility of a school to ensure the safety of its students and staff. Having a safe school is a first-line priority, and Stargate complies with all federal, state, and local laws and requirements. [District Policy 3500](#) details our baseline commitments.

To make sure our students and staff know what to do in an emergency, we practice safety drills throughout the year to help us respond quickly, calmly and safely to a number of situations. Families can learn more about safety at Stargate by visiting our [Safety and Security](#) web page Stargate's School Safety Plan includes:

I. Safety Framework

Stargate has an Emergency Operations Manual that is updated annually; this document provides an overview of actions to be taken in the event of a significant school emergency. The development of this manual is based on resources from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Colorado School Safety Resource Center (CSSRC).

All administrative staff are required to possess certification in FEMA's Incident Command System and Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools.

Stargate's Safety Team meets monthly to assess any safety concerns and makes recommendations based on these discussions.

II. School Resource Officer

Stargate partners with the Thornton Police Department to house a full time School Resource Officer (SRO) on campus.

III. Safety Drills

We design drills to teach confidence and allow students and staff to be "emergency prepared not emergency scared." The goal of our drills is to improve our ability to protect students, save lives and reduce injuries. These practice drills allow us to evaluate our emergency operation plans, improve our response skills and make students and staff aware of what to do in an emergency.

Parents/Guardians are notified after safety drills with overview information. Drills throughout the school year include:

- Fire drills - conducted monthly per fire code requirements
- Lockdown drills- designed to familiarize students with how to respond to an active threat in the school - conducted twice a year - one announced in the fall and one announced in the spring
- Weather related and tornado drills - conducted twice a year
- Hazardous material spill drills - conducted annually

IV. Emergency Protocols

Stargate, like other Adams 12 Five Star Schools, utilizes the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) developed by the [I Love U Guys Foundation](#) in collaboration with the Adams 12 Five Star District and law enforcement. The SRP is based not on individual scenarios but on the response to any given situation. The premise is simple - there are five actions that can be performed during an emergency situation:

HOLD - students are required to stay in their current classroom or location to keep hallways clear of occupants. During a HOLD, students may be relocated from a high traffic/occupancy area to another location.

SECURE - building is put in Secure based on concerning activity on external school grounds or in the surrounding area. This is the protocol used to safeguard people within the building. School staff move all students and activities inside and

ensure the building is locked while learning continues inside the school with minimal classroom interruption or distractions.

LockDOWN - building is put on LockDOWN due to perceived danger inside or very near the building. All students and staff are trained to get behind a locked door - Locks, Lights, Out of Sight. In the rare event that a student cannot get behind a locked door, they are trained in self-evacuation protocols.

RedBag Emergency Communication

Every classroom is equipped with a RedBag — a secure, silent, two-way communication system accessed by scanning a QR code with any phone or tablet, no app required. During a Lockdown (and in certain Hold situations), staff can use RedBag to communicate directly and silently with the school's safety team and, when necessary, law enforcement — reporting status, requesting medical help, or receiving real-time updates — without needing to open a locked door or speak aloud. This allows our safety team to know which rooms are secure, coordinate first responders efficiently, and, when appropriate, safely release or evacuate specific classrooms without requiring entry.

EVACUATE - students and staff are moved to a new or safe location due to a situation in or near the school building.

SHELTER - students and staff are instructed to take safe shelter inside the school due to a situation in or near the school. This is usually a weather-related event.

What is the difference between Secure and LockDOWN? In Secure, learning continues inside the school with minimal classroom interruption or distractions. All doors are locked and no one can leave or enter the building without police or school approval. However, the school day operates as normal, unless the Secure interferes with release times. By contrast, during a LockDOWN, classroom doors are locked and secured, lights are turned off, and students and staff move to a location away from hallway windows and doors. Students are encouraged to remain quiet. Students and staff are released by school or emergency personnel only. In the rare event that a student cannot get behind a locked door, they are trained in self-evacuation protocols. If your child contacts you to let you know they have self-evacuated, please contact Stargate to advise of their location.

V. Reunification and Emergency Communication

As a result of any of the four Emergency Protocol scenarios, students may need to be reunified with parents through a controlled release at the school or a reunification at a new location. We want to reunite students with parents as soon as possible during an emergency situation. We will work with our police and fire agencies to determine when it is safe to reunite students and parents. These situations often take time and planning to ensure you and your child are reunited safely.

In addition to reunification communications, Stargate provides notification in as timely a manner as possible when the school has enacted one of the four Emergency Protocols. The notification is typically provided via email communication and may include updates and next steps.

In case of an emergency, wait for instructions. Please DO NOT come to the school unless instructed to do so in order to allow Responders and the Safety Team to perform their required duties.

VI. Threat Assessments

Stargate's safety and security team works in collaboration with local authorities and uses emergency management best-practices to develop and implement safety procedures, including threat assessments. As part of our school safety planning, Stargate has procedures in place to identify and manage concerning behaviors among the staff and students.

Process - Threat assessment is an objective, fact-finding process to determine whether there is an existing or posed threat to others. This process is initiated whenever perceived harm to others is reported to the school/district, per [District Policy 5110](#) Student Bullying, Harassment, Hazing, Intimidation and Threatening Behavior. It is focused on identifying behaviors of concern to determine any appropriate intervention strategies for the student. This process runs independently of any discipline, restorative, or criminal process. There are two levels to this process: an initial screen and/or a full threat assessment. An initial screen is used to determine whether a threat is posed. If the information demonstrates a severe or significant concern or impact and/or not enough information is known to make an accurate determination - a trained school threat assessment team may move to a full threat assessment. A full threat assessment is used to delve deeper into the facts surrounding the alleged threat and the individual student's background. Every threat assessment will have a screen but not every screen will result in a full threat assessment. Threat assessments are used to guide practices for student intervention based on the individual and any concerns that may be presented. If your student has been contacted as part of a threat assessment process, you are welcome to reach out with any questions you may have.

VII. Disciplinary Philosophy

Clear behavior expectations are emphasized and every attempt should be made to ensure that those expectations are consistently enforced. Positive reinforcement and redirection are used whenever possible. Research shows that behavior expectations are easier for students to follow if stated in a positive manner. To this end, Stargate has implemented K-12 Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program to reinforce desired behaviors.

VIII. Student Code of Conduct

It is our goal to create a safe and productive learning environment for all students. The [Student Code of Conduct](#) is followed to address behavior concerns. Students and families are expected to be familiar and comply with all expectations identified in the Code of Conduct. The policies referenced in the Code of Conduct identify specific grounds for discipline, including suspension or expulsion of a student.

Consequences for inappropriate behaviors can be found here [Discipline Matrix](#)

IX. Developmentally Appropriate Conflict, Aggressive, and Bullying Behavior

An inclusive learning environment must provide students with the opportunity to engage in productive conflict while protecting students from the harmful effects of aggressive and bullying behavior. Stargate students are expected to behave respectfully toward community members, per [District Policy 5110](#)

For more information, please visit [Stop Bullying](#)

A. Safe2Tell

Safe2Tell was founded on the idea that early intervention is the key to preventing violence and saving lives. The program promotes early intervention by serving as a relay of information between people submitting reports and local multidisciplinary teams, such as schools and law enforcement agencies. The founding principles are:

- Educate the community on the importance of reporting safety concerns
- Encourage everyone to play a role in prevention
- Equip community stakeholders with a direct way to report anonymously • Empower those who have the intention to help, prevent or protect to make a difference

Community members are encouraged to report concerns at Safe2Tell Colorado - 877-542-7233 or www.safe2tell.org.

X. Visitors to Schools

Parents and visitors are welcome in district schools or facilities. For the safety of students, staff and visitors, [District Policy 1200 Visitors to Schools](#) will be followed. Visitors should report to the school office or building reception area and follow all

check-in procedures upon arrival. Building visit procedures include presenting a valid driver's license and wearing a visitor identification sticker. At Stargate, scanning software exists to verify that there are no individual criminal concerns that might jeopardize school safety.

Visitors who fail to abide by district and school guidelines may be directed to leave school property as noted in [District Policy 1210 Public Conduct on School Property](#). Law enforcement or district security staff may also be contacted if a visitor fails to comply with this request.

XI. Secondary Student ID

All Stargate Middle School Students (grades 6-8) are required to wear an unaltered visible school-issued photo identification card (ID) on a school appropriate lanyard on their outermost garment above the waist during school hours, or at such times, locations, and activities specifically identified by the building administration.

High school students (grades 9-12) are required to have their ID on their person at all times and may be asked to wear it on the outermost garment above the waist at any time during the school year. HS students must be able to produce their ID when requested.

Students will be issued an ID and lanyard at the beginning of the school year. Replacement ID and badges will be \$5 each.

XII. Secondary Student Exterior Door Access Pin Pad

As an additional safety measure, we will keep all exterior doors locked at all times. Every secondary student (grades 6-12) will be issued an exterior door access pin pad to gain entry to the building. Students will put in their student id numbers to access both the main secondary building and the fieldhouse/auditorium/Adroit building throughout the school day. If a student forgets their student ID number, they can ask their front office staff for help.

XIII. Attendance/Absence

A significant part of your student's educational experience is derived from classroom participation, activities, discussion, and relationships. Daily attendance and prompt arrival are crucial for your student to attain maximum benefit from the school experience. It is the responsibility of the student and the parent to maintain excellent attendance and to arrive on time. Written communication will be generated by the school to notify you of issues with either absenteeism or tardiness. Poor attendance and/or chronic tardiness may necessitate a meeting with the school administration to come to a mutual agreement on how to improve

your student's attendance at Stargate.

[District Policy 5020](#) provides specific guidelines regarding student attendance. The policy includes information on tardies, excused and unexcused absences.

XIV. Absence Reporting

Reporting Absences Process:

- Parents/Guardians are expected to report their student's absence using the form below which can be found on our Stargate School website.
[Absence Reporting Form](#)
- Parents/Guardians will upload documentation using the form below which can be found on our Stargate School website.
[Absence Documentation Form](#)
- The Forms, Spreadsheets and Folders will all be located in the Shared Drive named Attendance Forms/Sheets shared with all attendance personnel and administrators. Attendance personnel will monitor the spreadsheets and enter attendance into Infinite Campus throughout the day. The spreadsheets can be used to verify excused absences and documentation as needed.

Students who are ill or have been exposed to an illness should not be sent to school, as this may result in their health becoming worse or exposing other students to their illness. [How Sick is Too Sick?](#)

When students miss classroom instruction, critical content may not be available for review. Parents/guardians (K-5) and students (grades 6-12) should reach out to teachers, review Google Classroom and calendars, and review newsletters for information about missing learning activities and work assigned. Staff may accommodate requests for work prior to an arranged or extended absence, but are not required to do so.

A. Pre-Arranged or Extended Absences

When an extended absence is known in advance, the student/family must submit, within one (1) week, a [Pre Arranged/Extended Absence Form](#) for administrative review. Staff may accommodate requests for work prior to an absence, but are not required to do so. It should be noted that extended absences may have a negative impact on a student's course learning and achievement.

B. Tardies

Students are expected to be in their seats, ready to learn, at the start of school. Please be sure to drop your student off with enough time to travel from the parking lot and get to class safely on time. A student's repeated tardy arrival at

school or to a class will result in written communication being sent or an administrative telephone call to your home to encourage improved participation. Continued excessive tardiness may necessitate a meeting with an administrator to determine a plan for punctuality.

C. Release of Students During the School Day K-12

As part of our continuing effort to ensure the safety of all students, students will only be released to a parent/guardian or Infinite Campus identified pick-up person prior to the end of the school day. The pick up person must present a valid form of identification. Required forms or documentation is required for student sign-out during the school day. If a sibling is allowed to pick-up a student, they must be listed in Infinite Campus.

Do not call or text your child during the school day. If you need your student to be released early, you must contact the school office. If your student will be checked out before the end of the day by someone other than a parent/legal guardian, you must contact the school office by phone prior to the student being released. If we have not heard from you in advance, we will attempt to contact you. If we are unable to contact you, the student will not be released and will remain at school until the end of the day. Students of driving age must still have written permission from a parent/guardian to be released from school during a normally scheduled class.

Health Services

A registered nurse is available to train, delegate, and monitor various school staff on health procedures needed for students during the school day. The registered nurse also provides consultation to school staff and/or parents on medical concerns and often serves as medical liaison between schools and outside agencies. While the school nurse plays a vital role in managing minor health issues and emergencies at school, they are not a substitute for comprehensive medical care provided by a healthcare professional.

Trained Health Aides staff the clinic at each building. The health aide is responsible for providing minor first aid to students who become sick or are injured while at school, for administering prescribed medications, and for maintaining student health records. Other designated staff members may provide coverage in the health office when the school health aide is not available. All medication forms are available on the [Stargate website](#) under Parent Resources/Health Services.

CDPHE Parent letter and K-12 Immunization Requirements can also be found on the website. Immunization information can also be found [here](#). The website includes information about administration of medications at school, food allergies, illness or injuries, immunizations, head lice, vision and hearing screening and

contagious diseases.

The School Nurse, Health Aide or office staff will determine if your student needs to go home for illness or injury. If your student needs to go home, you will be contacted as soon as possible. The school has no facility to keep ill students for long periods of time. **Therefore, it is essential that you keep the school informed of any change in address and/or telephone numbers, as well as emergency contacts in case you cannot be reached. Your student may not return to school for 24 hours if he/she is sent home with any of the following: a fever of 100 or above, vomiting, or diarrhea.**

I. Guidelines Regarding Students with Concussions

Stargate is committed to the overall health of our students. Students who are diagnosed with a concussion by a medical professional will be subject to the established [Stargate School Concussion Protocol](#). If your student is diagnosed with a concussion please contact the Health Office and your student's School Counselor with all available details.

II. Guidelines Regarding Students with Diabetes

A. Nondiscrimination

Stargate is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination/harassment in relation to race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation and disability. This policy extends to all students with disabilities and includes students with diabetes. The School has adopted policies on nondiscrimination aligned with [Adams 12 Five Star Schools District \("District"\) Policy 8400](#) and the School's policies regarding nondiscrimination. Consistent with these policies, students with diabetes are entitled to appropriate educational opportunities consistent with their individualized needs. The School will provide students with diabetes who are eligible for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) as that term is defined by law. In addition, the School will comply with Section 504's procedural requirements and all other rights and obligations of any student with a disability, including provision of FAPE, and specifically including students with diabetes, regardless of whether the student is or is not on a health care plan, a Section 504 plan, and/or an IEP.

B. Services for Students with Diabetes

Stargate School is committed to ensuring a learning environment for students with diabetes that is consistent with individual student needs as well as state and nationally recognized standards of practice. A student with diabetes may have an IEP, a Section 504 Plan, and/or a Health Care plan that addresses student needs.

Health Care Plans may be developed by the registered nurse under the District training manual for school health aides. Health Care Plans are written to address a student's particularized healthcare needs within the school environment after consultation with the student's family, healthcare providers, and occasionally the student themselves. In drafting a suitable healthcare plan for a student with diabetes, the registered nurse uses as a guideline [Standards of Care for Diabetes Management in the School Setting & Licensed Child Care Facilities – Colorado 2020](#).

A Section 504 plan, or IEP, details any accommodations, modifications, and educational or related services needed to ensure the student's access to FAPE. Section 504 plans, IEP, and Health Care Plans may both be required to meet the needs of a particular student. A Section 504 plan may be written for any qualified student, including students with diabetes if the student is found qualified through the Section 504 or IEP eligibility process.

Some examples of accommodations to support a student with Diabetes could be:

- Multiple staff members trained to check blood glucose levels and administer insulin and glucagon
- School staff who interact regularly with the student learn to recognize high and low blood glucose levels and respond appropriately
- Capable students are allowed to self-manage anywhere, anytime, and keep their diabetes supplies with them.
- Needed assistance may be provided in the classroom to increase safety and decrease missed class time
- Participation in sports, extracurricular activities, and field trips with the necessary diabetes care assistance and/or supervision
- Students are permitted to eat whenever and wherever necessary, including eating lunch at an appropriate time with enough time to finish eating.
- Permission to take extra trips to the bathroom or water fountain
- Permission for extra absences for medical appointments and sick days without penalty
- Alternate arrangements for classroom time missed for medical appointments, because of periods of high or low blood glucose, or illness related to diabetes.

School staff, parents/guardians may also reference the [American Diabetes Association sample 504 Plan](#) for possible accommodations.

C. Staff Training

Stargate is committed to maintaining appropriate staff, such as ensuring the availability of a school registered nurse, to meet the needs of students with

disabilities, including students with diabetes. The School will ensure that all relevant staff are trained to meet the needs of students with diabetes in the school environment and at school-sponsored events (such as field trips) by requiring staff to comply with all school, District, state, and federal regulatory requirements, as well as completing approved, diabetes-specific training as provided by the American Diabetes Association.

D. Records

Health records for students with diabetes will be kept in accordance with [District Policy 5300 Student School Records](#). Student health records are maintained for individual students and considered part of the student's educational record and are subject to the confidentiality and parental access requirements of The Family Education Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA). Sharing health record information among appropriate staff may only be conducted for "legitimate educational interests." Such records will be maintained in the school health office under the direction of the school nurse. All staff will work to ensure the confidentiality of such records.

Health records of students with diabetes will be maintained as appropriate in accordance with the individual student's healthcare plan. Such records may include tracking of blood glucose, carbohydrates, and insulin administration, including necessary interventions and parental contacts, on the School Health Office Diabetes Record and/or Diabetes Care Log. Appropriate releases, such as a parent release to allow a student to self carry diabetes-related supplies, will also be maintained as required.

III. Guidelines Regarding Stock Epi-pen

Stargate shall have a stock supply of epinephrine auto-injectors for use in emergency anaphylaxis events that occur on school grounds or school sponsored events. Any administration of a stock epinephrine auto-injector to a student by a school employee shall be in accordance with applicable state law, including applicable State Board of Education rules.

The school's stock supply of epinephrine auto-injectors is not intended to replace student specific orders or medication provided by the student's parent/guardian to treat the student's asthma, food or other allergy, anaphylaxis or related, life-threatening condition.

Each location that has stock epinephrine will identify a minimum of two designated personnel that will receive a more comprehensive training using a CDE approved curriculum on identifying symptoms of anaphylaxis and administration of the stock epinephrine.

After responding to an anaphylactic reaction where the stock epinephrine is

administered, 911 will be called and school personnel will attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian regarding the emergency as promptly as possible.

Any use of stock epinephrine will be reported to the school's registered nurse and documented on the State **Epinephrine/Anaphylaxis Report** form. The form shall be submitted to the Colorado Department of Education Office of Health and Wellness within 7 days of the incident.

The school shall have on file a standing order and protocol from a provider who has prescriptive authority. The standing order and protocol must be signed annually and/or with any change in provider. The standing order and protocol should contain the dosage of epinephrine to be administered, and the indication for use.

All emergency medications, including epinephrine auto-injectors must be stored in a secure location, easily accessible by school staff, and in a location where the medication is not exposed to extreme cold or heat.

IV. Guidelines Regarding Homemade Food

Homemade (non-commercial) food items, drinks, and snacks intended to be shared with others are not permitted in the school during school hours (e.g., classroom or school celebrations, birthday celebrations, classroom potlucks etc.)

If it is necessary to have food in classrooms during school hours, only commercially prepared foods from retail stores or store bought items with clear ingredient lists should be served. If items are not individually wrapped, an adult using a serving utensil should provide a serving to each child per all Adams County Health Department food safety guidelines (<https://adamscountyhealthdepartment.org/food-safety-education>).

Children should not be permitted to put their hands into a common container to serve themselves (e.g., popcorn from a common bowl, cookies from a common package, etc.).

Whole fruits and vegetables can be served if their surfaces have been properly cleaned per Adams County Health Department requirements. Fruits and vegetables processed in any form (this includes sliced, cut, cooked, etc.) must be commercially prepared by a licensed retail food establishment.

Any foods that do not meet the above requirements will be sent home.

Homemade food items may be served at the discretion of the building's principal at afterschool district sponsored events where a student's guardian is present with the student and can decide if the student may eat such item.

If a learning event takes place that includes homemade food (example, learning about another culture or country), an announcement will be given to parents that includes a listing of foods to be provided and a parent or guardian must provide explicit permission for the student to participate in the event.

V. Guidelines Regarding Students with Food Related Allergies

There are a number of students in our buildings who have potentially life threatening food allergies. These students can have life threatening reactions even with a very little exposure to the allergen. In an effort to keep all of our students safe, please do not send your child to school with snacks containing nuts for in-class snack time.

VI. Contacts

The contacts for these guidelines are:

Stargate K-12 Section 504 coordinator:

Maggie Shaver, maggie.shaver@stargateschool.org

K-12 Director of Student Support Services:

Angela Fundaro, angela.fundaro@stargateschool.org

School Nurse:

Justine Begley BSN, RN-BC, justine.begley@stargateschool.org

VII. Mental Health Support

Creating a sense of emotional, social, and psychological safety within the community is just as crucial to school safety as establishing physical safety measures. Students have access to school counselors and school psychologists to receive mental health support. Teachers are also trained to recognize and support students' emotional and social needs.

Additionally, students will receive direct instruction in social and emotional learning to build the skills necessary for healthy mental health functioning.

Should families find themselves in mental health crisis outside of school hours, the following supports are also available:

Mental Health Crisis Services:

Colorado Crisis Support Line - 1-844-493-8255; or 988

Colorado Crisis Text - text TALK to 38255

Colorado Crisis Chat - click [here](#).

Safe 2 Tell Colorado - 877-542-7233 or www.safe2tell.org

A. Suicide Prevention

Protecting the health and well-being of all students is of utmost importance to Stargate and our school protocol will be followed as a priority to support students expressing suicidal ideation.

Students also have 24 hour access to national resources which they can contact for additional support, such as:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 988** <https://988lifeline.org/>
- **The Trevor Lifeline – 1.866.488.7386**, www.thetrevorproject.org

[District Policy 5520 Suicide Assessment](#) guides our response to student self-harm concerns.

All students will be expected to help create a school culture of respect and support in which students feel comfortable seeking help for themselves or friends. Students are encouraged to tell any staff member if they or a friend are feeling suicidal or in need of help. Students should also know that because of the health and safety impacts of these matters, the confidentiality and privacy rights of individuals will be respected, but privacy is secondary to seeking help for students in crisis.

Academic Programming

All students are expected to meet the minimum educational requirements set forth in the Colorado Academic Standards. Additional programming supports students' unique needs as gifted learners. All students who are formally identified as gifted per ECEA requirements will also receive an Advanced Learning Plan. Students who qualify for an IEP or 504 will receive additional support as outlined in those plans.

I. Academic Standards Strands

Within courses, there are required standards that are broken into strands of learning. Standards are written to develop over time with increasing attention to depth of understanding. K-12 teachers will provide grades for standards in each content area. Teachers may not report on each standard every grading term.

II. Assessment and Communication of Student Progress

All students are expected to meet the minimum educational requirements set forth in the Colorado Academic Standards.

Stargate school utilizes a variety of assessments to measure student growth and achievement. The following assessments may be used: Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS), NWEA MAPs, PSAT, SAT, District Level Assessments or other level tests, teacher developed assessments, skills checklists, formal and informal observations, progress reports, and diagnostic assessments.

III. Academic Progress Communication

Formal and informal assessments are ongoing processes at Stargate. Families will receive information regarding student performance in a number of ways, including the following:

- Infinite Campus
- Assessment Data
- Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) — An ALP is formulated for each identified student with specific goals to achieve based on their formal gifted designation.
- Grade Reports K-8 — Report cards will be issued each semester for grades K-8. Report cards are designed to communicate the student's achievement of academic standards.
- Grade Reports 9-12 — Student transcripts communicate the student's achievement in each enrolled course.

Please note that students who are performing above grade level and have been subject-accelerated will be evaluated on above grade level standards in the classroom; however, they will take on-grade level state tests such as Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS). **Stargate parents are expected to stay informed about their student's academic progress via Infinite Campus.** This affords parents the opportunity to track student progress on a regular, consistent basis.

IV. Academic Placement

Stargate recognizes that some gifted children may benefit academically, socially and/or emotionally from content-based, single subject acceleration. The Acceleration Policy outlines the policy for K-8 placement and acceleration in Mathematics and English Language Arts. Please see our [website](#) for more information on placement and acceleration.

V. Conferences

Stargate believes it is important to meet with parents/guardians to discuss student successes and challenges. Our schedule allows two days for fall conferences and two days for spring conferences for all grade levels. Parents will receive information on how to schedule a conference time. Additionally, conferences between teachers and parents may be requested any time during

the school year.

A. Monday Folders-ELEMENTARY

For Kindergarten through Fifth Grade, a Monday folder may be sent home with each student and contains important information and homework assignments. Teachers may also post the assignments on Google Classroom so that parents and students have another means of access. Homework is meant to be a reinforcement as well as communication with families as to the weekly skills and topics covered in class.

B. Student Planners-Grades 3-5

Stargate students in grades 3-5 should utilize their individual planners to track their homework assignments and due dates. Students may utilize a Student Planner as an organizational and communication tool, with usage modified to be developmentally appropriate. The planner is provided by the school.

C. Middle School Academic Planning Guide

[2026-2027](#) Stargate's Academic Planning Guides are updated each year. Students and parents/guardians should reference this guide for the latest information, including course offerings, graduation requirements, registration guidelines, and GPA measurement.

D. High School Academic Planning Guide

[2025-2026](#) Stargate's Academic Planning Guides are updated each year. Students and parents/guardians should reference this guide for the latest information, including course offerings, graduation requirements, registration guidelines, and GPA measurement.

VI. Academic and Social Emotional Intervention Supports

When a student performs below expectations in their content area courses, intervention becomes vital to reinforce the skills necessary for their academic success. This is accomplished by academic and social emotional support with a coordinated effort from the student, their classroom teacher, parents, and other staff professionals. A parent/guardian can request academic or social emotional interventions by first speaking with the classroom teacher and the school counselor. If more intensive support is needed, the students may be referred to the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) process for their student by speaking with their student's teacher or counselor. MTSS may be implemented prior to consideration for special education services or accommodations through a Section 504 plan. If the student is identified for special education services or accommodations through the evaluation process, then the terms of the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan supersede the intervention plan developed through the MTSS process.

Interventions for student success may be implemented and used consistently for a

period of time, usually four to six weeks. Families are encouraged to understand the timing required to internalize the supports and to participate in the end-of-support cycle review to determine further actions, if necessary.

VII. Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE)

The school will provide eligible students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) through their Individualized Education Program (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or their Section 504 plans under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

VIII. Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Grade 9-12

Stargate is committed to providing all students with 21st century learning experiences, environment, resources, and skills. An essential element in supporting this commitment is adequate access to technology through our BYOD plan. More information about machine requirements and the [BYOD Guidelines](#) can be found on the Stargate website.

Stargate understands that due to many different reasons families may need assistance with obtaining a device for their child(ren). If you believe that your family may need assistance, please email deviceassistance@stargateschool.org or reach out to the front desk for assistance. Families who need assistance with obtaining a device for school use should contact their principal for more information.

IX. Appropriate Technology and Internet Use Policy

Stargate follows the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and is committed to fostering a physically and emotionally safe environment both online and offline. While it is critical that students and staff have access to digital resources that can enhance learning and enrich our school community, it is equally important that the risks associated with digital access (e.g., exposure to obscenity, cyber-bullying, identity theft, etc.) be averted. To this aim, in addition to CIPA, our school adheres to the [Adams 12 Internet Safety Policy 8200](#). In addition to District Policy 8200, Stargate has adopted an [Appropriate Technology and Internet Use Policy](#)

General Information (in alphabetical order)

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a core value at Stargate, promoting honesty and ethical behavior in all academic pursuits. This includes respecting the intellectual

contributions of others.

Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else's work, whether it's writing, ideas, or digital information, as your own, regardless of whether the source is published or unpublished.

Cheating involves supplying, receiving, or using unauthorized aids, such as looking at or using someone else's work, crib notes, stolen notes, or disallowed equipment, among other examples.

Teachers will share the parameters for use of generative AI tools (ChatGPT, Google Gemini, etc.) within their classrooms.

Users should not take credit for things they didn't create themselves, or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online. Research conducted via the Internet should be appropriately cited, giving credit to the original author.

Students who are caught cheating or plagiarizing will be subject to disciplinary action, and will lose credit for assignments that do not meet school standards of academic integrity.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

SCHOOL HOURS

	Arrival Times	Dismissal Times
Kindergarten	7:55 am - 8:05 am	3:05 pm
1st-5th Grades	7:55 am - 8:05 am	3:15 pm
6th-8th Grades	7:40 am - 7:50 am	3:25 pm
9th-12th Grades	7:40 am - 7:50 am	3:25 pm

**Secondary students may enter through the secondary doors starting at 7:52am*

Arrival and Departure

For safety reasons, students should not arrive at school earlier than the designated arrival times. Students will go directly to the classrooms. After school, all students need to be picked up at dismissal. All students must be picked up by 3:35 pm in Elementary and 3:55 pm in Secondary (if not in an extracurricular activity).

Release of Elementary Students - End of School Day

As caretakers for your students, Stargate must release each student to a parent/guardian or designated person. Please place the names of people who may be picking up your student on the appropriate enrollment form. This information will be stored in Infinite Campus (IC). You may wish to consider having a backup driver for emergencies. If you wish to have your student go home with someone else on a specific day, we must have written or emailed permission on that date. We are unable to release students via verbal permission over the telephone. Students who walk or ride bicycles to and from school do so at their own risk and must submit written permission from their parent or guardian.

Elementary students may be picked up by older Stargate siblings and will remain with a staff member until the older sibling arrives. Older siblings should arrive no later than 3:40 pm. If older siblings are picking up a student, they must be designated in Infinite Campus.

Late Pickup

There are infrequent occasions when a student cannot be picked up on time. If that happens, parents/guardians should let the office know as soon as possible. If we do not hear from someone (and in order to diminish the student's concern), we will call the parents/guardians listed on the enrollment information, and then the emergency contact person. In the event that we have had no communication by 4:30 pm, Child Protective Services may be contacted, and the student may be taken to the police for safekeeping.

Before and After School Care – EAGLE'S LANDING

Eagle's Landing is Stargate's enrichment-based before and after-school childcare program, available via a fee-for-service arrangement for children ages 5-16. On-site enrichment is available before school (from 6:30 am) and after school (until 6:00 pm) as well as many non-school days. Please see the [Eagle's Landing webpage](#) or email eagleslanding@stargateschool.org for more information. Some non-instructional days where students are not in attendance and vacation days are also covered with on-site care at Stargate. There is a fee for service arrangements.

Change of address/email address/telephone number

If you change your address, please email registration@stargateschool.org or bring proof of residency (address change only) to the office. It is important to keep all contacts, including emergency information and telephone numbers, current so that Stargate can reach you should an emergency arise. Parents can change the telephone and email addresses in Infinite Campus, or the front office staff can help. In addition, should there be changes in parental custody and educational

decision-making for your family, please submit the proper legal documents to the front office.

Extracurricular Activities and Sports

Students are provided a variety of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities. Activities may occur before or after school and may require parents to sign permission forms, pay fees, and/or provide transportation to and from the activity. For safety and supervision reasons, it is important that students arrive and be picked up promptly at prescribed times.

Participation in extracurricular activities, including sports, may require students to meet attendance, academic and behavior eligibility standards. All school fees, in addition to any athletic or uniform fees, must be paid prior to participation in athletics or extracurricular activities. Financial aid may be available for qualified families; please contact info@stargateschool.org to discuss financial assistance.

Please refer to the [high school website](#) or [middle school website](#) or visit with the administration, sponsor, or coach for answers to specific eligibility questions.

For additional information on eligibility, please email athletics@stargateschool.org.

Extended Trips/Outdoor Education/Overnights

Students in grades 3 through 12 may participate in a curricular-related, overnight field trip or activity. Costs for these trips will vary. Financial aid may be available for qualified families; please contact info@stargateschool.org to discuss financial assistance. Overnight fees must be paid, or a payment plan established, before the student can participate. High School students may have the option to travel abroad and information will be disseminated a year in advance for individual family consideration.

Fees

All fees, including fees for workbooks, technology, and activities assigned during an academic year, must be paid by the end of the academic year or a payment plan must be developed. All fees and fines must be paid before graduating seniors will be allowed to participate in commencement exercises or ceremonies.

Please note: Overnight trips include team building and outdoor education and are part of the educational curriculum. Fees are associated with these trips and must be paid in advance of the trip.

Financial aid may be available for qualified families; please contact info@stargateschool.org to discuss financial assistance.

Please email info@stargateschool.org for payment plan or scholarship information.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when they reach the age of 18 or attend a school beyond the high school level.

Legal parents/guardians have the right to:

- Inspect and review their child's record
- Seek to amend the record if they believe it to be inaccurate
- Consent (or not) to disclose personally identifiable information
- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning the school's failures to comply with FERPA.

Parents/guardians do not have the right, nor it is appropriate, to request information regarding another student. Stargate upholds the confidentiality of student information.

Gifting

Some families choose to acknowledge staff at holidays or other times of the year as a token of appreciation with gifts. Please note that non-cash gifts of nominal value (e.g., holiday cards, baked goods) are permitted up to \$25 per gift; cash, gift cards, or gifts exceeding \$25 must be declined or redirected as a donation to the School.

High School Student Off Campus Privilege Guidelines

Juniors and Seniors are allowed off campus privileges with the following expectations

- Students must wear a student ID when leaving and returning to campus
- Students must not miss class to go off campus. If a student needs to leave campus during a normally scheduled class, they must check out at the front office with written documentation from their parent/guardian (signed note or email)
- Students may not travel off campus with a student/s who should be in

- class during the school day
- Campus is closed for freshmen and sophomores (and all Elementary and Middle School students)
 - During their second semester, some sophomores may earn off campus privileges. Please see additional information from the high school principal at the beginning of the school year.

Students are still accountable for all school rules while off campus, as well as respect local vendor establishments. Report of misconduct off school grounds may result in loss of off campus privileges and other consequences as appropriate according to code of conduct and [Stargate's Community Compact](#).

High School Student Parking Permit Guidelines

All those who drive and park on school grounds are responsible for following state, county, city and school regulations. Students who will be parking on our campus during the school day must have a permit and park in the North Lot. The school assumes no responsibility/liability for damages/losses to vehicles or their contents.

Purchase

- Students obtaining a parking permit 1st semester will pay a fee of \$50. Students obtaining a permit for 2nd semester only will pay a fee of \$25. Fees can be paid on <https://www.payschoolscentral.com>.
- Students need to bring their driver's license, car registration and proof of insurance to the Secondary School front office, who will confirm completion of the driver's safety mini-course and payment, and will issue the permit.

Expectations

- Carpooling should be approved by the parents/guardians involved and follow their expectations
- Motor vehicle and behavior violations may result in the loss of the parking permit and any other consequences deemed appropriate by the administration and/or SRO
- Parking permits must be placed on the rear view mirror
- If a permit is placed on another vehicle other than the one on file with the school, it may result in the loss of parking privileges
- Posted speed limits and traffic signs are to be followed while on school grounds. Citations for violations may be issued by the Thornton Police Department, in addition to consequences levied by the school
- Parking is confined to assigned areas and vehicles must be parked within the lines of a single space
- Once a vehicle is parked on school grounds it may be subject to a search (possibly by trained dogs)
- Students with vehicles who need to leave during an assigned class

must submit written documentation (note or email) from their parent/guardian and are required to check out with the front office before leaving campus

- Misuse of parking privileges will result in disciplinary action ranging from a warning, police citation, permanent loss of the privilege and/or towing at the owner's expense

A student found in violation of these expectations will be subject to disciplinary action and may be subject to traffic tickets.

Inclement Weather

If school is canceled for the day due to inclement weather, all activities will be canceled, including the before-school and after-school program (Eagle's Landing). Only the Adams 12 Five Star Schools Superintendent may authorize school closure. Please monitor local radio, television, the school website, and the [Adams 12 website](#) for announcements regarding Adams 12 school closures. Adjustments will be made to the master calendar to make up canceled school days that cause the school year to fall short of state requirements as necessary.

The Adams 12 Superintendent may authorize a Late/Delayed Start schedule rather than a full-day school closure. Late/Delayed Start is a 2 hour delay. All before-school activities will be canceled, Eagle's Landing will open at 8:30am, Elementary School will begin at 10:10 am, Middle School will begin at 10:00 am, and High School will begin at 10 :00 am. Dismissal time and after school activities will be as regularly scheduled.

Lost and Found

Please write your student's name on all items they bring to school (including, but not limited to, backpacks, lunch boxes, coats, and water bottles). Every effort is made to return lost articles to the rightful owner. Clothing and other items worn or brought to school are easier to return if marked with your student's name. Students and parents may check at the school for lost articles. Found items are kept for a short period of time in the front lobby of each building. Unclaimed items are given to charity.

Notices/Announcements

Events and items of interest to the school community, such as parent/teacher conference days, committee meeting times, fundraisers, after-school activities, non-instructional/no attendance school release days, reminders, or celebration notices are posted on the Stargate website. Please check the website regularly to keep current with news and changes at school. If you do not have regular access to the Internet, please alert the Front Office so that we can find another suitable way to make this information available to you.

Office Hours

The school office will be open from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm daily.

Smoking

State law prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco, marijuan on all school property. This prohibition includes the use of any tobacco products (including chewing tobacco), electronic smoking devices, and e-cigarettes. Staff will ask any adult on campus to stop smoking on property. Violators are subject to penalty.

Cell Phone/School Telephones, Smart Phone, and Smart Watch Use

Use of school telephones is at the discretion of teachers and staff members. In general, school telephones are for educational use by the students and business use by the staff, and in the case of an emergency.

Cell phones, smart phones, and smart watches are not to be used by students during the school day except at the direction of the staff, or if dictated by a health-care plan for a diagnosed medical need. Each principal will share their expectations for student cell phones and smart watches.

If a student is struggling to self-manage personal technology/ cell phone use, the teacher may ask the student to place the personal device/ cell phone in a designated safe location in order to ensure students have optimal access to learning opportunities. As per school and district policy, Stargate staff shall not assume responsibility for theft, loss, or damage of any personal technology.

Parents/Guardians should not message or call students during school hours as this disrupts learning. If there is an emergency or urgent need, parents/guardians may contact the front desk to relay a message to the classroom.

Student cell phone use is subject to appropriate use according to [District Policy 5030 Student Use of Cell Phones and Electronic Devices](#)

Title IX

Title IX is a Federal law that protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. Title IX states:

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.

Concerns about sexual harassment and discrimination should be promptly reported at titleixcoordinator@stargateschool.org

The school's Title IX Coordinator is Jennifer Baros.

Stargate School

14530 Washington Street

Thornton, CO 80023

titleix@stargateschool.org

303-450-3936

Traffic Pattern: Drop-off / Pick-up and Parking

Parents/guardians and students who drive or park on campus are expected to operate their vehicle in a safe manner, complying with all signs and parking only in appropriately designated areas. Failure to follow parking and driving guidelines may result in warnings, vehicles being towed, referral to law enforcement, issuance of traffic citations, or loss of the privilege of driving on campus.

At dismissal, elementary teachers will release students to vehicles at the pick-up curb or to walk-up parents once they have visual confirmation of an authorized individual(s). Student safety is always a top priority. Teachers will not release students to cross in front of driveway traffic or at a crosswalk. If you have a question for your teacher, please make an appointment for a mutually convenient time.

- Elementary students will be let into the playground area at 7:55. There is no supervision prior to 7:55 at the elementary building.
- Do not park in the pick-up or drop-off loop to allow a continuous traffic flow.
- Do not park in the firelane.
- Do not leave your car unattended in the drop-off/pick-up lane.
- For safety reasons, there is **no student drop-off/pick-up on Washington Street**.
- If you need to get out of your vehicle to assist your student(s), or if you need to speak with someone at drop-off or pick-up time, please **park your vehicle in the South school lot**.
- Courteous attention to these procedures contributes to a safe, orderly arrival and dismissal.
- Parents are **NOT** allowed to park in the **North** parking lot, from 7:00-4:00, M-F.
- The North lot is designated as a **PERMIT-ONLY** parking area for staff and students.
- **There is NO student pick up after school in the North lot**. Instead, please follow guidance outlined below for picking up students in the loop

and for parking in designated parent parking areas.

For more information, please visit [Parent Traffic Resources](#)

Transfer/Withdrawal

Please notify the school office by emailing registration@stargateschool.org at least one week in advance if your student will be transferring or withdrawing from Stargate. If possible, please provide your forwarding address, and the name and address of the school your student will be attending. Student records will be forwarded upon receipt of a request from the new school. These will be sent directly to the receiving school and are not given to parents.

Transportation/Carpooling

Stargate does not provide transportation to or from school. However, for your convenience, and to relieve traffic congestion, the school does participate in a carpool service. Way to Go is a regional partnership between the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) and a group of Transportation Management Associations (TMAs). If you are interested in this free service, please contact Way to Go at (303) 458-POOL or www.waytogo.org. You can also visit this [web page](#) for some additional resources.

Valuables at School

Stargate recognizes that personal technology devices are an integral part of a 21st Century learning environment. As such, students may be allowed to utilize personal technology devices (including, but not limited to, phones, iPods, tablets, and electronic readers) at the discretion of the teacher. Please do not bring other valuables, such as trading cards, toys, etc. to school. Under all circumstances students shall be personally and solely responsible for the security of all items brought to school. Stargate shall not assume responsibility for any lost or damaged personal property.

Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Adams 12 Legal Notifications

Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Policy

Stargate School (the "School") is committed to providing a safe learning and work environment where all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. The School is subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, ancestry or need for special education services.

Accordingly, no otherwise qualified student, employee, applicant for employment or member of the public shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any school program or activity on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, (which includes marital status), sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or need for special education services. Discrimination against employees and applicants for employment based on age and genetic information is also prohibited in accordance with state and federal law.

Anyone who believes a student, parent, guardian, or employee has been discriminated against on the basis of race, sex, disability, or age may file a complaint/report with the school.

Adams 12 Legal Notifications

[Legal Notifications](#)

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Commonly Requested Information on District Webpage](#)

Coversheet

2026-2027 Communications Pathways

Section:	IV. School Operations
Item:	C. 2026-2027 Communications Pathways
Purpose:	FYI
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	26-27 _Communication Pathways.pdf

Stargate Communication Pathways

Elementary Grades K-5

- Classroom Discipline
- Student Interactions

Secondary Grades 6-12

- Classroom Discipline
- Student Interactions

Student Services Grades K-12

- Gifted & Talented Programming
- Advanced Learning Plan (ALP)
- Learning Services/Special Education
- 504
- English Language Learners (ELL)

Athletics & Clubs Grades K-12

- Elementary Clubs
- Secondary Clubs
- Secondary Athletics

Operations Grades K-12

- Eagles Landing
- Lunch
- Student Health
- Traffic
- Facilities
- Safety & Security
- Admissions

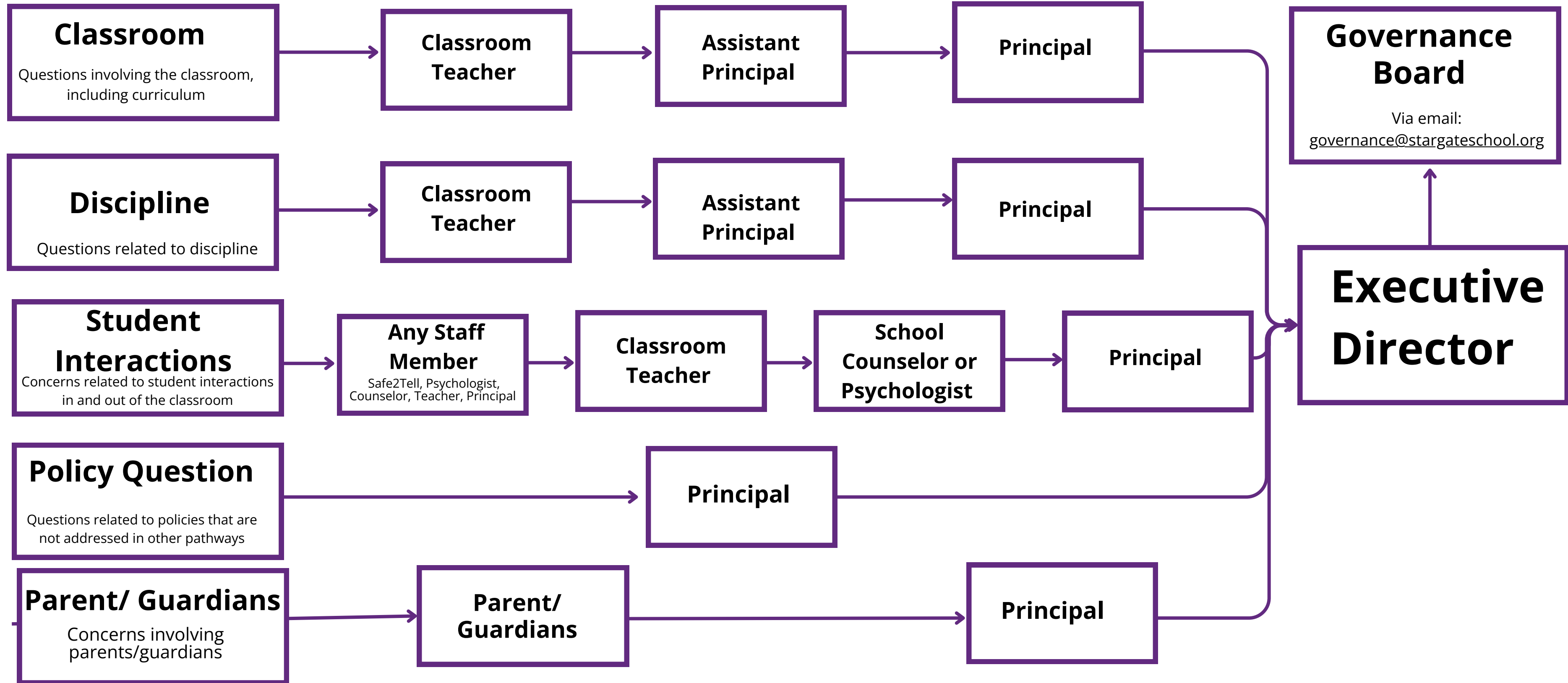
Staff K-12 Staff Members

- Curriculum
- Parent/Guardian involvement
- Other Staff concerns

Contact Procedures: To find the appropriate contact, please reference the [Communication Pathways Contacts Document](#) or the [School Directory](#). It is recommended that correspondence be made via email. Phone conversations and in-person meetings can be scheduled and should be leveraged to clarify and resolve issues. If the issue involves Title IX, please contact the Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator directly at titleixcoordinator@stargateschool.org.

Response Time Expectations: Expect responses from teachers, department chairs, and team leads within two school days; Administration, including Directors, within two school days, and the Board within five school days.

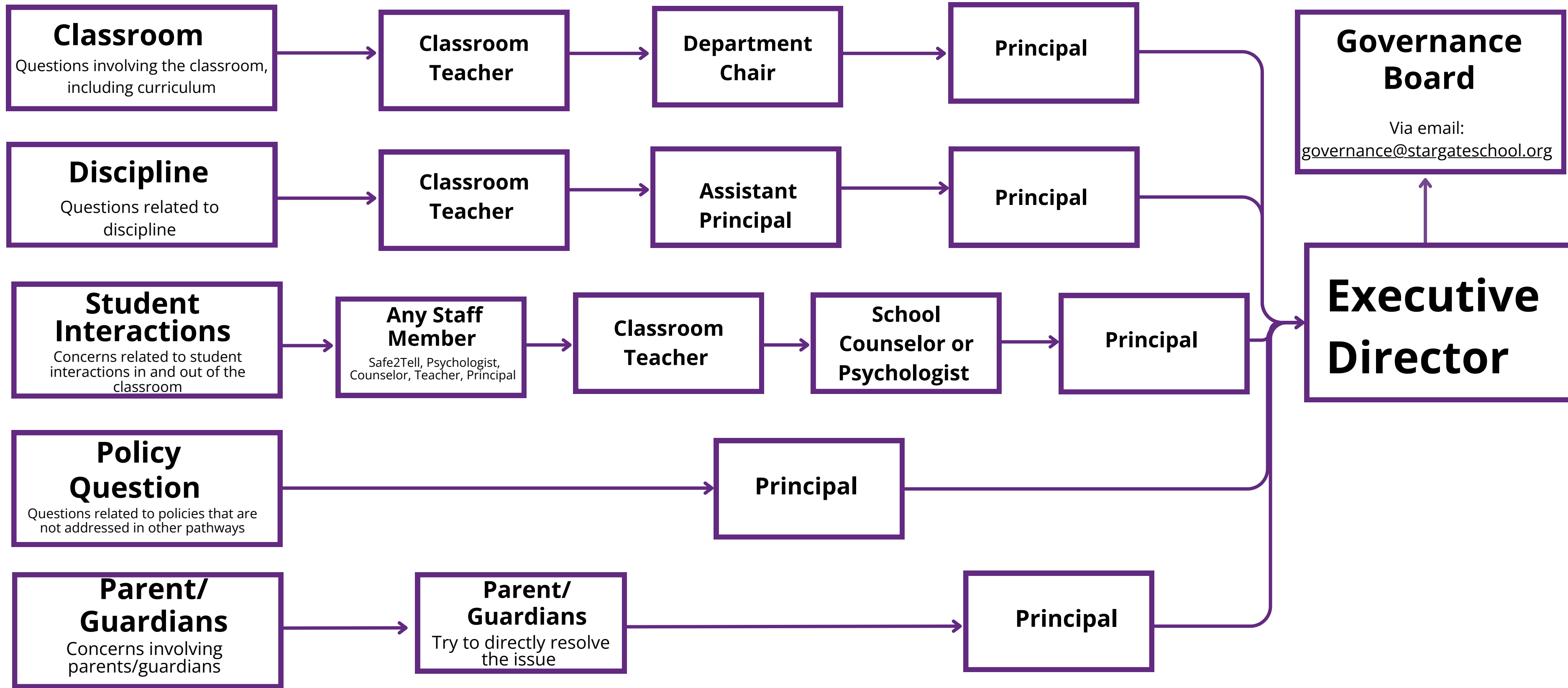
Stargate Elementary Parent/Guardian Communication Pathways



Contact Procedures: To find the appropriate contact, please reference the [Communication Pathways Contacts Document](#) or the [School Directory](#). It is recommended that correspondence be made via email. Phone conversations and in-person meetings can be scheduled and should be leveraged to clarify and resolve issues. If the issue involves Title IX, please contact the Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator directly at titleixcoordinator@stargateschool.org.

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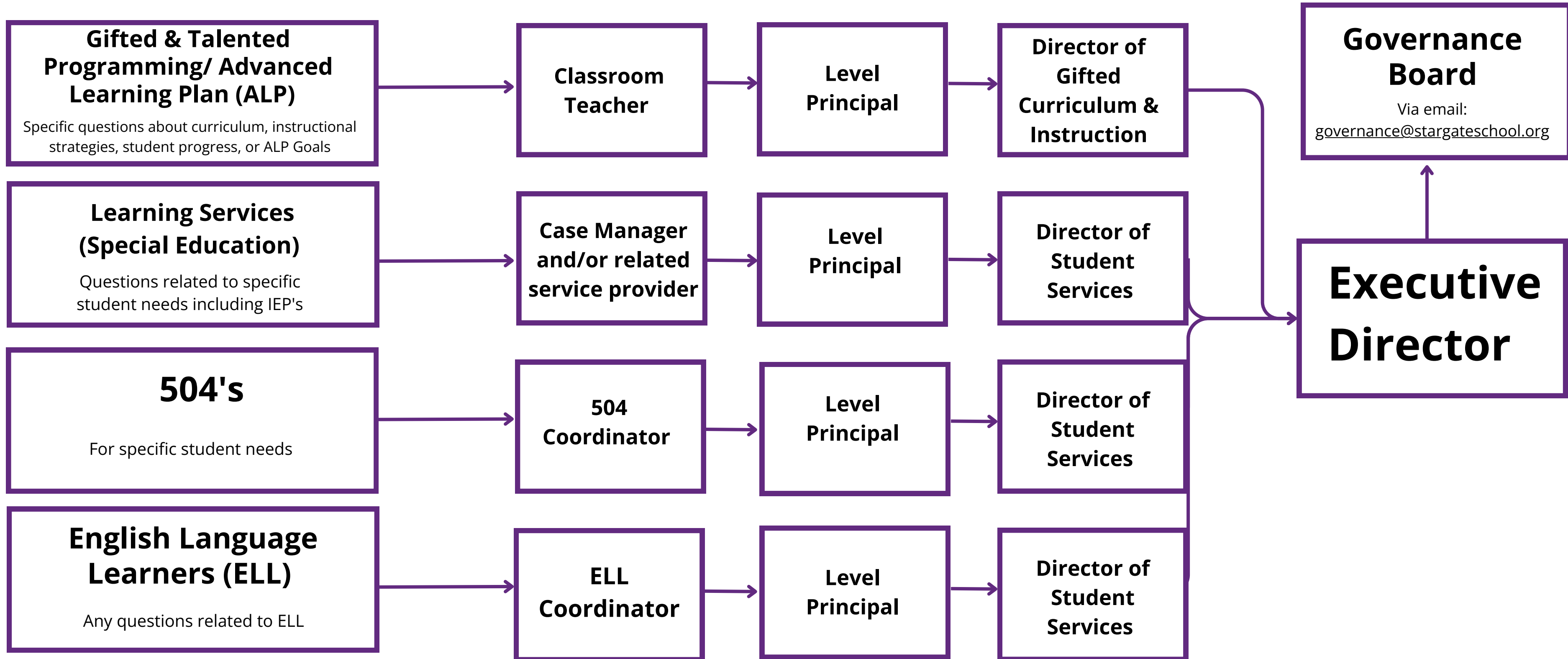
Stargate Secondary Parent/Guardian Communication Pathways



Contact Procedures: To find the appropriate contact, please reference the [Communication Pathways Contacts Document](#) or the [School Directory](#). It is recommended that correspondence be made via email. Phone conversations and in-person meetings can be scheduled and should be leveraged to clarify and resolve issues. If the issue involves Title IX, please contact the Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator directly at titleixcoordinator@stargateschool.org.

Response Time Expectations: Expect responses from teachers, department chairs, and team leads **within two school days**; Administration, including Directors, within **two school days** and the Board within **five** school days.

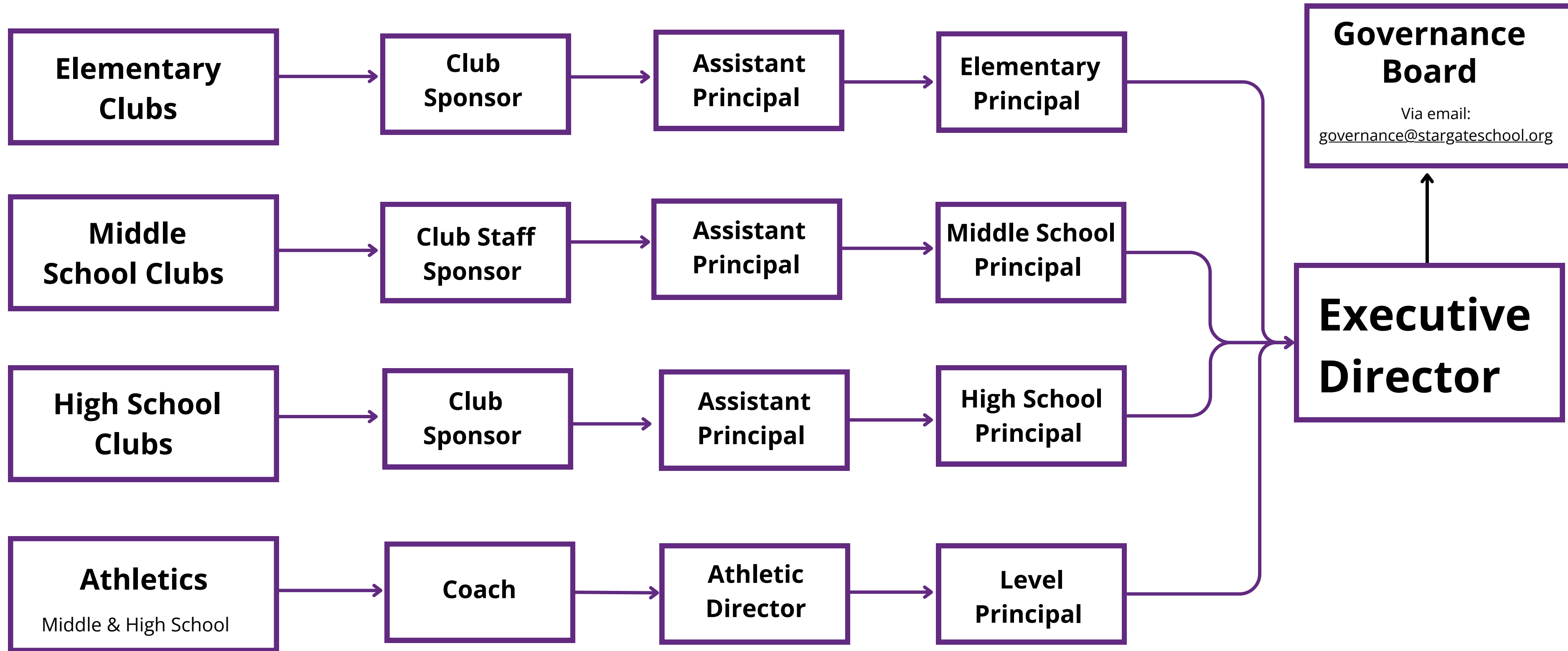
Stargate Student Services Parent/Guardian Communication Pathways



Contact Procedures: To find the appropriate contact, please reference the [Communication Pathways Contacts Document](#) or the [School Directory](#). It is recommended that correspondence be made via email. Phone conversations and in-person meetings can be scheduled and should be leveraged to clarify and resolve issues. If the issue involves Title IX, please contact the Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator directly at titleixcoordinator@stargateschool.org.

Response Time Expectations: Expect responses from teachers, department chairs, and team leads within **two school days**; Administration, including Directors, within **two school days** and the Board within **five school days**.

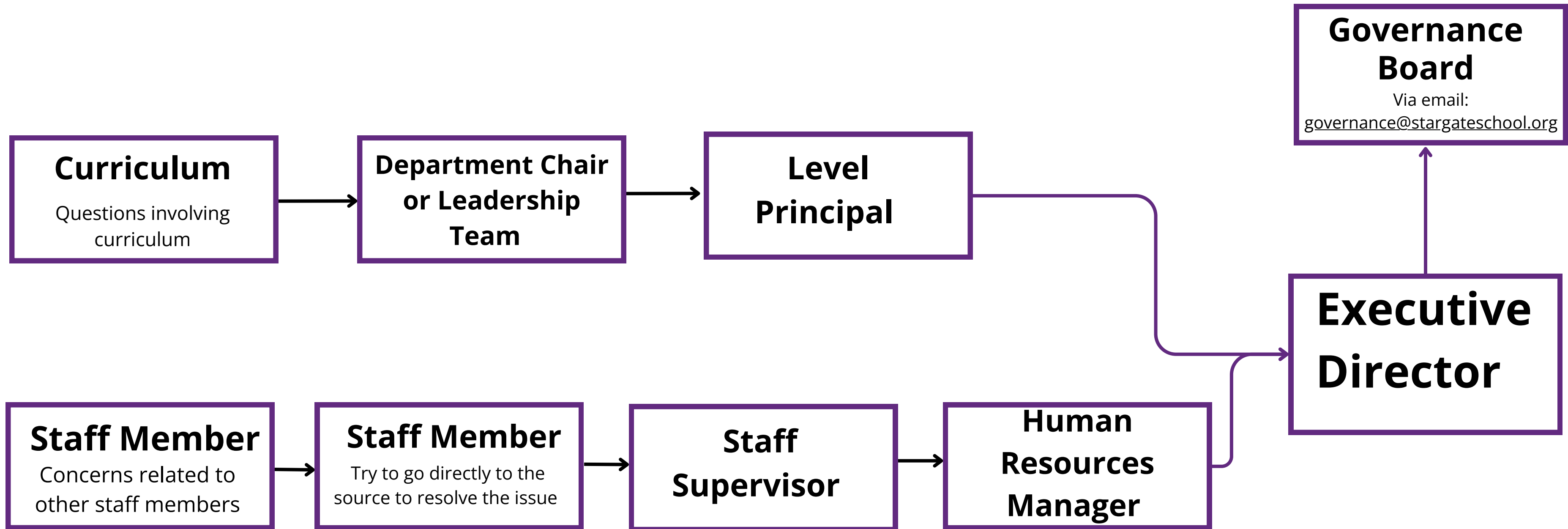
Stargate Athletics & Clubs Parent/Guardian Communication Pathways



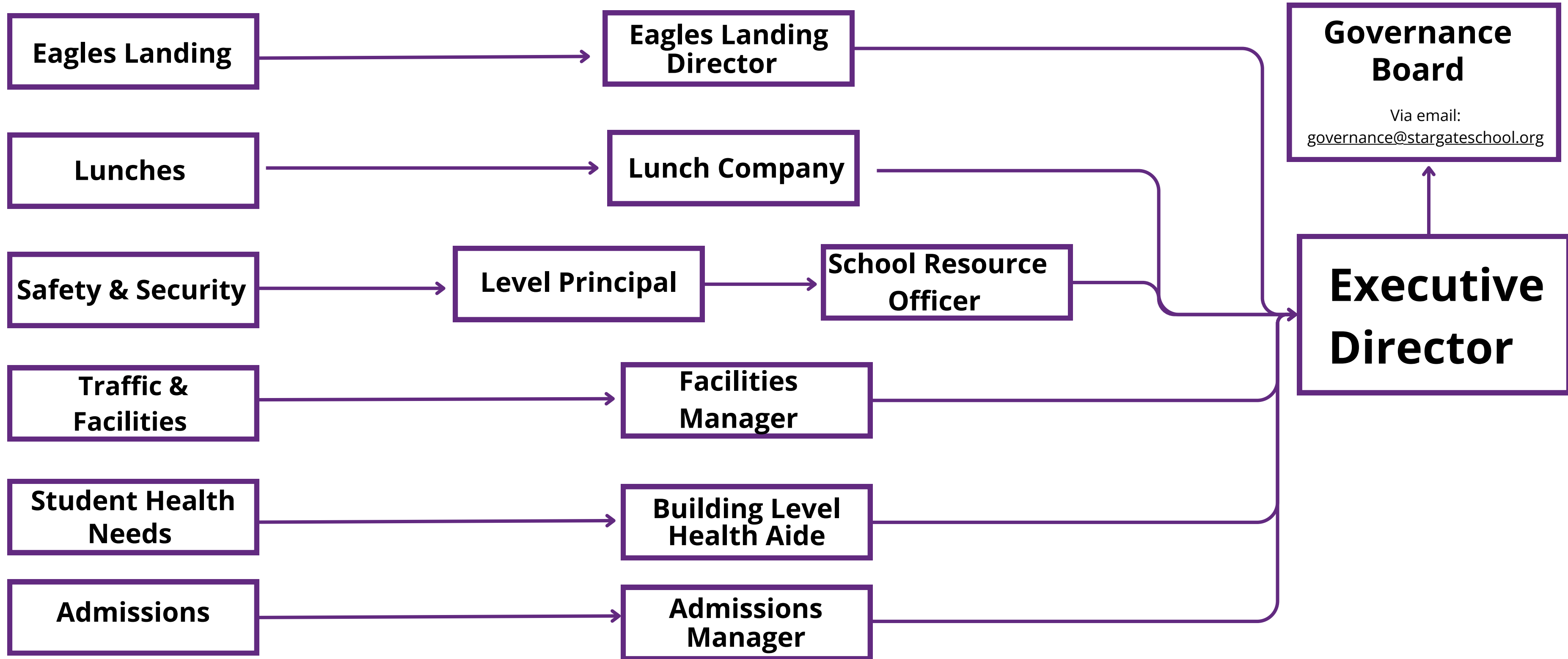
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Response Time Expectations: Expect responses from teachers, department chairs, and team leads within **two school days**; Administration, including Directors, within **two school days** and the Board within **five school days**.

Stargate Staff Communication Pathways



Stargate Operations Communication Pathways



Contact Procedures: To find the appropriate contact, please reference the [Communication Pathways Contacts Document](#) or the [School Directory](#). It is recommended that correspondence be made via email. Phone conversations and in-person meetings can be scheduled and should be leveraged to clarify and resolve issues. If the issue involves Title IX, please contact the Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator directly at titleixcoordinator@stargateschool.org.

Response Time Expectations: Expect responses from teachers, department chairs, and team leads within **two school days**; Administration, including Directors, within **two school days**, and the Board within **five school days**.

Coversheet

Executive Director Report

Section:	IV. School Operations
Item:	D. Executive Director Report
Purpose:	FYI
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	ED Report July 2026.pdf STARGATE LUNCH VENDOR 2026-27 REVIEW.docx (2).pdf



**Executive Director
Governance Board of Directors Report**

Date: 7/21/2026

Prepared by: Dr. Robin Greene, Executive Director

Celebration/Highlight:

- 40 Students went to [HOSA](#) International Leadership Conference and Competition
 - 14,000 students competed in total
- 4 students were honored with the Barbara James Service Award for their many hours of community service at local hospitals and health organizations.
- 1 student awarded a scholarship by the American Psychiatric Association Foundation
- 1 student made the top 10 Internationally for his resume and interview in the Job Seeking Skills event (9th place).
- 8 students made it to the final round of their competitions
- Mrs. McVeigh is the sponsor of this club

Strategic Work:

- No updates since 6/2026

Admissions/Enrollment:

- Update on International Exchange Student
 - Received 2 parent feedback and making adjustments

Bond/Construction Update

- TCO July 27,2026
- Furniture arrival delayed to August 3
- Reviewed possibility of paving and creating parking lot- cost prohibitive
 - Retention pond will be at minimum \$250,000.00 + construction and materials
 - We will use crusher-fines and create a staff only parking lot

Hiring Updates

- Hiring for an Elementary Special Education teacher
 - Open position as of June 29,2026
 - Looking at agencies
 - Middle/High School Special Education Teachers will support IEPs and deliver service minutes until the role is filled

Back to School

- Board Invited to August 4th at 11:30 welcome back with the staff
 - Opening
 - Help serve lunch

Lunch

- [Stargate Lunch Vendor Review](#)

Stargate School Healthy School Meals for All [HSMA] & USDA Reimbursable Free Lunch Program: 2026-27 Vendor Selection Process & Request for Proposal [RFP]

Summary:

In 2023, Stargate began offering the Healthy School Meals for All [HSMA] program, a reimbursable lunch plan largely funded by the Colorado state legislature. In 2025, Stargate administration decided to avoid a possible mid-year change of program and elected to contract lunch to a full-pay system. When the Colorado state legislature voted this past November to continue funding the HSMA program, Stargate again pivoted to offering free lunch for all students resuming this school year, 2026-27.

For Colorado charter schools there are requirements for implementing the HSMA system that begin with these two steps:

1. Charter schools must select/contract a School Food Authority [SFA]
2. The charter school's SFA will guide and oversee a meal vendor procurement process that includes a formal Request For Proposal [RFP] evaluation

School Food Authority [SFA] Selection

For inclusion in the HSMA program, Stargate is required to partner/contract with an SFA.

Role description of an SFA:

- Managing meal applications and determining student eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.
- Ensuring all school meals meet USDA nutrition and portion standards.
- Handling program finances, purchasing, and submitting claims for federal reimbursements.

Historically, CharterChoice Collaborative [CCC] served as Stargate's SFA from 2023-25. When Stargate chose to implement a full-pay school lunch system for the 2025-26 school year, Stargate was not required to contract with an SFA.

Stargate did evaluate another SFA in the spring of 2026 [CSI]. Ultimately, Stargate determined that CCC's cost and previous working relationship was most beneficial for returning to the HSMA program.

* Stargate did have a meeting with the Five Star/Adams12 Nutritional Services group about the timeline for when the district might be able to assume the role of SFA for Stargate – earliest possibility is 2027-28. No cost quotes were offered by Five Star/Adams12 at that time.

Lunch Vendor Selection

An important role of the SFA is to lead and oversee the Request For Proposal [RFP] process which is designed for the client to set lunch production and service requirements and accept bids from vendors. Stargate has a number of unique aspects when it comes to Charter School lunch provision, including:

- Two kitchens and two service sites
- Need for daily vegetarian entrée
- Daily number of meals

Our goal for the Stargate HSMA free lunch program is to provide every student who wants/needs a lunch to have access to a nutritious and tasty option daily. We also want to greatly reduce costs associated with inaccurate meal order projections and be fiscally sound with the lunch program so that more funds are available for academic resources.

In 2023, the RFP for Stargate and the HSMA lunch program yielded one bid. The 2026 RFP yielded four bids. After counsel from CCC and internal evaluation by our Lunch Team, all four bids were examined, discussed, and given a numerical rating. The team again met for a final discussion of the evaluation process and it was determined that Stargate will contract MyKidsLunch as lunch vendor for the HSMA/USDA program, for the school year 2026-27.

Reasons for selecting MyKidsLunch [MKL, a.k.a. Michael's Catering] as Lunch Vendor

MyKidsLunch [MKL]**Cost: \$4.80 Full Staff / \$4.65 Partial Staff**

PRO	CON
-Experience of vendor: 1. In HSMA program 2. Preparing/delivering the high number of meals needed daily at Stargate	-Invoicing/charging for “meals ordered” so overages would be charged \$4.80 per meal and are non-reimbursable costs to Stargate*
-Cost allows Stargate to recoup expenses for HSMA/USDA program to zero for “meals served”	-Stigma of reputation within some of the Stargate community
-Reliable service and trustworthy partnership for over three years	-Contributed very little assistance to Stargate messaging/marketing of HSMA/USDA program
-New agreement includes all staffing of lunch service, including POS, built into cost per meal	
- MKL to split expense of meal overages with Stargate [after first 10]*	
-Adding a third portion size for Grades 6-8 [previously only two portion sizes, K-8 and 9-12]	
-Willingness to offer daily vegetarian option to service Stargate request	
-Able to re-hire staff that has experience working in Stargate lunch service, both HSMA and full-pay	
-Willing to focus finding best practice when lunch entrees run short – i.e. sack lunch or convection oven options	
-Has historical service data which will aid meal projection accuracy	

Other RFP Bids Evaluated**FASTFIT FOODS****Cost: \$5.10 Full Staff / \$4.85 Partial Staff**

PRO	CON
-Charging Stargate only for “meals served,” not meals ordered	-Central kitchen in Colorado Springs: transportation time & food quality upon arrival
-Professional intent and eagerness to earn bid	-Transportation time and risk re: inclement weather, mechanical issues
-Infusion of new energy: new vendor, new food*	-No experience servicing a school account of Stargate’s populace

*Tasting was not part of the RFP and we were not able to sample FastFit Foods meal offerings.

ORDO

Cost: \$4.20 Full Staff / \$4.00 Partial Staff

PRO: Experience servicing schools of Stargate size & Cost was lowest of all bids

CONS: -No apparent or cited presence of service in Colorado -No Central kitchen noted -Intent to win bid was questionable

COMBI TACO

Cost: \$7.80 Full Staff / \$7.40 Partial Staff

PRO: Contemporary menu offerings

CONS: -Cost was self-eliminating –No experience servicing a school of Stargate’s size/need

Conclusion:

The Stargate team that evaluated all four vendor proposals awarded the contract for 2026-27 to MyKidsLunch primarily because of their previous experience working with Stargate and with the HSMA/USDA program. MyKidsLunch has been a collaborative and reliable partner, delivering meals daily with few mistakes or issues for over three years.

In addition, the cost per meal quotes proposed by MyKidsLunch allow Stargate to plan for lower expenditures on the HSMA program than in previous years. This will be bolstered by MyKidsLunch agreeing to share overage costs in the event of inaccurate meal projections.

While Stargate continues to strive for the highest level of student and family satisfaction with our lunch program, we believe that MyKidsLunch shares that same goal and to provide high quality food and service to Stargate.

Coversheet

2026-2027 Board Handbook

Section:	VII. Action Items (Discuss and/or Vote)
Item:	D. 2026-2027 Board Handbook
Purpose:	Vote
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	2026-2027 Board Handbook_Draft 7.2026.pdf



Governance Board Handbook 2025-2026

Revised and Approved July 24, 2025



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Introduction

A charter school board is charged with the following: (1) to exercise final authority in matters affecting the charter school; (2) to ultimately be held accountable to the Charter Authorizer (Adams 12 Five Star Schools) for the school's academic performance, financial health, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and (3) to manage and support the Executive Directors and assess their performance.

A member of the Stargate Governance Board of Directors ("Board") shall have a firm belief in the established mission, vision, and values of the school and shall be committed to the best practices for gifted education and other curriculum as approved by the Board. Additionally, members of the Board shall be fully committed to the charter school concept.

The mission and vision statements of Stargate, as a gifted charter school, will serve to guide and direct the function and decisions of the Board. The goal to continually improve, maintain integrity, serve Stargate families and ensure academic success for students shall take precedence in all situations.

MISSION STATEMENT

Stargate School will provide a differentiated program designed specifically to meet the needs of identified intellectually gifted learners in order to challenge each student's academic abilities, support their unique emotional needs, promote individual character development and encourage a life-long love of learning.

VISION STATEMENT

Stargate community will be a leader and innovator in intellectually gifted education by providing a learning environment to enhance gifted students' needs.

POLICY STATEMENT ON DECISION MAKING (Stargate Board Policy 1.1)

The Stargate charter belongs to the parents of the school. All decisions by the Board of Directors and the Executive Directors shall be made within the parameters and uphold the principles of the vision and mission statements. Decisions shall be made first considering the vision and mission statements and then considering the stakeholders, always keeping in mind that parents should have a meaningful voice in their child's education.

Capitalized terms used but not defined herein have the meaning set forth in the Bylaws.

Duties and Responsibilities

By law, charter school boards are held accountable by the authorizer, the state, the federal government, and the public to ensure that the school is operating in accordance with its original purpose and doing so in a responsible manner. Each member of the Board has no individual authority; it is only as a collective Board that there is authority.

As defined in Section 5.2 of the Stargate Bylaws, the primary responsibilities of the Governance Board of Directors are to:

- Determine the educational philosophy and culture of the school and uphold the school's mission
- Create a strategic vision and plan
- Establish policy by which the school is administered and/or managed



- Assure financial stability through fiscal and financial oversight and be accountable for the financial health of the school
- Promote fundraising efforts for the school
- Ensure that the school has appropriate resources to effectively implement the strategic plan and execute the day-to-day school operations.

The School may only act through its Officers described in these Bylaws, upon Board approval, as provided herein, or delegation by resolution or adopted policy.

As defined in Section 5.2.1 of the Stargate Bylaws, the Board has the following specific duties:

- (a) Understand and adhere to the portions of the Colorado Sunshine Act, C.R.S. §24-6-401 *et seq.* (“Open Meetings Law”) and the Colorado Open Records Act, C.R.S. §24-72-201 *et seq.* (“CORA”) applicable to charter schools and other State and Federal law that apply to non-profit corporations or charter schools;
- (b) Ensure that Directors attend annual Authorizer or School-sponsored training for Board members, which shall include, but not be limited to the topics of financial responsibilities, behavior protocols, relationship with the Executive Director(s), boundaries, communication, and confidentiality, and other training required by applicable law or otherwise directed by Board policy or vote, or required by the Charter Contract.
- (c) Appoint and/or remove the Executive Director(s) of the School and conduct an annual performance review of such Executive Director(s);
- (d) Direct the Executive Director(s) to establish and review the educational programs of the School;
- (e) Approve the annual budget of the School and modifications thereto, which shall be submitted to it upon recommendation of the Finance Committee, or upon motion of a Board member;
- (f) Approve and authorize any changes in fees within the School as indicated in the budget;
- (g) Approve contracts, unless by policy or resolution delegates it;
- (h) Establish and manage governance committees and their specific purpose and parameters, and serve as liaisons to committees;
- (i) Review and approve the following School policies: Admissions Policy; Employee Policies as expressed in the Staff Handbook; Student and Parent/Guardian Policies as expressed in the Community Handbook; Governance Board Handbook; all Board committee charters and all other policies deemed relevant by the Board;
- (j) Regularly communicate to the Members about key governance topics, including but not limited to: the Strategic Plan, the Budget, Policies, and Meeting Minutes;
- (k) Survey the Members (Parents and Staff) at least annually to assess satisfaction and identify areas for improvement;
- (l) Ensure compliance with the Charter Contract, and all applicable Authorizer, State, and Federal policies and requirements, not otherwise waived;
- (m) Create, periodically update, implement, and monitor a strategic plan;
- (n) Adopt long-range facilities plans;
- (o) Conduct annual Board self-evaluation; and
- (p) Approve certificates/diplomas upon recommendation of the faculty.



The Board may delegate specific duties as deemed appropriate.

Responsibility Matrix

As the governing entity, the Board is charged with developing school policies and setting goals and expectations. The Executive Director(s) serve as the school's manager and are in charge of implementing the Board's policies and carrying out the school's academic and operational programs on a day-to-day basis. The Executive Director(s) are direct reports to the Board as defined in the Organizational Chart of the Stargate School Governance Board of Directors Agreement, which is reviewed and approved by the Board each year.

Responsibility	Board	Executive Directors
Financial Management	• Approves annual budget • Reviews periodic financial reports • Ensures proper internal controls are in place	• Prepares annual budget with input from Board/Finance Committee • Oversees preparation of periodic financial reports • Implements proper financial controls
Academic Excellence	• Monitors academic benchmarks: examines whether goals are being met or on target to be met • Offers oversight and monitoring of academic program through the Unified Improvement Plan	• Delivers academic program aligned with charter contract's specifications • Determines how the instructional program is delivered
Compliance and Human Resources	• Approves personnel policies that adhere to state, federal, & local requirements • Approves salary scale & benefits packages offered by school	• Determines qualifications & hires staff • Conducts performance evaluations of staff • Responsible for management of school personnel



Organizational Chart

Stargate School is governed by the Board. The Board shall establish and maintain fundamental school policies to ensure adherence to the mission and vision statements. The Executive Director(s) shall make the day-to-day management decisions and are responsible for all administrative duties for the school. The Executive Director(s) shall report directly to the Board.

[2025-2026 Organizational Chart](#)

Code of Conduct

Board members will act in a professional manner that upholds the mission and vision of Stargate School at all times. Board members have a responsibility to exercise duty of care, duty of loyalty, and duty of obedience.

- **Confidentiality:** Board members shall remember that all matters discussed in closed sessions of meetings, many materials reviewed by members, and a great deal of information obtained as a member are confidential and may not be disclosed to anyone outside of the Board. In particular, Board members shall not disclose staff or student information discovered as a result of service on the Board. Disclosure of such could constitute a violation of federal and/or state law. Board members shall handle this material with great caution and sensitivity.
- **Active Participation:** Board members are expected to exercise the duties and responsibilities of their positions with integrity, collegiality, and care through:
 - consistent attendance at meetings
 - attention and participation during meetings
 - being prepared to discuss issues on the agenda
 - putting the interests of the school above personal interests
 - representing the school in a positive and supportive manner at all times
 - showing respect and courteous conduct to all parties in all meetings
 - refraining from intruding on administrative issues that are the responsibility of the Executive Director(s) (except to monitor the results and ensure that procedures are consistent with Board policy)
 - observing the established lines of communication
- **Conflict of Interest:** A Board member's duty is to act in good faith with regard to the best interests of the school, not in the Board member's personal interest. Board members must promptly report any actual or potential conflicts that may exist between the Board member and the school in accordance with the school's Bylaws and other applicable laws. Even the appearance of conflict of interest can create doubt in the Board's action. The rule of necessity may allow participation in a decision where there is a conflict of interest when a quorum cannot otherwise be met. In such a situation, the Board would decide to allow that member to participate even with the conflict.



- **Retaliation:** Retaliation is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Negative or adverse action will not be taken against any Board member, community member, or staff member for making a good-faith report of a possible violation of applicable laws or policies, even if the report is mistaken, or against the Board.
- **Communication:**
 - Board members should set the standard for respectful and courteous communication.
 - Board members should refrain from replying to all or sending emails to the entire Board, except when providing information (Board meeting notices, agendas, meeting logistics, social matters, etc.). No discussions, debates, or sharing of individual opinions on an issue before the Board should occur outside of meetings.
 - The Board speaks with one voice. Board members should seek to uphold the Board voice and recognize that community members may assume that individual members are speaking on behalf of the Board.
 - Board members should not respond to emails unrelated to their assigned Board duties sent only to them as a Board member. Instead, the Board member will forward the email to the entire Board for direction through proper channels.
 - Board members will notify the Board when approached by a community member wanting to discuss Board issues. Board members uphold the process for communication with the community outlined in Policy 1.15.
 - Board members should not solicit community members on Board issues outside of their assigned Board duties.
 - Board members should not individually contact staff members, unless acting within Board responsibilities. Should a Board member need to reach out to a staff member outside of these exceptions, the Executive Director(s) should be consulted prior to the communication. When addressing a matter related to their own child, the matter should be addressed following Communication Pathways via personal email.
 - Board members should direct communications with the Executive Director(s) through the assigned liaisons, except in cases where input has been requested of the individuals ((e.g. if ED requests input from all of the Board members and/or seeks out the expertise of a specific Board member.) or when acting within Board responsibilities.
 - Board members should not individually comment about Board decisions or promote any comments related to Board decisions on social media. Board members may share posts from official school communication channels.
 - Official messages of the Board to the community will be sent through official communication channels via the Communication Manager.
 - Conflicts between individual Board members should be resolved privately by those individuals outside of Policy 1.15 and independent of the Board, including its meetings..

Restrictions

The following prohibitions are applicable to the Board:

Employment/Compensation:

- Board members cannot be employees of the school, and the Board is prohibited from employing any close family member of a Board member.
- Board members cannot receive compensation for services to the school other than reimbursement of actual expenses, unless full disclosure is made of the conflict and compliance with applicable law.



- o Board members cannot solicit or accept personal gifts from any person or entity doing business, or seeking to do business, with the Board or school.

Nepotism:

- Close Family Members are defined as:
 - o (i) the individual's spouse; (ii) the individual's and the spouse's grandparents, parents, siblings, children, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and first cousins; (iii) the spouse of any persons listed in subcategories (i) and (ii); and (iv) any other person who shares the same household with the individual. (source: <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/close-family-member>)

Recusal:

- Board members must disclose and then recuse themselves from participating in voting on any transaction in which they have a personal substantial interest. This prohibition also extends to situations in which a Board member has a significant personal or business relationship with any of the following persons with a substantial economic interest in a transaction:
 - o Immediate family members or close family members; any entity of which the Board member is an officer, director, trustee, partner, or employee; anyone with whom the Board member is negotiating with or has an arrangement for prospective employment; any legal entity of which the Board member controls or owns an interest greater than 25%.
 - Immediate family members with respect to any potentially conflicting interest transaction means:
 - (i) the individual's spouse; (ii) the individual's and the spouse's grandparents, parents, siblings, children, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and first cousins; (iii) the spouse of any persons listed in subcategories (i) and (ii); and (iv) any other person who shares the same household with the individual. (source: <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/close-family-member>)
- Board members may participate in the discussion or debate concerning the transaction but must disclose the conflict of interest before the discussion begins and are prohibited from voting on the matter.

Compliance

Because charter schools are public schools, the Board must comply with laws applicable to Colorado public entities, including the Colorado Open Meetings Law (Sunshine Laws) and the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA). Violation of public laws can subject individual Board members to civil penalties, as well as impact an authorizer's decision to renew the school's charter contract.

Any matter conducted on behalf of the school by the Board or a committee thereof must be done in a manner that is open and transparent to the public.

- Boards and committees should err on the side of caution and abide by Colorado Open Meetings Law, especially when discussing any matter that will impact the school's Board, employees, and students (including governance, facilities, budget, and academics).
- A Board's failure to comply with Open Meetings Law can subject individual members to civil penalties and render null any decisions made by the Board.
- Note: A person who willfully disrupts a meeting and seriously compromises the ability of the meeting to be conducted in an orderly manner can be removed.



The Colorado Open Meetings Law [C.R.S. § 24-6-401] states that anyone discussing Board business, policy, actions, resolutions, etc. amongst three or more Directors, except at meetings for which notice has been properly posted at least 24 hours prior to the meeting, is illegal. "Meeting" with another director is defined as communication in person, by telephone, by electronic mail, or through any other means. Executive sessions and confidentiality laws are also outlined in the statute [C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4) (a) through (h)] as the following categories:

- a) Buying or selling property
- b) Legal advice
- c) Confidential matters required by State or Federal Law
- d) Security issues
- e) Contract negotiations and strategies
- f) Personnel matters
- g) Considerations of documents protected from disclosure under the Open Records Act
- h) Discussion of students

Note: No final or binding action (voting) can take place in an executive session. All votes must occur, and be recorded, in an open meeting.

A Quorum (simple majority or at least three, whichever is fewer) is needed for voting:

Any action (voting) by a Board or Committee can only take place if there is a quorum of members during the open meeting. If a Board or Committee member leaves the meeting (for whatever reason – whether temporarily or permanently) then he or she is no longer considered in attendance while absent and the remaining members must recalculate whether a quorum exists before proceeding with the meeting.

The Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) requires a school and Board to provide public access to certain school and Board records. A Public Record is any type of documentation (including e-mails) that are used or retained for use in the management of a public business/entity, including the operation of a public Charter School. Public records are records that actually exist. If a requested record does not exist, one does not have to be created to comply with the request. Certain records are considered NOT to be public records and cannot be given to the public upon request (student address or phone numbers, employee address or phone numbers, personnel files, student files, etc.). Retention of public records should follow the Board policy. Records requested must be provided in a timeframe as required by CORA and associated fees for making copies can be charged in alignment with CORA. If the time associated with gathering the requested record is burdensome or expensive, additional time and fees can be applied to the request.

Board Meeting Minutes

The Board must keep written minutes of all meetings where business is conducted. Additionally, meeting minutes are public records and must be made available to the public.

Minutes must include the following information:

- The date, time, and location of the meeting
- The attendance or absence of each Board member, presence or absence of the Executive Director(s) or their delegates
- The substance of all matters decided (minutes do not need to be overly detailed with specifics)
- If applicable, the reasons for moving into executive session



Orientation and Training

The Board has a responsibility to articulate prerequisites for candidates, orient new members, and ensure that Board members receive consistent and updated training.

ORIENTATION

Each Board member will comply with the Stargate Governance Board Orientation Policy.

TRAINING

The Board has many avenues for receiving the required training to effectively execute the mission. All Board members must complete the following each year:

- Specific training pertaining to due process hearing requirements and Colorado law pertaining to student discipline, including discipline of students with disabilities (as detailed in applicable law)
- Mandatory Reporter Training, as prescribed by the Colorado Department of Human Services for public school officials
- One group training session with a hired consultant or other professional
- One public training event (including webinar, regional CDE trainings, or Colorado League of Charter Schools Conference)
- Attendance at one non-Stargate board meeting
- League of Charter Schools Modules provided by the Colorado Department of Education
 - Before being sworn in - complete modules 1-3
 - Year 1 - complete modules 4-6
 - Year 2 - complete modules 7-8
 - Year 3 - complete modules 9-11

Board members are encouraged to complete as much training as possible. Board members should also stay informed on developments in education and charter school issues.

Each Board member shall sign an Oath of Office upon commencement with their term in compliance with the law.

Board Officer Responsibilities

Board Officers are elected by a majority of the Board each year and serve until the next officer elections. The following specific duties are assigned to each Officer.

BOARD PRESIDENT

- Act as spokesperson for the school, or delegate as appropriate
- Oversee the sessions of the Board:
 - Call meetings to order and adjournment
 - Call for motions and discussions
 - Summarize votes
 - Control the flow of each meeting, and redirect Board or audience discussion as necessary to stay on topic, agenda, and on time.
- Ensure that legal and ethical integrity is maintained
- Administer the employer/employee relationship with the Executive Director(s):



- o Meet with, or delegate another Board member to meet with, the Executive Director(s) on a regular basis to provide support, guidance, and direction
 - o Brief all Board members on issues discussed with the Executive Director(s)
- Act as liaison to the District/Authorizer:
 - o Attend, or delegate another Board member to attend, all appropriate meetings with the authorizer to ensure that a Board representative is present when needed
 - o Ensure that charter contract deliverables and deadlines are met
- Develop and manage agendas
 - o Prior to each business meeting, prepare a draft agenda for the following meeting so that agenda items can be reviewed
 - o One week prior to each business meeting, send the draft agenda to the Board members for review
 - o Ensure the final agenda is posted to the school's website at least 24 hours prior to the meeting
- Prepare, or delegate another Board member to prepare, documents for review:
 - o Governance Handbook
 - o Board Planning Calendar for approval at the July business meeting,
 - update as needed throughout the year
 - ensure most current version is posted to the governance page of the website
- Prepare, or delegate another Board member to prepare, regular communication for the community, including monthly summaries of business meetings
- Execute legal documents, contracts, and other agreements

VICE PRESIDENT

- Understand the responsibilities and duties of the President and be able to perform these duties in the President's absence
- Other duties, as needed and as delegated by the President

SECRETARY

- Ensure that minutes of all business meetings are manually recorded
 - o Review drafted minutes from the Recording Secretary and finalize for approval by the Board
 - o Once approved, minutes and relevant attachments are posted to the governance website within 10 days
- Ensure public availability of agenda for each meeting
- Ensure that minutes of executive sessions (except portions when receiving legal counsel) are mechanically recorded, and ensure deletion of executive session recordings 90 days following the session
- Maintain all Board records and ensure their accuracy and safety
- Work with the President to prepare the agenda and Board documents for all open sessions
- Maintain approved documents according to the Document Control Policy
- Manage document and website updates:
 - o Ensure that the latest approved versions of board policies and other documents are posted to the school's website
- Manage Governance Drive access and content:
 - o Ensure access to governance folders is limited to appropriate individuals
 - o Ensure content is well organized and updated



- o Prepare board packets for meetings, ensuring all relevant documents have been added to the packet one week prior to the meeting when possible
- o Work with school technology consultant to manage distribution lists for the Governance Board Committees

TREASURER

- Work with the Finance Committee to provide support for evaluating the budget and KPIs
- Act as liaison to the Finance Committee and attend Finance Committee meetings on a regular basis
- Maintain a thorough understanding of all financial details of the school, including policies and budgets
- Lead discussions on finance-related agenda items at Board meetings

DUTIES ASSIGNED TO OFFICERS OR DIRECTORS

- Conduct an annual review of the Board Policy Manual
- Prepare and lead annual presentations:
 - o Presentation to Stakeholders in the fall
 - o State of the School in the spring
- Lead Strategic Planning:
 - o Plan the board retreat and planning session
 - o Revise the Strategic Plan document and present it for Board approval
 - o Ensure committee goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) are incorporated into the strategic planning process
 - o Once approved, share the plan with board members, administrators, and committees
- Act as Board Liaison to Governance Committees or Special Projects
- Manage Board response to Governance mailbox and Complaint Reporting System
- Support Executive Director Performance Evaluation process
- Other duties as deemed necessary



2026-2027 Board Agreement Signatures

By signing below you agree to the contents of this agreement and to:

- Support and be an active ambassador for the values, mission, and vision of Stargate School
- Make decisions in the best interest of Stargate students and the parents who send their students to our school, as well as to the staff members who enable their success
- Work with fellow Board members to fulfill the obligations of Board membership
- Behave in ways that clearly contribute to the effective operation of the Board
 - Focus on the good of the organization and group, not on personal agendas
 - Support Board decisions once they are made
 - Participate in an honest appraisal of your own performance and that of the Board
 - Build awareness of and vigilance toward governance matters rather than management
- Regularly attend Board and committee meetings in accordance with the Board's absenteeism policy, prepare for these meetings by reviewing materials and bringing the materials to meetings, and if unable to attend, notify the Board or committee chair
- Stay informed on relevant issues by reviewing materials, participating in discussions, and asking strategic questions
- Participate in strategic planning sessions and contribute to the achievement of outlined goals

Printed Name	Signature	Office / Title
Lindsey Paquette		President
Lumakar Challa		Vice President
Karla Lindgren		Secretary
Samantha Howorko		Treasurer
Bibi Paul		Director
Jessica Painz		Director
Harikrishnadhar Sonnenahalli		Director



Lauren Steele		Director
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Appendices

- A: Oath of Office
- B: Stargate History
- C: Charter School Overview
- D. Financial Overview



A: Oath of Office for Incoming Stargate Directors

In accordance with CRS 24-12-101, an Oath of Office is required for all Board members. The oath can be administered by a person designated by the governing body, or any officer thereof. In July of 2023, the Board officially authorized the President and Secretary to serve as designated officiators of the oath.

Each new Board member is to swear the oath with an uplifted hand, and the oath should be in writing and signed by the Board member. An electronic copy of the signed oath should be sent to recordingpublicpostings@adcogov.org to be filed by the Adams County Clerk and Recorder with public notices.

OATH OF OFFICE
COUNTY OF ADAMS
STATE OF COLORADO

I, _____ (printed board member name) do swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Colorado, and the laws of the State of Colorado, and will faithfully perform the duties of the office of Board Member of Stargate School upon which I am about to enter to the best of my ability.

Signature

Board Member subscribed and sworn to before me this ____ day of _____, 2025.

Signature

Witnessing Official Printed Name _____



B: Stargate History

Stargate School is a K-12 charter school serving a gifted and talented community of students. The original school was founded by a group of dedicated parents in 1994 as an elementary school serving students in first through fifth grade. In subsequent years, the school expanded to include kindergarten through 8th grades. In the fall of 2015, the first 9th grade class was added, and the school expanded its new high school by one grade per year, celebrating its first graduating class in 2019.

Through a collaboration of the Board of Directors and the Stargate Foundation, the current K-12 campus was completed and opened for classes in the fall of 2016.

Stargate School's Charter Contract with Adams 12 Five Star Schools is renewed periodically as dictated by the terms of the current contract. The current contract was renewed in 2024 for 5 years.

C: Charter Schools Overview

Unlike traditional public schools – where schools located within a certain jurisdiction are subject to uniform rules and regulations set by a local or state school board – charter schools are independent public schools that are given educational and operational autonomy in exchange for performance-based accountability.

In essence, charter schools operate from 3 basic principles:

1. **Choice:** Parents select the school their child attends.
2. **Flexibility:** Charter schools are free to make timely decisions on issues specific to their school such as developing curricula, structuring the school day, creating a balanced budget, and hiring teachers who meet the needs of their students.
3. **Accountability:** In exchange for operational freedom and flexibility, charter schools are subject to a higher level of accountability via performance-based contracts and must meet certain academic, financial, and legal standards within an allotted time frame or risk closure of the charter school. Stargate School is accountable to the families in the school, the Adams 12 Five Star School District, and the state.

Note: Minnesota enacted the first legislated charter school in 1991. In 1993, Colorado became the third state in the US to enact a charter school law. Stargate School was authorized in 1994.

In Colorado, there are 3 primary sources for charter school laws, rules, and regulations:

1. **Law:** Charter Schools Act (C.R.S. 22-30.5-101 through C.R.S. 22-30.5-704)
2. **Policy:** Stargate School follows policies that are currently approved by Adams 12 Five Star Schools unless specifically waived as part of the contract. In addition, Stargate School maintains additional policies in the policy manual that is managed by the Board of Directors.
3. **Contract:** Charter contracts are unique to each individual school. Stargate School operates through a contract agreement with Adams 12 Five Star Schools.



A public charter school comes to life through, and is generally governed by, a Charter Contract between the School and the Authorizer. Stargate School is authorized through Adams 12 Five Star Schools.

Similar to all other service contracts, the Charter Contract is a legal agreement that sets the expectation for the school and authorizer over a set term. It defines both the school's rights to manage the school and the authorizer's monitoring and oversight responsibilities.

The continued operation of the School is contingent upon the school's ability to meet certain academic, financial, and legal standards within an allotted time frame. If the school meets those requirements, then the contract can be renewed for another set time period; but if the school fails to do so, the contract cannot be renewed and the school will either be closed altogether or transferred to a different operator. Additionally, the Charter Contract can be revoked at any time by a majority vote of the authorizer if the authorizer finds that the operator violates the contract, fiscal standards, or the law (this type of revocation generally occurs when there is a gross violation, or health and safety of students are at risk).

D: Financial Overview

Charter schools are not just educational centers, they are organizations with significant budgetary and operational needs and expectations. Managing the business side of the school is vital to its success. Unlike traditional public schools, stand-alone charter schools do not have a district or management organization to handle things like managing the budget, transportation, food service, janitorial services, payroll, etc. Overlooking this aspect of the school is dangerous as experiencing financial challenges is the most common reason for closing a charter school. Stargate School has maintained a history of strong financial performance in large part because of a strong Executive Director of Operations and Finance, an engaged Finance Committee made up of qualified parent volunteers, and a Board committed to financial stability.

One of the most significant duties of the Board is to create and maintain a balanced school budget. Because Stargate School is a public school, the Board must adopt, finalize, amend, and implement the school's budget in accordance with the law.

- The Board will engage in sound financial practices, reporting, and audits to ensure proper use of public funds and the successful fiscal operation of the school.
- Stargate School's annual audit must be conducted by a qualified third party.
- The Board will establish a reliable accounting system through the Executive Director of Operations and Finance and the Finance Committee, as well as maintain accurate accounts and documentations for all allocated and accrued funds.
- The Board will keep proper documentation of the use of public versus private funds.

Stargate School is a public charter school, therefore funding is provided through tax dollars via the authorizer.

Charter School State Funding

- Charter schools receive the same per pupil funding as their authorizing district (or Charter School Institute).
- From this funding, charter schools pay their authorizers for central administrative services. Some of these fees are statutory and some are negotiated. All of these fees are included in the annual operating budget of the charter school.



- Charter schools finance their facilities from per pupil operating revenue, not from voter-approved bonds.
- Voter-approved additional revenue can come from bonds for capital expenditures and mill levies for operational costs. The ability to share in these funds depends on the agreement with the authorizer.
 - o In 2016, Adams 12 voters approved a capital bond that was shared with the district charter schools. This funding was required to be spent on capital building improvements only.
 - o In 2018, state law changed to require mill levies to be shared with charter schools at 95%. This funding will be able to be applied to general operating expenses.
- Charter school portions of state and federal grant revenues are negotiated as part of the charter school contract.
 - o Stargate School receives 65% of the state and federal grant revenue that Adams 12 School District receives on our behalf. The remaining 35% is contractually obligated to be retained by the district.

Additional Sources of Funding

Private donations, corporate support, and earned income are additional ways that Stargate School acquires funding. Through community engagement activities, annual fundraising events, and fees for space use or services, Stargate School is able to use additional funds to supplement traditional operating expenses. However, money raised through fundraising efforts is not considered stable income and should not be applied to regular operating expenses, such as salaries, rent, or utility bills.

Reserve Funds

Stargate School follows best practice through its reserve fund policy. The Finance Committee, through direction of the Board, tracks the progress of the school to align with the reserve policy. The policy allows use of this fund only under specific circumstances and only through Board approval. It is important to maintain a proper reserve fund in order to cover unexpected expenses.

Facilities

Unlike traditional public schools, which utilize voter-approved bond funding to build and maintain their facilities, charter schools must finance and pay for their facilities with operating budget models that will support 30 years of payments from per pupil revenue. Facility acquisition is critical to charter school success. Charter schools must borrow money to finance facilities development. They typically accomplish this through the issuance of municipal bonds, with interest rates ranging from 4%-8% depending on credit worthiness. Building corporations are generally set up to own the facilities and assume the debt. The school then becomes the tenant of the building corporation. The Stargate Foundation is the Building Corporation that owns the debt for the Stargate School campus.

The primary consideration in charter school design is space usage. Particular attention is paid to maximizing space usage to maximize dollars generated. Ongoing maintenance of the building is also a budget line item that is considered and appropriated annually.