



# **PACE Academy**

## **Employee Handbook**

### **2023-2024**

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PACE does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, or immigrant status in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle the nondiscrimination policies. For questions pertaining to Section 504, contact Melissa Rabon, and for questions pertaining to Title IX, contact Dr. Melanie Vaughn.

**DISCLAIMER**

**THIS HANDBOOK IS ADVISORY IN NATURE, CREATES NO CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION ON THE PART OF THE SCHOOL OR ITS EMPLOYEES AND DOES NOT ALTER THE AT-WILL RELATIONSHIP OF EMPLOYEES WHO ARE FREE TO RESIGN AT ANY TIME FOR ANY REASON. NOTHING IN THIS HANDBOOK OR IN ANY POLICY MANUAL OF PACE ACADEMY CONSTITUTES OR CREATES AN EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT; RATHER, THIS HANDBOOK SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE BENEFITS OFFERED BY PACE ACADEMY AND AN OVERVIEW OF ITS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES. AS OF JANUARY 20, 2021, THIS HANDBOOK SUPERSEDES ALL PREVIOUS HANDBOOKS OR OTHER DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE SAME SUBJECT MATTER AS THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CONTAINED IN THIS HANDBOOK. IN ADDITION, THIS HANDBOOK CAN BE MODIFIED OR ALTERED AT ANY TIME BY PACE ACADEMY.**

I understand that PACE Academy’s handbooks and policy manuals are not contracts.

I have read this handbook in its entirety and agree to adhere to its requirements.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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## Section 1: Welcome

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year!

We are so excited you have chosen PACE as your place of employment. If you are a current employee, we appreciate your dedication and contribution to our students' success.

To support our vision and beliefs, we are dedicated to the employment and retention of highly qualified personnel. Our primary focus at PACE is to provide support for our employees, so our students receive maximum learning opportunities in a positive learning environment.

### About this Employee Handbook

This handbook has been prepared to provide employees with information that is essential to achieving success in our school. This handbook will act as a guide to familiarize you with the general practices, policies, and procedures. However, because this is just a summary, it may not answer all questions. Should you need further information, please see someone in Administration.

While it is our goal to provide employees with beneficial programs and policies, all programs and policies are dependent upon economic and other considerations and cannot be guaranteed. For that reason, PACE Academy reserves the right to eliminate, amend, alter, and make exceptions to programs, policies, and procedures at any time. No statement by an employee or Board Member contrary to this paragraph shall have any force or effect unless it is in writing and signed by the Executive Director.

### Our Mission, Vision, Beliefs and Core Values

The **Mission** of PACE Academy is to ensure all students master foundational reading skills along with South Carolina College and Career-Ready Standards to reach their full potential both in and out of the classroom.

PACE Academy is **Committed** to ensuring all teachers and classroom assistants are trained in multisensory, structured pedagogy with the Orton-Gillingham Approach.

It is our **Philosophy** that students with dyslexia are capable of achieving academic success. PACE Academy believes that by providing our students with this multisensory, sequential language instruction based on the science of reading, we can ensure all students, with or without dyslexia, master foundational reading skills necessary for academic success and life outside the classroom.

Despite the difficulties people with dyslexia face academically, research has shown there is no connection between their overall intelligence and their ability to read. In fact, PACE Academy **Believes** there are many advantages to having

dyslexia. Many famous dyslexics, like Steve Jobs, Walt Disney, Albert Einstein, George Washington, Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and many more are celebrated for their intelligence and have shaped the world we live in today. PACE Academy firmly believes dyslexia is a gift, and if given the proper tools for success, every child with dyslexia will agree!

## **Section 2: Employment**

### **At-Will Employment / Work Agreements**

PACE Academy participates in an at-will employment relationship. Work agreements are issued to all employees indicating the assigned position, salary, number of days employed, and special terms, if applicable. PACE Academy or the employee can terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice.

This employment/at-will relationship is in effect regardless of any other written statements or policies contained in this handbook, or in any other school documents, or in any verbal statements to the contrary, and no one except the Executive Director can enter into any differing employment/at-will relationship, contract, or agreement. To be enforceable, any such out-of-the-ordinary relationship, contract, or agreement must be in writing, signed by the Executive Director and in the employee's file.

### **Criminal Background Check and Fingerprint Policy *Criminal Record History***

As part of the employment process, the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) will screen all individuals as a contingency to a work agreement for any position. All employees will also be screened through the National Sex Offender registry. This screening process assists in determining that all employees working in our school are able to provide a safe and healthy environment for all students.

### **Equal Opportunity Employment**

PACE Academy provides equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, religion, immigrant status, sex, military status, English-speaking status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal or S.C. law.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for an individual with a medically documented disability who is otherwise qualified for a position unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship upon the school.

Only U.S. citizens and aliens lawfully authorized to work in the U.S. will be employed. For foreign nationals, a copy of the passport and visa must be on file in the personnel file.



Foreign nationals must obtain written permission before traveling outside the USA. Failure to adhere to the rules in this handbook, South Carolina laws and Board policies will result in the revocation of visa sponsorship. The Executive Director will issue the letter of invitation for visa sponsorship and will provide approval for the SC Department of Education to initiate visa sponsorship for selected foreign nationals.

## Procedures for Hiring Employees

Applications for available positions will be collected online at [hiring@choosepace.org](mailto:hiring@choosepace.org). The Executive Director and/or designee will consult with the selected applicants for interviews and set up interviews. Special Services contracted employees must provide a copy of their proof of insurance and professional credentials. Upon the hiring of a new employee, the Executive Director or designee will complete information on the employee employment agreement concerning salary, date of hire, eligibility for benefits, etc. To be eligible for benefits, a certified employee must work 15 hours per week and non-certified employees must work 20 hours per week. The Executive Director or designee will give this information to the Chief Business Officer. The Chief Business Officer will schedule an appointment with the new hire to complete all necessary paperwork.

## Teacher Certifications

### 1) *Certificate Renewal/Evaluation Plans*

The State Department of Education (SDE) requires 120 points to renew a teacher certificate based on the state's Student Learning Objective (SLO) tool for actionable reflection in a teacher's evaluation system. Sixty of the points must be for a 3-hour graduate course if the educator does not have a master's degree. All points earned by teachers will be recorded in the teacher's personnel file and will be submitted by the teacher to the SC Public Charter School District, which will be submitted to State Department of Education for certificate renewal. Professional Growth Plans must be submitted by the 20th day of the school year or as assigned by the Executive Director or designee.

### 2) *Professional Certification*

Certified employees who have completed coursework for an advanced degree or certification (Master's or Doctorate) and desire an updated certificate must request that their college or university submit transcripts to the State Department of Education, Office of Teacher Certification. Using the "Application for Credential Change/Action" form, the employee must also

request to the Office of Teacher Certification that the updated certificate be issued. If a teacher completes requirements for an additional area(s) of certification, the area(s) may not be added to the certificate without a written request to the Office of Teacher Certification from the teacher.

In the event that a salary differential for advanced degrees is offered at PACE Academy, the increased differential pay will only begin at the beginning of the school year or at the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter once records are updated at the Office of Teacher Certification.

### 3) *Valid Teaching Certificates*

All certified employees must maintain valid teaching certification from the South Carolina Department of Education. Such certification must be obtained prior to the first day of the school term and no later than two months after employment. It is the responsibility of the certified employee to provide the school with a copy of the certificate to be placed in the personnel file.

### 4) *Teaching Experience*

In order for a teacher to receive a year of experience, the teacher must be employed in a regular position for at least 152 days of paid full-time employment. Full-time employment is based upon a minimum of 30 hours per week. The teacher who has been employed in a regular teaching position for at least 76 days of full-time teaching may receive one-half year of experience for certification and retirement purposes. Two half-years of verified experience may be combined to give one full year of experience.

### 5) *Types of Certificates*

- Professional: The educator holds an earned undergraduate or graduate degree from an accredited teacher education institution and has fulfilled requirements of the State Department of Education.
- Initial: The educator holds an earned undergraduate or graduate degree from an accredited teacher education institution and/or has been accepted into an alternative certificate program with zero-two years of experience. One or more ancillary requirements must be met to earn the Professional Certificate (e.g. passing score on PLT, successful completion of Expanded Adept 4.0).
- Restricted: This certificate is granted annually by request from school districts. To be eligible for a restricted certificate, the teacher must be HQ (Highly Qualified) and have 12 hours in the area requested.
  - SC PACE Program: Under the guidelines for this program (revised in January, 2001) candidates may receive a STATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY to seek employment in a South Carolina public school upon meeting specified

criteria. Specific details may be found on the state department website:  
<https://ed.sc.gov/educators/alternative-certification/pace/>

- Teach for America Program: Under the guidelines for this program candidates may receive a STATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY to seek employment in a South Carolina public school upon meeting specified criteria. Specific details may be found on their website:  
<https://www.teachforamerica.org/where-we-work/south-carolina>

#### 6) *Experience Credit*

Experience credit for the current year may not officially recorded in the educator's file until after September 1.

### **Tuberculin Health Certificates**

The Guidelines of the Department of Health and Environmental Control (as applicable to school employees) governs the school district. Upon employment, and as a condition for further employment, each employee will have a tuberculin skin test performed by intradermal injection of five tuberculin units of purified protein derivative of tuberculin (Mantoux with 5 TU of PPD). The cost of the test is the responsibility of the employee and results of this test will be kept in the employee's personnel file and shall be updated every five (5) years of employment.

### **Section 3: Employment Expectations**

#### **Bloodborne Pathogen Plan**

##### Universal Precautions in the School Setting

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of universal precautions is to eliminate or minimize exposure to blood or other potentially infectious body fluids. Treat all blood as potentially infectious. Appropriate barrier precautions should be used to prevent skin and mucous membrane exposure when in contact with blood or bodily fluids of any person.

*Hand-washing:* Hand-washing is an important preventive measure in the spread of disease. Hands and other skin surfaces should be washed after contact with blood or body fluids and after the removal of gloves. Hand-washing facilities with germicidal soap are provided for employees who incur exposure to blood or other potentially infectious material. Hand-washing should be done with warm water and soap, vigorously scrubbing hands, wrists, between fingers and under nails. Hands should then be rinsed thoroughly, allowing water to run off fingertips. Dry with paper towel, then use towel to turn off faucet.

*Housekeeping:* All surfaces contaminated with blood or body fluids should be disinfected with 1:10 solution of bleach, 70% alcohol, or disinfectant used by plant operations. Use gloves when cleaning up a spill. Call custodian for cleanup of any

large spills, or if you need help cleaning contaminated surfaces. Do not pick up broken glass with bare hands. Articles contaminated with blood should be triple bagged and thrown away in a garbage can. If contaminated articles are thrown away in a classroom waste basket, have custodian remove it as soon as possible. If an article is saturated with blood (blood can be squeezed out of it), it should be placed in a triple bagged trash bag.

*Personal Protective Equipment:* Gloves (disposable latex or non-latex) – Gloves should always be worn if any contact with blood or body fluids is anticipated. Gloves should be worn only once and thrown away. They should not be washed or decontaminated for reuse and are to be replaced as soon as practical when they become torn, punctured, or when their ability to function as a barrier is compromised. Skin breaks or dermatitis should be covered with a bandage under the gloves. Hands should be washed immediately after removal of gloves. Goggles and masks should be worn whenever droplets of blood or other potentially infectious materials may be generated and eye, nose, or mouth contamination can be reasonably anticipated. Mucous membranes should be flushed with water immediately if exposure to blood occurs.

*Sharps:* Needles or other sharps such as lancets used to test blood sugar in diabetic students should be disposed of in the sharps' container in the nurse's office. The needle should not be recapped or broken.

*General Rules:* Minimize splashing as much as possible. Do not eat, drink, put in contacts, apply cosmetics, or lip balms in areas with possible exposure.

All exposure incidents should be reported to the Administration, and/or school nurse.

## **Building Security**

### ***Safety Requirements***

All employees shall adhere to school's safety rules and regulations as outlined in the School's Emergency Plan and shall report unsafe conditions or practices to the appropriate supervisor.

The school has a plan to provide for the protection of staff and students in the event of any crisis which may threaten the school. Emergency drills are conducted at least monthly to ensure student and staff respond appropriately to any potential threat to safety.

An emergency evacuation map should be posted by the classroom door along with updated class rosters. Teachers should instruct their classes in the proper procedures for emergency drills. It is important to review the procedures throughout the school year. Teachers will normally be alerted when a test is planned.

### ***Life Threatening Emergency During School & Non-School Hours***

If the emergency is life threatening and a call to the office is not possible, call **911**. The operator answering the call will be able to identify the building and location of the emergency. As soon as possible, notify the secretary and/or the building director where the emergency is occurring.

## Confidentiality

As part of employees' duties and responsibilities, it may be necessary to maintain, process, handle, review, and/or be privy to student information, personnel information, and other information which is considered private and confidential. Unless mandated for legal reasons, private and confidential information is not to be discussed with any person other than school personnel with a work-related need to know.

Comment and discussion regarding student personalities and records should only be discussed with appropriate people in the education setting. Student behavior problems should not be part of public discussions. Do not discuss a student's performance, behavior and/or grades in front of other students, parents, or teachers not in direct contact with that student.

Professional discretion and courtesy should be used in discussing all staff and school concerns.

**Unauthorized discussion, disclosure, and/or dissemination of confidential information could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.**

## Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy

Any employee acting in an official capacity and any other person having reasonable cause to believe that a child under age 18 has been subjected to physical abuse or neglect must report or cause a report to be made to either the Sheriff's Department or the Department of Social Services in the county in which the child resides. Note that PACE serves students from 6 or more counties, so it is important to determine the county of residency of the student when making a report.

All teachers and staff members are mandated reporters. The teacher or staff member must consult with the Executive Director in making a decision to request an investigation. Mandated reporters must report abuse or neglect when, in their professional capacity, they receive information giving them reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health has been, or may be, adversely affected by abuse or neglect. A decision to report must be based upon a reasonable belief that a child has been, or may be, abused or neglected. Thus, mandatory reporters need not have conclusive proof that a child has been

abused or neglected prior to reporting abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

**A person who is required to report and fails to do so is guilty of a misdemeanor.**

Upon conviction, he or she may be fined up to \$500 or imprisoned up to six months, or both.

*Legal Definition of Physical Abuse:* Serious physical injury is inflicted by non-accidental means.

*Legal Definition of Sexual Abuse:* The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct.

*Legal Definition of Neglect:* A neglected child is one who is not receiving proper or necessary support or education as required by law or medical, psychiatric, psychological, or other care necessary to his well-being; or one who is abandoned by his parent or guardian.

## **Computer, Email, and Internet Policy**

### *E-Mail*

- E-mail is a school service provided by public funds. E-mail is for instructional, administrative, and limited personal use. Sending jokes, chain letters, etc. via e-mail is considered an inappropriate use of school equipment. E-mail is viewed as a public document and can become part of a legal process. Care should be given to the tone of the e-mail. Also, grammar and spelling should be checked before an e-mail is sent.
- E-mail shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored. Remember that email can be sent to others without one's knowledge.
- School personnel should check their e-mail at appropriate times. For example, teachers should service their e-mail at least once during the school day but not during class.
- E-mail should be positive or informative and never negative in content.
- Employees are expected to respond to all emails within 48 business hours (2 school days). Even if additional research or advice is needed, respond with "I have received your inquiry/concern and will respond by \_\_ when I have completely researched the question/concern." For email received after the end of day on Friday, teachers are not required to respond until end of day Tuesday unless the issue is urgent (i.e. missing student, injury, etc.). Then, contact a director.
- Use caution when sharing confidential student information via email.
- Revealing personal addresses or phone numbers of others is prohibited.

- Use **Bcc** for group emails to parents.

Devices with camera and/or video capability are never to be used in any area associated in any way whatsoever with the school, its programs, or activities in which an individual has a reasonable expectation for privacy including, but not limited to, restrooms, locker rooms, and showers. These devices are never to be used to record students without parent notification and written permission. No such recording should be made in a way that would embarrass, humiliate or be threatening to students and/or their parents.

Personally owned devices are to be turned off during the school day and during school programs/activities (except after-school public events). The administration may make such exceptions to this requirement as are necessary for the efficient administration of the school and the health and safety of students and staff members. **Violations will result in disciplinary action such as, but not limited to, revocation of the right to use such devices at work, administrative leave, suspension, or dismissal.**

### **Social Networking Sites**

The value of student, teacher, parent, and community interaction is strongly recognized. Collaboration, resource and information sharing, online tutoring, and other instructional applications can be facilitated by the judicious use of Internet tools.

Employees may communicate through electronic media with current students and parents for educational purposes. All online communication in which an individual holds him/herself out as an employee must be consistent with policies and regulations, which includes, but is not limited to: emails, newsletters, school-owned apps, and any postings in any social media outlets associated with the school and should be done on a school device.

### **Employee Use of Personal Social Networking Sites**

Employees shall make student Internet safety, including the protection of students' personal information, a priority. The act of any employee establishing an online social networking relationship with a currently enrolled student on his or her personal social networking site(s), such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, etc. is prohibited. Employees are also prohibited from accessing any personal social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, etc. during the instructional day. Violations of this will result in disciplinary action at the discretion of the supervisor. For the protection and safety of both employees and students, employees should consider limiting Internet contact and communication with such students to available school-approved, work-related social networking resources made available through the school's network.

The Executive Director or designee may access social media at school if the social media is an official outlet for communications such as a school Facebook page or Twitter account or to conduct an investigation into violations or complaints.

In all use of personal social networking sites, employees should:

- Maintain appropriate, professional boundaries as a classroom teacher, director, supervisor or staff member;
- Practice online reputation management by considering the personal, professional, and social impact of what you post;
- Establish appropriate privacy settings to limit access to personal information contained on your social networking site;
- Establish social networking relationships with caution and consider "unfriending" those who post inappropriate content that may be viewed on your social networking site;
- Refrain from inappropriate electronic communications with students;
- Recognize that students may not exercise good judgment and may use social media inappropriately;
- Avoid the appearance of impropriety (giving someone reason to question your ethics);
- Refrain from posting negative information about students, fellow employees, or PACE Academy;
- Refrain from uploading inappropriate content; exercise caution when posting links to other Internet or social networking sites and consider ad-free sites for hosting videos to eliminate inadvertent access to inappropriate advertisements and content.
- Refrain from posting or discussing information about pay, benefits, administrative leave, staff conflicts, etc.

### *Consequences of Inappropriate Use of Social Networking*

All employees are expected to know and are responsible for observing federal and state laws as well as the Board's policies and regulations pertinent to their work activities. Accordingly, employee use of social networking found to be in violation of one or more policies, regulations or procedures and/or in violation of any applicable state or federal law may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.



## **Computer Crime Act**

Section 16-16-20 of the Code of Laws of S.C. states that:

It is unlawful for a person to willfully, knowingly, maliciously, and without authorization or for an unauthorized purpose to:

- a. directly or indirectly access or cause to be accessed a computer (including iPad and Smartphone), computer system, or computer network for the purpose of:
  - i. devising or executing a scheme or artifice to defraud;
  - ii. obtaining money, property, or service, by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, promises; or
  - iii. committing any other crime.
- b. alter, damage, destroy, or modify a computer, computer system, computer network, computer software, computer program, or data contained in that computer, computer system, computer program, or computer network or introduce a computer contaminant into that computer, computer system, computer program, or computer network.

## **Internet Acceptable Use Agreement**

All users must sign an *Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)* agreement form. A private login and password will be assigned to each user. The user is responsible for any activity performed under that login and password; therefore, passwords must be kept private. Passwords should be changed each quarter.

All network use should be in support of education and be consistent with the school's educational objectives.

Staff members will be held accountable for violations of the Acceptable Use Policy agreement and understand that disciplinary action may be taken including dismissal.

This policy applies to all employees and students on the school's wireless Internet network, and those involved with information assets and information systems.

The user is expected to abide by the following network rules of etiquette:

- Students must be under teacher supervision when using online communications;
- Appropriate language must be used; (no swearing or use of vulgarities)
- Users must not harass, insult, bully, threaten, or attack others electronically;

- Sending, displaying, or viewing obscene or offensive materials is prohibited;
- Users may not monopolize the resources of the school's network by such things as running unapproved large programs and applications over the network during the day, sending massive amounts of email to other users, or using system resources for games;
- Playing/downloading non-educational games or programs is strictly prohibited;
- Using another user's password is prohibited;
- Users must not share their passwords with anyone;
- Users must comply with copyright laws; (including but not limited to software, written work, music, and other media)
- Damaging computer systems, computer networks, or school websites is strictly prohibited;
- Users must not upload a virus, Trojan horse, time bomb, or other harmful form of programming or vandalism;
- Users must not bypass or attempt to bypass any proxy settings on the network;
- Trespassing in another user's account (folder, network, or files) is prohibited, though directors may monitor email use at any time;
- Users must not use the network for commercial or any questionable purposes;
- Users (Teachers, Library Media Specialists, and other educators) are expected to select instructional materials and recommend research sources in print or electronic media. Educators will select and guide students on the use of instructional materials on the Internet;
- Staff must know which students do not have a signed AUP on file because that student may not share access with another student;
- Electronic mail and internet access are a privilege not a right for the express purpose of educational activities and school business. Do not use electronic mail or internet for instance, for private business or personal, non-related communications;
- Users may not send or attach documents containing pornographic, obscene, threatening, or sexually explicit material;
- Users must not create, send, or participate in chain E-mail;
- Users should notify the Technology Coordinator/designee of any violations of this policy/agreement;

- Teachers shall provide students with instruction about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking sites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response.
- All Internet sites visited will be logged and can be reviewed for suitability of Internet use to assure compliance with AUP and with state law.

## Cell Phone Policy

**Personal cell phones are not to be used to receive or make personal calls and texts during class or while students are being supervised.** This applies to directors when in meetings or conducting official school business. All ringers on cell phones should be turned off so that the education of the children is not interrupted. **Cell phones should not be brought to staff, IEP, Team, or other official school meetings** (public meetings such as Board and General PTO meetings exempted) **and should not be visible during school meetings.** Please do not use cell phones for typing or texting during meetings. Employees shall conduct personal phone calls/messages during their designated planning or break periods.

While driving a vehicle in the course of employment with the school, personnel are not to use cell phones, and/or other electronic devices under any circumstances where such use might create or appear to create a hazard to themselves, other persons, personal property, and/or real property. Such devices are to be used only when safety is not compromised and in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.

## Committees / Meetings

It is expected that each teacher be an active member of a school level committee sometime during the school year. A list of committees and their function will be available at the beginning of each school year.

## Copyright Law

The 1976 Federal Copyright Law, P.L. 94-553 makes it illegal to duplicate or scan copyrighted materials without permission except for certain exempt purposes. Unauthorized reproduction and/or use of copyrighted materials is illegal, unethical, and not permitted by the school. Violations of the copyright law may result in criminal or civil suits and/or suspension and/or dismissal from employment in the school. To protect staff members and the school against legal redress for alleged violation of the copyright laws, the person making the reproduction is responsible for determining that the action is within the law. When an individual is not certain, he/she should contact his/her Executive Director or supervisor in order to ascertain whether copying or scanning falls under

“permitted use.” If it does not, permission to reproduce materials must be obtained from copyright holders.

### **Delayed Opening/Early Dismissal**

Due to weather conditions, the school may call a Delayed Opening, an Early Dismissal, or Cancel school. A Delayed Opening or Cancellation will be announced on the local television and/or local radio stations. In the event that school will need to be dismissed early, parents will be contacted immediately to pick up their children.

Normally, the decision is not made until the early morning hours of the day in question. PACE will use the Remind App to contact employees. A two-hour delay means that staff reports exactly two hours after their regular scheduled report time. Students must report two hours after the tardy bell.

### **Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use Policy**

#### *Drug-Free Schools*

The school is committed to providing a drug and alcohol-free learning environment and workplace. Drug and alcohol abuse at school or in connection with school-sponsored activities on or off school grounds threatens the health and safety of our students and our employees and adversely affects the educational mission of the school. Disciplinary action including dismissal and referral to law enforcement will be taken as needed by the Executive Director or designee.

#### *Tobacco-Free Schools/Staff Smoking/No-Smoking Policy*

Tobacco use is prohibited always in all buildings and grounds. This prohibition is applicable to all employees, students, visitors, and those people providing services for which the school contracts.

Employees who violate the tobacco-use policy will receive a written reprimand on the first offense, a one-day suspension with loss of pay on the second offense, a five-day suspension with loss of pay on the third offense and will be dismissed for insubordination on the fourth offense. Visitors will receive a warning on the first offense. If a visitor refuses to comply after being warned, he or she will be required to leave the property and forfeit any fee charged for admission. Failure to leave school buildings and grounds may result in prosecution for disorderly conduct.

### **Duty Assignments**

The Executive Director or designee may assign duties to any employee in addition to those specified in job descriptions. Other duties as assigned by the Executive Director or designee may include, but are not limited to:

- Supervision of students during non-academic times including but not limited to lunchtime and recess
- classroom housekeeping duties such as turning out lights and other electric devices, closing windows, locking doors, maintaining neat and attractive classrooms, and the like
- duty at extracurricular activities
- parking lot supervision
- other duties assigned by the Executive Director.

The Executive Director or designee will prepare a schedule of these duty assignments. A copy of the schedule will be available, and orientation will be provided. Duties may be changed as needed to meet the needs of the school.

***\*\*If you are absent on a day that you would have duty and another teacher has to fulfill your duty assignment, you will make-up your duty assignment with the teacher who did your duty assignment. If you know in advance of your absence, you must make prior arrangements for covering your duty assignment with a substitute or another teacher. You must send an email to your replacement and to Geri McLeod to inform them of the change. You may switch duty assignments to cover for your absence. When calling in an absence, you must inform the supervisor of duty assignments.***

### **Earbuds/Headphones**

Employees shall not have earbuds in or headphones on during instructional time or when in direct supervision of students.

### **Employee Dress Code & Professionalism Policy**

It is the responsibility of all employees to serve as role models for students and present a positive, professional image in attitude, language, behavior, grooming, and dress. Appropriate dress is a rational means of promoting respect for authority, traditional values, and discipline.

Employees who are meeting with parents and other guests in the schools, or who are in continual contact with students, shall present themselves during the instructional day in accordance with the following guidelines and other standards deemed appropriate by the Administrative team:

- Clothing cannot be overly tight or low cut. Cannot reveal undergarments, cleavage, or midriffs.
- Clothing must cover the waist, shoulders and back with no skin showing between the top garment and bottom garment.

- Sleeveless attire cannot reveal undergarments and must come to the end of the shoulder (tank tops prohibited).
- Dresses, skirts, or shorts must be no shorter than **4 inches above the kneecap** and must not be excessively tight.
- Leggings must be accompanied by a dress or top that completely covers the Employee's bottom.
- Jeans without holes are permitted.
- Professional shoes, sandals, and tennis shoes permitted.

#### Unacceptable attire

- Frayed, torn and/or extremely faded pants (including holes in jeans)
- Excessively form fitting clothing
- Exercise clothing (sweat suits/jogging suits, except for physical educator instructors)
- Halter-tops/Tank Tops
- Yoga Pants or other form-fitting athletic wear
- Sweatpants or Pajama pants, unless being worn for a specific school spirit day
- Sheer clothing
- Spaghetti straps
- Hats, bandanas, or head coverings, unless being worn for a specific school spirit day or for religious purposes
- Bedroom shoes/slippers, flip flops, classic crocs, or athletic slides unless being worn for a specific school spirit day
- Tattoos or any images that display inappropriate language or images (must be covered if inappropriate)
- Clothing that depicts offensive, inappropriate, or illegal language or images (weapons, drugs, discrimination, etc.)

The enforcement of the prescribed dress code will be the responsibility of the Executive Director or designee. Unprofessional dress or conduct may subject the employee to disciplinary actions consistent with state law, federal law and may include dismissal of employment.

## **Employee Parking**

All school employees must park in employee-designated spaces.

## **Employee Vehicle Safety**

The school is not liable for vandalism, theft, or any damage to cars that not authorized to park on the premises or while parked on school property after school hours.

## **Personal Property**

The school is not responsible for the loss of any personal property.

## **Personnel Files**

Personnel records and information will be maintained for each employee. Personnel folders may include evaluation reports made by the administration, commendations for or complaints against the employee by the administration, written suggestions for corrections and improvements made by the administration, teaching credentials, transcripts, pre-employment references, application records, a SLED check, TB test results, and other records kept about an employee. Employees will be made aware of any items being placed in the employee's file and will be given the opportunity to sign stating that they received such feedback. Any employee wishing to review their file must make the request in writing to the Executive Director or Chief Business Officer and must allow up to 24 hours prior to reviewing the file. Files may not be removed from the administrative area.

## **Personnel Data Changes**

Staff should inform administration of any changes to address, phone number, or name. This information will be updated in PowerSchool and will be shared with the Finance Office for payroll purposes.

## **Political Activities**

Employees shall not promote, organize, or engage in political activities while performing their duties or during the workday. Promoting or engaging in political activities shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Encouraging students to adopt or support a particular political position, party, or candidate; or
- Using school property, email, communication apps, or other materials to advance the support of a particular political position, party, or candidate.

## Responsibilities, Ethics and Conflict of Interest

Employees have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with, and abide by, federal and state laws, as well as regulations designed to implement these laws, as these affect their work. Employees must know, understand, and follow school policies and rules. Ignorance of the provisions of school policies and rules will not be acceptable as a defense in the event of an infraction. The school expects all employees to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern and professional behavior.

Essential to the success of ongoing school operations are the following specific responsibilities, which the school requires of all personnel:

- 1) Professional behavior including, but not limited to, adherence to:
  - a. community standards of honesty, integrity, and morality;
  - b. the school's organizational culture that:
    - i. treats people, including parents, citizens and staff, with respect, dignity and courtesy, (2) values individual differences of opinion, (3) reasonably includes people in decisions that affect them, (4) requires appropriate open and honest communications in written and interpersonal interactions, and (5) requires an open, responsive, and welcoming environment;
- 2) Support of, enforcement of, and adherence to federal laws and regulations, state laws and regulations, and district and school policies, rules, and procedures;
- 3) Faithfulness and promptness in attendance at work;
- 4) Employees are expected to adhere to time schedules as established by the Administration.
- 5) Care and protection of school property;
- 6) Concern and attention toward personal and the Board's legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of students, including the need to ensure that students are supervised in all areas of the school at all times;
- 7) Annually viewing the school's required Safe Schools training courses by the deadline.



- a. Failure to complete Safety training by the specified date may result in the delay of the next paycheck until training is completed.
- 9) Inspecting, verifying, and assuming responsibility for, the content of documents signed by the employee – documents including, but not limited to, information concerning: taxes, direct deposits, insurance, savings plans, flexible spending accounts, and student grades;
- 10) Adherence to the school’s guidelines set forth in the school’s program to prevent workplace injuries caused by, but not limited to, slips, trips, and falls.

The personal life of an employee, including the employee’s personal use of non-school issued electronic equipment outside of working hours (such as through social networking sites and personal portrayal on the Internet), will be the concern of and warrant the attention of the school if it impairs the employee’s ability to effectively perform his/her job responsibilities or if it violates local, state, or federal law or contractual agreements or is detrimental to the school’s reputation, harmony or to school personnel. Unprofessional conduct or unlawful behavior may subject the employee to disciplinary actions consistent with state and federal laws and may include termination of employment.

## **Sexual Discrimination and Harassment**

### **PACE Academy Sexual Harassment of Employees**

Sexual harassment of employees of PACE Academy is prohibited. All employees, including supervisory level employees and third parties associated with schools, must avoid any action or conduct, which could be viewed as sexual harassment. Teachers and school directors are expected to use judgment and common sense, which are important elements of a proper response to an allegation of sexual harassment or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either expressly or impliedly a condition of employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for any employment decisions affecting the individual; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the employee’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Any employee who believes he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment is encouraged to file a complaint in accordance with the School’s procedures. All allegations will be investigated promptly and confidentially. Employees who file a

complaint of sexual harassment will not be subject to retaliation or reprisal in any form. An employee, including a supervisory level employee or a third party associated with the School, who is found to have engaged in sexual harassment or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature will be subject to appropriate action, up to and including termination of employment in the case of an employee, and all other appropriate steps will be taken to correct or rectify the situation.

*Legal reference. Federal. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Revised: 7-1-04.*

The following procedures are intended to:

1. Discourage employees and third parties associated with schools from subjecting employees of the School to sexual harassment;
2. Promote a harassment-free work environment;
3. Effectively and appropriately address all sexual harassment found to have occurred or be occurring;
4. Establish ongoing education and awareness of the problem of sexual harassment; and
5. Provide information about how to report allegations of sexual harassment.

Types of behavior, which constitute sexual harassment Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which:

1. Is made an employment condition, so that submission to such conduct is a term or condition of employment;
2. Has an employment consequence, so that submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting an individual employee; or
3. Is an offensive job interference, so that such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to: verbal harassment, including epithets, sexually offensive comments or slurs; physical harassment; physical interference with movement or work; or visual harassment, such as sexually offensive cartoons, drawings, or posters. Sexual harassment is prohibited against members of the same sex, as well as against members of the opposite sex.

Behavior prohibited of directors/supervisors:

1. No director or supervisor may condition any offer of employment, employee benefit, or continued employment on an employee's acquiescence to any of the sexual behavior defined above.
2. No director or supervisor may retaliate against any employee because that employee has opposed a practice prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the South Carolina Human Affairs Law, or has filed a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing conducted by an authorized agency.
3. No director or supervisor shall cause or tolerate the creation of a sexually hostile or offensive work environment by any subordinate employee or third party associated with schools who engages in sexual harassment.
4. No director or supervisor shall destroy evidence relevant to an investigation of sexual harassment.

Behavior prohibited of all employees:

1. No director, supervisor, or any other employee of the School and/or third party associated with the school shall create a sexually hostile or offensive work environment for any employee by engaging in any sexual harassment.
2. No director, supervisor, or any other employee of the School and/or third party associated with the school shall assist any individual in doing any act which constitutes sexual harassment against any employee.

Preventive action periodically, the School shall ensure that:

1. The policy on sexual harassment of employees and these procedures are fully referenced in the Staff Handbook.
2. All employees are informed about the nature of sexual harassment, the procedures for registering a complaint, and the possible redress which is available.
3. Directors and/or designated sexual harassment contact persons are informed of the School's sexual harassment procedures and understand how to implement them. For example, they should be made aware of the kinds of acts that constitute sexual harassment, the School's commitment to eliminating and avoiding sexual harassment in the school, the penalties for engaging in harassment, the procedures for reporting incidents of sexual harassment, and the procedures for conducting a sexual harassment investigation.
4. The Executive Director makes available information from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission about

filing claims of sexual harassment with these entities. The Executive Director will assign a staff member to serve as the school's Title IX Coordinator. His or her name, address, and business telephone number shall be disseminated throughout the School and referenced in employee handbooks.

Reporting and response procedures:

1. Any employee who feels that he or she has been the object of sexual harassment is encouraged to file a complaint with his or her immediate supervisor or Executive Director except for situations covered in item "2" immediately below. Complaint forms which may be used to file a complaint may be obtained from the Title IX Coordinator.
2. Under no circumstances shall an employee be required to first report allegations of harassment to his or her immediate supervisor if that person is the individual who is accused of the harassment. In such cases, the employee shall file the complaint with the Executive Director or the Chair of the Grievance Committee.
3. Directors/supervisors shall initiate an investigation of any incident of alleged sexual harassment reported to them or observed by them. The School shall be responsible for ensuring that reasonable efforts are made to prevent public disclosure of the names of all parties involved in the sexual harassment allegation, except to the extent necessary to carry out an investigation and comply with statutory obligations.
4. Directors/supervisors shall report the general results of any investigation of sexual harassment, including corrective or disciplinary action taken, to the Title IX Coordinator and/or the Executive Director. The employee who brought the sexual harassment allegation shall be informed that appropriate actions were taken and shall be advised as to how to report any subsequent problems.
5. If an employee is determined to have sexually harassed another employee, the director/supervisor shall take whatever disciplinary action he/she determines is warranted, up to and including termination of employment.
6. Directors/supervisors shall follow up periodically on any incident of sexual harassment they were involved in investigating to determine whether the employee has been subjected to any further sexual harassment since the corrective action was taken.
7. No director/supervisor shall retaliate in any way against an employee who has provided information as a witness to or victim of an incident of sexual harassment.

Additional obligations of employees:

1. Employees shall report to their immediate supervisor any conduct on the part of non-employees, such as sales representatives or service vendors, which is believed to constitute sexual harassment.
2. Employees shall cooperate with and maintain the confidentiality of any investigation of alleged acts of sexual harassment conducted by the School or by an appropriate state or federal agency. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action against the individual who failed to cooperate or who violated the confidentiality of the matter.
3. No employee shall take any action to discourage any other employee from reporting alleged sexual harassment. However, any person who intentionally provides false information in connection with a report or investigation of sexual harassment may be subject to disciplinary action.
4. No employee shall retaliate in any way against another employee who has provided information regarding an incident of sexual harassment.

### **Staff Concerns/Complaints/Grievances**

PACE Academy encourages all employees to discuss their concerns or complaints associated with their employment informally with their supervisor. Often, the cause of a problem or concern is merely a misunderstanding among the individuals involved. Under normal circumstances, an employee should utilize the grievance procedure only after reasonable informal efforts have failed to produce a satisfactory result. If after reasonable and appropriate informal efforts have failed or for good reasons are inappropriate, an employee feels that a “formal” mechanism for raising his/her concern or problem is needed, he/she should follow the policy. Employees who utilize the grievance procedures have the right to do so with complete freedom from reprisal. With respect to formal grievances, the Board of Directors recognizes the need to provide an orderly means for the efficient and expeditious resolution of disputes concerning the application of any of the provisions of the School’s policies, rules, regulations and/or unsafe or unhealthy working conditions as they affect the activity of employees. Ideally, employees should secure an equitable solution of grievances at the lowest administrative level possible.

### **PACE Academy Complaints and Grievances Policy**

The Board of Directors for PACE Academy encourages employees to act to resolve concerns that may arise in the course of employment through the grievance procedure outlined herein. Employees should review this grievance procedure thoroughly, including the timelines for exercising grievances and the officials to whom grievances must be directed.

PACE's grievance process may be used by a PACE's employee as follows:

1. To address concerns pertaining to the aggrieved employee's employment arrangements.
2. To address an alleged violation of applicable law or regulations that directly affects the aggrieved employee.
3. To address an alleged violation of PACE's Board policy that directly affects the aggrieved employee.
4. To address an alleged violation of PACE's charter compliance that directly affects the aggrieved employee.
5. To address alleged discrimination or harassment against the aggrieved employee.

An aggrieved employee has the right to be represented by legal counsel at the employee's own expense.

If an aggrieved employee fails to meet any of the timelines set forth herein, the employee's grievance may be deemed waived by PACE's official(s) charged with investigating and deciding the grievance.

PACE's official(s) charged with investigating and deciding grievances are entitled to extend the timelines herein for investigating and issuing decisions if necessary to conduct a thorough and complete investigation into a grievance or appeal.

### **Step One: Informal Discussion**

Subject to the following paragraph, the aggrieved employee must first initiate an informal discussion with the other person(s) involved in the incident giving rise to the grievance within ten (10) workdays of the incident or when the aggrieved employee learned of the incident for the purpose of attempting to resolve the grievance.

If the grievance includes allegations of discrimination or harassment against the aggrieved employee, the aggrieved employee is not required to initiate an informal discussion with the person(s) allegedly discriminating against or harassing the aggrieved employee, and the aggrieved employee may proceed immediately to Step Two.

### **Step Two: Submit a Written Grievance**

If the informal discussion fails to resolve the aggrieved employee's concerns, the aggrieved employee has ten (10) workdays after the informal discussion to submit a written Grievance Form to the aggrieved employee's direct supervisor. If the grievance includes allegations of discrimination or harassment, the aggrieved employee shall submit a written Grievance Form within ten (10) work days of the incident or when the aggrieved employee learned of the incident to the person closest up the chain of

command who is a supervisor to both the aggrieved employee and the employee(s) who allegedly engaged in the discrimination or harassment, or to the Board pursuant to Step Four if such allegations are against the Executive Director.

The aggrieved employee should include in the Grievance Form a description of the grievance, the actions already taken by the aggrieved employee to attempt to resolve the grievance, and the relief requested. A Grievance Form that does not contain such information will be deemed incomplete and returned to the aggrieved employee to complete within the required timeline. Submission of an incomplete Grievance Form does not extend the required timeline. Only the issues set forth in the written Grievance Form shall be considered thereafter.

Upon receipt of a Grievance Form, the supervisor shall schedule a conference with the aggrieved employee and any other individual(s) deemed necessary by the supervisor within fifteen (15) workdays after receiving the Grievance Form. The supervisor shall issue a written decision to the aggrieved employee within ten (10) workdays of the conclusion of the conference(s).

### **Step Three: Appeal to the Executive Director**

If the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with supervisor's written decision, the aggrieved employee may submit a written appeal to the Executive Director within ten (10) work days of receiving the supervisor's written decision. The written appeal must include a copy of the original Grievance Form, a copy of the supervisor's written decision, and a written description of why the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the supervisor's written decision. An appeal that does not contain such information will be deemed incomplete and returned to the aggrieved employee to complete within the required timeline. Submission of an incomplete appeal does not extend the required timeline.

Upon receipt of a written appeal, the Executive Director may, in the Executive Director's discretion, schedule a conference with the aggrieved employee and any other individual(s) deemed necessary by the Executive Director within fifteen (15) work days after receiving the written appeal. The Executive Director shall issue a written decision to the aggrieved employee within ten (10) work days of the conclusion of the conference(s), or in the event no conferences are scheduled, within fifteen (15) work days of receiving the written appeal.

If the Executive Director issued the written decision in Step Two, the aggrieved employee shall skip Step Three and proceed to Step Four.

#### **Step Four: Final Appeal to PACE's Board**

If the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the Management Consultant written decision, the aggrieved employee may submit a written appeal to the PACE Board of Directors within ten (10) workdays of receiving the Executive Director's written decision, which can be accomplished by submitting the written appeal to the PACE Board Chair. The written appeal must include a copy of the original written Grievance Form, a copy of the supervisor's written decision, a copy of the Executive Director's written decision, and the written descriptions of why the aggrieved employee was not satisfied with the supervisor's and Executive Director's written decisions. An appeal that does not contain such information will be deemed incomplete and returned to the aggrieved employee to complete within the required timeline. Submission of an incomplete appeal does not extend the required timeline.

Within thirty (30) days of receipt of a written appeal, the PACE Board of Directors will schedule a hearing date for the appeal and provide the aggrieved employee with notice of the hearing date and the procedures for the hearing. After the hearing, the Board will issue a written decision within ten (10) business days, which will be final and binding. The PACE Board of Directors is entitled to extend these timelines if necessary, for the purpose of conducting a thorough and complete investigation.

Legal Reference(s): S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended: Section 59-4-60(F)(13) – Charter School Grievance Procedure

#### **Substance Abuse**

No employee will unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess or be under the influence any illegal or non-prescribed drugs on or in the workplace. "Drug" means any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, or any other controlled substance that is not prescribed to the person.

"Workplace" means the site for the performance of work. That includes any school building or any school premises or any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities. It also includes off-school property during any school-sponsored or school-approved activity, event or function such as a field trip or athletic event where students are under the jurisdiction of the school or where work on a federal grant is performed.

As a condition of employment, each employee will notify Administration of his/her conviction of any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace as defined above. The employee must notify the Administration no later than five days after such conviction.



An employee who violates the terms of this rule will be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, administrative leave, suspension, or termination.

The Executive Director will take such action in accordance with these regulations as well as applicable state and federal laws.

## **Weapons**

Carrying, bringing, using, or possessing any weapon, dangerous instrument, or device that may threaten the health and safety of others, including hunting knives, in any school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle, or at any school-sponsored activity is prohibited. Except for authorized law enforcement officials, carrying concealed weapons is prohibited on school property. Staff members who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

Employees who know or believe that this policy has been violated must promptly make a report by telephone or otherwise to the local police department and/or sheriff department.

## **Section 4: Performance**

### **Administrative Leave**

Administrative leave is a general term for temporary removal from a job assignment. The Administration may place an employee on administrative leave when allegations of misconduct have been made against him or her. The school may remove the employee from the situation while investigating the allegations. When the allegations are inflammatory or become public knowledge, administrative leave can also be beneficial for the employee. An employee on administrative leave may continue to receive pay and benefits during the leave at the discretion of the Administration. During this time, the employee should not discuss the matter with any other staff member and should refrain from contact with any other parties engaged in the matter.

The school may place an employee on administrative leave pending the resolution of a criminal case, even when the case is not directly school related but when the case may cause disruption to the school environment. Placing an employee on administrative leave for investigative purposes is not a disciplinary action.

### **Evaluation of Classified Staff**

Supervisors are expected to evaluate the performance of classified employees at least annually (or on the annual anniversary of their date of hire) in an effort to improve the quality of work performance. The employee's Executive Director,

director, immediate supervisor, or designee has the responsibility for evaluating employees under his/her supervision. The employee will receive a signed copy of the evaluation report.

If an employee is assigned a rating of needs improvement on his or her performance expectations, a performance improvement plan may be developed that includes clear steps and performance targets the employee must achieve in order to continue employment.

### **Misconduct in the Workplace**

Disciplinary measures, or termination as the circumstances warrant, may be applied for misconduct in the workplace. Corrective discipline may be initiated at the most appropriate level, based on each case and its severity. When applying corrective discipline, action may be taken as the supervisor deems appropriate from one or more measures that include, but are not limited to:

1. *coaching session* – a scheduled conference with an employee to reach agreement regarding how to correct a problem and/or improper performance;
2. *oral reprimand* – may be issued to an employee for misconduct by the director or immediate supervisor. An oral reprimand serves as notice to the employee that the specific conduct in question is considered undesirable, shall be corrected, and shall not reoccur in the future.
3. *written reprimand* – may be issued subsequent to any oral warning for misconduct or may serve as notice to the employee that he/she has breached his/her designated responsibility. The written reprimand shall contain facts of the incident/situation, specific directives for correction, remediation techniques if needed, the date of reprimand, and the supervisor's signature. A copy of the written reprimand shall be provided to the employee. The original reprimand shall be placed in the employee's personnel file as a permanent record of the misconduct and discipline. The employee has the right to attach his/her written rebuttal to the documentation.
4. *administrative leave with pay, authorized by the Executive Director or designee.*
5. *administrative suspension/leave without pay.*
6. *demotion.*
7. *termination of employment.*

In order to maintain a good working environment, all employees are expected to conform to reasonable standards of performance and conduct. When an employee demonstrates an inability to maintain these standards, the Executive Director or supervisor will take necessary corrective action. This action in all cases is directed toward resolving personal and work-related problems which interfere with the employee's effectiveness. When all reasonable efforts to correct employee deficiencies are exhausted, it is necessary that he/she be terminated.

Reasons for termination include, but are not limited to, unsatisfactory evaluations, uncorrected notices of performance deficiencies, or serious offenses that justify immediate dismissal.

Examples of offenses warranting immediate dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) adjudication at the trial court level for any felony which is manifestly inconsistent with the safe and efficient operation of the school. This includes but is not limited to conviction of any felony, any crime involving moral turpitude, any crime disrupting the educational process or workplace or other adverse adjudication.
- b) fighting, threatening, or attempting to do bodily injury to anyone. Bodily injury means physical pain, illness, or any impairment of physical condition.
- c) carrying weapons. A weapon is any object that could cause injury to another person and is not required to be in the possession of that employee in the normal course of his/her job.
- d) stealing or misappropriation of property of employees;
- e) malicious mischief, abuse, misuse, or deliberate destruction or damaging of property, tools, equipment of other employees
- f) altering or tampering with timecards, sign in/out rosters, or other documents relative to attendance. This also includes time padding, which entails the expanding or increasing of time needlessly to complete an assigned task.
- g) drinking alcoholic beverages on the job; or the possession of or introduction of any alcoholic beverage on school property or at school-sponsored events at any time, which also includes reporting to work while under the influence of alcohol or testing positive for alcohol.
- h) using illegal or non-prescribed narcotics, and/or possessing or transmitting on school premises or at school-related events, drugs or substances capable of modifying mood and/or behavior other than prescription medications. This includes the habitual use of addictive drugs, hallucinogens, alcoholic beverages, or controlled substances. Any

employee testing positive for illegal drugs while on school property or work time will be terminated.

- i) disorderly, disruptive, or immoral conduct.
- j) falsification of personnel, insurance, or other official PACE Academy records, or making false statements when applying for employment;
- k) falsifying, concealing information, or refusing to give testimony concerning accidents and/or incidents which are being investigated;
- l) possessing, displaying or using pornographic, vulgar, obscene or suggestive material on school property;
- m) leaving work without authorization;
- n) excessive absences or tardiness;
- o) no show/no call for work;
- p) unsatisfactory performance of assigned duties;
- q) any violations of the school's Work Agreement; and,
- r) for good cause as determined by the Executive Director or designee.

## **Section 5: Employee Attendance**

### **Absence from Work**

Regular and reliable attendance is an essential job function. All employees are expected to report to work on time on a regular basis.

Employees who will be late arriving to work are required to contact the Chief Business Officer (Geri McLeod- **803-261-4589**) and the ACE Coordinator (Katie Connell- **803-427-2364**) prior to the beginning work time.

If an Employee is scheduled to be out, the Employee must complete a leave notification in the EZ School Application. (Teachers must have complete lesson plans ready and available for the substitute.) If the Employee is to be out unexpectedly, the Employee must notify the Chief Business Officer via direct phone call or text and must have emergency sub-plans on file in the school so that uninterrupted instructional time can continue. Within 24 hours upon return to work of an unexpected absence, the Employee must complete the leave notification in EZSchoolapps.com.

### **Half-Day/Early Release Day**

Students will be dismissed every Wednesday by 12:00 pm. This will allow teachers to participate in professional development and analyze student data. Staff will meet at 1:15pm each Wednesday. All staff are expected to remain at work until the end of their contracted day (3:45pm for most employees).

Several other early dismissal days are scheduled throughout the school year. These days will follow the same schedule as Wednesday dismissals.

### **Hours of Duty**

Employees shall be prompt in attendance and shall remain on duty the entire school day.

Teachers are required to be at their classroom door and on duty during established work hours which shall be from 7:45 AM to 3:45 PM or as specified by the Executive Director.

Teaching Assistants'/Para-Professionals' hours are from 8:00 AM to 3:45 PM. TAs/Paras shall arrive to work early enough to be at their designated ACE room by 8:00 AM.

Hourly employees work their assigned hours.

Additionally, the school has an expectation that staff members will be available to attend reasonable school-related activities that may occur outside the established workday such as collaborative planning sessions, staff/faculty meetings, in-service meetings, school related sponsorships, PTO meetings and events, and the like. Teachers are categorized as learned professional employees and are therefore exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regarding overtime or compensatory time for working beyond 40 hours per week.

Employees are not allowed to leave their job assignment during duty hours without the expressed permission of their immediate supervisor and signing out appropriately in the front office.

### **Professional Development and Teacher Workdays**

In-service day work hours are 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM, unless otherwise notified. Please use each day productively: prepare instructional plans, prepare bulletin boards and displays, finalize grades, review files, attend professional training, etc.

Every Wednesday afternoon from 1:15 PM - 3:45 PM is reserved for staff professional development and/or student data analysis. Teachers and TAs are expected to attend every Wednesday afternoon.

## **Section 6: Wage and Salary Policies**

### **Direct Deposit**

All staff will be paid through Direct Deposit.

### **Payroll Procedures/Schedule**

The business office issues all paychecks for regular staff members, substitutes, and part-time workers on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of each month according to the PACE Academy pay schedule.

## Salary Information

The assignment of salaries is guided by salary scales for teachers and support staff, but the Executive Director is provided limited discretion based on school needs. All salary employees are paid a yearly salary for days worked in a given year divided into 24 equal payments. Paychecks are issued twice per month. All employees are required to use direct deposit of payments.

**Please note:** It is important that employees retain their paycheck stubs in a safe and secure location. They may need to refer to them throughout the year for insurance deductions, refinance purposes, tax audits, etc.

## Salary Deductions

*Taxes:* Taxes are determined by Federal and State income tax charts.

*Flexible Benefits Plans (Money Plus):* This plan allows an employee to have health insurance, dental insurance, dependent day care expenses, and out-of-pocket medical expenses free from FICA, federal, and state taxes. However, once an employee is enrolled in this plan, insurance coverage cannot be changed unless there is a change in family status. Employees who enroll in this plan are locked into the plan for up to two years. If an employee has special status allowing exemption from certain state and/or federal taxes, it is the responsibility of the employee to provide the necessary IRS exemption forms two weeks prior to the first pay period.

*Insurance:* Health insurance, dental insurance, vision plan insurance, disability insurance, life insurance, and long-term care insurance are offered to every full-time employee. A monthly premium for plans chosen by the employee will be deducted.

*Social Security (FICA):* Deductions for Social Security occur at the accepted rate.

*Withholding Tax (Federal and State):* If you have experienced changes in your tax exemption status, you should file a new exemption certificate (W-4 form). Responsibility for accuracy of exemption certificate lies with the employee. Forms are available from the front office. If an employee has special status allowing exemption from certain state and/or federal taxes, it is the responsibility of the employee to provide the necessary IRS exemption forms two weeks prior to the first pay period.

*FICAHI (Medicare Tax):* A deduction of 1.45 percent of the gross monthly salary will be made.

## **Section 7: Benefits**

### **Bereavement Leave**

Five days of leave are granted per occurrence for bereavement in the immediate family. Three of the five days **will not** come from the employee's leave allocation. Two days may be taken from the employee's leave allocation.

Up to three days of leave can be taken per occurrence for bereavement of an extended family member. These days **will come** from leave allocation. If the employee does not maintain a sufficient leave balance, the employee will be docked pay.

For the purposes of this policy, immediate family is defined as the following:

- spouse
- son, son-in-law, step-son
- daughter, daughter-in-law, step-daughter
- mother, mother-in-law, step-mother or guardian/in loco parentis
- father, father-in-law, step-father or guardian/in loco parentis
- brother, step-brother, brother-in-law
- sister, step-sister, sister-in-law
- grandparents, step-grandparents, grandchildren, step-grandchildren
- ward or other relative living in the household at the time of illness/death

For the purposes of this policy, extended family is defined as the following: aunt, uncle, cousin, niece, or nephew.

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

The board will provide leave to eligible employees consistent with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA). Eligible employees are entitled to up to 12 work weeks of unpaid family and medical leave in any 12-month period. The school will continue to pay the school's share of the employee's health benefits during the leave. In addition, the school will restore the employee to the employee's original job or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits and other terms of employment after the termination of the leave in accordance with board policy. Maternity leave is included in FMLA.

In complying with the FMLA, the school will adhere to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as other applicable federal and state laws.

## Holidays

Holidays are indicated on the annual school calendar.

## Insurance Programs

Proviso 1.61 calls for permanent part-time employees to qualify for state health/dental insurance. Eligible employees must work at least 15 hours per week but less than 30 hours per week and be included on the Professional Certified Staff (PCS) in position codes 3-11, 17, 18, 36-40 and 85. Below are insurance programs that are offered by the state. Initial enrollment must be made within 31 days of hire.

*Health Insurance:* The State of South Carolina has made available a comprehensive health insurance plan for its eligible employees, retirees, and their dependents. Claims made under this plan are funded by employer and employee contributions and administered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Carolina. The employer pays the larger portion of the premium and the employee pays a premium for himself/herself. The employee pays the entire portion for his/her dependent(s). Rate sheets are available from the Benefits Administrator. Coverage will begin the first day of the calendar month coinciding with or following the date of employment.

To enroll in the State Health Plan as a late entrant, employees must enroll within 31 days of a special eligibility situation or do so during an Open Enrollment period.

Employees can choose a plan offered through a state group policy processed by Blue Cross Blue Shield or HMO's. Coverage for a spouse or dependent(s) can be purchased by the employee. Employees new to the school must complete insurance forms within 31 days of employment if they want insurance for themselves, their spouse, or dependents. If an employee begins work on the first working day of the month, health coverage goes into effect on that day. If an employee begins work on any other day after the first working day of the month, health coverage goes into effect on the first day of the following month, provided the employee is actively at work on the effective date of coverage. Questions about claims through the State Health Plan should be directed to 1-800-868-2520.

Employees on leave of absence without pay (i.e., FMLA leave) must pay their monthly premium. In some cases, the state portion will also have to be paid.

*Special Note:* Employees who plan to resign or retire should contact the Benefits Administrator to find out the termination date(s) of their insurance benefits. Any



insurance benefits received during FMLA leave must be repaid to the school if the employee chooses not to return to work following the leave.

Changes in coverage, (to add or drop coverage) may be made within 31 days of a status change. A status change may be birth, adoption, legal custody, marriage, legal separation, divorce, death, or job change.

*State Dental Plan:* Employees are covered under a state group policy. Coverage for full-time employees is included under the basic state benefits plan. Employees may purchase insurance on their spouse and dependents for an additional cost paid by the employee.

*Dental Plus:* Dental Plus is an additional dental program that provides a higher level of coverage for dental services covered under the State Dental Plan. Dental Plus insurance is paid by the employee.

*State Vision Plan:* The State Vision plan, provided through EyeMed Vision Care, is available to eligible active employees, retirees, survivors, permanent, part-time teachers and COBRA subscribers and their covered dependents. Subscribers pay the premium without an employer contribution.

*Disability:* Insurance is available for employees to purchase for protection against long-term disabilities.

*Life:* Each employee covered under the state group insurance program or HMO is provided \$3,000 worth of life insurance at no cost. Employees can purchase life insurance on their spouse and dependent children.

*Optional Life:* The state of South Carolina offers additional life insurance benefits for all eligible employees. "Optional Life" insurance is paid by the employee.

*Worker's Compensation:* All employees who are injured on the job are covered by Worker's Compensation. The school pays the annual premium with no cost to employees. When employees are injured on the job, incidents should be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor.

*Flex Day:* At the discretion of the Executive Director, a specified flex day(s) may replace a teacher workday(s) during the school year.

*Overtime:* Overtime is not allowed unless approved by the Executive Director in writing, prior to the hours being worked. If prior written approval was not obtained by the Executive Director, the employee will not get paid. Teachers are categorized as learned professional employees and are therefore exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regarding overtime or compensatory time for working beyond 40 hours per week.

## **Jury Duty**

The school will grant an employee leave without loss of pay when he/she is summoned for jury duty or subpoenaed or appearing in court in cases involving school business. Whenever a prospective juror is dismissed before the end of the working day, he/she will return to his/her official duties. South Carolina law provides that teachers, certified personnel at the building level or bus drivers may request and be released from jury duty during the school year. An employee must submit to the Executive Director an official statement from the court for days served on jury duty.

## Leave

Personal Time Off (PTO) for full-time employees (180-190 day employees) is accrued at a rate of 1 day per month of full-time employment (up to 12 days per calendar year, depending on when the Employee starts). Personal Time Off (PTO) for half-time employees (minimum 20 hours per week) is accrued at a rate of .5 day per month of full-time employment (up to 6 days per calendar year, depending on when the Employee starts). If an employee leaves the school and has used more days than he/she has earned, the salary paid for unearned leave will be deducted from the employee's last paycheck.

PTO days may be taken in whole or half-day increments (AM - 7:45-11:45 or PM - 11:30-3:30). Employees must use the approved list of substitutes and attempt to secure a substitute for planned PTO days. If an emergency arises and you must take an unplanned PTO day (i.e., unexpected sickness of you or a child), please notify the Chief Business Officer immediately.

**Employees are prohibited from taking PTO days during the first five or last five days of the school year, before and after a holiday, except upon written approval by their supervisor.** Requests for absences before or after a holiday must be submitted in writing and in enough time to allow for review and response (5 business days minimum). Employees are prohibited from taking more than 3 consecutive days off unless approved by the Executive Director ahead of time. If an unforeseen illness occurs, the employee shall communicate with the Executive Director immediately.

Employees may roll over unused PTO days each school year, not to exceed 50 days total. Upon leaving PACE Academy, employees will be paid for any accrued PTO days, up to 50 days total, at a daily rate of \$65. Any days accrued over 50 total days will be paid out at a rate of \$65 per day.

Upon returning from an absence, employees must complete documentation on [ezschoolapps.com](https://ezschoolapps.com).

Failure to comply with personal business leave provisions could result in the employee having payroll reductions (leave without pay) for an unauthorized absence.

New employees transferring from another South Carolina school district or state agency may transfer no more than 5 days from their former employer to PACE Academy.

## **Military Leave**

Employees may take military leave without loss of pay, seniority or efficiency rating for one or more periods not exceeding a total of 15 workdays in one year. Saturdays, Sundays and state holidays may not be included in this 15 day unless the Saturday, Sunday or district holiday is a regularly scheduled workday for the employee.

This leave may be taken when the employee is engaged in training or other duties ordered by the governor, the Department of Defense, the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, the Department of the Treasury, or any other department or agency of the government of the United States having authority to issue lawful orders requiring military service. This leave applies to employees who are either enlisted or commissioned member of the South Carolina National Guard, the United State Army Reserve, the United States Air Force Reserve, the United States Naval Reserve, the United States Marine Corps Reserve or the United States Coast Guard Reserve. The school Executive Director must receive a copy of the orders.

In the event an employee is called upon to serve during an emergency by the President of the United States or the governor of South Carolina, he/she will be entitled to such leave of absence for a period not exceeding 30 additional days. Under USERRA (Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act), upon return the employee has the right to be reemployed in their civilian job and to benefits they would have attained if they had not been absent due to military service or, in some cases, a comparable job. The employee has the right to elect to continue their existing employer-based health plan coverage for themselves and their dependents for up to 24 months while in the military or to be reinstated in the employer's health plan when they are reemployed, generally without any waiting periods or exclusions.

The board expects employees to request their training for a period when school is not in session. The board must approve a military leave of absence.

An employee seeking leave for annual active-duty training must forward a written request and a copy of his/her last orders, including the appropriate verifying data, to the Executive Director no later than 30 days prior to the pre-arranged military activity or as soon as the orders are received, whichever is less. The school will grant all military leave in compliance with the law.

## **Professional Development**

PACE Academy believes that it is desirable to provide professional leave in order to attract and retain faculty who will continue to grow professionally and enhance their service to PACE Academy. A "Request to Attend" form must be completed

prior to attending conferences and workshops. Out-of-state and/or Out-of-country travel requires Board approval. Employees should not incur expenses before all required approvals are obtained and must allow sufficient time for processing travel payments if applicable.

The Executive Director may authorize professional leave for attending state, regional and national meetings, workshops, and conferences (including observing in other schools) without pay deduction. The employee must apply for prior approval through his/her supervisor.

For these and other emergencies, or unusual situations not covered by the leave policies of the school, an employee may request non-paid leave for a period not to exceed one semester. In addition, an employee who has exhausted accumulated leave and/or annual leave may request non-paid leave for up to one semester. A written request must be presented and approved by the board. In the event of a medically related request involving the employee or a family member, a doctor's statement must accompany the request.

## Retirement

PACE Academy has contracted with Horace Mann to provide a 403(b)-retirement option for employees. Employees may receive up to 3% match on contributions after 1 year of service.

## Sunshine Committee

The purpose of the Hospitality Committee is to acknowledge events/occurrences in the lives of our employees. Participation is on a voluntary basis and is open to all faculty and staff at PACE Academy.

Dues for the Hospitality Committee are due to the front office by the **3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in September** each year and are as follows:

Administration: \$25

Teachers & Other Salaried Employees: \$20

Part-time or Hourly Employees: \$10

Funds may be used for the following:

- Death of an immediate family member – flowers, plant, or gift card up to \$40
- Death of an extended family member – card
- Hospitalization, surgical procedure, extended illness – flowers, plant, or gift card up to \$40
- Weddings – card and gift card up to \$40
- Birth or adoption of a child – gift from registry up to \$40

- Special circumstances – at discretion of committee leader with approval of Executive Director

### **Vacation Leave (195+-day employees)**

Each full-time, 180-190 day employee is entitled to vacation leave with pay. This leave is accrued monthly, beginning with the first month of employment. Vacation leave is earned at the rate of one day for each full month of service, up to 12 days per year.

Each half-time, 180+-day employee is entitled to vacation leave with pay. This leave is accrued monthly, beginning with the first month of employment. Vacation leave is earned at the rate of one HALF day for each full month of service, up to 6 days per year.

Up to 50 days leave may be accrued and carried to the next year. When an employee leaves, the employee may receive payment for all PTO days at a daily rate of \$65 per day.

## **Section 8: Separation of Employment**

### **Grounds for Dismissal**

It is the policy of the Administration to recommend to the Board the removal from employment of any certified staff member who shall fail, or who may be incompetent in accordance with the directions of the Administration, or who shall otherwise manifest an evident unfitness for the position as determined by the Administration.

The Administration will make decisions about employment, discipline, change of duties/responsibilities and removal of classified staff without Board approval.

Evident unfitness for teaching or employment may be manifested by conduct such as: persistent neglect of duty; willful violation of the Board approved policies, rules, regulations, or procedures of the school; drunkenness, conviction of a violation of the law of S.C. or the United States; gross immorality; dishonesty; insubordination; conduct that may directly and adversely impact the stability and growth of the school, and/or the illegal use, sale, or possession of drugs or narcotics. In addition, following the end of the second month from the date of employment, the school may suspend a professional staff member such as a teacher without pay until evidence of his/her certification has been received by the school. The employee must meet with the Executive Director to discuss the matter.

### **Procedures for Dismissal of Employees**

All employee dismissals will be handled by the Executive Director. Whenever it is necessary to reprimand an employee, the matter must be documented in writing and brought to the attention of the employee. The written reprimand must include the complaint and suggestions for improvement and must be signed by

the supervisor. A signed copy of the reprimand will be given to the employee and copies of all written reprimands will be filed in the employee's personnel folder. All employees who voluntarily leave employment or who are dismissed must contact the Benefits Administrator concerning their insurance and retirement benefits.

### **Return of Property**

Upon separation of employment, all materials that are property of PACE Academy, including but not limited to any technology provided, keys, and instructional materials or furnishings, will be turned over to the administration.

## **Section 9: Responsibilities**

### **Attendance**

PACE Academy is funded based on our student enrollment and attendance. Therefore, attendance accuracy is extremely important. Teachers should have attendance recorded in PowerSchool during homeroom each morning (no later than 8:10 am). Middle school teachers and Related Arts Teachers should take attendance at the beginning of each class period.

### **Board Meetings**

PACE Academy board meetings take place the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at 6:30pm. Teachers and Teaching Assistants/Paras are encouraged to attend at least 1 board meeting each semester. Participation may be virtual.

### **Building/Classroom Maintenance**

When staff members note that equipment/building is damaged, either by intention or accident, they shall communicate the damage to the Administrative Team with a building maintenance request form. It is the duty of the staff members to supervise students so that damage to the school building, furniture, equipment, or other school property does not occur. Teachers may not glue, tape, staple, or nail items to walls without prior approval from the Executive Director. Teachers should utilize bulletin boards or approved hanging materials when displaying student work or decorating the classroom. Teachers should NOT use duct tape, scotch tape, mounting tape, or glue dots on sheetrock walls as they damage the wall.

Teachers should check to make sure that all windows and doors are locked and all smart boards and lights are turned off when leaving for the day.

### **Child Find**

Child Find is a federally established comprehensive system designed to assure that each child, regardless of disability, is educated toward his or her maximum potential. The purpose of Child Find is to locate, identify, and evaluate infants,

children, and young adults through age 21 who may have a developmental delay or other disabilities.

PACE Academy is committed to providing quality special education services to every child with a disability who attends PACE Academy and offers comprehensive special education services to eligible students. All referrals are considered confidential, and services are provided at no cost.

A free, appropriate, public education with a full continuum of services is available. If a child is determined to be a child with a disability, PACE Academy will assist parents in developing appropriate special education services designed to meet the child's educational needs. For more information concerning eligibility criteria and the referral process, contact the school or the Disabilities Services Director.

### **Classroom Maintenance/Cleaning**

Our custodians are important people to all of us. They enable both you and the students to have healthy and sanitary surroundings. Similar to the secretary, their tasks are many and varied and to pinpoint them would take an endless list. Direction for their daily, weekly and monthly tasks should stem from the Chief Business Officer or designee so that he/she might keep their work coordinated and not overlapping. Requests for additional custodial tasks should be made with the maintenance request form. Immediate custodial needs (ie. Student throws up, large spills, etc) should be addressed by reporting to the front desk immediately.

Periodically clean your desktops and dust your room (Once per week is recommended). Shortly before dismissal, all paper, and crayons should be picked up off the floor and deposited in the room's waste can or storage bins. Books should be placed in desks and back on shelves as appropriate. Student chairs should be placed on desks at the close of the school day.

### **Daily Lesson Plans and Record Keeping**

Teachers will develop daily and weekly lesson plans that align with the school's curriculum guides and allow students to appropriately develop their learning toward the learning goals. Specific guidelines for lesson plans will be provided.

Teachers will keep appropriate records on student performance, discipline, and parent communication for evidence. Records will be turned in to the administration at the end of the year and are subject to regular viewing.

Teachers will monitor student learning and keep an up-to-date record of student grades. These grades will be kept in a paper gradebook and input into PowerTeacher on a weekly basis so that parents can keep track of their child's performance as well.

Teachers should have a hard copy of their lesson plans in a designated binder/folder on the teacher's desk. Daily key objectives for each lesson should

be displayed for students to see. Plans may be reviewed at any time by the Executive Director, Academic Director, or designee. Textbooks and other instructional materials are supplemental to the curriculum and should be used accordingly.

### **Daily Schedules**

#### **Everyday, except Wednesdays:**

7:30 am – Doors Open – Students may go to cafeteria

7:45 am – Students allowed to go to Homeroom

8:00 am – Homeroom officially begins

8:15 am – ACE Time

9:03 – 9:53 am – 1<sup>st</sup> Block

9:56 – 10:46 am – 2<sup>nd</sup> Block

10:49 – 11:39 am – 3<sup>rd</sup> Block

11:42 – 12:32 pm – 4<sup>th</sup> Block

12:35 – 1:25 pm – 5<sup>th</sup> Block

1:28 – 2:18 pm – 6<sup>th</sup> Block

2:21 – 3:11 pm – 7<sup>th</sup> Block

3:15 – 3:45 pm – Dismissal

#### **Wednesday Schedule:**

7:30 am – Doors Open – Students may go to cafeteria

7:45 am – Students allowed to go to Homeroom

8:00 am – Homeroom officially begins

8:12 am – ACE Time

8:45 – 9:15 am – 1<sup>st</sup> Block

9:18 – 9:48 am – 2<sup>nd</sup> Block

9:51 – 10:21 am – 3<sup>rd</sup> Block

10:24 – 10:54 am – 4<sup>th</sup> Block

10:57 – 11:27 am – 5<sup>th</sup> Block

11:30 – 12:00 pm – 6<sup>th</sup> Block

12:03 pm – Dismissal

12:45 – 1:15 pm – Lunch Break

1:15 – 3:45 pm – PD

### **Discipline Guidelines**

Teachers should keep record of all disciplinary incidents they witness. Only the adult who witnesses the disciplinary incident may write up or record the event.



(Example: Teacher A witnesses a child destroying school property during dismissal but is not the student's homeroom teacher. Teacher A is responsible for documenting the incident and following the discipline policy.)

All PACE staff are required to uphold the PACE Academy Behavior Guidelines and are not allowed to give students permission to break any school rules or procedures.

### **Fee and Cash Collection**

Teachers should collect any monies from students at the beginning of the day during homeroom and maintain a clear and accurate log of amount collected from each student via a Student Collection Form. Once logged into the Student Collection Form, all collected money and collection forms will be placed into an envelope and turned into the front office with the daily attendance record.

The Chief Business Officer or designee will receive money collection envelopes from teachers and will place them into a lockbox until all attendance records are entered first. Then, the Chief Business Officer will receipt all collected money and enter the amounts into a digital record form, cross-referencing the teacher's record for accuracy. Two (2) signatures will be required for cash collections. Receipts will be returned to classroom teachers by the end of the next school day and will create a deposit slip to be verified by the Academic Director or designee.

The Academic Director or designee will verify daily Student Collection Deposit amounts and will place deposits in the school vault. Deposits shall be taken to the bank withing 48 hours of receipt.

### **Field Trip Procedures**

Field trips should be an integral part of long-range and daily lesson plans and should identify state academic standards. When preparing for a field trip, all employees must complete a *Field Trip Packet* and follow all guidelines within the packet. All approvals must be obtained before announcing to parents. Each grade level must decide on a grade level field trip or engage in an additional activity that is educational in nature and extends beyond the curriculum. Trips should be taken in as large a group as possible. Teachers should have a complete itinerary to be sent home with students with a permission form. NO student may leave campus without a signed permission slip. A note signed by the parent will suffice as a permission slip as long as it has the date, parent signature, and states that the parent gives permission for the child to go to the specified location.

Adults may be asked to assist on the field trip if extra supervision is necessary. Final decision concerning adult participation on field trips and activities will be

made by the classroom teacher and/or Executive Director. Adults who help on a field trip must have a clear SLED check on record with the school and may not bring other children. Parents or relatives who assist are expected to follow the direction of the teacher and follow all school rules. No adult who is not an employee should be left alone with a group of students. Please have all groups stay together with the teacher. All adults are to be a model for the students. All adults must stay with their assigned group and are not permitted to curse, smoke, or drink alcohol on the field trip.

If you are concerned about a student attending a field trip, please discuss the matter with the Executive Director or designee before excluding anyone.

Expectations for behavior on a field study are the same as they are for on-campus instruction.

Also, all drivers must provide a copy of their current driver's license and liability insurance card.

## **Fundraisers**

All fundraising projects must be approved in writing by the Executive Director. See the Chief Business Officer first to review the proposal before presenting proposal to the Executive Director.

## **Grading, Progress Reports and Report Cards**

All teachers should keep an accurate record of each student's progress toward mastery of the concepts during the school year. Each teacher is responsible for placing grades in both a paper grade book and the electronic grade book through PowerSchool. Training will be provided at the annual orientation. Because we have an electronic gradebook that has parent access, it is imperative that grades are current and kept updated weekly.

Report cards and progress reports will be generated through PowerSchool. The PowerSchool coordinator will provide teachers with the reporting schedule. All teachers must comply with the schedule.

### **2023 – 2024 Grading Deadlines are as follows:**

Progress Report Grades Due: September 4, 2023, November 13, 2023, February 5, 2024, and April 22, 2024

Report Card Grades Due: October 18, 2023, January 8, 2024, March 14, 2024, and May 24, 2024

ACE Progress Reports will be completed for each grading deadline (progress reports and report cards).

Student grades should reflect their mastery/proficiency of the academic standards. When appropriate, rubrics should be used to set goals for students. Grades should not be based on student behavior. Teachers are to enter grades into PowerTeacher no later than 10 days following an assignment's due date.

PACE Academy will follow the SC State adopted 10-point grading scale for number grades. Kindergarten students will receive a standards-based report card.

90%-100% = A

80%-89% = B

70%-79% = C

60%-69% = D

Below 60% = F

The purpose of grading is to assess a student's progress and mastery of skills and concepts. Teachers are expected to teach and reteach for mastery. Teachers are not allowed to grade students on nonacademic items (i.e. parent signature on a syllabus, classroom behavior, etc.) or items not covered in their state standards (i.e. reducing a grade for grammar mistakes on a math assessment, etc.).

**Number of Grades Required each grading period:** Teachers must provide students a minimum number of chances for grades each grading period.

### **General Education Classes**

**Grades 2-4:** a minimum of 12 grades each 9 weeks. 2 of the 12 grades must be a test or project that count twice in the gradebook.

(In subjects that rotate every 4.5 weeks, 6 grades are required each 9 weeks, 1 of which must be a test or project.)

**Grades 5-8:** a minimum of 10 grades each 9 weeks. 2 of the 10 grades must be a test or project that count twice in the gradebook. 1 grade each 9-weeks for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students ONLY may be a homework grade.

### **Related Arts Classes**

**Grades 2 – 4:** a minimum of 6 grades each 9 weeks. 1 of the 6 grades must be a test or project that count twice in the gradebook.

**Grades 5-8:** a minimum of 10 grades each 9 weeks. 2 of the 10 grades must be a test or project that count twice in the gradebook.

### **Special Education Classes**

**All Grades:** a minimum of 6 grades each 9 weeks, based on student's IEP goals.

### **ACE Classes**

All ACE teachers will maintain a record of every student's ACE performance. ACE Progress reports are required for each reporting period.

### **Homework**

Structured homework for all students, excluding 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, should not be assigned to students. However, teachers are encouraged to send practice assignments home so students can study/prepare for their assessments.

8<sup>th</sup> grade students should be given homework on a regular basis to assist students in preparing for high school. Teachers should count homework completion as 1 MINOR grade each 9-weeks.

Special projects may be assigned throughout the year as extensions of classroom instruction. However, teachers should provide classroom time to complete such assignments.

### **Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)**

Teachers are required by law to follow every student's Individualized Education Plan. Special Education teachers are required to maintain student IEP records according to district, state, and federal regulations. Sped teachers are also required to provide general education teachers with updated student IEP accommodations and obtain signature from each general education teacher within 48 hours of every IEP meeting.

### **Mailboxes**

Employees should check their mailbox in the morning and before leaving for the day. Students should not be sent to pick up mail or check the copier since confidential information may exist in these locations.

### **Make Up Work**

Please assist students in gathering any work missed due to absences. Missed work must be made up within a reasonable amount of time depending upon the length and cause of the absence. As a rule, students should have the same number of days to make up work as the number of days that they were absent.

Students may be assigned Lunch & Learn if a reasonable effort is not made to complete missing assignments. Students in grades 2-5 may not miss recess to complete missing/incomplete assignments. Recess is not required by law for middle school students. Therefore, teachers may assign recess detention/work time for these students if necessary.

### **Medication**

Teachers should not administer any medications to students. Any student medication shall be provided by the parent in the original pharmacy bottle along with a physician's orders and logged with the school nurse. If medications are needed on the bus, during field studies, for extracurricular activities, or for after

school clubs, the parent must contact the nurse to make necessary arrangements. Students with special healthcare needs who require that they keep medication with them during the school day must complete Permission for Student to self –Monitor/ Self-Administer Medication form.

Parents may provide over-the-counter medication to the school nurse to be administered to their students on an as-needed basis. Medication must be in its original container and must accompany a permission form. Students may not carry OTC medications within the school.

### **Movies/Videos**

Movies and videos that are shown in the classroom should be of an educational nature and must be included in weekly lesson plans as supporting a required content standard. The only exceptions to this rule is specific holiday celebrations. ALL movie selections must be pre-approved by the Executive Director or designee prior to use by submitting a Movie Request Form.

Movies/videos should be rated G. No movie/video should be shown with any rating other than G or PG.

Please follow all copyright rules and regulations. Preview all movies, video clips prior to showing to the students.

### **Parent Conferences**

There are regular times set on the calendar for Parent/Teacher/Student conferences. In the event that you need to schedule an additional conference, try to accommodate parents schedule within reason. Meetings may be during your planning period, before or after school. Meetings will not take place during instructional time or during Wednesday teacher workdays.

### **Parent Teacher Organization**

PACE Academy PTO (*Parent Teacher Organization*) exists to coordinate events, volunteers, and to raise funds to improve and benefit the school. The PTO strives to enrich each student's educational experience at PACE Academy by providing additional resources for our teachers and students, as well as sponsoring a variety of school activities and events.

### **Planning Period**

The planning period is designed to permit the teacher an opportunity to prepare for classes and to confer with students, parents, and colleagues. Details on conducting team meetings will be provided. *Teachers are not to leave the building during their planning period without prior approval from the Executive Director, Academic Director, or Chief Business Officer. Staff leaving campus during the regular school day must sign out in the front office prior to leaving.*

Teaching Assistants/Para-Professionals will be given 1 planning block to prepare for ACE classes and eat lunch. No other duties should be assigned to TAs/Paras during their designated planning block.

### **Recess and Playground Supervision**

All staff should adhere to the recess schedule. If times are moved or added, the office staff should be notified. Children should not be sent to the office to spend their recess time unless medical documentation has been received and approved by the nurse. Indoor activities should be planned during inclement weather.

We will use weather restrictions on taking students outside for recess. Please note that these temperatures include the heat index/wind chill. It is your responsibility to check the weather conditions prior to going outside. See detailed chart provided by administration.

90-100 degrees – Children can stay out but please be sure to have plenty of water

32-90 degrees – Children can stay out for an unlimited amount of time

20-32 degrees – Children can stay out 10-15 minutes

### *Playground Rules*

The classroom teacher will discuss rules regarding the playground so that students will have a thorough understanding of the playground rules. It is very important that playground rules be clearly understood by all students.

1. The following activities are *NOT* permitted:
  - a. Fighting
  - b. Causing bodily harm to self or others
  - c. Tackling
  - d. Pulling on clothing/other people
  - e. Pushing
  - f. Picking up/throwing sticks, dirt, rocks, mud balls, woodchips and/or other debris
  - g. roughhousing
2. The students will line up quietly when signaled.
3. Climb on the slide on the ladder side only. Slide down the slide in a sitting position with feet first.

4. No jumping from the playground equipment from unsafe heights.
5. Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds for any reason unless the office has notified the teacher on duty.
6. Students are not to bring athletic equipment from home.
7. Students should not play around the building walls or talk to students in time out.

### **Room Parties and Classroom Events**

Please notify the office of any party or classroom event that is scheduled. All parties/events must be over by 3:00 pm as not to interfere with dismissal. Parents must sign in and out of the office before going to the classroom. When planning parties and special snacks parents must be reminded of any classroom allergies.

**Outside food must be store-bought and individually wrapped.**

### **Special Education Services and Procedures**

A student may be eligible to receive special education or related services under state and federal guidelines. Following a series of pre-referral activities, a child may be referred for a Special Needs Diagnostic Evaluation.

Special Education services available in the school includes inclusion resource services, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. These providers deliver specialized or remedial services to children to help them develop strategies and skills, which allow them to continue to experience success in the classroom. Children may be served under IDEA due to identification in one of the following categories: Specific Learning Disability, Other Health Impairment, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Emotional Disturbance, Speech/Language Impairment, Visual Impairment, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Orthopedic Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Traumatic Brain Injury, Multiple Disabilities, Deaf-Blindness, or Developmental Delay. The Disabilities Services Director or designee will meet with all teachers during back-to-school orientation week to inform them of any unique SPED needs of any students assigned to their class. When new students enter the school with SPED needs, a meeting will be held with the teacher(s) to inform them of the plan and needs.

*Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:*

This is a federal act that prohibits discrimination against persons with a handicap in any program receiving federal financial assistance. A person with a handicap is anyone who: has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more life activities such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Please note that all student plans (BIP, 504, IEP, or other) are expected to be followed completely.

## School Improvement Council

The purpose of the PACE School Improvement Council is to assist the school in deliberation of policies and to create an environment that helps meet the goals of the charter. Participants in the councils will include a parent and teacher from each grade band (2-4 and 5-8). The council is an important group that shares information and communicates with the school, parents, and community. As with all volunteers that come to the school to work with children, council members must present a clean SLED check or, if new to South Carolina, an FBI check in addition to a sex offender check.

The primary objective of the council is to give the Executive Director feedback on the programs, climate, and culture of the school and provide suggestions for improvement. The council's responsibilities are as follows:

- Provide a venue for feedback among all partners and give a voice to the community
- Agree upon community-related goals for the school program
- Make constructive recommendations for school improvement
- Establish relationships with members of the broader community and recognize their value
- Provide information to the community about the purpose and mission of PACE

## Staff Meetings

Unless an employee is on authorized leave, or has been excused by the Executive Director, all staff members will attend all called meetings.

All teachers and assistants must attend the weekly professional learning meetings on Wednesday afternoons. These meetings will be devoted to implementing professional practices in our school and analyzing student data.

A large part of internal communication will be provided in writing via email. Written communications to the staff are not to be made available to the students or parents unless directed to do so by the Executive Director or designee.

## Student Cellphone Policy

Middle Students are permitted to bring cellular devices to school; however, **students must turn them off once they arrive on campus and place them in bookbags or lockers for the entire school day.** Students are not allowed to wear smartwatches that are voice or text capable.

Teachers shall confiscate cellphones if they are out during the school day.

1<sup>st</sup> offense – teacher may return to the student at the end of the day



2<sup>nd</sup> offense – teacher must turn into the front office; the Academic Director or designee will contact the parent to pick up the phone

3<sup>rd</sup> offense – phone may be returned to the parent at the end of the next day

4<sup>th</sup> offense – student will no longer be allowed to have a cellphone on school property

### **Substitute Teacher Folder/Emergency Lesson Plans**

Each teacher should have a folder with specific directions for a substitute teacher. Substitute folders should be kept in Google Drive and updated regularly with enough work for up to three days of instruction. Specific guidelines for substitute folders will be provided.

Emergency lesson plans shall be submitted in the designated Google Drive Folder before Labor Day each school year and should include three (3) days of plans.

### **Supervision of Students**

While at school or during school-related or school-sponsored activities, students must be under the supervision of a qualified adult at all times. A qualified adult shall be a school director, teacher, or instructional assistant. A non-faculty coach or non-faculty assistant shall be considered a qualified adult so long as he/she meets the qualifications of a "volunteer" with appropriate SLED clearance and is current on all training. All school employees are required to assist in providing appropriate supervision and correction of students.

Employees are expected to take reasonable and prudent action in situations involving student welfare and safety, including intervening and reporting to the Executive Director or to the immediate supervisor those situations that threaten, harass, or endanger the safety of students, other staff members, or visitors to the school. Such instances shall include, but are not limited to, bullying or hazing of students and harassment/discrimination of staff, students, or visitors by any party.

Students shall be supervised at all times – in the classroom, hallways, playground, and all areas of the school. Staff members should walk elementary students to and from the cafeteria, special classes, and recess. Art, Music, ASL, and PE teachers should wait until the classroom teachers pick up their class. Do not send elementary classes back without the teacher. Small groups of students may be traveling to and from other special classes (Speech/OT/PT, etc) without an adult. Please be aware of this and monitor when those children should be returning. All students in the hallway must have a pass. Middle School students shall be permitted to move between classes without a teacher escort. However, Middle School teachers shall stand at their door to have visibility of the hall and their classroom during transitions. If it is determined that Middle School students

are unable to transition to Related Arts appropriately, it may be determined that a teacher escort is necessary.

At times, you may send a student to the library, bathroom, or elsewhere in the building with a hall pass. Please be aware of who is out of the classroom and make every attempt to keep students together in case of emergency. The responsibility and authority of staff extends beyond the classroom. Teachers are expected to help supervise students throughout the school. Besides maintaining discipline in the classroom, teachers' supervision duties include the hallways, restrooms, assemblies, etc. All teachers are expected to attend assemblies and help supervise which means actively standing, walking, and correcting students during the assembly. Each staff member is responsible for helping prevent damage to school property and preventing general misbehavior. This can only happen if you are actively supervising the students! All staff members should be vigilant to walk around while supervising.

**If you need to leave the room, please ask another teacher to cover for you. You are liable if you leave your students unattended.**

### Supplies

Teachers will be provided with basic instructional teaching supplies as allotted per budgetary constraints.

### Teacher as Sponsors

Teachers may be called upon to sponsor various organizations and class groups. Sponsors will:

- supervise projects and activities selected by organizations and class groups;
- counsel and advise students in elections, and in the selection of projects and activities;
- establish proper and adequate procedures for the collection and accounting of funds derived from fundraising projects;
- keep the Executive Director informed of projects and activity dates and have these posted on the school activity calendar;
- ensure that all projects and activities of classes and organizations are approved by the administration;
- schedule projects and organizational work so that class time is not used for that purpose.

Teachers are urged to attend and participate in as many extracurricular activities as time and convenience permit.

## Textbook Guidelines/Recommendations for Textbook Accountability

Teachers must use the Project Read curriculum for ELA and the Right Start Math curriculum for math as outlined in our charter application.

State approved textbooks may be used for science and social studies. If your grade level has consumable workbooks, then you must use these workbooks and complete the majority of them during the year. They can be used for homework, classwork, or extension/re-teaching.

When issuing textbooks, teacher editions and/or ancillary materials to a staff member, each teacher will sign for the materials he/she receives. These records will be kept by the Administration. Each teacher will perform at least two "book checks" throughout the year and will notify the bookkeeper in writing of any lost books.

The Administration will also conduct an annual comprehensive textbook inventory. This inventory will be performed at the end of each school year and includes state adopted student and teacher editions, as well as ancillary materials.

A teacher who fails to return an assigned teacher edition or any assigned ancillary material(s) and cannot account for the missing material(s) through the annual textbook inventory report may be subject to disciplinary action for the lost material(s) as well as withholding from pay for the cost of the materials.

## Tutoring Policy

PACE Academy faculty and staff may only tutor students for pay with prior written approval by the Executive Director. This policy is in place to avoid conflicts of interest, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Any approved tutoring agreements may not take place during regular contract hours.

## Visitors/Parents

Visitors/parents are always welcome and will be escorted to the classroom after checking in with the front office. All visitors must enter the school through the front office. Students and staff shall not open a door for a visitor.

## Volunteers

Be nice and welcome parents to our building. If a parent wants to volunteer, let them! Parent volunteers are not to be left alone with children unless a SLED and National Sex Offender background check has been performed.

**Please note:** parent volunteers are NOT to grade papers or have access to private student data. This is a FERPA violation. Do not allow parents to enter student grades into PowerSchool.

## Wolfpack Mentality

All PACE employees agree to demonstrate a wolfpack mentality and pledge to uphold the following expectations:

- P** I will PROTECT everyone's right to a safe workplace by treating all people with respect.
- A** I will ANTICIPATE the needs of our Wolfpack and will do my best to help fulfill those needs.
- C** I will CREATE a positive, comfortable, and safe school environment by using clear, kind, and caring communication.
- E** I will EXECUTE my job duties to the best of my ability as I know the Wolfpack depends on me.

#### Yearbook Photos

Please capture photos of your students and class activities throughout the year for the school yearbook. You will be sent a link to a designated folder for your photos. Please try to capture group photos as well as individual photos.