America's Finest CHARTER SCHOOL

2026-27 AMERICA'S FINEST CHARTER SCHOOL EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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America's Finest CHARTER SCHOOL

WELCOME STATEMENT

Welcome to America's Finest Charter School! We offer this Employee Handbook to assist you in understanding our processes as a new employee or to those of you who have been with us for a while to refresh that understanding.
As an employee of America's Finest Charter School, the importance of your contribution cannot be overstated. Our goal is to provide the finest-quality education to our students. By satisfying our students' needs, they will continue to grow with us and attain the success they seek in life. You are an important part of this process for your work directly influences America's Finest Charter School's success. Your service to our families and our students is commendable. We welcome you and look forward to serving alongside you.

THE OBJECTIVES OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools in California are meant to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Improve pupil learning.
2. Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving.
3. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
4. Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
5. Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public-school system.
6. Hold the schools established under this part accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems.
7. Provide vigorous competition within the public-school system to stimulate continual improvements in all public schools. [§47601]

AMERICA'S FINEST CHARTER SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

America's Finest Charter School's continuing mission is to help our students achieve their American Dream. Our Motto is: "Work Hard, Learn Everything You Can, Always Do Your Best, Help Others And Success Will Follow To Realize The American Dream."
America's Finest Charter Schools are located in San Diego, California and serve students in

Transitional Kindergarten through eighth grade.
CHARTER SCHOOL VISION: Seize the Dream!

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Our School is committed to equal employment opportunity. We will not discriminate against employees or applicants for employment on any legally-recognized basis. You may discuss equal employment opportunity related questions with the Director or any other member of management.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Our School is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities. This may include providing reasonable accommodation where appropriate for an otherwise qualified individual to perform the essential functions of the job. It is your responsibility to notify the Executive Director of the need for accommodation. Upon doing so, the Executive Director may ask you for your input or the type of accommodation you believe may be necessary or the functional limitations caused by your disability. Also, when appropriate, we may need your permission to obtain additional information from your physician or other medical or rehabilitation professionals.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All employees of America's Finest Charter School owe a duty of loyalty to the school and must conduct school business in a manner that avoids actual or potential conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest occurs when an employee's personal, family, or financial interests interfere, or appear to interfere, with their professional responsibilities or the best interests of AFCS.

Guidelines & Requirements:

- **Outside Employment & Consulting:** Employees may not engage in outside employment, consulting, or business activities that create a conflict with their obligations to AFCS or impair their work performance.
- **Gifts and Gratuities:** Employees must not accept gifts, gratuities, favors, or entertainment from vendors, contractors, or parents that exceed nominal value or that could influence, or appear to influence, professional decision-making.
- **Use of School Resources:** School assets, equipment, supplies, and working hours may not be used for personal gain or external commercial enterprises.
- **Financial & Contractual Decisions:** Employees must disclose any personal or financial interest in any vendor, contractor, or service provider before participating in evaluation, selection, or procurement decisions.

America's Finest CHARTER SCHOOL

HARASSMENT FREE WORKPLACE

We prohibit harassment of one employee by another employee, supervisor or third party for any reason including, but not limited to: veteran status, uniform service member status, race, color, religion, sexual orientation or national origin or any other protected class under federal, state or local law.

While it is not easy to define precisely what harassment is, it includes: slurs, epithets, threats, derogatory comments or visual depictions, unwelcome jokes and teasing.
Any employee who believes that s(he) has been harassed should report the situation immediately to Dr. Esther Omogbehin, Executive Director at (619) 694-4809. If an employee makes a report to the Executive Director and either does not respond or does not respond in a manner the employee deems satisfactory or consistent with this policy, the employee can report the situation to the AFCS Board of Directors or Human Resource for more information about UPC.
The School will investigate all such reports as confidentially as possible. Adverse action will not be taken against an employee because he or she, in good faith, reports or participates in the investigation of a violation of this policy. Violations of this policy are not permitted and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Any type of sexual harassment is against school policy and may be unlawful. Every employee must complete a sexual harassment training on a yearly basis by September 15th, or within 30 days of being hired.
We firmly prohibit sexual harassment of any employee by another employee, supervisor or third party. Harassment of third parties by our employees is also prohibited. The purpose of this policy is not to regulate the morality of employees. It is to ensure that in the workplace, no employee is subject to sexual harassment. While it is not easy to define precisely what sexual harassment is, it may include: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature including, but not limited to, sexually-related drawings, pictures, jokes, teasing, uninvited touching or other sexually-related comments. The conduct prohibited by this policy includes conduct in any form including but not limited to email, voice mail, chat rooms, Internet use or history, text messages, pictures, images, writings, words or gestures.
Sexual harassment of an employee will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. There will be no adverse action taken against employees who report violations of this policy in good faith or participate in the investigation of such violations.
Any employee who believes that (s)he is a victim of sexual harassment or has been retaliated

against for complaining of sexual harassment, should report the situation immediately to Dr. Esther Omogbehin, Executive Director at (619) 694-4809 or eomogbehin@myafcs.org. If the Director either does not respond or does not respond in a manner the employee deems satisfactory or consistent with this policy, the employee is required to report the situation to AFCS Board of Directors.

- The School will investigate every reported incident immediately. Any employee, supervisor or agent of the School who has been found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including immediate discharge.
- The School will conduct all investigations in a discreet manner. The School recognizes that every investigation requires a determination based on all the facts in the matter. We also recognize the serious impact a false accusation can have. We trust that all employees will continue to act responsibly.
- The reporting employee and any employee participating in any investigation under this policy have the School's assurance that no reprisal will be taken as a result of a sexual harassment complaint. It is our policy to encourage discussion of the matter, to help protect others from being subjected to similar inappropriate behavior.

STAFF-STUDENT INTERACTIONS & BOUNDARIES

It is the policy of America's Finest Charter School that no teacher or other staff member will use corporal punishment against a student.

BOUNDARIES DEFINED

For the purposes of this policy, the term "boundaries" is defined as acceptable professional behavior by staff members while interacting with a student. Trespassing beyond the boundaries of a student-teacher relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviors

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member's point-of-view but could be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from the perspective of students or parents. There is no single reasonable person standard. The purpose of the following lists of unacceptable and acceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between staff and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to or may be perceived as inappropriate, or sexual misconduct.

Staff members must understand their own responsibilities for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this policy. Violations could subject the teacher or staff member to discipline up to and including termination. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of these established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for any required disciplinary purposes.

Thus, it is critical that all employees study this policy thoroughly and apply its spirit and intent in their daily activities.

Unacceptable Behaviors

These lists are not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather, illustrative of the types of behavior intended to be addressed by this policy.

- Giving gifts of a personal and intimate nature (including photographs) to a student; or items such as money, food, outings, electronics, etc. without the written pre-approval of the Principal or School Leader. It is recommended that any such gifts be filtered through the Director along with the rationale therefore.
- Kissing of ANY kind
- Massage [Note: Prohibited in athletics unless provided by massage therapist or other certified professional in an open public location. Coaches may not perform massage or rub-down. Permitted in special education only as instructed under an IEP or 504 Plan.]
- Full frontal or rear hugs and lengthy embraces
- Sitting students on one's lap (grades 3 and above)
- Touching buttocks, thighs, chest, or genital area
- Wrestling with students or other staff members except in the context of a formal wrestling program
- Tickling or piggyback rides
- Any form of sexual contact
- Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student in a private situation
- Intentionally being alone with a student away from school
- Furnishing alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs - or failing to report knowledge of such
- "Dating" or "going out with" a student
- Remarks about physical attributes or physiological development of anyone. This includes comments such as "Looking fine!" or "Check out that [body part]."
- Taking photographs or videos of students for personal use or posting online
- Either partially or fully undressing in front of a student or asking a student to undress with the intent to view/expose private body parts
- Leaving campus alone with a student for lunch
- Sharing a bed, mat, or sleeping bag with a student
- Making, or participating in, sexually inappropriate comments
- Sexual jokes, or jokes/comments with sexual overtones or double-entendres
- Seeking emotional involvement (which can include intimate attachment) with a student beyond the normative care and concern required of an educator.
- Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented
- Discussing your personal troubles or intimate issues with a student
- Becoming too involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior
- Giving students a ride to/from school or school activities without the express, advance

written permission of the Executive Director and the student's parent or legal guardian
- Being alone in a room with a student at school with the door closed and/or windows blocked from view
- Allowing students at your home and/or in rooms within your home without signed parental permission for a pre-planned and pre-communicated educational activity which must include another educator, parent, or designated school volunteer
- Sending emails, text messages, social media responses, making phone calls, or sending notes or letters to students if the content is not about school activities. Communication via private social media accounts is not acceptable.

Acceptable Behaviors

- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- "High-fives" and hand slapping
- Touching face to check temperature, wipe away a tear, remove hair from face, or other similar types of contact
- Placing TK through second grade students on one's lap for purposes of comforting the child for a short duration only
- Holding hands while walking with small children or children with significant disabilities
- Assisting with toileting of small or disabled children in view of another staff member
- Touch required under an IEP or 504 Plan
- Reasonable restraint of a violent person to protect self, others, or property
- Obtaining formal written pre-approval from parents or guardians to take students off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions, including parent's written permission and waiver form for any sponsored after-school activity whether on or off-campus
- Emails, text-messages, phone conversations, and other communications to and with students, if permitted, must be professional and pertain to school activities or classes (communication should be initiated via transparent [non-private] school-based technology and equipment)
- Keeping the door wide open when alone with a student
- Keeping reasonable and appropriate space between you and the student
- Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries, including touching legs, or buttocks, frontal hugs, kissing, or caressing
- Keeping parents informed when a significant issue develops about a student, such as a change in demeanor or uncharacteristic behavior
- Keeping after-class discussions with a student professional and brief
- Immediately asking for advice from senior staff or administration if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries
- Involving your direct supervisor in discussion about boundaries situations that have the potential to become more severe (including but not limited to: grooming or other red flag

behaviors observed in colleagues, written material that is disturbing, or a student's fixation on an adult)

- Making detailed notes about an incident that in your best judgment could evolve into a more serious situation later
- Recognizing the responsibility to stop "Unacceptable Behaviors" of students and/or co-workers
- Asking another staff member to be present, or within close supervisory distance, when you must be alone with a student after regular school hours
- Prioritizing professional behavior during all moments of student contact
- Asking yourself if any of your actions, which could be contrary to these provisions, are worth sacrificing your job and career.
- This policy does not prevent: 1) touching a student for the purpose of guiding them along a physical path; 2) helping them up after a fall; or 3) engaging in a rescue or the application of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) or other emergency first-aid. Nor does it prohibit the use of reasonable force and touching in self-defense or in the defense of another. Restraining a child who is trying to engage in violent or inappropriate behavior is also allowed. Only such force as necessary to defend one's self, another person, or the child or to protect property is legally permitted. Excessive force is prohibited.

BOUNDARIES REPORTING

When any staff member, parent, or student becomes aware of a staff member (or volunteer, guest, vendor) having crossed the boundaries specified in this policy, or has a strong suspicion of misconduct, he or she must report the suspicion to the Executive Director promptly. Reasonable suspicion means something perceived in spite of inconclusive or slight evidence. It is based on facts that would lead a reasonable person to believe the conduct occurred. Prompt reporting of observations falling into the unacceptable range of adult behavior with students is essential to protect students, the staff member, any witnesses, and the school as a whole. Employees must also report to the administration any awareness of, or concern about, student behavior that crosses boundaries, or any situation in which a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse.

MANDATED REPORTING: CHILD ABUSE / SEXUAL ABUSE REPORTING

Under California Penal Code Sections 11164 - 11174.3, all AFCS employees are legally designated mandated reporters. If, in your professional capacity, you observe or gain knowledge of reasonable suspicion that a child has been a victim of child abuse or neglect, California Penal Code Section 11166 requires **YOU** to immediately report this information or suspicion directly to a child protective agency or the police. The report shall be made by phone as soon as possible and a subsequent written report must be sent within 36 hours of your knowledge or suspicion of

the abuse. Failure to meet these obligations can result in a monetary fine and/or jail.

What is "Reasonable Suspicion"

"Reasonable Suspicion" occurs when "it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain such a suspicion, when based upon the facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing when appropriate on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse." (California Penal Code 11166[a])

All employees must complete the California Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training annually. The Executive Director will promptly investigate and document the investigation of any allegation of sexual misconduct or inappropriate behavior, using such support staff or outside assistance, as he or she deems necessary and appropriate under the circumstances. Throughout this fact-finding process, the investigating administrator, and all others privy to the investigation, shall protect the privacy interests of any affected student(s) and/or staff member(s) including any potential witnesses, as much as possible. The investigating administrator shall promptly notify the Governing Board in closed session of the existence and status of any investigations. Upon completion of any such investigations, the Executive Director shall report to the Governing Board any conclusions reached. The investigating administrator shall consult with legal counsel, as appropriate, prior to, during, and after conducting any investigation.

2026-2027 MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS) & RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

AFCS utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and Restorative Practices framework aligned with the Student Handbook to support student academic, behavioral, and social-emotional wellness.

- **Tier 1 — Universal Support:** High-quality instruction, positive schoolwide behavioral expectations, SEL curriculum, classroom routines, and family engagement.
- **Tier 2 — Targeted Support:** Small-group interventions, CICO (Check-In/Check-Out), behavior skill-building, counseling referrals, and restorative conferences.
- **Tier 3 — Intensive Support:** Individualized behavior support plans, Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA), safety planning, and individual counseling.

Restorative Practices: Staff are expected to employ restorative responses—including community-building circles, restorative conversations, responsive circles, and re-entry meetings—to hold students accountable, repair harm, and maintain a positive school culture without resorting to unnecessary exclusionary discipline.

2026-2027 BEHAVIORAL SAFETY ASSESSMENT AND THREAT RESPONSE

When a student engages in conduct or makes threats that raise significant safety concerns,

AFCS conducts a behavioral threat or safety assessment to evaluate safety risks, identify protective factors, create safety/support plans, and connect the student and family with resources. A behavioral safety assessment is an intervention procedure and does not prevent AFCS from taking required safety or disciplinary actions under California law.

2026-2027 SMARTPHONE AND CELL PHONE POLICY COMPLIANCE

Effective July 1, 2026, pursuant to California Education Code mandates, AFCS enforces policy restrictions on student smartphone and electronic device usage during school hours. Student devices must be turned off and stored away during instructional time, unless explicitly authorized by a teacher/administrator, required under an IEP or Section 504 Plan, or necessary during an active emergency. Staff members are responsible for enforcing cell phone expectations consistently across all school sites.

2026-2027 IMMIGRATION-ENFORCEMENT, ICE & SAFE-SCHOOL PROTECTIONS (EXPANDED AB 49 / SB 98 COMPLIANCE)

In compliance with the California Safe Haven Schools Act (AB 49), SB 98, and California Education Code Section 234.7, AFCS enforces strict board-approved safe-school policies regarding federal immigration enforcement (including ICE) to guarantee safe learning environments:

1. **Campus Access & Warrant Verification:** Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or other federal immigration officers are prohibited from entering nonpublic school grounds unless they present valid official identification AND a valid judicial warrant, judicial subpoena, or court order signed by a federal or state judge. Administrative ICE warrants (e.g., Forms I-200 or I-205) do not authorize site access.
2. **Verification Protocol:** Any immigration officer arriving on campus must be directed to administrative offices immediately. Staff must notify the Executive Director or Director of Operations to verify credentials and judicial documentation prior to granting site access.
3. **Privacy & Confidentiality:** AFCS personnel shall not collect, request, or disclose information regarding the citizenship or immigration status of any student, family member, or employee. Education records, addresses, student travel routes, and staff personnel details will not be disclosed without explicit parent/employee consent or a judicial order.
4. **Safety Plan & Community Notifications:** AFCS maintains emergency notification protocols in its Comprehensive School Safety Plan to inform parents, guardians, teachers, and staff if immigration enforcement activity occurs near or on school grounds.

5. **Emergency Care Safeguards:** If a student's parent/guardian is detained or unavailable due to an immigration enforcement action, school staff will contact designated emergency contacts on file to arrange care before involving outside social service agencies.

2026-2027 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PLAN (WVPP) POLICY

In accordance with California Labor Code Section 6401.9 (SB 553), AFCS maintains a written Workplace Violence Prevention Plan (WVPP) to protect all employees, students, and campus visitors. AFCS enforces a zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence, threats, intimidation, or physical harm. All employees are required to complete mandatory annual WVPP training, report potential threats or safety hazards immediately to administrative leadership, and participate in incident recording and response protocols.

2026-2027 LACTATION ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Pursuant to California Labor Code Sections 1030–1034, AFCS provides reasonable break time and appropriate, private facilities (other than a restroom) equipped with electrical outlets, seating, and refrigeration access for any employee desiring to express breast milk for an infant child.

2026-2027 STUDENT DISCIPLINE DUE PROCESS & INVOLUNTARY REMOVAL SAFEGUARDS

All staff must adhere to the student discipline procedures outlined in the AFCS Student & Family Handbook and California Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(J):

- **Graduated Response:** Classroom and school-managed behaviors must be addressed using graduated interventions before exclusionary discipline is considered.
- **Attendance Protections:** Students may never be suspended or expelled solely due to truancy, tardiness, or unexcused absences.
- **Suspension & Expulsion Due Process:** Suspensions under 10 days require notice and an opportunity for the student to respond. Expulsions or suspensions of 10 days or more require formal written notice and a hearing before a neutral hearing officer, with rights to counsel and witness presentation.
- **Involuntary Removal Safeguards:** Involuntary removal or disenrollment requires at least five (5) schooldays' advance written notice in the parent's primary language detailing hearing rights. The student remains enrolled until final determination if appealed.
- **Students with Disabilities:** Discipline involving students with IEPs or 504 Plans must adhere to IDEA and Section 504 Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) rules.

America's Finest CHARTER SCHOOL

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES, HIRING PROCEDURES & NOTICE OF INELIGIBILITY FOR REHIRE (NIE)

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

The following general statement of policy applies to all employees of America's Finest Charter School. If any conflict should exist between the Employment Handbook and a written Employee Agreement between the Employer and Employee, the Employment Agreement shall prevail.

HIRING POLICY & PROCEDURES

America's Finest Charter School is committed to recruiting, hiring, and retaining highly qualified, effective, and diverse faculty and staff members who align with our mission and educational philosophy.

Detailed Recruitment & Selection Process:

1. **Job Posting & Application:** Open positions are posted on approved educational career portals. Applicants must submit a completed application, resume, references, and relevant credential/educational documentation.
2. **Screening & Interviewing:** The administration conducts preliminary screening of qualifications followed by panel interviews and candidate teaching demonstrations or task assessments where applicable.
3. **Verification & Clearance:** Prior to extending a formal offer of employment, AFCS completes reference checks, education and credential verification, Live Scan background checks, and TB health screenings.
4. **Final Hiring Approval:** Final hiring recommendations are confirmed by administrative leadership and processed through Human Resources for orientation.

NOTICE OF INELIGIBILITY FOR REHIRE (NIE)

1. Purpose & Scope: This Notice of Ineligibility for Rehire (NIE) policy establishes clear standards and procedures regarding former employees whose employment with America's Finest Charter School has ended under circumstances that render them ineligible for future employment or re-engagement with AFCS.

2. Criteria for Ineligibility: An individual may be designated as "Not Eligible for Rehire" (NIE) based on factors including, but not limited to:

- Termination of employment for cause, severe misconduct, or gross negligence.
- Unprofessional conduct or serious violations of school policy (e.g., boundaries violations,

harassment, theft, safety non-compliance).
- Resignation in lieu of termination or while under formal investigation for severe misconduct.
- Job abandonment or failure to provide standard notice without extenuating circumstances.
- Substantiated findings of student safety or mandated reporting non-compliance.

3. Designation & Documentation Protocol:
- **Determination:** The decision to designate a departing employee as NIE is made by the Executive Director in consultation with Human Resources and, if appropriate, legal counsel.
- **Personnel File Record:** The NIE designation shall be clearly documented in the individual's confidential personnel file maintained by Human Resources.
- **Written Notification:** Where appropriate or required, a formal Notice of Ineligibility for Rehire (NIE) letter will be provided to the former employee or placed in their personnel file detailing the status.

4. Rehire Screening Verification: During any future recruitment process, Human Resources is required to check the applicant's prior personnel records against the NIE registry. Any former employee marked as NIE will be automatically disqualified from consideration for open positions, substitute roles, independent contractor positions, or volunteer roles involving direct student contact.

EMPLOYEE CORRECTIVE ACTION & WRITTEN WARNING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent, fair, and documented process for addressing employee performance, attendance, conduct, and workplace policy violations. The school seeks to maintain a safe, professional, respectful, and effective educational environment while ensuring that employment-related concerns are appropriately documented.

2. Scope

This policy applies to school employees designated as at-will employees, subject to applicable law, written employment agreements, collective bargaining agreements, and other controlling requirements.

3. At-Will Employment

To the extent permitted by applicable law, employment with the school is at will. Either the employee or the school may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or advance notice, subject to applicable legal requirements.

This policy does not create a contract of employment, guarantee continued employment, or require the school to follow a particular sequence of disciplinary steps before taking employment action.
The school may use coaching, a verbal warning, a written warning, a final written warning, suspension where lawful, or termination, depending on the circumstances. The school reserves the right to skip any step when appropriate.

4. Grounds for Corrective Action

Corrective action may be considered for documented concerns, including but not limited to:

- Failure to perform assigned duties or meet reasonable performance expectations.
- Repeated tardiness, unexcused absences, or failure to follow attendance procedures.
- Failure to follow established school policies or reasonable supervisory instructions.
- Unprofessional, disrespectful, or inappropriate workplace conduct.
- Failure to maintain required documentation, supervision, or classroom procedures.
- Negligent handling of school property, records, or confidential information.
- Safety violations or failure to follow applicable student-supervision procedures.
- Other substantiated conduct or performance concerns.

5. Progressive Corrective Action

When appropriate, the school may use the following steps:

- **Step 1 — Coaching or verbal warning:** The supervisor discusses the concern, clarifies expectations, and documents the discussion when appropriate.
- **Step 2 — First written warning:** The employee receives written notice describing the specific concern, required improvement, and expected timeframe.
- **Step 3 — Final written warning:** If warranted by subsequent conduct or performance, the school documents the continued concern and advises that further issues may result in additional action, up to and including termination.
- **Step 4 — Further employment action:** The school may take further action, including termination, consistent with applicable law and any controlling employment agreement.

These steps are guidelines, not mandatory prerequisites. The school may use a different sequence or take immediate action when warranted by the circumstances.

6. Documentation Requirements

Each written warning must include:

- Employee's name, job title, department, and supervisor.
- Date of the incident or performance concern.
- A factual description of the conduct, including dates, times, and relevant details.
- The applicable job expectation, policy, or instruction.
- Prior coaching or warnings, if relevant.

- The employee's response, if provided.
- Specific corrective actions and a reasonable review date, where appropriate.
- The potential consequences of failing to meet expectations.
- The signatures of the supervisor and employee, or documentation that the employee declined to sign.

Supervisors must avoid speculation, personal opinions, inflammatory language, and unsupported allegations. Documentation must be accurate, relevant, and based on information reasonably reviewed by the Executive Directors of AFCS and Human Resources.

RESIGNATION

Should it become necessary for an employee to terminate his/her employment with America's Finest Charter School, America's Finest Charter School requests the courtesy of the employee's notice of the intent to terminate employment at least two weeks prior to termination whenever possible. Upon termination of employment, all school property must be returned to the Executive Director and Human Resources including, but not limited to, computers, keys, gate security badge.

EXIT INTERVIEW

If an employee voluntarily leaves America's Finest Charter School, you may be asked to participate in an exit interview. During the exit interview, you can express yourself freely. We hope this will provide insight to both parties. All information will be kept confidential and will not affect any reference information we provide to another employer.

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

Employee files and benefit records are considered confidential. Keeping your file up to date can be important to you with regard to pay, deductions, benefits and other matters.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

You are responsible for providing the following information required for your personnel file. You must promptly notify America's Finest Charter School of any changes:

1. Full correct name, home address, telephone number, and social security number.
2. Copies of all academic records, credentials, degrees.
3. Annual forms and certifications as required.
4. Applications for benefits with accurate information.
5. Tuberculosis Tests. Employees must be tested every four years by having a skin test. If you qualify for the Tuberculosis Risk Assessment you may ask the office for the form and take it to your provider, have this form filled out and signed. A chest x-ray is also

acceptable. Current TB test results must be on file in the office and updated every four years.

6. Proof of U.S. citizenship. Federal regulations require that 1) before becoming employed, all applicants must complete and sign Federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form; and 2) all applicants who are hired need to present documents of identity and eligibility to work in the U.S.
7. Other forms as necessary.

INSPECTION OF YOUR FILE AND/OR BENEFIT RECORDS

You may inspect your own personnel file by making an appointment with Human Resources. Files will be inspected in the presence of one of the employees of the office. Benefit information, such as sick leave records, personal days used, or hours worked may also be reviewed. You may request and receive copies of all documents you have signed.
Benefits described in this manual apply only to full-time employees. All other policies apply to all employees.

FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

Full-time employees are those scheduled for 40 hours per week or more during the school year.

PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

An employee who is scheduled to work less than a 40-hour week is considered a part-time employee.

CONSULTANTS

America's Finest Charter School may hire persons for completion of a specific project. These persons may be hired as consultants and the job assignment; work schedule and duration of the position will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

EXEMPT AND NONEXEMPT EMPLOYEES

At the time of hiring, all employees are classified as either "exempt" or "nonexempt". By law, employees in certain types of jobs are entitled to overtime pay for hours worked in excess of eight hours per day or forty hours per work week. These employees are referred to as "nonexempt" and therefore they should receive overtime pay. Overtime hours require supervisor approval prior to being worked.

Exempt employees are administrators, teachers, professional staff, technical staff and others whose duties and responsibilities allow them to be "exempt" from the laws governing overtime pay.

EMPLOYEE EVALUATION

Job description and specific criteria for each position should be clearly communicated to each employee. Performance feedback is an important part of each person's growth. Feedback will be given on an ongoing basis. New employees and employees who have a change in responsibilities may be reviewed mid year for room for improvement at least once a year.

WORK SCHEDULES

The normal workweek is a five-day period, Monday through Friday. America's Finest Charter School's regular hours of operation are from 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. In general, employees are informed of their working hours/schedule at the inception of their employment relationship. Working hours and schedules vary depending upon the job classification and the school's needs. In addition, America's Finest Charter School reserves the right to alter schedules as it may require.
Teachers are required to work 187 days; 5 days are for teacher planning and staff development throughout the school year and 3 to 5 days are set aside as "Boot Camp" training which will happen the week before school begins.

MEALS AND REST PERIODS

The School complies with California meal and rest period laws. All non-exempt (hourly) employees must follow these requirements.

Meal Periods

- Employees working **more than 5 hours** must take an uninterrupted, duty-free meal period of at least 30 minutes, beginning no later than the end of the fifth hour of work.
- Employees working **more than 10 hours** must take a second uninterrupted, duty-free meal period of at least 30 minutes, beginning no later than the end of the tenth hour of work.
- Employees working **5 to 6 hours** may voluntarily waive their first meal period in writing. Employees working **up to 12 hours** may waive their second meal period

if they did not waive the first. The School provides voluntary written meal waiver agreements, which employees may revoke at any time.

- Employees must be completely relieved of all duties during meal periods and may leave the premises. Employees must accurately record the start and end times of each meal period in the School's timekeeping system.

Reporting Missed or Interrupted Breaks

Employees must report any missed, late, short, or interrupted meal or rest period to their supervisor and Human Resources on the same workday, explaining what occurred. When a break is voluntarily missed or changed by the employee, premium pay may not be owed. When the break is involuntarily missed or interrupted due to work demands, the employee may be entitled to one additional hour of pay, as required by law.

Supervisors may not pressure or coerce employees to skip or take late, short, or interrupted meal or rest periods. Employees who experience such pressure must report it to Human Resources.

Meal Period Summary

- **5 hours or less:** No meal period required.
- **More than 5 hours through 10 hours:** One 30-minute meal period, unless the employee works 6 hours or less and voluntarily waives it.
- **More than 10 hours:** Two 30-minute meal periods, unless the employee qualifies to waive the second meal period under the conditions above.

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TIMEKEEPING

To ensure compliance with all applicable laws, non-exempt employees must accurately record all hours worked using the School's timekeeping system. This means they must clock in and out whenever they begin, cease, or resume working during the course of a workday. While you need not clock out and in during your rest periods, you must clock out and in during your meal periods. Under no circumstances may one employee clock in or out for another employee. Exempt employees may also be expected to record their total time worked and report absences from work due to personal needs or illness.
Employees are prohibited from doing the following:

- Recording hours worked inaccurately.
- Recording hours worked on behalf of another employee.
- Working "off the clock."
- Failing to record all hours worked.
- Falsification of any time record. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

PAY PRACTICES

Payroll dates and times are scheduled according to America's Finest Charter School policy. Employees get paid 2 times per month on the 10th and the 26th of each month unless these days fall on a weekend or a holiday.

ANNIVERSARY DATE

The first day you report to work will be recorded in school records as your anniversary date. This date may be used to calculate many different school benefits. If you have any questions regarding your anniversary date, please see your supervisor.

BACKGROUND CHECKS & LIVE SCAN SECURITY PROTOCOLS

The California State Education Department requires background checks. The school recognizes the importance of maintaining a safe place for our students and Employees who are honest, trustworthy, qualified, reliable, and nonviolent, and do not present a risk of serious harm to their coworkers or others. Consistent with Education Department guidelines, prospective Employees are fingerprinted for a criminal background check and must be cleared by the California State Department of Justice before hire. For purposes of furthering these concerns and interests, the School reserves the right to investigate an individual's prior employment history, personal references, and educational background, as well as other relevant information that is reasonably

available to the School.

To ensure student safety, all prospective employees must undergo a fingerprint background check via Live Scan and obtain Department of Justice (DOJ) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) clearance prior to commencing employment on campus.

Live Scan Handling & Security Protocols:

- **Authorized Access Only:** Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) received from the DOJ is strictly confidential and accessible solely by authorized Custodians of Records in Human Resources.
- **Secure Storage:** Hard copies of Live Scan results and criminal background reports are stored in locked, fireproof filing cabinets separate from general personnel files. Electronic records are encrypted and restricted via secure access control.
- **Prohibited Dissemination:** CHRI results are never shared, transferred, or disclosed to unauthorized staff, outside entities, or third parties except as explicitly required by court order or statute.
- **Record Retention & Destruction:** Background check records are retained strictly in accordance with DOJ guidelines and are securely shredded/destroyed when no longer legally required.

CERTIFICATION, LICENSING AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Employees are responsible for obtaining and maintaining all licenses, certifications, and qualifications required for their positions. The school may award or provide support for additional certifications or training when deemed necessary. Employees must comply with all applicable requirements and complete any required licensing, certification, or testing as directed by their supervisor. Failure to obtain or maintain required qualifications may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

Upon joining our school, you were given this copy of our Employee Handbook. After reading this Employee Handbook, please sign the receipt page and return it to Human Resources. You will be asked to complete personnel, payroll and benefit forms.
If you lose your Employee Handbook or if it becomes damaged in any way, please notify your supervisor as soon as possible to obtain a replacement copy.
Your supervisor is responsible for the operations of your department. S(he) is a good source of

information about the School and your job.

LEGAL STATUS REQUIREMENTS & EMPLOYEE IMMIGRATION STATUS

In compliance with the federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), as amended, and any state law requirements, if applicable, our School is committed to employing only individuals who are authorized to work in the United States.
Each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility within three business days of hire.
If an employee is authorized to work in this country for a limited time, the individual will be required to submit proof of renewed employment eligibility prior to expiration of that period to remain employed by the School.

HEALTH EXAMINATION AND SCREENINGS FOR TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

In accordance with California Education Code Section 49406, all employees must provide documented proof of freedom from active tuberculosis prior to beginning employment and every four (4) years thereafter.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

We encourage you to bring your questions, suggestions and complaints to our attention. We will carefully consider each of these in our continuing effort to improve operations. If you feel you have a problem, present the situation to the Executive Director so that the problem can be settled by examination and discussion of the facts. Your suggestions and comments on any subject are important, and we encourage you to take every opportunity to discuss them with us. Your job will not be adversely affected in any way because you choose to use this procedure. If at any time you do not feel comfortable speaking with the Executive Director, discuss your concern with Human Resources.

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

At America's Finest Charter School, it is unlawful to manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess or use a controlled substance on school grounds or while performing work duties. If a violation of this policy occurs, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

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BENEFITS & WORKER'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE

HEALTH INSURANCE

Forms of Health Coverage Offered at AFCS: AFCS offers insurance plans for full time employees that include medical, dental, and vision insurance benefits, we also offer Employee Assistance Programs. Available benefit plans may vary and may change from time to time at AFCS's sole discretion. Affected employees will be advised of any such changes as required by applicable law. Employees who opt out of health coverage are offered a stipend in lieu of health coverage.

Medical

Employees who meet the eligibility requirements are provided with medical insurance at AFCS's expense. Employees, who are eligible may purchase dependent coverage at the employee's expense. Employees who sign up for dependent coverage must pay for the coverage through a payroll deduction.

Dental

Employees who meet the eligibility requirements are provided dental insurance at AFCS's expense. Employees, who are eligible may purchase dependent coverage at the employee's expense. Employees who sign up for dependent coverage must pay for the coverage through a payroll deduction.

Vision

Vision insurance is provided for full time employees on an individual basis at AFCS's expense. Employees who sign up family members for vision insurance must pay for the coverage through a payroll deduction.

Cessation of Benefits upon Termination

Regular insurance benefits cease on the last day of the month in which employment is terminated. Insurance benefits will be in effect during the summer months for returning employees.

WORK-RELATED INJURIES PROCEDURE

If you are injured on the job, your medical and hospital expenses and a portion of lost salary may be payable under Workers' Compensation Insurance. Employees injured on the job are covered under Worker's Compensation Insurance. Any job-related injury must be reported immediately to the office, and appropriate injury reports must be completed.

- **Reporting an injury:** You are responsible for reporting any job-related injury to the Office immediately.
- You will be asked to complete a simple form "Employer's First Report of Injury." The office will provide you with information so you can seek medical attention as necessary under the Workers' Compensation Plan.
- You will receive a pamphlet "Facts for Injured Workers" which will give you additional information about your rights under Workers' Compensation Insurance.
- You should report any injury in a timely fashion, even minor ones not requiring immediate medical attention, so that appropriate records can be kept. Should a minor injury develop into a more severe problem you and the school may be in a better position to make a claim.

LEAVE POLICIES

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF LEAVES OF ABSENCE

America's Finest Charter School's policy is to grant certain leaves of absence to eligible employees on a non-discriminatory basis within the parameters of its policies and applicable law. Unless applicable law requires otherwise, the following policies will govern the noted leaves of absence.

In general, America's Finest Charter School offers eligible employees leaves for:

- Short-term illness
- Family and medical needs under the Federal Family Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") and The California Family Rights Act ("CFRA")
- Pregnancy disability
- Kin care
- Bereavement
- Reproductive loss leave
- Jury duty
- Personal business

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Sick Leave/Personal Necessity Leave

America's Finest Charter School recognizes that there are times when employees have the need to take a brief period of time off due to short-term illness or injury to themselves or their legal dependents, personal necessity leave, or other statutorily protected purposes (including victim leave or judicial proceedings under AB 406 / SB 616). Salaried employees will receive

their hours upfront and all hourly employees will accrue hours at the rate of 1-hour time off for every 30 hours worked.
When employees must be seen by a doctor for an absence, the employee is to present a doctor's note to excuse the absence.

a. Maximum Accrual of Sick Leave Time

Each regular, salaried, full-time Certificated Staff and Confidential Administrative Assistants are eligible for ten (10) days of sick/personal necessity leave time each contract year. Other Classified, who are on salary, will receive six (6) days of sick/personal necessity leave time each contract year.
All hourly employees will accrue 1 hour of sick / personal necessity time after 30 hours worked. The maximum each employee can save is 600 hours.

b. Certificated employees need to request time off on Bamboo HR

See Human Resources if you need assistance.
https://americasfinestcharterschool.bamboohr.com/login.php

c. Cash Redemption for Sick/Personal Necessity Leave

Sick/personal necessity leave benefits are intended to assist eligible employees who must miss work due to an illness or injury or personal necessity leave. Accordingly, no other sick leave benefits are cashed out or paid upon retirement or termination of employment unless approved by the Executive Director. However, for participants in the STRS program, unused sick leave balances at retirement may be calculated as extra time worked and thereby increase retirement benefits.

Family and Medical Leave

Family and medical leaves of absence may be available to eligible employees. Unpaid leave may be taken according to applicable laws and AFCS policies.

Pregnancy Leave

An employee who is temporarily disabled and unable to work due to a pregnancy-related condition, is eligible to take an unpaid leave of absence for the period of her disability, provided such period does not exceed four (4) months.

Kin Care Leave

An employee who requests and is granted an unpaid leave of absence for family leave may be eligible for up to six (6) weeks' partial wage replacement benefits through the EDD Paid Family

Leave Insurance Program.

Bereavement Leave

Each employee will be provided with three (3) paid bereavement days for family members. Employees should make their requests for bereavement leave to the principal or Administrative Assistant as soon as possible.

Reproductive Loss Leave (Gov. Code § 12945.6)

In compliance with California Government Code Section 12945.6, eligible employees who have been employed with AFCS for at least 30 days may take up to five (5) days of protected leave following a reproductive loss event (including failed adoption, failed surrogacy, miscarriage, stillbirth, or unsuccessful assisted reproduction). Leave must be completed within three (3) months of the event and will be held in strict confidence.

Jury Duty

AFCS encourages its employees to participate in the judicial process from the vantage point of a juror. Regular full-time employees will be excused from work for required court duty.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Permission to attend conferences or other professional growth activities must be worked out with the Executive Director, in accordance with budget allocations for such activities.

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TEACHER

The role of the teacher is to provide for children a high-quality education, in an environment that is not only safe, but also in an atmosphere that promotes opportunities to expand their educational horizons and develop understanding and acceptance of other members of the school community.

ROLE & COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL AIDE

The role of the instructional aide is to support teachers and our SPED department in providing children a high-quality education, in an environment that is not only safe, but also in an atmosphere that promotes opportunities to expand their educational horizons and develop understanding and acceptance of other members of the school community.

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To support compliance with state and federal regulations for special education personnel, Special Education Instructional Assistants / Aides at AFCS must meet specific educational prerequisites.

Instructional Assistant College Prerequisites:

Requirement Category	Specification / Qualification
Educational Attainment	High School Diploma or recognized equivalent (GED) AND one of the following:
Option 1: College Coursework	Completion of at least 48 semester units (or 60 quarter units) of higher education coursework at an accredited institution.
Option 2: Associate Degree	An Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) degree or higher.
Option 3: Formal Assessment	Passage of an approved local academic assessment demonstrating knowledge of and ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics.

SPECIAL EDUCATION & MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

America's Finest Charter School adheres to the Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Local Plan and operates in full partnership with applicable educational authorities under formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).

- **SELPA Alignment:** AFCS maintains active MOUs with the El Dorado SELPA to define service delivery models, administrative responsibilities, regional placement procedures, and legal compliance mandates.
- **Staff Responsibilities:** All instructional, administrative, and specialized support staff are obligated to fulfill individual duties outlined under these agreements to guarantee a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for all special education students.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Teachers need to arrive at school no later than 7:40 am. Teachers are expected to work on campus until 3:40 pm. All other classified staff are required to arrive by their contractually agreed upon start time, and are expected to work on campus through their contracted hours.

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ATTENDANCE

Each teacher is responsible for taking attendance by 9:15 a.m. each morning.

CARE OF CHILDREN IN CASE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

First Aid supplies are kept in the school office, and minor first aid may be administered by the teacher. Depending on the nature of the illness/injury, a child should be accompanied to the office by a teacher or another adult or child for additional care as necessary. Any staff involved when a child is injured at school is to fill out an injury report form and return to the front office.

EMPLOYEE DRESS CODE

Employees are to come to work in Business Casual attire.

EMPLOYEE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

AFCS reimburses employees for reasonable, necessary, and pre-approved business expenses incurred in the direct performance of their job duties. To be reimbursed for all authorized expenses, you must submit an expense report/voucher accompanied by original receipts to Human Resources. All reimbursement requests must be approved by the Executive Director.

Expense Reimbursement Guidelines:

- **Approval Requirement:** All expenditures must be authorized in advance by the Executive Director.
- **Submission Process:** Employees must submit a completed Expense Reimbursement Request form along with itemized original receipts to the Business Office within 30 days of incurring the expense.
- **Processing Schedule:** Reimbursement requests are processed through regular accounts payable cycles, typically within two weeks of receipt of complete documentation.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff meetings are held on Wednesday Afternoons at the TK-8 campus. Staff meetings are held occasionally to go over school business. Teachers are expected to attend all professional development and faculty meetings unless excused by their supervisor.

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FIELD TRIPS

Classroom teachers are responsible for making their own field trip arrangements. Field trips are encouraged as part of the school curriculum. All out-of-class activities, however, must be directly related to curriculums being studied. There are forms for Parent Permission slips, bus reservations and lunches for field trips in the office.

FIRE DRILLS / DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Fire drills will be held regularly. Disaster Preparedness drills will be held at least once a year. Maps and specific evacuation directions will be given to all employees.

FUND RAISING

No request for funds should go to parents or to other members of the community unless first cleared through the Executive Director.

PERSONAL PHONE CALLS

Please keep your personal phone calls to a minimum—they must not interfere with your work or prevent access to your classroom.

PERSONAL USE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

To use AFCS equipment for personal benefit, during or after work hours, you must have authorization from the Principal.

SAFETY RULES & MANDATORY SAFETY TRAININGS

Safety is everybody's business. Safety is of prime importance in protecting you and our children. Below are general safety rules and mandatory annual trainings via Vector Training.

SECURITY

Maintaining the security of AFCS is every employee's responsibility. Cash is turned in daily to the campus designee.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

If it is necessary to have a substitute, arrangements should be made by the teacher through Bamboo HR and the leadership team.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

AFCS employees are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information obtained during the course of their employment with AFCS ("AFCS Information").

TEST SECURITY MEASURES

Maintaining the integrity and validity of all standardized, state, and local assessments (including CAASPP, ELPAC, and Northwest Evaluation Association assessments) is essential. All test administrators and staff must comply with strict test security protocols.

Test Security Requirements:

- **Trainings & Affidavits:** All staff involved in test administration must complete annual security training and sign required Test Security Affidavits prior to testing.
- **Secure Handling:** Testing materials and electronic log-ins must be kept secure at all times. Physical materials must be stored in locked rooms or cabinets when not in active use.
- **Prohibited Practices:** Staff are strictly prohibited from reviewing, copying, distributing, discussing, or altering student test items or responses before, during, or after administration.
- **Reporting Violations:** Any suspected testing irregularity, security breach, or impropriety must be reported immediately to the Site Testing Coordinator and Executive Director.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Please sign and return this page to Human Resources.

I acknowledge that I have received the *2026–2027 America's Finest Charter School Employee Handbook*. I understand that I am responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the policies, procedures, rules, and expectations outlined in the handbook.

I understand that I am responsible for seeking clarification from my supervisor or Human Resources if I have questions about any policy or procedure. I acknowledge that failure to comply with school policies and procedures may result in corrective or disciplinary action, consistent with applicable law and school policy.

I understand that this acknowledgment confirms receipt of the handbook and does not create an employment contract or guarantee employment for any specific period.

By signing below, I confirm that I have received the handbook and accept responsibility for familiarizing myself with and following its requirements.

Employee Name (Print): _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

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BOARD ADOPTION

This policy shall become effective upon approval by the America's Finest Charter School Board of Directors.

Date of Adoption: October 19, 2026

Secretary of the Board: _____

Board Meeting Date: October 19, 2026