



Employee Handbook

2025-2026

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SECTION 1: WELCOME

1.1 MISSION, VISION AND WELCOME

Mission

Harbor City International School is an inclusive, tuition-free, public school committed to academic challenge, community engagement, creative expression, and global perspective.

Vision

Harbor City International School is a dynamic and welcoming choice for students in grades 6–12. Our strong academic, arts, and community programs inspire curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking—preparing students for college, careers, and life beyond school.

We strive to be an inclusive environment where all students, families, and staff feel safe, valued, and respected. Through open communication, thoughtful problem-solving, and meaningful connections, we build a supportive and diverse community.

Our students take an active role in their education—asking questions, developing their voices, and using their knowledge to make a difference in the world. Families are true partners in learning, and our passionate, lifelong educators are at the heart of our school.

Located in the heart of Duluth, Harbor City is a vital part of downtown, bringing energy, engagement, and positivity to the community.

Welcome

Welcome to Harbor City International School, a public charter school that provides its employees the opportunity to work in an innovative school environment. Founded in 2000 by a group of teachers, the first students were enrolled in the fall of 2002. As a “teacher as owner” model, teachers serve as the ultimate source of accountability through their membership on the Board of Directors. With a strong belief in democratic leadership, HCIS strives to provide the best education for its students by respecting the collective wisdom of its community regarding the philosophy and programs of the school. Dialogue, civility, respect for peers, and compromise are highly valued. HCIS looks for the best in its students and expects the best from its staff.

Challenging students to reach academic excellence while promoting a sense of belonging requires reflective teaching practices, creativity, wisdom and experience. The messages we send our students about persistence, dedication, managing discomfort, and reaching just beyond their fingertips is critical to their success in the future.

The contents of the Employee Handbook explain the policies of HCIS and the expectations of employees.

1.2 CHANGES IN POLICY

This handbook is intended to provide you with a general understanding of our personnel policies. It will answer many of the questions you may have concerning your employment with HCIS.

However, this handbook cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question about employment.

This manual supersedes all previous employee manuals and memos that may have been issued from time to time on subjects covered in this manual.

However, since our business and our organization are subject to change, HCIS Administration reserves the right to interpret, change, suspend, cancel, or dispute without notice all or any part of our policies, procedures, and benefits at any time. We will notify all employees of these changes. Changes will be effective on the dates determined by the administration of HCIS, and after those dates all superseded policies will be null and void.

1.3 EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS

We rely upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application/resume and the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or if the person has been hired, termination of employment. Employees are responsible to have, maintain, and renew licenses/certificates required for their position. Failure to do so may result in termination of employment.

1.4 AT WILL EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

Your employment relationship with HCIS is voluntarily entered into and is subject to termination by you or the organization at will, with or without cause, at any time either you or the organization believes such action to be appropriate, subject to applicable laws. This handbook is not an employment contract and does not create contractual obligations concerning continuing employment or benefits. Employees are required to follow the Employment Termination Policy (see Section 3.14)

Violation of any of the policies in this handbook may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

If you have any concerns or suggestions related to this handbook, you are encouraged to discuss them with the Executive Director.

1.5 EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

This Guide is intended to fully comply with employee rights to protected, concerted activity. Concerted activity includes things like talking with co-workers about wages and benefits or other working conditions, refusal to work in unsafe conditions, and joining with co-workers to talk about problems in the workplace. No language or policy is intended to interfere with such rights. Handbook policies are designed to advance legitimate and substantial business interests. Should any provision in this handbook be found to be unenforceable and invalid, such a finding does not invalidate the entire handbook, but only the subject provision. Nothing in this handbook

is intended to infringe upon employee rights under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) or be incompatible with the NLRA.

SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS OF EMPLOYEE STATUS

2.1 EMPLOYEE DEFINED

Employees may be hired as regular full-time employees (minimum .8 FTE or 30 hours a week in a ten-month school year), and as such will be placed on the organization's payroll and will be eligible for all benefits as described in this manual.

Part-time employees working under an Agreement as described in this handbook, including PTO. PTO will be prorated to match the FTE. For instance 5 4-hour days of PTO for a .5 FTE. Time off work without pay for part-time employees may be granted by the Director.

Exempt Employees - Pursuant to applicable federal and state laws, exempt employees are not entitled to overtime pay. Exempt employees include:

- Faculty – Teaching staff,
- Administrative, Facilities Manager

Non-Exempt Employees (Non-teaching staff- paraprofessionals, Nutrition Coordinator, Office Coordinator) are entitled to overtime pay as required by applicable federal and state law.

Temporary (Full-Time or Part-time) employees are those whose performance is being evaluated to determine whether further employment in a specific position is appropriate during the 30 day evaluation period, or individuals who are hired as interim replacements (e.g. long term or daily substitutes) to assist in the completion of a specific project, work period, or for vacation relief. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. Temporary employees retain that status until they are notified of a change. Temporary employees are not eligible for any of the benefit programs.

Adjustments To Employee Status

The Director may at any time, but for specified reasons, adjust the salary, benefits (excluding any benefits required by law to be provided), leave accruals, titles, privileges or other personnel policies for any employee either upwards or downwards. Adjustments to employee status may be based upon, but in no way are restricted to, promotions, demotions, changes in job duties, disciplinary actions, and performance assessments.

Phasing-Out and Elimination of Positions

From time-to-time, it may be necessary to phase-out or eliminate certain positions previously established within the organization.

2.2 EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION

Equal Opportunity Employer

It is the policy of this organization to seek and employ the best qualified personnel without regard to race, religion, color, creed, national origin, citizenship, age, gender, marital status, sexual preference, disability or any other status protected by applicable local, Minnesota or Federal law.. It is further this organization's policy to ensure equal opportunity for the advancement of staff members and equal treatment in the areas of upgrading, training, promotion, transfer, layoff, and termination.

Employee Reference Checks

To ensure that individuals who join HCIS are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, it is the policy of HCIS to check the employment references of top applicants prior to employment.

Hiring

Upon employment by this organization, all employees are required to complete any and all necessary financial forms and benefit applications as deemed necessary by the Director or a designee.

Employment qualifications as stated by an employee or prospective employee on an employment application or related information may be verified, and falsification of such information may jeopardize an employee's standing with this organization or a prospective employee's likelihood of being hired.

SECTION 3: EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

3.1 NON-DISCRIMINATION

HCIS prohibits discrimination and/or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status or any other status protected by applicable law. All employees have the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and is free from discriminatory practices and/or harassment. Violations of this policy will not be tolerated.

Discrimination includes, but is not limited to: making any employment decision or employment related action on the basis of a protected class.

HCIS will make reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with known disabilities, unless doing so will result in an undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination in the workplace should follow the grievance policy which is located in policies 4.4 and 7.4 in this handbook.

3.2 NON-DISCLOSURE/CONFIDENTIALITY

Employees of this organization shall not, in any way, release any information about this organization, its activities, or the activities of its personnel except as normally required by their duties or as expressly permitted by the Director. The Director or their designee is/are the official spokesperson/people for HCIS.

No employee shall publish, disclose, or use, or authorize anyone else to publish, disclose, or use, or in any way cause to be published, disclosed, or used, any private or proprietary information which such employee may in any way acquire, learn, develop, or create by reason of employment with this organization, unless otherwise provided by the Director or their designee. Any document or other material containing such information is required to be returned to the Director upon an employee's termination or resignation.

All external contact and/or communication, including with media sources must be pre-approved by the Director.

Confidential Information includes, but is not limited to the following examples:

- Compensation data/discussion(not required by public disclosure laws)
- Marketing strategies
- Pending projects and proposals
- Proprietary processes
- Student/Personnel/Payroll records
- Business/school conversations between any person associated with the school or its employees
- Content of discussions during staff meetings that deal with students, families, and/or other staff. HCIS staff should be able to communicate with confidence that frank discussions will not be betrayed to the public, or otherwise undermined.
- Majority staff decisions will always be publicly portrayed as the unified voice of the school staff.
- Emails regarding school business, school personnel, or students.

Employees who improperly use, disclose, or access confidential business information and/or confidential staff discussions will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment and legal action, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

Personnel Inquiries

No one in this organization other than the Chair of the Board of Directors, Director, or their designee is authorized to respond either verbally or in writing to personnel inquiries of any type about any employee of this organization.

3.3 WAGE DISCLOSURE PROTECTION

Employees are allowed to share information about their own wages with others. HCIS will not: retaliate against an employee for disclosing their own wages; stop an employee from telling anyone about their own wages; or require an employee to sign a waiver that takes away this right.

The law does not: require an employee to tell anyone about their wages; allow an employee to share proprietary information (trade secrets) or other legally protected information; or allow an employee to share wage information of other employees.

3.4 NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

New employees may be required to attend orientation, which may occur on days when school is not in session and other teachers are not required to be in school.

3.5 SCHOOL HOURS

Work Days, Work Week, and Work Year

Unless otherwise provided for or as approved by the Director, all full-time employees are required to work a minimum of seven and a half (7.5) hours each day, Monday through Friday, and a minimum total of thirty-seven and a half (37.5) hours each week. Unless otherwise provided for by the Director, all full-time employees are expected to work from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM each workday, with a half hour lunch break. All salaried staff working .8FTE or more are expected to attend a staff meeting one day each week until 4:30pm. The day of the meeting will be consistent throughout the year and will be announced by the director at the start of the year. The Director may choose to find alternative meeting contributions for staff if needed. All salaried staff working .6 FTE or more will be assigned an additional 40 minute extra duty during the school day. This could include CP supervision, lunch supervision, school opening or other tasks the school may need. Employees may be asked to work outside of these hours to accommodate other school activities or events (for instance parent-teacher conferences). Part-Time employees are expected to work as outlined in their offer letter and the school calendar.

The full-time employment offer for each year refers to a calendar of staff work days between August and July of each year. Each employee is supplied with a calendar outlining required days at the beginning of each school year. Work days are not necessarily limited to the school calendar.

No time used for any personal endeavor within the workday is to be counted towards the daily or weekly minimum work hour requirements. Further, any employee wishing to engage in such personal activities must receive the prior approval of the Director or his/her designee.

Unauthorized Absence

When you are unable to work owing to illness or an accident, you must notify the Dean of Students who will notify the Director. This will allow the school to arrange for temporary coverage of your duties, and help other employees to continue work in your absence. If you do not report for work and the school is not notified of your status, it will be assumed after two consecutive days of absence that you have resigned, and you may be removed from the payroll. However, an employee is NEVER allowed to miss work without appropriately notifying the Dean of Students in advance.

If you become ill while at work or must leave the school for some other reason before the end of the workday, the employee must inform the Dean of Students (or, if the Dean of Students is absent, the Director) of the situation prior to leaving for the purpose of arranging coverage of duties.

3.6 LUNCH PERIODS

Employees are not guaranteed a duty-free lunch break. Lunch breaks generally are taken during the same time period as the student lunch. When employees need to use the lunch period for errands, they are to inform Administration in advance, and to return in time so that there is no disruption of instruction or supervision.

3.7 BREAK PERIODS

Break/Prep periods are paid and therefore the employee cannot leave school grounds unless they notify the Director or a designee and provide acceptable reason/s for leaving.

If employees have unexpected personal business to take care of, they must notify the Director or their designee in advance to discuss time away from work and make provisions as necessary. Personal business should be conducted on the employee's own time.

3.8 PERSONNEL FILES

Employee personnel files may include the following working documents: job application, job description, resume, records of participation in training events, salary history, records of disciplinary action and working documents related to employee performance reviews, coaching, and mentoring.

Personnel files are the property of HCIS and access to the information is restricted. Management personnel of HCIS who have a legitimate reason to review the files are allowed to do so.

Employees who wish to review their own file should contact a Director. With reasonable notice, the employee may review his/her/their personnel file in the school office and in the presence of a Director. Such employee may take written notes about the contents of the file, and may add comments for inclusion in the file at any time. No personnel file or its contents are to be removed from the office by any employee.

3.9 PERSONNEL DATA CHANGES

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify the Director or a designee of any changes in personnel data such as:

- Mailing address
- Telephone numbers

- Name and number of dependents (if applicable to insurance benefits)
- Individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency

An employee's personnel data should be accurate and current at all times.

3.10 INCLEMENT WEATHER/EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In the event of inclement weather, when students are officially notified that school is closed, HCIS staff members are not required to report to the school.

3.11 EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Employee Evaluations

All HCIS staff are encouraged to discuss job performance and goals with their peers, Executive Director and Leadership Team on an informal, ongoing basis. In addition, formal written evaluations of employees will be performed by the Director or a designee throughout the school year. The exact process of these evaluations will be communicated to employees throughout the school year.

Performance Concerns

Should a concern regarding an employee's professional performance arise during the school year, the Executive Director or Leadership Team shall bring the concern to the attention of the employee in a timely fashion.

3.12 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employees may hold outside jobs as long as the employee meets the performance standards of their job description with HCIS and it does not compete with, conflict with or compromise organizational interests. Employees of HCIS who have additional employment elsewhere are encouraged to inform their supervisor. Unless the Director approves an alternative work schedule to accommodate outside employment, employees will be subject to HCIS scheduling interests.

HCIS office space, equipment, and materials are not to be used for outside employment.

3.13 DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

HCIS reserves the right to assign employees to jobs other than their usual assignment when necessary, provided the employee is capable of performing the essential functions of the alternate assignment. Employees are not allowed to perform work (for pay) at home or away from HCIS unless specifically authorized for each occurrence by the Executive Director. Non-Exempt employees are not to work before or to continue working after their scheduled hours unless specifically authorized for each occurrence by their supervisor. Non-Exempt employees are not allowed to perform work while on scheduled non-paid lunch break, unless specifically assigned by the supervisor.

3.14 CORRECTIVE ACTION

HCIS holds each of its employees to certain work rules and standards of conduct (see Section 4). When an employee deviates from these rules and standards, HCIS expects the school administration to take corrective action.

Corrective action is progressive. That is, the action taken in response to a rule infraction or violation of standards typically follows a pattern increasing in seriousness until the infraction or violation is corrected or employment is terminated.

The usual sequence of corrective actions includes coaching (oral warning), a written warning, mentorship, probation, suspension without pay and/or termination of employment. In deciding which initial corrective action would be appropriate, the administration will consider the seriousness of the infraction, the circumstances surrounding the infraction, and the employee's previous record.

Though committed to a progressive approach to corrective action, HCIS considers some rule infractions and violations of standards as grounds for immediate termination of employment. These include, but are not limited to: theft in any form, insubordinate behavior, vandalism or destruction of school property, the use of school equipment and/or school vehicles without prior authorization, untruthfulness about work history, skills, or training, divulging school business practices or other sensitive information, undermining of school decisions, practices, or policies, and misrepresentations of HCIS to a student, parent, a prospective student/parent, the general public, and/or another employee.

3.15 EMPLOYMENT TERMINATION

Resignation

An employee who wishes to resign is required to give the Board of Directors (Appendix A) and a Director in writing, a minimum of four weeks prior notice to the desired resignation date, unless an exception is made by a Director. A resigning employee remains eligible for any salary due for time already worked. Timely notification of intent to leave HCIS is essential.

Termination

All employees serve at the will of the Board of Directors, and the authority to terminate an employee is vested with the Board of Directors or its designee, and may include, but is in no way limited to, a decision based upon a violation of any of the policies, procedures, regulations, or restrictions set forth in this manual. A terminated employee remains eligible for any salary due for time already worked.

Retirement

Employee chooses to leave employment with HCIS and start his/her retirement.

Return of Office Materials

An employee who is terminated or resigns must return all office keys, identification, security cards and codes, computer passwords and office materials and supplies in such employee's possession to the Executive Director immediately or within five days of the last day of school or the date of termination as directed by the School Director. No information or copies of information, including but in no way limited to files, memos, computer-stored items, lists or similar information, may be taken by such employee without the express permission of the School Director.

Employee benefits will be affected by employment termination in the following manner: some benefits may be continued at the employee's expense (see Section 6, Benefits) if the employee elects to do so. The employee will be notified of their COBRA benefits that may be continued and of the terms, conditions, and limitations.

3.16 SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

HCIS provides information to the school and its employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication such as:

- Training sessions
- Team meetings
- Email postings
- Memorandums paper or email
- Other written communications

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and exercise caution and common sense in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe conditions to the Director. Employees who violate safety standards, including cleanliness of work space, classrooms, school grounds, school vehicles, etc., cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or fail to report, or where appropriate, remedy such situation may be subject to disciplinary action.

In the case of an accident that results in injury, regardless of how significant the injury may appear, employees should notify the Executive Director immediately.

HCIS has developed an Crisis Response Plan specific to the activities of our school. Staff are required to follow this plan. Because HCIS has additional activities off campus, staff will be expected to be aware of and follow any additional policies that may accompany those activities.

3.17 REASONABLE FORCE STATEMENT

According to Minn. Stat. 121A.582, teachers, principals, or other agents of the district in exercising the person's lawful authority, may use reasonable force when it is necessary under the circumstances to correct or restrain a student or prevent bodily harm or death to themselves or another. Only staff members with current CPI Certifications may use restraining holds on Special Education Students.

3.18 BUILDING SECURITY

All employees who are issued keys to the school are responsible for their safekeeping. A designated employee, who leaves the school at the end of the business day assumes the responsibility to ensure that all doors are securely locked, and all lights are turned off with the exception of lights normally left on for security purposes. Administration reserves the right to charge employees for the cost of lost keys, including the re-keying of the building.

Director may assign closing duties to employees. Employees will be given information as to the proper procedure for carrying out these duties.

3.19 MONITORING OF BUILDING DURING SCHOOL HOURS

In order to promote a safe and violence-free school, HCIS staff is expected to monitor their classrooms or offices as well as school hallways, restrooms, and general commons areas. Any staff member who has a student or students in their workspace is expected to monitor those students. Additionally, staff is responsible for the monitoring of hallways or commons areas in the vicinity of their workspace, particularly during passing times and before and after school. Staff members may be assigned specific areas of the school to monitor during the school day.

3.20 MONITORING OF STUDENTS DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Staff who have students assigned to them during school hours are directly responsible for monitoring those students. Staff should not send students out of the classroom to an unsupervised area of the school, and should not send students off-campus without first gaining informed parental consent.

3.21 DATA PRIVACY

HCIS staff are expected to follow the guidelines for data privacy as dictated by the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act. Staff shall not allow inappropriate disclosure of a student's educational records. Teachers assigned Teaching Assistants will ensure that private data is protected, including grades and other components of education records. Documents related to employees of HCIS are also private data and cannot be shared.

3.22 GENERATIVE AI (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE) TOOL

HCIS prohibits employees from including any trade secrets, intellectual property, or other confidential information in their queries and conversations with generative AI tools. Caution must also be used to avoid using AI in a way that may violate copyright or intellectual property laws. Please bring any questions to the Dean of Students or Executive Director.

3.23 MANDATED REPORTING

It is the policy of HCIS to fully comply with Minn. Stat. 626.556 requiring school personnel to report suspected child neglect or physical or sexual abuse. It shall be a violation of this policy for any school personnel to fail to immediately report instances of child neglect, or physical or sexual abuse when the school personnel knows or has reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years. Reports are made to the County Initial Intervention Unit, phone number 218 471-7128 or 800 450-9777.

3.24 CODE OF ETHICS FOR MINNESOTA TEACHERS

The standards of professional conduct are as follows (Aug 2017):

- A teacher shall provide professional education services in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- A teacher shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to health and safety.
- In accordance with state and federal laws, a teacher shall disclose confidential information about individuals only when a compelling professional purpose is served or when required by law.
- A teacher shall take reasonable disciplinary action in exercising the authority to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- A teacher shall not use professional relationships with students, parents, and colleagues to private advantage.
- A teacher shall delegate authority for teaching responsibilities only to licensed personnel.
- A teacher shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter.
- A teacher shall not knowingly falsify or misrepresent records or facts relating to that teacher's own qualifications or to other teachers' qualifications.
- A teacher shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about students or colleagues.
- A teacher shall accept a contract for a teaching position that requires licensing only if properly or provisionally licensed for that position.

[See Link](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/8710.2100/) from the Minnesota Office of Revisor of Statutes. (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/8710.2100/>)

3.25 CODE OF ETHICS FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

- A school administrator shall provide professional educational services in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- A school administrator shall take reasonable action to protect students and staff from conditions harmful to health and safety.
- A school administrator shall take reasonable action to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- A school administrator shall not misuse professional relationships with students, parents and caregivers, staff, or colleagues to private advantage.
- A school administrator shall disclose confidential information about individuals only when a compelling professional purpose is served in accordance with state and federal laws, and school district policies.
- A school administrator shall not knowingly falsify or misrepresent records or facts relating to the administrator's qualifications, or to the qualifications of other staff or personnel.

- A school administrator shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about students, students' families, staff, or colleagues.
- A school administrator shall not accept gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment, nor offer any favor, service, or item of value to obtain special advantage.
- A school administrator shall only accept a contract for a position when licensed for the position or when a school district is granted a variance or letter of approval by the board.
- A school administrator, in filling positions requiring licensure, shall employ, recommend for employment, and assign only appropriately licensed personnel, or persons for whom the school district has been granted a variance by the appropriate state board or agency, unless, after making reasonable efforts to obtain a variance, an appropriately licensed person cannot be assigned and the position must be filled to meet a legitimate emergency educational need.
- A school administrator shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties.

[See Link](#) from the Minnesota Office of Revisor of Statutes.

3.26 INSURANCE OF PERSONAL EFFECTS

All employees should be sure that their own personal insurance policies cover the loss of anything occasionally left at or missing from the school or school property. HCIS assumes no risk for any loss or damage to personal property.

3.27 IMMIGRATION LAW COMPLIANCE

HCIS employs only United States citizens and those non-U.S. citizens authorized to work in the United States or in compliance with the immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

Each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form 1-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are rehired must also complete this form.

3.28 CRIMINAL AND EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND CHECKS

A criminal background check will be conducted on all school employees and independent contractors working with students. Volunteers may also be required to complete a background check depending on frequency, student contact and/or duties.

3.29 VISITORS IN THE WORKPLACE

To provide for the safety and security of employees, visitors, and the facilities, only authorized visitors are allowed in the school workplace and will be required to sign in at the front desk. Restricting unauthorized

visitors helps ensure security, decreases insurance liability, protects confidential information, safeguards employee welfare, and avoids potential distractions and disturbances. All visitors must check in at the office.

3.30 SUPPLIES AND EXPENDITURES OBLIGATING THE SCHOOL

Only authorized persons may purchase supplies in the name of HCIS. Authorized individuals must follow the HCIS Financial Accountability Staff Guidelines for all purchases made. Employees shall not incur any expense on behalf of the school by any promise or representation without prior approval.

3.31 EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Expenses incurred by employees must have prior approval from the Director. An example of such an expense would include mileage. Any expenses including those requiring reimbursement must include receipts. All reimbursement requests should be turned into the Director or designee with invoice/receipts of the actual expenses incurred by the employee per the Financial Accountability Staff Guidelines. [Expense Reimbursement Policy](#).

3.32 WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

HCIS is committed to maintaining a workplace where employees are free to raise good faith concerns regarding the business practices, specifically:

1. Reporting suspected violations of law, including but not limited to federal laws and regulations;
2. Providing truthful information in connection with an inquiry or investigation by a court, agency, law enforcement, or other governmental body; and
3. Identifying potential violations of HCIS policy, specifically the policies contained in the HCIS Employee Handbook

An employee who wishes to report a suspected violation of law or HCIS policy may do so confidentially by contacting the Director, the Chairperson of the Board, or school authorizer.

HCIS expressly prohibits any form of retaliation, including harassment, intimidation, adverse employment actions, or any other form of retaliation, against employees who raise suspected violations of law, cooperate in inquiries or investigations, or identify potential violations of HCIS. Any employee who engages in retaliation will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Any employee who believes that he/she/they has been subjected to any form of retaliation as a result of reporting a suspected violation of law or policy should immediately report the retaliation to the Director, or the Chairperson of the Board.

Reports of suspected violations of law or policy and reports of retaliation will be investigated promptly and in a manner intended to protect confidentiality, consistent with a full and fair investigation. The Director will conduct or designate other internal or external parties to conduct the investigations. The investigating parties will notify the concerned individuals of their findings directly.

3.33 TUITION REIMBURSEMENT POLICY (passed by BOD 5/17, updated 3/2024)

Harbor City International School (the School) believes that the School and its students benefit when employees develop and improve their knowledge and skills. Obtaining additional education and licensing can increase teaching skills and professional competence. The intention of this policy is to encourage employees to take classes that will benefit the school as well as the employee. This is the guiding factor when evaluating applications for tuition reimbursement.

Policy:

The School may reimburse tuition for School employees if the following conditions are satisfied:

1. Money has been budgeted (\$17,400 per year) and is available for the requested education plan. Money may be budgeted for specific subject areas, licensure or courses depending on the needs of the school and available revenue. Reimbursement is determined by the needs of the school first and will vary according to money available.
2. The employee has been employed by the Harbor City International School (HCIS) for at least two (2) years.
3. Potential for continued employment with the School exists.
4. The tuition is for courses that:
 - a. Are applicable to a position and/or future positions in the organization.
 - b. If for special education, meet the federal guidelines for tuition reimbursement.
5. The courses are taken at:
 - a. Fully accredited colleges or universities.
 - b. A school providing training or instruction that is approved by the Minnesota Department of Education Board of Teaching
6. Courses are taken outside of regularly scheduled work hours.
7. A reimbursement schedule will be included in the tuition reimbursement agreement and may be over multiple years and subject to continued employment at HCIS. The tuition agreement may include partial reimbursement for a course or courses. While \$17,400 will be budgeted each year, no more than \$5,800 per person will be paid per year.
 - a. Unused funds will roll into the HCIS fund balance.
 - b. Tuition reimbursement plans will be reviewed each year, and the amount reimbursed to each individual will be based on school needs as determined by the Director and voted on by the Board.
 - c. An employee may submit a tuition reimbursement request for 4 years, but may receive different reimbursement amounts for each year, or may receive no funding for some years.
 - d. The Director will annually review all tuition reimbursement requests, new and existing, and propose tuition reimbursement amounts to the BOD each year in April.
 - e. The BOD will take action on reimbursement requests by May so requesters have adequate time to secure other funding or withdraw from their program. It is the Director's responsibility to communicate funding decisions to applicants.
8. Because of the significant investment in the employee, the school may ask for repayment of tuition reimbursement - or costs associated with obtaining a license - if the employee opts to leave HCIS within four years of receiving reimbursement costs.

- a. If the employee opts to leave within one year of the reimbursement, they will agree to pay the school 100% of what the school invested for tuition or licensing costs.
- b. If the employee opts to leave within two years, they will agree to pay the school 75% of what the school invested.
- c. If the employee leaves within three years, they will agree to pay the school 50% of what the school invested.
- d. If the employee leaves within four years, they will agree to pay the school 25% of what the school invested.
- e. If the employee leaves after five years, they will not be required to pay the school back for tuition reimbursement or licensing costs.
- f. If the employee has been with HCIS for 6 or more years prior to pursuing additional education/licensure, reimbursement costs may be waived should the employee leave within 4 years of receiving reimbursement.
- g. Fees to attend workshops are not considered tuition reimbursement.

[Reimbursement agreement](#)

Process:

Reimbursement will only be considered when the following conditions are met:

1. The employee submits an education plan. The plan will answer the following questions:
 - a. How will the education plan improve the teacher's ability to meet the school's mission?
 - b. What course(s) will be taken?
 - c. Where will the courses be taken?
 - d. When are the courses anticipated to be completed?
 - e. How much is the plan expected to cost (itemized)?
 - f. If the employee is seeking funding through Special Education, the request also should contain justification for funding to meet federal guidelines. The guiding questions are:
 - i. In the absence of special education needs, would this cost exist?
 - ii. Will this professional development expand and enhance the direct instruction of students with disabilities?
 - iii. Will this training expand and enhance the IEP process?
 - iv. Will this professional development opportunity (training) expand and enhance delivery of IEP specific disabilities services?
2. The school's director(s) give an initial approval to the employee's request for reimbursement and a Tuition Reimbursement Agreement is created. Employees seeking reimbursement must deliver their education plan to the Director by March 31st of the year prior to their program starting. *Example: Classes start in Fall 2024, education plan must be completed by March 2024.* The Director will present education plans to the board, and the board will decide by May. Tuition Reimbursement Requests are not guaranteed until the board makes the final approval.
3. The Tuition Reimbursement Agreement has received final approval from the Board of Directors.

April Board Meeting

- Director presents tuition reimbursement requests for following fiscal year to the board
- Board may ask questions, seek clarification

May Board Meeting

- Board votes on tuition reimbursement requests

4. Reimbursement will be paid according to the tuition reimbursement agreement when the employee:
 - h. Provides evidence of completion of the course with a passing mark of B or better.
 - i. Provides an itemized receipt of the payment of tuition.
 - j. Passes any applicable or qualifying exam.

SECTION 4: STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

4.1 WORK RULES AND STANDARDS

The work rules and standards of conduct for HCIS are important and the school regards them seriously. All employees are urged to become familiar with these rules and standards. In addition, employees are expected to follow the rules and standards faithfully in doing their own jobs and conducting the school's business. Please note that any employee who deviates from these rules and standards will be subject to corrective action.

While not listing all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of rule infractions or misconduct.

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property;
- Falsification of timekeeping records (See Section 5.2, Timekeeping);
- Working under the influence of alcohol, CBD/THC products (ex: gummies) and marijuana or illegal drugs (See Section 4.6, Substance Abuse);
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace (See Section 4.7, Substance Abuse);
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace;
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace;
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of school-owned or customer-owned property;
- Violation of safety or health rules,;
- Smoking in the workplace, on school grounds, or on/during school sponsored trips;
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment (See Section 4. 3, Harassment, including Sexual Harassment);
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice, or excessive lateness (See also, Section 4.2 Attendance/Punctuality and 4.3, Absence without Notice);

- Unauthorized use of telephones, or other School-owned equipment (See Section 4.5, Telephone Use);
- Using school equipment for purposes other than business (i.e. playing games on computers or excessive, inappropriate, or unproductive personal internet usage);
- Unauthorized public disclosure of student records, confidential information, and sensitive staff decision making discussions;
- Violation of personnel policies;
- Unsatisfactory performance.

4.2 ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY

The presence or absence of each employee is of critical importance to the successful operation of HCIS. Therefore, HCIS expects all of its employees to be on time, ready to begin work at the beginning of their day, and to work the full allotted time they are assigned each day. Attendance at HCIS sponsored functions is not compensated unless the supervisor has required you to attend and work at the function and has written approval from the Director to provide the additional compensation.

If you are unable to report for work for any reason, notify the Dean of Students immediately, at latest 6:30 AM. You are responsible for speaking directly with the Dean of Students about your absence.

Please see: [Requesting a sub or time off document](#)

4.3 HARASSMENT, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

SEXUAL, RACIAL & RELIGIOUS HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning and working environment that is free from religious, racial or sexual harassment and violence. Harbor City International School prohibits any form of religious, racial or sexual harassment and violence.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- It is the policy of Harbor City International School to maintain a safe learning and working environment that is free from religious, racial or sexual harassment and violence. The school prohibits any form of religious, racial or sexual harassment and violence.
- It shall be a violation of this policy for any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel of the school district to harass a pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel through conduct or communication of a sexual nature or regarding religion and race as defined by this policy. (For purposes of this policy, school personnel includes school board members, school employees, agents, volunteers, contractors or persons subject to the supervision and control of the district.)
- It shall be a violation of this policy for any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel of the school to inflict, threaten to inflict, or attempt to inflict religious, racial or sexual violence upon any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel.

- The school will act to investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written, of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence, and to discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who is found to have violated this policy.

RELIGIOUS, RACIAL AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE DEFINED

Sexual Harassment; Definition

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when: submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining or retaining employment, or of obtaining an education; or

- o submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment or education; or
- o that conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's employment or education, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive employment or educational environment.
- Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to:
 - o unwelcome verbal harassment or abuse;
 - o unwelcome pressure for sexual activity;
 - o unwelcome, sexually motivated or inappropriate patting, pinching or physical contact, other than necessary restraint of pupil(s) by teachers, administrators or other school personnel to avoid physical harm to persons or property;
 - o unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's employment or educational status;
 - o unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's employment or educational status; or
 - o unwelcome behavior or words directed at an individual because of gender.
- Racial Harassment; Racial harassment consists of physical or verbal conduct relating to an individual's race when the conduct:
 - o has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment;
 - o has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or
 - o otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.
- Religious Harassment; Religious harassment consists of physical or verbal conduct which is related to an individual's religion when the conduct:
 - o has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment;
 - o has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or
 - o otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.
- Sexual Violence; Sexual violence is a physical act of aggression or force or the threat thereof which involves the touching of another's intimate parts, or forcing a person to touch any person's intimate parts. Intimate parts, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 609.341, includes the primary genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttocks or breast, as well as the clothing covering these areas.

- o Sexual violence may include, but is not limited to:
 - o touching, patting, grabbing, or pinching another person's intimate parts, whether that person is of the same sex or the opposite sex;
 - o coercing, forcing or attempting to coerce or force the touching of anyone's intimate parts;
 - o coercing, forcing or attempting to coerce or force sexual intercourse or a sexual act on another;
 - o threatening to force or coerce sexual acts, including the touching of intimate parts or intercourse, on another.
- Racial Violence; Racial violence is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another because of, or in a manner reasonably related to, race.
- Religious Violence; Religious violence is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another because of, or in a manner reasonably related to, religion.
- Assault; Definition: Assault is:
 - o an act done with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or death;
 - o the intentional infliction of or attempt to inflict bodily harm upon another; or
 - o the threat to do bodily harm to another with present ability to carry out the threat.

REPORTING PROCEDURES ([link](#))

Any person who believes they have been the victim of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence by a pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel of Harbor City International School, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence toward a pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel should report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school district official designated by this policy. The school encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form available from the Director or available from the Main Office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well.

At Harbor City International School, a Director is the person responsible for receiving oral or written reports of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence. Any adult school district personnel who receives a report of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence shall inform the Director immediately.

Upon receipt of a report, the Director must notify the school human rights officer immediately, without screening or investigating the report. The Director may request, but may not insist upon a written complaint. A written statement of the facts alleged will be forwarded as soon as practicable by the Director to the human rights officer. If the report was given verbally, the Director shall personally reduce it to written form within 24 hours and forward it to the human rights officer. Failure to forward any harassment or violence report or complaint as provided herein will result in disciplinary action against the Director. If the complaint involves the Director, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the Board of Directors Chair or the school's human rights officer by the reporting party or complainant. 413-5

For the Board of Directors:

The Board of Directors hereby designates as the school district human rights officer(s) to receive reports or complaints of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence. If the complaint involves a human rights officer, the complaint shall be filed directly with the President of the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors shall conspicuously post the name of the human rights officer(s), including mailing addresses and telephone number.

Submission of a good faith complaint or report of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades or work assignments.

Use of formal reporting forms is not mandatory.

The Board of Directors will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the Board of Directors legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations.

INVESTIGATION

By authority of Harbor City International School, the human rights officer, upon receipt of a report or complaint alleging religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence, shall immediately undertake or authorize an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by Harbor City International School's officials or by a third party designated by the school district.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the school should consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.

In addition, the school district may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, pupils, teachers, administrators or other school personnel pending completion of an investigation of alleged religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence.

The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable. The school's human rights officer shall make a written report to the Executive Director upon completion of the investigation. If the complaint involves the President of the Board of Directors, the report may be filed directly with the Board of Directors. The report shall include a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual and whether they appear to be violations of this policy.

SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION

Upon receipt of a report, the school will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination or discharge. School's action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, Minnesota and federal law and school district policies.

The result of the school's investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant by the school district in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

REPRISAL

Harbor City International School will discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence or any person who testifies, assists or participates in

an investigation, or who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such harassment or violence. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.

RIGHT TO ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse which may include filing charges with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, initiating civil action or seeking redress under state criminal statutes and/or federal law.

HARASSMENT OR VIOLENCE AS ABUSE

Under certain circumstances, alleged harassment or violence may also be possible abuse under Minnesota law. If so, the duties of mandatory reporting under Minn. Stat. § 626.556 may be applicable.

Nothing in this policy will prohibit the school from taking immediate action to protect victims of alleged harassment, violence or abuse.

DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND TRAINING

- This policy shall be conspicuously posted throughout each school building in areas accessible to pupils and staff members.
- This policy shall be given to the school's employee and independent contractor at the time of entering into the person's employment contract.
- This policy shall appear in the student handbook.
- The school district will develop a method of discussing this policy with students and employees.
- This policy shall be reviewed at least annually for compliance with state and federal law.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 121A.03, Subd. 2 (Sexual, Religious and Racial Harassment and Violence Policy)

Minn. Stat. Ch. 363 (Minnesota Human Rights Act)

Minn. Stat. § 626.556 et seq. (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)

42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq. (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 102 (Equal Educational Opportunity)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 403 (Discipline, Suspension, and Dismissal of School District Employees)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 406 (Public and Private Personnel Data)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 414 (Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 525 (Violence Prevention)

4.4 PUBLIC IMAGE AND DRESS CODE

A professional appearance is important any time that you come in contact with students, parents, and the general public. Employees should be well-groomed and dressed appropriately for their position.

4.5 SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Adopted: January 8, 2015

HARBOR CITY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL POLICY No. 4.6.4

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE / DRUG-FREE SCHOOL

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to maintain an alcohol and drug-free workplace and safe and healthy environment for students and employees.

POLICY STATEMENT

For the health and safety of students and employees, HCIS prohibits employees from manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, attempting to sell, attempting to distribute, possessing or using illegal controlled substances in the workplace. Employees are further prohibited from possessing, using or distributing alcohol and/or cannabis in the workplace.

POLICY

Controlled Substances. It is a violation of this policy to illegally manufacture, distribute, dispense, attempt to sell, attempt to distribute, possess or use illegal controlled substances on school premises, during school-sponsored activities or in the workplace.

Alcohol. It is a violation of this policy to possess, use or distribute alcoholic beverages on school premises or during school-sponsored activities.

Cannabis. It is a violation of this policy to possess, use, or distribute cannabis products on school premises, during school-sponsored activities, or while operating school vehicles, machinery, or equipment.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following terms shall mean:

- “Alcohol” includes any alcoholic beverage, malt beverage, fortified wine, or other intoxicating liquor.
- “Cannabis” includes cannabis flower, product, lower-potency hemp edibles, or hemp-derived consumer product.
- “Controlled substances” include narcotic drugs, hallucinogenic drugs, amphetamines, barbiturates,, anabolic steroids, or any other controlled substance as defined in Schedules I through V of the Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. §812, including analogues and look-alike drugs.
- “Toxic substances” includes glue, cement, aerosol paint, or other substances used or possessed with the intent of inducing intoxication or excitement of the central nervous system.
- “Use” includes to sell, buy, manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, and/or controlled substances, whether or not for the purpose of receiving remuneration or consideration.
- “Possess” means to have on one’s person, in one’s effects, or in an area subject to one’s control.
- “School location” includes any school building or on any school premises; in any school-owned vehicle or in any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities; off school property at 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 during any period of time such employee is supervising students on behalf of the school otherwise engaged in school business.
-

MANDATORY REPORTING

Employees shall, within five (5) calendar days of conviction, notify the Director of any criminal drug statute conviction occurring in the workplace. The Director shall notify the appropriate federal agency of conviction.

ENFORCEMENT

Any employee who violates this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment in accordance with the provisions of the current employee agreement or other procedures established by the Board and referral for prosecution.

DISTRIBUTION OF POLICY

This policy shall be distributed to all employees of HCIS. In addition, in-service programs shall be held periodically which inform employees about the dangers of alcohol and other drug abuse in the workplace, the school's employee assistance program or other rehabilitation programs available, and the penalties that may be imposed upon employees for violations of this policy.

All employees are expected to abide by the provisions of this policy.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. §624.701 (Liquor in Certain Buildings or Grounds)

41 U.S.C. §§701-707 (Drug-Free Workplace Act)

20 U.S.C. §§7101-7165 (Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act)

21 U.S.C. §812 (Schedules of Controlled Substances)

21 C.F.R. §§1308.11-1308.15 (Controlled Substances)

34 C.F.R. Part 85 (Government-Wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace)

4.6 TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Adopted: December 11, 2014

HARBOR CITY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL POLICY No. 5.5.3

TOBACCO FREE ENVIRONMENT

PURPOSE

The Board of HCIS recognizes that the use of tobacco presents a health hazard to both the user of tobacco and to persons subject to secondhand smoke. The purpose of this policy is to describe the Board's policy with respect to tobacco use on school property and at extracurricular events.

POLICY STATEMENT

For the health and well-being of students, employees, and the public who visit HCIS buildings and grounds, it is the policy of HCIS to prohibit tobacco use.

TOBACCO USE PROHIBITED

No person shall at any time smoke, chew, or otherwise ingest tobacco or a tobacco product in HCIS. This prohibition extends to all facilities, whether owned, rented, or leased, and all vehicles that HCIS owns, leases, rents, contracts for, or controls. For purposes of this policy, "use of tobacco" shall mean all uses of tobacco, including a cigar, cigarette, pipe, snuff, or any other matter or substances that contain tobacco.

This prohibition also extends to HCIS staff and students while at any school sponsored function, regardless of whether the function takes place on school grounds. School district jurisdiction is limited only to the designated school zone, as defined by 5th Avenue West, I-35, 3rd Avenue West and the upper side of /Superior Street. Violations of this prohibition will be subject to appropriate discipline.

OTHER NICOTINE-DELIVERY SYSTEMS PROHIBITED

No person shall use or possess nicotine-delivery systems on school grounds or in the designated school zone.

EXCEPTIONS

- Nothing in this policy shall prohibit the lighting of tobacco by an adult as part of a traditional spiritual or other recognized cultural ceremony.
- Additionally, nothing in this policy shall prohibit adult employees or visitors from using transdermal nicotine delivery systems, or nicotine gum.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. §§144.411-144.417 (Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act)
Minn. Stat. Ann. §144.4165 (Tobacco products prohibited in public schools)

4.7 PERSONAL USE OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND HCIS TECHNOLOGY

Telephone

HCIS telephones are intended for the use of serving our students and in conducting school business.

Personal usage during business hours is discouraged except for extreme emergencies. All personal telephone calls should be kept brief, and staff should support the effort to keep students from using cell phones by using their own cell phones in private areas, and by not using cell phones during times they are responsible for students (i.e. class time). Employees should not make personal long distance calls from the office. If unavoidable, and they cannot be charged to a home number or credit card, the employee will pay for the actual cost.

To respect the rights of all employees and avoid miscommunication in the school, employees must inform family and friends to limit personal telephone calls during working hours.

Copier

The school copier is to be used for copies related to the educational mission of HCIS. Employees should refrain from making personal copies on the school copier.

Use of Email, Voicemail and Computer Technology

Valid uses of the school's computers and electronic technology includes: Communicating, transmitting and storing information relating to HCIS, its students, its business and its activities; broadcasting authorized meaningful information to individuals or groups within the school; composing and editing newsletters and mailings, and other appropriate uses.

Inappropriate use of HCIS technology includes: Extensive personal use of equipment which detracts from job performance; communicating highly confidential information to others who do not have a need to know it; sending, viewing, listening to, or storing obscene, offensive, or harassing information of any kind; using HCIS equipment for personal profit or gain; attachment or download of games, viruses, or offensive graphics on the computer, or attaching same to electronic messages; chain letters; communication which speaks poorly of the school or any other person or group; or other uses which are inappropriate. Such inappropriate uses of HCIS technology may be grounds for discipline or termination of employment.

HCIS encourages the use of good judgment in all electronic and verbal communications.

Please refer to Harbor City International School Policy No. 4.8.1: *Use of Internet, Email, Computers, Voicemail and other electronic systems* and 4.8.2 : *Employee use of social media*.

4.8 GUIDELINES FOR VISUAL MEDIA SHOWN IN CLASS

HCIS trusts teachers to make wise decisions about visual media shown to students, and HCIS also respects the thoughtful choices individual parents/guardians make about images they choose or choose not to have their children witness. As such, the following policy applies to all movies, films, documentaries, and visual documents shown as part of the HCIS curricular program:

If a visual document is rated, the rating should not exceed the ages of the students in the course. Generally, this means that movies, films, and documentaries should not exceed a PG-13 rating. If a document with an R-rating is shown, the following standards must be met:

- The teacher must gain approval from the Director prior to showing an R-rated visual, and when submitting the request the teacher must demonstrate that an attempt to find a non R-rated visual of similar educational merit was unsuccessful, and must provide a written explanation justifying the R-rated selection.
- A permission form signed by the student's parent/guardian must be submitted to the teacher prior to the viewing, and the form must include a description of the document and a description of how the document connects to the curricular content of the course.
- An alternative activity must be available for students and/or parents who opt out of the viewing.
- The regular classroom teacher must have made students aware, prior to viewing, of the substantial connection between the content of the R-rated document and the content of the class.
- The regular classroom teacher must be present during the viewing (R-rated documents cannot be shown as part of plans for a substitute teacher.)
- The regular classroom teacher must have previewed the document and needs to skip through scenes that have gratuitous violence, nudity, or language that do not enhance the educational quality of the document.
- Documents shown at school-related events, but that are not part of the curricular program, are not to exceed the PG-13 rating. Video games are not to exceed a teen rating. If a teacher wants to show visual media that exceeds these ratings, they must follow through with standards 1 and 2 as listed above.

4.9 COPYRIGHT LAWS

Copyrights

Copyrights, payments and/or royalties which occur as a result of a project of any employee or employees of this organization remain the property of the organization. The Director may assign copyrights, royalties, or other payments to the author or authors or project participants. Employees should respect copyright laws when making copies for student use or showing media for classroom use.

Works Made for Hire

Any work created by an employee at the request of the employer are works made for hire in which HCIS owns the intellectual property rights and copyright. Employees may not reproduce or publish these works, except in the pursuit of employment duties.

4.10 TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

Mileage Reimbursement

HCIS staff, performing approved work-related approved travel, have the option of claiming a mileage reimbursement equaling the current year IRS standard rate minus \$.05. This rate will be adjustable annually, based on the adjustment made by the IRS.

The HCIS transportation policy provides guidance and requirements for the operation of HCIS vehicles, staff/driver training, and expectations for driving behavior. This policy applies to all HCIS vehicles, vehicles rented by HCIS for school use, and any personal vehicles used to carry students for school business. HCIS vehicles are intended for HCIS business only (student travel, staff professional development). All use of HCIS vehicles must have the approval of the Director.

Driver Requirements and Training Policies

The vehicle driver must:

- Be at least 21 years of age;
- Have in their possession a valid driver's license and a copy of that license on file with the school;
- Have permission of the HCIS Director;
- Have a criminal background check on file with the school
- Have completed the Dept. of Public Safety Type III School Bus training, including completing a Driving Evaluation with the Transportation Supervisor and submitting a copy of their driving record.

Vehicle Operating Policies:

- Vehicle drivers are expected to check vehicle keys in and out of the Business Office before and after use.
- Upon return, vehicles are expected to be clean and to have a full tank of gas
- Hours of Service (HOS)(length of time driving or combination of driving and non-driving work). Drivers will not be behind wheel longer than ten hours, or work a combination of driving and other duties totaling more than fifteen hours in any twenty-four hour period. This includes transporting students or staff, pulling trailers, or driving empty vehicles. HCIS encourages drivers to rest when fatigued.
- No alcohol or non-medical drugs may be consumed while operating an HCIS vehicle or a personal vehicle being used for HCIS business. Additionally, drivers of HCIS vehicles must refrain from drinking alcohol for at least ten hours prior to driving. Drivers also need to be aware of any possible adverse reactions from any prescription or nonprescription drugs, such as antihistamines they may be taking.
- Drivers must require students to wear seatbelts at all times when the van is moving.
- All HCIS vehicles must be driven with headlights on during operation.
- Drivers must observe posted speed limits, traffic signs and legal rules of the road. Vehicles pulling trailers or loaded with students will not exceed 70 mph, even if posted speed limits are greater.

- Avoid driving practices that lead to loss of control such as driving too fast for road conditions and panic steering.
- Load vehicles and trailers properly. Flammable liquids/materials must not be transported in the passenger compartment of vehicles.
- HCIS vehicles are serviced on a regular schedule. When operating an HCIS vehicle, employees are encouraged to routinely check the tires, oil, lights, spare, jack, fluids and belts, and report any irregularities to the Facilities Manager.
- All other laws and regulations applying to the use of public school vehicles within the state of Minnesota also apply, including the obligation to evaluate the vehicle prior to use.

Driving Behavior Expectations:

- HCIS will support the decisions of person acting in a prudent manner. Driving in an unsafe or dangerous manner is unacceptable.
- Picking up hitchhikers is not allowed.
- Drivers must avoid distractions while driving
 - o Driver use of cellphones while operating an HCIS vehicle is prohibited while the vehicle is in motion.
 - o Be prepared to properly handle the vehicle while controlling passenger behavior.
 - o Use passengers to adjust radio, climate control, answer cell phones or respond to other passenger needs.

SECTION 5: WAGE AND SALARY POLICIES

5.1 WAGE OR SALARY INCREASES

Each employee's hourly wage or salary will be reviewed at least once each year. The employee's review date will usually be conducted during the spring of each year. Such reviews may be conducted more frequently for a newly created position, or based on a recent promotion/job change.

Increases will be determined on the basis of school financial status, job performance, adherence to policies and procedures, and ability to meet or exceed duties per job description. Fluctuations in student enrollment can also impact wages and salaries.

5.2 TIMEKEEPING

Accurate recording of time worked is the responsibility of every non-exempt/hourly employee. Time worked is the time actually spent on a job(s) performing assigned duties.

The school does not pay for extended breaks or time spent on personal matters.

The timesheet is a legal instrument. Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another team member's time record may result in disciplinary action.

Authorized personnel will review time records each month. The Business Liaison or Executive Director must approve any changes to an employee's time record. Questions regarding payroll should be directed to the Director.

5.3 OVERTIME

Overtime compensation is paid to non-exempt employees in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions. Overtime is payable for all hours worked over 40 per week for all at a rate of one and a half times the non-exempt employee's regular hourly rate. Paid Time Off, personal time, holidays, or any leave of absence will not be considered hours worked when calculating overtime.

5.4 PAYDAYS

Pay periods are twice monthly, totaling 24 pay periods per 12-month school year.

It is the policy of Harbor City International School (HCIS) to pay employees by direct deposit on a regular basis and in a manner so that the amount, method, and timing of wage payments comply with any applicable laws or regulations.

Employees normally will be paid on the fifteenth day and the last day of the month. If the regular payday occurs on a Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday, employees will be paid on the last working day before the regular payday.

Employees on each payday will receive, in addition to their check or deposit advice, a statement showing gross pay, deductions, and net pay. Local, state, federal, and Social Security taxes will be deducted automatically. No other deductions will be made unless required or allowed by law, or employee obligation. Employees may elect to have additional voluntary deductions taken from their pay only if they authorize the deductions in writing.

SECTION 6: BENEFITS AND SERVICES

HCIS offers a benefits program for its full-time employees (See Definitions, Full-time, Sec. 2). However, the existence of these programs does not signify that an employee will necessarily be employed for the required time necessary to qualify for the benefits included in and administered through these programs. Employees may be required to pay a portion of the premium for health coverage.

6.1 GROUP INSURANCE

Effective Date

Salaried employee Benefit Coverage effective dates are determined individually by each policy's coverage terms. Please see Summary of Benefits for more information.

Medical Insurance

Medical insurance coverage is provided for those salaried employees working full-time or 0.8 FTE or 30 Hours a week in a ten-month school year. Full-time salaried employees will be provided medical coverage using an ICHRA plan in the value of medical plan coverage for the employee at a high cost plan on the MN individual health plan marketplace. Additional costs are incurred by the employee. Remaining reimbursement amounts are dispersed to the employee using a Health Wallet to be used for allowed expenses.

The School Administration and School Board will work with a 3rd party broker to procure bids and select the school medical insurance plan, which may include more than one option of provider or provider networks. Employee co-payment for health care plan premiums may be required, and will vary depending upon the level of coverage selected by the employee (individual plus spouse/domestic partner; family; etc.). Employee contributions if required, for health care coverage will be automatically withheld from employee paychecks, in an amount in accordance with a schedule maintained by the Director or a designee.

Employees may contribute to a pre-tax Health Savings Account (HSA) with qualifying health plans. See the Director or a designee for details and specifications.

Full-time salaried staff can enroll their dependents in health insurance for 100% of the premium.

Harbor City International School requires verification of domestic partnership for participation in employee/benefits; please contact the Director for details.

Upon termination you may be entitled to continuation or conversion of the group medical insurance plan in accordance with the terms of the policy and/or applicable state and federal law. For more information contact the Director or a designee.

Dental Insurance

The School Administration Team will select a dental insurance plan. If the employee elects the coverage, the cost of the coverage for the employee will be paid by the school. The employee may elect to add dependents to their plan at their own cost.

Employee co-payment for dental care plan premiums may be required, and will vary depending upon the level of coverage selected by the employee (individual plus spouse/domestic partner; family; etc.). Employee contributions, if elected, for dental care coverage will be automatically withheld from employee paychecks, in an amount in accordance with a schedule maintained by the Director or a designee.

Upon termination you may be entitled to continuation or conversion of the group dental insurance plan in accordance with the terms of the policy and/or applicable state and federal law. For more information contact the Director or a designee.

Life Insurance

The School Administration Team will select life insurance policies and will provide such at no premium cost to each full-time regular employee, in accordance with all applicable laws.

Deferred Compensation

The organization **may choose to** offer a deferred compensation (403(b)) or a 457(b), State Deferred Compensation Plan. Under such a program, employees may opt to defer a portion of their current gross pay, having that portion of pay invested in accordance with applicable federal and state guidelines governing

deferred compensation programs and with procedures established by the Director. Employees may join the deferred compensation program quarterly, beginning with the 1st pay day in August. The amount of income to be deferred must be the same for each pay period throughout the quarter year. Employees may opt out of the program at any time, subject to sufficient notification to the Director or a designee.

HCIS does not offer, administrate nor is trustee of employee IRA, 401k or any other deferred compensation plan when fulfilling the employee's request for payroll deduction and submission to their plan.

In accordance with federal guidelines, employees are subject to a maximum limit per year on deferred compensation. Employees shall take every reasonable precaution to ensure that the per-paycheck amount of income requested to be deferred will not cause such limits to be exceeded in any given year.

Workers' Compensation

Injury resulting from accidents that occur while performing official duties on behalf of this organization are covered by workers' compensation insurance. Any employee who suffers an injury as a result of such an accident must file a report with the Director or his/her designee as soon as possible. Such employee is responsible for filing any other necessary forms, applications, or other information as required by applicable government policies.

Disability Insurance (to be updated in January 2026 for Paid Family Medical Leave)

The organization carries disability insurance in accordance with Minnesota State law. Such insurance allows payment in the event of certain injuries, illnesses or other disabilities occurring outside of the workplace, including pregnancy. Any employee wishing to claim disability pay must file appropriate reports and forms with the Director and the Director or a designee. Such employee also is responsible for filing any other necessary forms, applications, or other information as required by applicable government policies.

The School offers both long and short term disability

Unemployment Compensation

This organization participates in the Unemployment Compensation plan administered by the State of Minnesota.

Declination of Insurance Benefits

Any employee who wishes not to accept any of the insurance benefits offered by this organization is required to submit such a request in writing to the Director or his or her designee. Any additional compensation to an employee who declines insurance benefits is detailed in Appendix B.

Reservation of Rights

This organization reserves the right to alter the benefits package made available to employees at any time, consistent with all applicable laws. Each employee will be notified of any alteration in the benefits package.

Disability Insurance

The organization carries disability insurance in accordance with Minnesota State law. Such insurance allows payment in the event of certain injuries, illnesses or other disabilities occurring outside of the workplace, including pregnancy. Any employee wishing to claim disability pay must file appropriate reports and forms with

the Director and the Director or a designee. Such employee also is responsible for filing any other necessary forms, applications, or other information as required by applicable government policies.

This Manual does not contain the complete terms and/or conditions of any of the school's current insurance benefit plans. It is intended only to provide general explanations. If there is ever any conflict between the Manual and any documents issued by one of the school's insurance carriers, the carrier's guideline regulations will be regarded as authoritative.

Long Term Disability

HCIS pays for group long-term disability insurance for employees that work at least 20 hours per week. After 90 days of disability the plan pays for 60% of the employee's salary up to \$5000 per month.

Short Term Disability (to be updated January 2026 for Paid Family Medical Leave)

HCIS pays for group short-term disability insurance for employees that work at least 20 hours per week. After the first day of an accident or the 8th day of an illness, the plan pays for 66.67% of the employee's salary (\$500 per week maximum) for up to 13 weeks.

Worker's and Unemployment Compensation

All School employees are covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance and the state unemployment program. Employees must report all injuries to the Director or a designee as soon as possible. Compensation forms must be submitted to the insurance company within 72 hours of injury to prevent a delay in payment from the insurance carrier.

Benefits Changes

The eligibility rules contained in any benefit plans maintained by Harbor City International School shall govern and control in the event there is any inconsistency between the terms of this Handbook and such plans. The corporation may make changes in the benefits provided to the employees at any time with or without their consent.

6.2 COBRA BENEFITS

The Federal Consolidated Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under the HCIS health/plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility.

Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, or death of an employee; a reduction in the employee's hours or leave of absence, divorce or legal separation and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements.

Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at HCIS group rates plus an administration fee. HCIS provides each eligible employee with a written notice describing rights granted under COBRA when the employee becomes eligible for coverage under HCIS health insurance plan. The notice contains important information about the employee's rights and obligations.

6.3 SOCIAL SECURITY/MEDICARE

HCIS withholds income tax from all employees' earnings and participates in FICA (Social Security) and Medicare withholding and matching programs as required by law.

6.4 TEACHERS RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

Licensed Teachers. Teachers contribute a percentage of their gross income (determined by law) to the Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) and the employer contributes a percentage. Minnesota TRA website: www.minnesotatra.org

Non-licensed employees. Non-licensed employees contribute a percentage of their gross income (determined by law) to Public Employees Retirement Association of Minnesota (PERA) and the employer contributes a percentage of the employee's gross income. Minnesota PERA website: www.mnpera.org/

6.5 RECORD KEEPING

The Business Liaison maintains sick days and personal days earned and used. Each employee is responsible for verifying his/her/their information to make sure the correct amount of available hours is accurate.

6.6 LEAVES OF ABSENCE

All leave requests must be submitted to the Director with the required forms. The leave is approved only upon signature of the Director.

Vacation Leave

Vacation leave is during Thanksgiving and Winter Holidays, Winter and Spring Breaks and any other federal holidays of each school year. The school shall be closed in summer for approximately eight (8) weeks from the last day of school (to be determined by the Board of Directors) to mid-August. Refer to the current year calendar.

Staff members may be requested to attend conferences, staff training, curriculum planning meetings, or other professional development events during these weeks.

Sick Leave and Paid Time Off (PTO)

The philosophy of HCIS is that the best person to be leading a classroom is a highly qualified instructor. The expectation is that employees schedule vacations during scheduled school breaks. Unless otherwise provided for or as approved by the Director, each full-time employee is granted 6 sick days and 4 PTO days, which may be used as sick days or personal days, but are subject to approval by the director.

Administrative staff who must remain on duty during summer break will receive an additional 20 days of PTO during the months when school is not in session, in addition to scheduled days off, or other arrangement to make sure that duties are covered.

Part-time salaried employees will have PTO prorated based on their FTE. Per ESST, a part time employee working less than 30 hours per week will be granted 1 hour of sick time per 30 hours worked, up to 48 hours per year.

All PTO shall be taken at the Director discretion and is contingent upon the needs of the school and the availability of qualified substitutes. In general no more than 2 staff members will be granted PTO on the same day, and there are days of high volume requests which may result in requests being denied. PTO days which can be reasonably foreseen (not due to sick leave) must be approved by the director at least 24 hours in advance. (This means that the request for leave must come earlier than 24 hours, and may not be granted, contingent upon the needs of the school or availability of substitutes). Leave may be requested in increments of .5 or 1 day. It is the responsibility of the employee to know the status of their leave days before submitting for leave, to avoid taking a day of unpaid leave.

Unused PTO days may accumulate, on employee's discretion, up to a maximum of 10 saved days exclusively as sick days for medically required longer-term convalescence, accompanied by Doctor's verification outlining the condition of health and expected date of resumption of responsibilities. Unused PTO days not accumulated shall be annually compensated at a rate of \$100 per day (\$75 per day for non-teaching staff). Staff leaving HCIS prior to the end of the school year through either resignation or termination are not eligible to collect pay for unused PTO days.

PTO time can be used when an employee is sick, to care for a sick family member or to seek assistance if an employee or their family member has experienced domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking.

Part-Time Status:

Unless otherwise provided for or as approved by the Director, a part-time employee below 30 hours or 0.8 FTE is granted PTO prorated to FTE agreement.

HCIS PTO Policy complies with the Minnesota Earned Sick and Safe Time Law (Effective 1/1/2024). The Department of Labor and Industry has posted additional resources, including FAQ's, a sample employee notice and an informational video about earned sick and safe time at dli.mn.gov/sick-leave.

Unpaid Leave

In the case of extended illness or justifiable depletion of available PTO Leave, additional unpaid time may be granted at the discretion of the Director. As follows, the Director retains the right to require enactment of Medical Leave, and/or the granting of other leave without pay.

Any leave without pay will result in an adjustment to the employee's compensation, which will be calculated in the payroll immediately following the leave days (based on a pro-rated value of annual salary).

Administrative Leave of Absence

Employees may be placed on paid administrative leave in the event of an incident or investigation related to student or employee safety or maltreatment. The employee placed on leave will be notified of both in person

and in writing. Depending on the situation the leave will either be for a select period of time determined when the employee is placed on leave, or for an undetermined amount of time pending further information. An employee on administrative leave is not responsible to make up any duties missed during the duration of the leave.

Bereavement Leave

Unless otherwise provided for or as approved by the Director, an employee may be granted up to three work days of paid Bereavement Leave for the death of a family member, subject to a determination by the Director, on a case-by-case basis. PTO days will not be deducted except for days requested beyond three. Family members are defined as employee's spouse, domestic partner, parents, step parents, siblings, children, stepchildren, grandparent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, or grandchild or at the discretion of the Director.

Medical Leave of Absence (to be updated January 2026 for Paid Family Medical Leave)

Employees who have completed at least ninety (90) days of continuous employment with the organization are eligible for an unpaid Medical Leave of Absence due to illness, injury, or pregnancy-related disability.

Medical leaves of absence will be granted for a period of up to one month, but may be extended with the approval of the Director on a month-to-month basis for a maximum of three (3) months. An employee wishing an extension of a Medical Leave of Absence must be able to submit proof of continued disability from an attending medical doctor.

The organization will continue to provide health insurance coverage for any employee on an authorized medical leave of absence through the first full calendar month from the date that the Leave began. After that period, the employer reserves the right to require payment of the monthly premium from the employee. The employer will invoice the employee for the next month coverage ten days before the first day of that month. Payment due date will be the first day of the month being invoiced for coverage. Employees who qualify for short- or long-term disability benefits are eligible for continued employer-paid health premiums.

Employees on Medical Leaves of Absence must provide the school with at least one week's written notice of their intended return to work. Included in this notice should be a medical doctor's certificate stating the ability to return to work. The organization reserves the right to require a medical examination by a physician of the organization's choosing prior to an employee's resumption of duties.

The organization will make a reasonable effort to return an employee on a Medical Leave of Absence to the same or similar job as held prior to the Leave of Absence upon his or her return to work, subject to staffing needs and business requirements that may exist.

An employee's continued absence from work beyond the date of the Leave granted, without other arrangements having been made and approved by the Director, will be deemed a voluntary resignation from employment.

Federal and State Parenting/Family Leave Laws

The employer will provide leave for all eligible employees in accordance with the Minnesota Parenting Leave Law.

Sabbatical Leave of Absence

Recognizing the importance of maintaining our highly-qualified, talented staff over the long-term, Harbor City International School has implemented a Sabbatical Leave of Absence policy to offer teachers the opportunity to take leave for up to two years without pay for the purpose of acquiring additional knowledge and competency in their respective fields. Teachers must complete an application to be considered for the sabbatical leave (available from the Director). Possible uses of the sabbatical include: study, research, teaching enrichment, Peace Corps, community organizing, service, or other pursuit, the object of which is to increase the staff member's usefulness to the institution.

Candidate eligibility requirements:

Any HCIS teacher may apply for a sabbatical leave of absence provided that the following requirements are met:

- Candidate must be full-time employee of HCIS in good standing.
- Candidate must have at least 4 years of employment at HCIS.
- Candidate must agree to participate in the hiring committees to identify a long-term substitute replacement.

Application Process

- Teacher must complete an application form to apply for the Sabbatical Leave of Absence. The application form is available from the Director.
- Applications for Sabbatical Leave will be submitted directly to the Director by March 1st of the year preceding the requested leave.
- The Director will review the application and will make the final decision regarding the granting of a Sabbatical Leave of Absence.

Conditions for approval or denial:

- Applications will not be approved if any additional costs to HCIS are involved.
- Sabbaticals are subject to availability of qualified replacement candidates.
- All decisions will be made in the long-term best interests of HCIS. All decisions made by the Director will be final.

Notification of intentions:

- The district may require that the request for a leave or extension of leave be made before February 1 in the school year preceding the school year in which the teacher intends to leave, or February 1 of the calendar year in which the teacher's leave is scheduled to terminate. The teacher must notify the administration of the school he or she is currently teaching and the administration of the school to which he or she will be returning before February 1 of the school year preceding the school year in which the teacher intends to return, or February 1 of the calendar year in which the teacher's leave is scheduled to terminate that he or she intends to return to his or her district.

Parental Leave (to be updated in January 2026 for Paid Family Medical Leave)

HCIS provides twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave for an employee's pregnancy-related condition or upon birth or adoption of a child.

Timing: The leave must begin within twelve months of the birth or adoption. Contact your supervisor at the earliest stage possible to request Parental Leave.

Total leave: Total leave (parental leave plus any PTO) is limited to 12 weeks. PTO may be used to augment unpaid parental leave.

Health insurance: Employer-provided health insurance will be continued for eligible employees during the duration of approved parental leave. Employees maintain responsibility for any premiums not paid by the employer.

Return from leave: Upon return from approved parental leave, employees will be reinstated to their former position or one with comparable duties, hours and pay

School Leave

Eligible employees are allowed unpaid leave of up to a total of 16 hours during any 12-month period to attend school conferences or school-related activities related to the employee's child, provided the conferences or school-related activities cannot be scheduled during nonwork hours. Employees may use accrued paid time off (if applicable).

Jury Duty

Any employee called to jury duty should present to the Director a copy of his or her jury duty papers as soon as they are received. Leave arrangements may be made as soon as possible thereafter. If it is deemed that Jury Duty would be a hardship to the school, HCIS may ask the employee to ask for a deferral. Employees serving on jury duty are requested to report to work at times when they are released from court duties. An employee who has been summoned for jury duty will be allowed time off with pay for jury duty. The employee will show evidence of selection and any fees received are to be given to the employer except for allowance for transportation to and from jury duty.

Pregnancy and Lactation Accommodations

HCIS will provide reasonable accommodations to an employee for health conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth upon request and with the advice of a licensed health care provider or certified doula, unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship. HCIS will not claim undue hardship when an employee requests: (1) more frequent or longer restroom, food and water breaks; (2) seating; and/or (3) limits on lifting over 20 pounds. HCIS will engage in an interactive process with respect to all other pregnancy-related requests for reasonable accommodation. Based on the circumstances, reasonable accommodation may include but is not limited to temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous position, temporary leave of absence, or modification in work schedule or job assignments.

HCIS will provide reasonable, paid break time each day to any employee to nurse/pump/express milk for their child. Private space and other requirements of the law are also provided. HCIS is committed to following State and Federal regulations regarding time off to nurse/pump at work.

HCIS will not discharge, discipline, penalize, interfere with, threaten, restrain, coerce, or otherwise retaliate or discriminate against an employee for asserting rights or remedies under the law.

6.7 EMPLOYMENT AND BENEFITS POSTINGS

Federal and State employment and benefit law postings are in the staff room and maintained by the Executive Director.

SECTION 7: EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

7.1 STAFF MEETINGS

Regular staff meetings are held and punctual attendance is required. Administration will give notice of times of meetings or changes to the meeting schedule as much in advance as possible. These meetings allow employees to be informed on student and community concerns, recent school activities, changes in the workplace, and employee recognition. Information disseminated at staff meetings is considered as formal notification of policies, expectations, and standards of operation that are to be followed. Employees are responsible for adhering to directives set forth during staff meetings.

7.2 EMAIL

In most instances, email will be used to disseminate necessary information and email notification from administration to employees and is considered formal notification. Each employee is responsible for reading necessary information posted in emails.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS

HCIS encourages employees to make suggestions to help the school be a pleasant, efficient, and cost-effective employer. If they do not want to offer these orally or in person, write them down and leave them with the Executive Director, Administrative Assistant or another administrative employee. If this is done anonymously, every care will be taken to preserve the employee's privacy.

7.4 PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS: Grievance Process

Problem-Solving Procedures

Informal

Any employee who experiences an interpersonal or professional conflict with a fellow colleague that cannot be resolved through direct and honest dialogue should first seek the support of a Director for support in a restorative resolution process. It is incumbent on all staff members to make a good faith effort to resolve disagreements and conflicts with students, parents and colleagues in a confidential, direct, timely and professional manner.

Formal

Any employee wishing to formally complain about a procedure, action, or directive of another employee or supervisor should notify a Director at the employee's discretion, as soon as possible after such procedure, action, or directive has occurred. The Director or a designee shall be the investigator and final arbiter of all such complaints.

In the event that the complaint involves a procedure, action, or directive of a Director, an employee may file a complaint with the Board of Directors. In such instances, the Chairperson/Board will be responsible for initiating the investigation, and be the final arbiter of the complaint.

Grievance Procedure ([LINK Policy 2.4.1](#))

Harbor City International School

Adopted: June 2013

Reviewed: July, 2017

Revised:

EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE POLICY

The initial approach to settling any issue is open communication. An employee should first seek to resolve any complaint with his/her immediate supervisor through informal discussion. If such discussion does not resolve the matter informally, and the employee believes that his/her complaint rises to the level of a grievance as defined below, then the employee may initiate a formal grievance as described in this policy in an effort to seek an equitable solution.

Definitions

Grievance: A grievance is defined as a formal written complaint by an employee concerning terms and conditions of the employment arising from any administrative decision which the employee claims is in violation of rights under, or a failure to apply, established Harbor City International School (HCIS) personnel regulations, policies, or practices, or which results from a misinterpretation or misapplication thereof. Recommendations for final administrative decisions are not grievable.

Any employee who believes he or she has been aggrieved by a decision not covered by the definition of grievance in this policy may appeal the decision to a Director and thereafter have the right to petition the Board for a hearing. In order to petition the board for a hearing, the employee must document the reasons for the hearing to the Board Chair who will bring the petition to the board. The Board shall notify the employee of its decision whether to grant a hearing.

Day: Day is defined as a scheduled workday except where provided otherwise. Day of receipt or other event does not count as one of the working days.

Time Limitation: No grievance shall be heard unless it has been filed in writing within thirty (30) calendar days after the act or condition giving rise to the grievance and states with particularity the basis for the grievance and the remedy sought. In order to be considered, the formal written grievance must be filed on the appropriate form at Level One as described below.

Level One

The grievant may initiate a formal grievance by obtaining a grievance form from the Staff Room or see Appendix A, filling out the form and providing a copy to their supervisor. The grievant shall specify on the form the facts supporting the grievance; the specific law, policy, or regulation alleged to have been violated; and the relief requested. The supervisor shall make every reasonable effort to provide a written response to the employee's grievance within five (5) business days of receiving the completed grievance form.

Level Two

If the employee is not satisfied with the decision rendered at Level One, the employee may appeal to a Director or designee. The employee shall file a written appeal on the designated form specifying with particularity the reason(s) for the appeal. The employee shall file the appeal with a Director or designee within five (5) days of receiving the supervisor's written response to his/her grievance.

A Director or designee shall make every effort to schedule a meeting with the employee for the purpose of resolving the grievance within fifteen (15) days from the receipt of the appeal form. If a Director or designee determines that additional time is needed to develop the factual record, the grievance may be put on hold for thirty (30) days (or longer if by mutual written agreement) to allow time for investigation.

Either party may call witnesses at the grievance meeting to help resolve the matter.

A Director or designee shall make every reasonable effort to send written notice of the decision to the grievant and the supervisor involved within five (5) days of the meeting.

If in Level One, the employee initiated the grievance procedure with a director, then the employee shall go directly from Level One to Level Three.

Level Three

If any employee is not satisfied with the decision rendered at Level Two, the employee has the right to file an appeal with the Board of Directors within five (5) days of receiving a Director's decision. Upon receipt of this appeal, the Board Chair may appoint a committee of not fewer than two (2) members of the Board to hear and decide the grievance.

The committee shall make every reasonable effort to meet and consider the appeal within twenty (20) days after the Chair refers the grievance to the committee. Reasonable notice of the appeal hearing will be given to the parties. The committee shall review the grievance on the record unless it determines that additional information may be presented. No new evidence, written or verbal, may be presented without the prior knowledge and consent of both parties or upon a majority vote of the hearing committee. Each party may make a brief oral presentation to the committee to summarize his or her position. The appeal hearing may be recorded and shall be held in closed session.

The Board committee may affirm, reverse or modify the decision of the Director. The Director's Level One or Two decision will be reversed only if the decision was:

- in violation of school policies;
- in excess of statutory authority or jurisdiction of the school system;
- made upon unlawful procedure;
- affected by other error of law;
- unsupported by substantial evidence in view of the entire record as submitted; or
- arbitrary or capricious.

As used in this policy, substantial evidence means such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion.

The decision of the committee shall be final. The committee shall make every reasonable effort to send to the grievant and the Director a written statement of its decision within five (5) days of the hearing. A copy of the decision shall also be delivered to the Board.

Decision of the School Board

This policy establishes a procedure for employees to grieve certain decisions of school officials. The policy does not grant employees the right to appeal decisions of the Board itself. Nonetheless, an employee may petition the Board to reconsider one of its own decisions. The request must be made in writing to the Board Chair within thirty (30) days of the Board's decision and must state the reasons why the Board should reconsider its decision. The Board may exercise its discretion to grant the petition. The Board will review the decision on the record unless it determines that additional information may be presented.

Guidelines for Implementation of Above Proceedings

The steps of the grievance procedure will be followed to the convenience of all parties whenever possible. When meetings are held during work hours, no employee shall suffer loss of pay for time away from his/her duties, nor shall he or she receive extra pay when meetings are held at a time other than working hours.

In order to process grievances as expediently as possible, every effort should be made to handle each step in the specified time period. If the grievant fails to comply with the time periods or other procedures outlined in this policy, the grievant waives any further right of appeal and the grievance will be considered resolved. If the school system fails to comply with the time periods or other procedures outlined in this policy, the grievant may advance the grievance to the next level. There shall be no other consequences or remedies for failure of the school system to meet the time periods outlined in this policy.

Grievances involving the Director shall be presented to the Board Chair who will follow appropriate Level procedures.

The grievance may be voluntarily withdrawn at any level. Once a grievance is withdrawn, it cannot be reopened. If at any time during the grievance process the school system grants the grievant the relief sought, the Director or designee may terminate the grievance.

No retaliation of any kind shall be taken by the Board or by an employee of HCIS against any party or other employee on account of his or her participation in a grievance proceeding filed pursuant to this policy.

The Director will develop a grievance form to document each step of the grievance process.

This policy supersedes any current policy.

7.5 PARENT/GUARDIAN AND TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Parents of HCIS students are assured upon enrollment that there will be high levels of communication between teachers and parents/guardians. These are required elements of communication to parents from teachers:

- Attend all scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences.
- Communicate in order to eliminate surprises: parents should not receive negative news about their student's performance or behavior for the first time at conferences or upon receipt of report cards.
- Prompt communication: respond within one school day to email or phone inquiries from parents/guardians.
- Participate in problem-solving process: attend team meetings and work with parents/guardians and school staff to correct student performance or behavior problems.
- Keep website information up to date and reliable.

Appendix A - Employee Grievance Form

EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE FORM

It is the purpose of the Grievance Procedure to establish a method whereby grievances of employees will be resolved fairly and effectively. The filing of a grievance will in no way prejudice the status of the employee. Please see the Policy Manual for a full description of the procedure.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

JOB TITLE: _____

STATEMENT OF GRIEVANCE (Background/activity leading to complaint, including dates):

REMEDY REQUESTED: _____

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Date LEVEL ONE initiated: _____

(Please attach response)

Date LEVEL TWO initiated: _____

(Please attach response)

Date LEVEL THREE initiated: _____

(Please attach response)

Appeal Process:

1. Appeals shall (a) be in writing; (b) be signed by you; (c) be addressed to the appropriate person/group; (d) state the date and substance of the decision or action being appealed; (e) give the reasons why the decision or action is being challenged; and (f) specify what decision or action you seek.
2. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Director/Board may reconsider the decision or action being appealed, and with consent from the Chair, reverse or modify the decision or action. You will be notified of the reversal or modification of the decision or action. Unless so reversed or modified to your satisfaction, the Director shall transmit the appeal to the Committee designated by the Board of Directors to hear the appeal.

Appendix B - PRIVACY NOTICE (Tennessee Warning)

In accordance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Harbor City International School, is required to inform you of your rights as they pertain to the information we collect about you. Harbor City is asking for this private information so that it can consider your employment application and create a personnel file.

- The information we collect from you may be used for one or more of the following purposes:
- To distinguish you from all other applicants or employees and identify you in our personnel files;
- To determine your eligibility for employment or promotion;
- To contact you or other significant persons in an emergency;
- To enroll you and your family members for health insurance;
- To enroll you in retirement benefit plans;
- To account for wages paid;
- To comply with state and federal reporting requirements.

You are not legally required to provide the information that HCIS is requesting, and you may refuse to provide some or all of the information requested. However, if you do not provide the requested information, HCIS may not be able to determine your eligibility for employment or promotion, compute your wages, or provide benefits that you may be entitled to.

The information HCIS collects from you may be routinely shared with human resources staff, accounting/payroll staff, and insurance companies.

Information may also be shared with other state and federal agencies authorized by law to receive specific data relating to:

- Child support;
- Worker's compensation;
- Unemployment insurance;
- Health and human services;
- State and federal taxes;
- Other entities if required by a court order or authorized by state or federal law.

The information on this form applies to your future contacts with this organization whether the contact is in person, by mail, or by phone.

I have read and fully understand the above Privacy Notice.

_____ Signature Date

_____ Printed Employee Name

Harbor City International School

Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I hereby acknowledge that I have reviewed and have a copy of the HCIS Employee Handbook. I understand this handbook has been prepared as a guide and a reference for all employees.

I agree to comply with the policies, procedures, and expectations as set forth in the Handbook. I also acknowledge that these policies, procedures, and expectations may be changed, interpreted, withdrawn, or added to by HCIS at any time in their sole option and without prior notice to me.

I understand that my employment with the school constitutes an "at will" relationship. I may resign at any time for any reason, and HCIS and/or its administrative team may terminate my relationship for any reason or no reason so long as it is not a violation of law.

I understand that the Handbook does not in any way form a contract or imply or promise continuous, long term, or permanent employment.

I agree to abide by the non-disclosure requirements (policy 3.2)

Employee signature

Date

Please sign and return to a Director or a designee.

c.c. Employee

Personnel file

Harbor City International School