



For 26-28 School Year

Last reviewed/approved by Sankofa Montessori Board 6/24/26

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SECTION 1: ABOUT SANKOFA MONTESSORI

Welcome Letter

We are excited to welcome you to our team for the 2027 school year! It is an immense privilege to do this important work alongside each of you; you are the ones who make it all possible. This handbook is designed to outline the policies and procedures to which you, as the employee, and the organization are expected to adhere. Please note that these policies and procedures can change at any point during the year; in such cases, we will communicate the changes to you in a timely manner. To the extent there is ever a conflict between the information in this handbook and any applicable law or regulation, the law or regulation controls.

To remain equitable in our practices at Sankofa Montessori ,we require all staff members to read the handbook carefully, as it answers many questions about employment at Sankofa Montessori . If you have any questions after reading this handbook, please reach out to the Executive Director. Thank you for joining us in the sacred work of educating children and empowering them to lead a life of purpose.

Vision

To design more purposeful futures.

Mission

At Sankofa Montessori, we bridge standards-based instruction with the Montessori approach to provide a culturally responsive, child and family-centered education that empowers every child with the knowledge, skills, and agency to lead a life of purpose.

The meaning of Sankofa is to honor the past to make way for the future. It symbolizes our philosophy of perpetual reflection and growth at the center of our work with our students, families, and communities.

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Our Values

Love	We act in service of love by building deep and meaningful relationships and always going above and beyond for each other.
Ownership	With shared ownership of our vision and mission, we deliver on our commitments, take the initiative, and find ways to elevate our excellence every day.
Purpose	We operate with intention and urgency in all that we do to ensure that every child has the opportunity to lead a life of purpose.
Reflection	We cultivate a growth mindset by making time to reflect on what we do and why we do it to ensure that we are continuously improving.
Joy	We have fun, we celebrate each other, and we show up as our full selves.

Governing Board

The Sankofa Montessori Governing Board of Directors is charged with the management of the affairs of the not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation, Sankofa Montessori, Inc., and must pursue such policies and principles in accordance with law, the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation, Sankofa Montessori Bylaws, and any written charter entered into by the Board. As trustees of public funds, The Governing Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring the school's long-term financial stability and integrity of the charter. The board sets the strategic plan and is responsible for overseeing the effective, faithful execution of the mission through the school's program and operations. Directors recognize that in order to fulfill these obligations, they pledge to personally contribute needed resources and/or talents to maintain the school's success. Please visit [our Board portal](#) for more specific information regarding the duties and obligations of the Governing Board of Directors as well as a list of current members.

Complete List of Policies

Our current list of public policies can be found at [this link](#), and is continuously updated as new policies are passed.

Charter Information

Georgia law grants groups the right (or "charter") to start new public schools that report to their authorizers and to their own independent governing boards. By freeing charter schools from many of the constraints of traditional public schools, charter school law in Georgia intends for charter schools to "increase student achievement through academic and organizational innovation." Charter schools are public schools funded through national and state funds, as well as local school fundraising. The current

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Sankofa Montessori charter agreement is through the State Charter School Commission and runs from July 1, 2023-June 30, 2028. Please visit the [our Board portal](#) to view the [complete charter agreement](#).

SECTION 2: THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Who to Contact with Questions

Question area	Who to contact
I have a question about payroll and/or reimbursement	CFO (via hr@sankofamontessori.org)
I want to know how many vacation hours I have	Timestatic Platform
I have a question about benefits and leave	HR (via hr@sankofamontessori.org)
I have a question about the board policies and state charter	HR (via hr@sankofamontessori.org)
I know a community partner and/or leader that is interested in providing support for the school; financial or otherwise	HR (via hr@sankofamontessori.org)
I would like to make a donation of goods, services, or money to the school	HR (via hr@sankofamontessori.org)
I would like to escalate my question or concern. <i>Please see our Grievance Policy. We ask that you start with the Executive Director, because it is most likely that they can solve the problem directly.</i>	

All members of the Sankofa Montessori staff will make every effort to respond to phone calls and e-mails during the school week within 48 hours or two business days, though this will not always be possible. Please never hesitate to be in touch with questions, concerns, or suggestions.

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Categories of Employment

Your offer letter sets forth your employment classifications.

- **Full-Time Employees:** Regularly work an average of 30 hours or more per week and are not on temporary appointments. All full-time employees qualify for Sankofa Montessori benefits.
- **Part-Time Employees:** Regularly work less than an average of 30 hours each week and are not on temporary appointments. Part-time employees are not eligible for Sankofa Montessori benefits except as required by law.
- **Temporary Employees:** Employees assigned to positions on a temporary basis, not to exceed six months in length. No individual may be employed as a temporary employee for longer than six months in any 12-month period. Temporary employees are not eligible for Sankofa Montessori benefits except as required by law. Note: In addition to the preceding categories, Sankofa Montessori employees are also categorized as "exempt" or "non-exempt", in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). These categories are summarized below. More information about the FLSA is available via the Department of Labor website at: <https://www.dol.gov/>.
- **Exempt Employees:** Pursuant to applicable federal and state laws, exempt employees are employees who are paid on a salaried basis and are typically individuals who hold certain administrative, professional, or executive roles that meet specific criteria established by applicable wage and hour laws. Exempt employees are not entitled to the overtime pay provisions of the FLSA, and are not subject to certain deductions to their salary under federal and state laws.
- **Non-Exempt Employees:** Pursuant to federal and state laws, non-exempt employees are employees whose job duties and responsibilities do not exempt them from coverage under the FLSA overtime pay provisions. Non-exempt employees must receive overtime pay compensation for all overtime hours worked. All employees who are not classified as "exempt" are classified as "non-exempt". For additional information on overtime, please refer to the Overtime section of this Employee Handbook. **At Sankofa Montessori, Teaching Assistants and Paraprofessionals are Non-Exempt Employees.**

Benefits and Leave

Benefits Overview

Benefits Information at Sankofa Montessori is pleased to offer a comprehensive and competitive benefits program and makes significant financial contributions to help enable benefit choice and affordability. All full-time exempt employees working at least 30 hours per week in a benefit eligible position are eligible

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to enroll in any group benefit plan offered by Sankofa Montessori . Benefits include medical insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, life insurance, retirement options, and optional supplemental insurance. Sankofa Montessori anticipates continuing to make these benefits available, but reserves the right to amend or terminate these benefits at any time. Complete details of the plans are contained in official plan documents. To the extent there is any discrepancy between the information in this Staff Manual and the official plan documents, the official plan documents shall govern.

Benefit Enrollment Period

All employees are eligible for employer provided basic life insurance policy. Sankofa Montessori has the right to change its benefit offerings and service providers at any time; in such cases, we will communicate the changes to you in a timely manner. New employees of Sankofa Montessori who enroll in benefits will start receiving medical, dental, vision and basic life insurance on the first day of the month following a thirty (30) day waiting period that begins on their first day of employment. As an exception, new employees who start at the beginning of the school year (July) will be eligible for benefits no later than August 1. In order to begin coverage on schedule, current employees must enroll prior to July 1 of each year.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) states that eligible employees may only make elections to the plan during their initial eligibility period or once a year at open enrollment. Pre-tax benefit choices are binding through the end of the plan year, June 30. However, the IRS provides specific instances when an employee can make mid-year election changes. Examples include: Getting married or divorced; Death of spouse or dependent; Birth or Adoption; Loss of Dependent Status; Involuntary Loss of Coverage for Employee, Spouse, or Dependent. These special circumstances, often referred to as “qualifying events,” allow employees to make plan changes at any time during the year in which they occur. The changes must be made within thirty (30) days of the event in order to make the qualified change. All other changes will be deferred to open enrollment.

Upon separation from Sankofa Montessori ,medical, dental, and vision coverage for former employees will expire immediately after the employment ends. For example, if an employee separates on October 15, coverage will end on October 15. Basic life insurance policy will expire immediately following the last day of employment. Information regarding benefits continuation through the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) will be sent to the employee’s home address.

Time off and Other Leave Policies

Out of the 365 days in a year, Sankofa Montessori teaching and support staff work for a total of 203 days and are off for the remaining 162 days. And with that, Sankofa also provides sick and paid time off. And while this is a workplace benefit, please keep this in mind the impact that your absence will have on your

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classroom community and the school community when taking time off and do your best to plan in advance when booking doctor's appointments or planning time off.

To ensure student safety and maintain smooth school operations, if more than two staff members are absent on a given day, any additional leave requests submitted afterward may be denied and considered unapproved and unpaid.

Holidays

Sankofa Montessori normally observes the following holidays for all employees throughout the year:

1. New Year's Day
2. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
3. Presidents Day
4. Memorial Day
5. Juneteenth
6. Independence Day
7. Thanksgiving
8. Christmas Day

Additional holidays are determined by your role and work location. Please refer to the calendar (see below) that is applicable to your role and work location for your complete time off schedule. Whether an employee is paid on the above-mentioned holidays depends on the employee's job classification. If you have questions about whether you qualify for pay on holidays, please email HR via hr@sankofamontessori.org.

Staff Calendar

School Breaks for Staff

In addition to the above-mentioned holidays, school-based employees receive several breaks in conjunction with student days off from school. Please refer to your specific calendar for information on school breaks that apply to staff. These calendars vary by job function and work location. If you have any questions about which calendar is associated with your role at Sankofa Montessori, please reach out to hr@sankofamontessori.org.

Personal Leave Days

All Exempt employees shall be entitled to 16.5 days of leave each academic year. Leave days are accrued at a rate of 1.5 days every month, at the start of each month, starting during the month of July and ending during the month of May. Sankofa Montessori complies with federal and Georgia sick leave laws and does not make a differentiation in leave policy between sick days and personal leave days. Personal

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leave days do not carry over from one academic year to the next. Upon termination of this service to Sankofa Montessori, Employee shall not be paid out for remaining PTO/sick days; provided, however, that should Employee have a minimum accrued sick leave of sixty (60) days, Employee can choose to apply the accrued sick leave days to establish sick leave credit with their Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS) account. The policy concerning the establishment of sick leave credit with TRS is governed by TRS and is subject to TRS rules (<https://www.trsga.com/?s=sick>).

Personal leave days may not be taken during critical days and will be unpaid without a doctor's note. Non-exempt employees are not entitled to personal leave days. **Personal leave days are earned at the end of the month.**

Personal days may be used in hour long, half-day or full-day increments.

Note: Staff members who begin their employment with Sankofa Montessori after the start of the academic year will receive a prorated number of personal days. If you have questions about your prorated entitlement, please reach out to hr@sankofamontessori.org.

Personal Leave Days Request Procedure

Generally speaking, a covered employee who needs to use his/her/their available personal leave days:

- For foreseeable reasons (e.g., for a family wedding) should contact hr@sankofamontessori.org in writing as soon as he/she is aware of the need to take leave, but no less than 14 days prior to taking leave, and provide a reason for the absence and the expected duration of the leave.
- For unforeseeable reasons (e.g. a pipe burst in your home), slack your direct manager and put in a request on the timetastic platform.
- In the case of emergency (e.g., following a car accident) must notify your direct manager of the request as soon as practicable and put in a request on the timetastic platform, preferably prior to the start of the next school/work day or within 24 hours of the onset of the emergency, whichever occurs sooner.
- The form for requesting Additional Time Off Procedures can be accessed [HERE](#)

Unless there is an unforeseeable reason (e.g., car accident) any time off request that occurs after 6AM on the day of the requested absence will be unpaid.

Failure to adhere to the above notice rules will result in the denial of a request to use personal leave days. This means, an employee's time off work will be unpaid and that the employee's use of leave is not excused.

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Sankofa Montessori employees are not permitted to carry over unused personal leave days from one academic year to the next. Sankofa Montessori does not compensate employees for unused personal leave days upon separation from employment with Sankofa Montessori .

- Unused leave days accrued throughout any year of service under service to Sankofa Montessori will not carry over to the following year.

PTO days taken during a critical day will require a doctor's note in order to be paid. The doctor's note will be verified.

A covered employee will be required to provide reasonable certification of the need to take leave upon the employee's return to work or within one school/work day thereafter, if the employee used two or more consecutive workdays for such leave, or took leave on a Critical Day, as described below. Certification may include a police report, court order, or doctor's note. Information provided will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law.

If an employee's absence is covered by the Federal Family and Medical Leave Acts, the employee should follow procedures outlined in the [FMLA section of this handbook](#).

Reinstatement of Leave

Following termination, if an employee is rehired by Sankofa Montessori as a full-time or part-time employee within one year of separation, any previously earned but unused leave will not be reinstated.

Sankofa Montessori does not compensate employees for unused sick leave upon separation of employment.

Retaliation Prohibition

Sankofa Montessori prohibits retaliation against any covered Sankofa Montessori employee for requesting or using leave in accordance with this policy.

Critical Days

To ensure safe student supervision, appropriate support for staff, and successful school operations, we ask that school staff be present at work during certain critical dates during the year.

For the 2026-28 school year, the Critical Work Days will be:

- The day before and after a holiday or school break
- All professional development days
- All assessment days/weeks
- All school wide event days

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Please note that PTO may be unpaid if more than two teammates are absent on a given day, as this would be considered a critical staffing day to ensure student safety.

Please reach out to Hr@sankofamontessori.org if you think you may need to request leave during these periods, so you can discuss your options.

Bereavement Leave

All full-time employees may receive up to ten paid bereavement days for the death of an employee's spouse, domestic partner, or children (i.e. biological or adopted child, minor legal ward, or stepchild). All full-time and part-time employees may receive up to five paid bereavement days for the death of a parent, legal guardian, sibling, or grandchild. All full-time and part-time employees may receive up to three paid bereavement days for the death of an aunt, uncle, or grandparent.

Requests for bereavement leave should be made in writing to hr@sankofamontessori.org. Employees are to submit written verification of an employee's relationship to the deceased and his or her attendance at the funeral service, or related event, as a condition of the bereavement pay.

Jury Duty/Witness Leave

Full-time employees summoned for jury duty or subpoenaed to testify as a witness (in a matter that is not connected to your employment with Sankofa Montessori) will be granted the necessary time off upon furnishing proof of such notice to serve. Full-time employees will be paid their regular salary for up to ten business days of jury or witness duty. Should you have to serve on a jury or as a witness for more than ten business days, you will be permitted to remain off of work until your service concludes, and you may use any available sick or personal leave days for any unpaid time. After sick leave and vacation have been exhausted, any additional days of jury or witness leave would be unpaid.

Should jury or witness leave not require the full workday or workweek, you must return to your duties at Sankofa Montessori at the conclusion of the jury service or witness duty.

Employees **will be required** to provide verification of jury duty or witness notice and dates served.

Military Leave

Full-time employees who are absent from work due to service in the uniformed services, including but not limited to, service in the armed forces of the United States or the armed forces reserves, the national guard, or another commissioned corps of public service, will be granted a leave of absence in accordance with federal and state laws governing such leaves, such as the Uniformed Services Employment and

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Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 38-2-279, employees will be paid for a maximum period of 18 working days per Federal fiscal year for ordered military duty as defined in the code section and while going to and returning from such duty.

Unless otherwise provided by state law, employees on such leaves of absence are generally entitled to certain reemployment rights and benefits if they meet the following requirements:

- **Advance Notice** – The employee must personally, or through an officer of the service, give written notice before the need for military leave begins, unless precluded by military necessity or circumstances which make notice unreasonable or impossible;
- **Duration of Leave** – The employee's cumulative period of service in the uniformed services while in Sankofa Montessori's employment may not exceed five years, unless additional service is required to complete an initial period of obligated service, the employee is unable to obtain orders of release through no fault of his/her/their own, the employee is able to certify in writing by the Secretary of Defense that additional training is required, or additional service is required during a national emergency or war; and
- **Timely Reemployment Application** – The employee must return to work or submit an application for reemployment within the required time frame depending on the length of the employee's service.

An employee should contact hr@sankofamontessori.org for more details regarding military leave (e.g., what type of service qualifies for this leave entitlement, what constitutes timely reemployment, under what circumstances an employee's application for reemployment may be denied, an employee's rights and obligations related to employment benefits while on leave and upon returning from leave, etc.).

Parental Leave Policy

Sankofa Montessori is committed to supporting employees during significant life events, including the birth or placement of a child. This policy outlines the parental leave benefits available to eligible employees and ensures compliance with applicable federal and state laws.

Paid Parental Leave

Eligible Sankofa Montessori employees are entitled to take up to 240 hours of paid parental leave during a rolling twelve (12) month period for certain qualifying life events, including the birth, adoption, fostering or assumption of legal guardianship of a child.

- a. The rolling twelve (12) month period shall be measured backward from the date an eligible employee first uses parental leave.

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- b. Paid Parental Leave may be taken as needed and may be taken in increments of less than eight hours per day. The smallest increment of parental leave that may be taken is four (4) hours in a workday.
- c. Any unused Paid Parental Leave that remains twelve (12) months after the qualifying event shall not carry over for future use.
- d. Unused Paid Parental Leave shall have no cash value at any time of the eligible employee's separation from employment with the School
- e. Paid Parental Leave shall run concurrently with any other leave provided under federal law, including FMLA.

Sankofa Montessori reserves the right at its sole discretion to deny the use of Intermittent parental leave during critical periods such as Milestone testing, if it appears the leave is being requested specifically to avoid those obligations and if the request is made in such a manner that the School cannot adequately prepare for the absence

Eligibility

To be eligible for paid parental leave under this policy, an employee must:

- Be a full-time employee
- Have completed at least six (6) consecutive months of employment immediately preceding the start of the leave.

Employees may also be eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) if they meet federal eligibility requirements.

A “qualifying event” for paid birthing parent leave means giving birth to one or more children in a single or multiple pregnancy.

Definitions

Birthing Parent

An employee who physically gives birth to a child.

Non-Birthing Parent

An employee who becomes a parent through birth, adoption, surrogacy, or foster placement but is not the individual who physically gives birth. This includes a legal spouse, domestic partner, or legally recognized parent with custodial or parental rights.

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Calculation of Leave

For purposes of calculating paid parental leave:

- All paid workdays are included, including school days, scheduled school breaks, and holidays within the employee's paid calendar.
- Weekends are excluded from the calculation.

Coordination with Other Leave

- Parental leave and birthing parent leave under this policy will run concurrently with FMLA or any other applicable federal or state leave laws.
- Employees may elect to use accrued PTO to extend their leave, subject to approval and operational needs.
- Use of PTO before or after parental leave must be approved by school leadership and HR.

Total Paid Leave Cap

Total paid leave provided under this policy, including parental leave and PTO, will not exceed 9.5 weeks, unless otherwise required by law or approved by the school.

Timing of Leave

- Parental leave must be taken within twelve (12) months following the qualifying event.
- Birthing parent leave must be taken within three (3) weeks following the qualifying event.

Notice and Documentation

Employees are expected to:

- Provide at least thirty (30) days' advance notice, when practicable; and
- Submit appropriate documentation, including:
 - Birth confirmation;
 - Adoption or placement documentation;
 - Medical certification for short-term disability (if applicable).

Employees should contact HR for support with completing short-term disability paperwork, if needed.

Approval and Administration

- Sankofa Montessori reserves the right to require scheduling adjustments to ensure continuity of instruction and student safety.
- No later than 15 days prior to the start of leave, the employee must submit a coverage plan to their direct manager outlining how responsibilities will be managed during their absence.

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Job Protection

Parental and birthing parent leave will be administered in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Where eligible, employees will receive job protection consistent with FMLA requirements.

General Compliance

This policy is intended to comply with all applicable federal and state laws. In the event of a conflict, applicable law will govern.

Transition Back to Work from Parental Leave Support

In addition to the provisions set forth above, all birthing parents who are Sankofa Montessori employees who work full-time may elect to work ten days of a reduced schedule for full pay. Classroom-based instructional staff may work from 8:00 am to 2:30pm. All other staff may work 90% of their regular schedule each day for up to 10 days upon return from leave, with the specific schedule to be approved by the Executive Director. This reduced schedule is available to eligible employees once in a twelve-month period, must be taken consecutively, and must be taken and concluded within twelve weeks following the birth, adoption, or assumption of guardianship of their child.

Please see the FMLA section of this handbook for more information about the reasons for which an eligible employee may take family or medical leave pursuant to the Federal FMLA.

Family And Medical Leave (FMLA)

Sankofa Montessori provides eligible employees unpaid, job-protected leave for certain family and medical reasons in accordance with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, as amended ("Federal FMLA") and other applicable law. Time off work for an FMLA-qualifying reason may be unpaid or employees may use available paid leave (e.g., sick leave, vacation leave, or paid parental leave) concurrently with FMLA leave to continue receiving income during their period of FMLA leave.

During the leave, health benefits remain in effect if the employee continues to still pay their premium portions. The employee will be required to inform the school via hr@sankofamontessori.org when expected to return to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, Sankofa Montessori will make every effort to place the employee in their original or equivalent position. For employees not eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act, Sankofa Montessori will review business considerations and the individual circumstances involved before making approval decisions.

This handbook does not cover every aspect of the Federal FMLA. For more information, contact Human Resources via hr@sankofamontessori.org and consult the Guide to Family and Medical Leave

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Workers' Compensation

Employees may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits if injured on the job. This insurance is provided at no cost to an employee. If an employee becomes injured on the job, the employee must report the incident immediately to hr@sankofamontessori.org to ensure the employee's workers' compensation claim is processed. Failure to make a timely report may result in the loss of benefits.

Generally, employees are not eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits for injuries sustained: going to or coming from work; during deviations from the scope of employment (e.g., employee making a delivery drives to a place unconnected to the employment); as a consequence of imported danger (e.g., employee's own attire or a personal weapon causes injury to self); an employee engaging in a prohibited act; an employee engaging in horseplay; during recreational or social activities; and during times in which the employee is not subject to the employer's control (e.g., not on the premises, not during the regularly scheduled work day).

All participation in off-duty Sankofa Montessori recreational activities (social events, picnics, softball leagues, etc.) is at the sole discretion of the employee and is not considered work-related. Neither Sankofa Montessori nor its insurer will be liable for the payment of worker's compensation benefits for any injury that arises out of an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity that is not part of, required by, or an expected part of the employee's work-related duties.

Questions may be addressed to hr@sankofamontessori.org.

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During the leave, health benefits remain in effect if the employee continues to still pay their premium portions. The employee will be required to inform the school via hr@sankofamontessori.org when expected to return to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, Sankofa Montessori will make every effort to place the employee in their original or equivalent position. For employees not eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act, Sankofa Montessori will review business considerations and the individual circumstances involved before making approval decisions.

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This handbook does not cover every aspect of the Federal FMLA. For more information, contact Human Resources via hr@sankofamontessori.org and consult the Guide to Family and Medical Leave (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla>).

Family And Medical Leave Overview

Purposes of Leave

Eligible employees may take unpaid family or medical leave pursuant to Federal FMLA under the following circumstances:

- The birth and care of a child (but only during the first 12 months after birth);
- The adoption of a child or placement of a foster child (but only during the first 12 months after the adoption or placement);
- To care for an employee's family member with a serious health condition;
- To address a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of the employee's job;
- A military exigency or to care for an injured service member.

Duration of Leave

The Federal FMLA provides up to 12 weeks of leave during a 12-month period for family or medical leave or due to military exigency associated with a family member being called to military service. In addition, an eligible employee may also take up to 26 weeks of leave during a 12-month period to care for an injured service member or veteran.

Spouses who are both employed by Sankofa Montessori may be limited in their use of leave in some circumstances and should consult Sankofa Montessori Human Resources at hr@sankofamontessori.org with questions.

Eligible Employees

An employee is eligible for Federal FMLA leave if he or she (i) has been employed by Sankofa Montessori for 12 months (which need not be consecutive and includes periods of paid and unpaid leave), and (ii) has worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave.

Eligible Family Members

Federal FMLA defines a family member to mean:

- A spouse (i.e., husband or wife, and includes a same-sex or common law marriage).

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- A son or daughter (biological, adopted, foster, stepchild, legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis) who is either under the age of 18, or over the age of 18 and disabled within the meaning of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- A parent (including a person who has acted in loco parentis, such as a stepparent or grandparent).

Sankofa Montessori will require reasonable documentation to confirm a family relationship.

Qualifying Serious Health Conditions

Federal FMLA collectively define a serious health condition to mean an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either:

- Inpatient care (i.e., an overnight stay) in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity or any subsequent treatment in connection with the inpatient care.
- Continuing treatment by a health care provider.

Certification

Upon being notified that an employee wishes to take leave for an FMLA-qualifying reason, an employee will submit a medical certification regarding the employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member to hr@sankofamontessori.org. Where an employee is requesting leave due to a military exigency, he/she will be asked to provide proof of the service member's military status. Certification should be provided in advance of taking leave whenever possible. When this is not possible, the employee is expected to provide the certification to hr@sankofamontessori.org within 15 calendar days of receiving a request for certification from hr@sankofamontessori.org. Consistent with other applicable leave policies, an employee's failure to provide medical certification may result in his/her/their time off work being considered unexcused. All employees returning from a medical leave must provide medical certification of their fitness to return to work before they begin working.

Leave Request Procedure

Requests for FMLA leave must be approved in advance by HR at hr@sankofamontessori.org, except during emergency situations where providing notice is not possible. If the need for leave is foreseeable, an employee must provide Sankofa Montessori with at least 30 days' notice before the leave is to begin. If the need is not foreseeable, and 30 days' notice is not possible, written notice must be given, as soon as practical. When an employee requests leave under this policy, employees should complete an FMLA application [here](#) in full and submit a medical certification completed by a health care provider or proof of a service member's military service. ***In addition, an employee should notify his/her/their supervisor that he/she has submitted a request for a leave of absence and provide his/her/their manager with the anticipated dates of leave.***

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Failure to comply with these rules is grounds for, and may result in, deferral of the requested leave until the employee complies with this notice policy.

When planning medical treatment, an employee should make a reasonable effort to schedule leave so as not to unduly disrupt Sankofa Montessori 's operations. Employees are expected to consult HR prior to the scheduling of treatment to work out a treatment schedule that best suits the needs of both the employee and Sankofa Montessori .

Intermittent Leave or Reduced Schedule Leave

Sankofa Montessori employees may not take intermittent or reduced leave schedules for the birth or adoption of a child or the placement of a child in foster care, absent an express, written agreement with Human Resources. Leave taken for a serious health condition of an employee or family member may be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule where a health care provider determines that doing so is medically necessary, and the employee provides required medical certification. If an employee takes intermittent leave or a reduced work schedule, Sankofa Montessori may temporarily transfer that employee to another position with equivalent pay and benefits to better accommodate the leave.

Compensation during Leave

All FMLA leave is unpaid, but eligible employees may substitute Sankofa Montessori paid leave, including any available sick leave, vacation leave, or parental leave, or apply for short- and/or long-term disability benefits. When all forms of paid leave have been exhausted or are unavailable, employees may continue the balance of their leave under this policy on an unpaid basis.

The length of an employee's family or medical leave shall not be extended by his or her use of available paid leave. Time spent on FMLA leave shall not constitute a break in service for purposes of longevity, seniority or any employee benefit plan.

Group Insurance Benefits

Sankofa Montessori will maintain group insurance coverage, for eligible employees, during an FMLA leave period under the same conditions as coverage would have been provided if the employee had been continuously employed during the leave period. Employees will continue to be responsible for premium co-payments (if any) for themselves and their dependents under Sankofa Montessori 's group health insurance plans.

Employees who do not return to work at the end of their family and/or medical leave will be required to reimburse Sankofa Montessori for all premiums paid on their behalf, unless the reason the employee does not return to work is due to circumstances beyond the employee's control, or the continuation, recurrence or onset of a serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member, or a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember, that would otherwise entitle the employee to leave under the FMLA.

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Returning to Work

Before returning to work from medical leave for the employee's own serious medical condition, an employee must provide satisfactory medical certification of his/her/their/their fitness to return to work.

Upon returning from protected leave, eligible employees will generally be returned to the same position held prior to the leave, or one that is equivalent in pay, benefits and the terms and conditions of employment. Being on FMLA leave does not provide employees with any additional rights to employment than if they had not been on leave.

Acceptance of other employment during a period of FMLA leave will be considered a resignation from Sankofa Montessori .

Employees who do not return to work upon the expiration of their approved family or medical leave, without justification, may be terminated for job abandonment.

Instructional Employees

The FMLA contains special rules applying to instructional employees, which are defined as employees whose principal function is to teach and instruct students in class, small group, or individual settings. Such rules apply to the use of intermittent leave and to leave taken at the end of an academic term.

Retaliation Prohibition

Sankofa Montessori prohibits retaliation against any covered Sankofa Montessori employee for requesting or using leave in accordance with this policy and the Federal Family and Medical Leave Acts.

An employee who believes his/her/their rights under the FMLA have been violated has the choice of filing a complaint with the Secretary of Labor or filing a private lawsuit pursuant to section 107 of the FMLA. A complaint with the Secretary of Labor may be filed in person, by mail, or by telephone with the Wage and Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor. A complaint may be filed at any local office of the Wage and Hour Division. For more information, visit: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/contact/complaints>.

SECTION 3: WAGE AND HOUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Sankofa Montessori complies with all applicable federal and Georgia laws regarding wage payment.

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Recording Your Time

Currently, Sankofa Montessori student hours at all schools are 7:30 am – 2:30 pm. Hours worked at Sankofa Montessori may vary by school level and location. School staff should consult their role specific calendar and direct manager for their expected arrival and departure times. Weekly staff hours are announced at the beginning of the school year, and staff will be notified if these hours change.

All employees are required to clock in and clock out each day. This ensures we have an accurate record of who is in the building at all times for safety purposes. Additionally, payroll uses this information to verify attendance prior to processing salary payments.

No one has the authority to direct an employee to fill out a timesheet that does not accurately report time worked and leave taken. If anyone instructs an employee not to record all time worked or to otherwise fill out timesheets inaccurately, the employee is required to notify his/her/their Supervisor or Human Resources immediately. If an employee makes a mistake in reporting time, the employee should immediately report the correct hours and how the mistake happened to his/her/their Supervisor or Human Resources.

Overtime (Non-exempt Employees)

This section is only applicable to employees who are considered non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). At Sankofa, all salaried roles are considered as exempt under the FLSA. If you have questions about your status under the FLSA, you may contact HR via hr@sankofamontessori.org.

There may be times when an employee will need to work outside of contract hours so that we may meet the needs of our students. Although employees will be given advance notice of the need to work overtime whenever feasible, providing advance notice is not always possible. Barring exigent circumstances, an employee will be expected to work outside of contract hours when directed to do so by his/her/their supervisor.

Overtime pay is based on actual hours worked. Time off on holidays, sick leave, or any leave of absence will not be considered hours worked for purposes of overtime calculations. Overtime is normally paid at the rate of 1.5 times an employee's regular rate of pay for hours worked over 40 in any workweek. In calculating hours worked, for purposes of overtime pay, paid break periods are considered part of the workday, but lunch periods are not. Sankofa Montessori's workweek runs from Sunday at 12:01 am through midnight Saturday. Exempt employees do not receive overtime pay.

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An employee who fails to gain prior approval from his/her/their Supervisor before working overtime, or who fails to report overtime on the employee's timesheets and obtain a Supervisor's signature may have delay in payment or non-payment of unapproved overtime. Failure to follow these overtime policies may result in discipline up to and including termination.

Time And Effort Reporting Policy – Federal Funds

As a recipient of federal funding, Sankofa Montessori is required to comply with federal requirements to confirm time and effort spent on federally-funded grant initiatives. Individuals who hold positions at Sankofa Montessori that are federally-funded are responsible for responding to requests for documentation and certification by the Grants and Finance teams. Sankofa Montessori requires all individuals whose positions are funded with federal dollars to comply with time and effort reporting policies.

Employee Paycheck Deductions (Exempt and Non Exempt Employees)

Sankofa Montessori is required by law to make certain deductions from an exempt employee's paycheck each pay period. Such deductions typically include federal and state taxes and Social Security (FICA) taxes.

Depending on the benefits that are chosen, there may be additional deductions. All deductions, and the amount of the deductions, are listed on a pay stub, which can be viewed through an employee's Paylocity account. These deductions are totaled each year for an employee's Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement.

Sankofa Montessori may make deductions from exempt and non exempt employees' salaries in a way that is permitted under federal and Georgia wage and hour law. Thus, exempt and non exempt employees may be subject to the following salary deductions, except where prohibited by law:

- Absences of one or more full days for personal reasons, other than sickness or disability;
- Absences of one or more full days due to sickness or disability, if there is a plan, policy, or practice providing replacement compensation for such absences;
- Absences of one or more full days before eligibility under such a plan, policy, or practice or after replacement compensation for such absences has been exhausted;
- Suspensions of one or more full days for violations of safety rules of major significance;
- Suspensions of one or more full days for violations of written workplace conduct rules, such as rules against sexual harassment and workplace violence;
- During the first or last week of employment if the employee does not work a full week;

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- Any unpaid leave taken under the Family and Medical Leave Act, including intermittent or partial day leave;
- Negative vacation leave balances, in half and whole-day increments.

If an employee believes that an improper deduction from pay has occurred, he/she should notify hr@sankofamontessori.org upon learning of the deduction. Sankofa Montessori will make every effort to investigate the complaint promptly, review the results, and make a good faith determination as to whether the deduction was proper. Employees will be reimbursed in full for any isolated, inadvertent, or improper deductions, as determined under federal or Georgia law.

Garnishment And Child Support

A wage garnishment or wage attachment is an order from a court or government agency that is sent to an employer requiring an employer to withhold a certain amount of money from an employee's paycheck and send this money directly to the creditor. Thus, when an employee's wages are garnished by a court order or government agency, Sankofa Montessori is legally bound to withhold the amount indicated in the garnishment order from the employee's paycheck.

All court orders for child support include an automatic wage withholding order. Sankofa Montessori may be held liable for failing to comply with a child support order. Thus, Sankofa Montessori is legally bound to withhold the amount indicated in a child support order from an employee's paycheck.

In either case, Sankofa Montessori will honor applicable federal and Georgia laws that impose limits on the amount of an employee's income that may be subject to garnishment or wage withholding.

Direct Deposit

All full- and part-time employees have the option to receive their pay in a payroll check or by having their pay deposited into their bank account through our direct deposit program. If an employee chooses to have their paycheck directly deposited into their specified accounts, the employee is able to view pay stubs through their Paylocity account. In order to directly deposit funds in an employee's account, Sankofa Montessori must have advance written consent. Please contact Human Resources to receive the necessary form and for more information.

If you are planning on updating or changing your bank account, please alert Human Resources prior to making these changes. Changing banks close to a pay period may result in payroll errors.

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Payday

Sankofa Montessori employees are paid semi-monthly on the 15th and the last day of the month of each month, over a 12 month period. When the payday is on a holiday, employees typically will be paid on the first business day after the holiday. All employees should review their paycheck for errors. If a mistake has occurred, please report it to Human Resources immediately.

Reimbursements

Sankofa Montessori will reimburse employees for reasonable, pre-approved, work-related expenses in accordance with [Sankofa Montessori fiscal policies](#). All requests for reimbursements must be approved by the Director of Operations before the purchase is made in order to guarantee full or partial reimbursements.

- See details for non-travel-related employee reimbursement policy [here](#)
- See details for travel-related employee reimbursement policy [here](#)
- See details for employee mileage reimbursement policy [here](#)

SECTION 4: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND PROHIBITIONS ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Policy On Workplace Accommodations

Accommodations For Individuals With Disabilities

Sankofa Montessori is committed to ensuring an equal opportunity in employment for qualified individuals with disabilities, with accepted disabilities being disabilities that are recognized and defined within the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) and other applicable federal and Georgia laws. Sankofa Montessori complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) and other applicable federal and Georgia laws. This means we do not discriminate against any qualified employee or applicant because of his/her/their disability or because the person is related to or associated with a person with a disability. This also means Sankofa Montessori provides qualified individuals with disabilities with reasonable accommodations, unless doing so would present an undue hardship or direct threat to the safety of the employee or others in the workplace. A reasonable accommodation is any change or adjustment to the workplace that permits a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the job application process, to perform the essential functions of a job, or to enjoy benefits and privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by employees without disabilities.

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In general, it is an employee's responsibility to notify Sankofa Montessori of the need for an accommodation. To request an accommodation, contact the Human Resources representative for your work location or email hr@sankofamontessori.org. You and your health care provider may be asked for information regarding your condition as part of Sankofa Montessori's review of your accommodation request. Such information will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law.

Accommodations For Religious Beliefs

Sankofa Montessori is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for an employee's bona fide religious beliefs, unless doing so would cause more than a minimal burden on school operations.

Accommodations might include time off or a modification to an employee's schedule during a religious holiday.

Accommodations For Nursing Mothers/Parents

Employees at Sankofa Montessori are entitled to a reasonable amount of break time to accommodate an employee's need to express breast milk for the employee's infant child, for up to one year after the birth of the employee's child. The break time should, if possible, be taken concurrently with other break periods already provided. Sankofa Montessori will also provide nursing employees with the use of a clean, private room or other location in close proximity to the team member's work area to express breast milk. Employees are not expected to express breast milk in bathrooms. If you have questions or concerns about your accommodations contact hr@sankofamontessori.org.

In general, it is an employee's responsibility to notify Sankofa Montessori of the need for accommodation. To request an accommodation, email HR at hr@sankofamontessori.org.

Policy Prohibiting Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation

Sankofa Montessori does not tolerate the harassment of applicants, employees, students, parents, vendors, or any other member of or visitor to the School community. Any form of harassment relating to an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, pregnancy, genetic information, sexual orientation, marital status, citizenship status, service member status, or any other category protected by federal, state, or local law is a violation of this policy.

Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

At a minimum, the term "harassment" as used in this policy includes:

- Offensive remarks, comments, jokes, slurs, or verbal conduct pertaining to an individual's race, color, religion, genetic information, national origin, sex (including same sex), pregnancy, age,

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disability, citizenship status, service member status, sexual orientation, or any other category protected by federal, state, or local law;

- Offensive pictures, drawings, photographs, figurines, or other graphic images, conduct, or communications, including e-mail, faxes, and copies pertaining to an individual's race, color, religion, genetic information, national origin, sex (including same sex), pregnancy, age, disability, citizenship status, service member status, sexual orientation, or any other category protected by federal, state, or local law;
- Offensive sexual remarks, sexual advances, or requests for sexual favors regardless of the gender of the individuals involved; and
- Offensive physical conduct, including touching and gestures, regardless of the gender of the individuals involved.

Sankofa Montessori absolutely prohibits retaliation, which includes: threatening an individual or taking any adverse action against an individual for (1) reporting a possible violation of this policy, or (2) participating in an investigation conducted under this policy.

Our managers, supervisors, and administrators are covered by this policy and are prohibited from engaging in any form of harassing, discriminatory, or retaliatory conduct. No manager or supervisor has the authority to suggest to any applicant or employee that employment or advancement will be affected by the individual entering into (or refusing to enter into) a personal relationship with the supervisor or manager, or for tolerating (or refusing to tolerate) conduct or communication that might violate this policy. Such conduct is a direct violation of this policy.

Similarly, no employee has the authority to suggest to a student that the student's continued attendance, grade, or promotion will be affected by the individual entering into (or refusing to enter into) a personal relationship with the employee, or for tolerating (or refusing to tolerate) conduct or communications that might violate this policy. Such conduct is a direct violation of this policy.

Non-employees are also covered by this policy. Sankofa Montessori prohibits harassment, discrimination, or retaliation of our employees in connection with their work by non-employees. Immediately report any harassing or discriminating behavior by non-employees. Any employee who experiences or observes harassment, discrimination, or retaliation should report it using the guidelines listed below.

If you have any concern that our Policy Prohibiting Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation may have been violated by anyone, you must immediately report the matter. Due to the very serious nature of harassment, discrimination and retaliation, you must report your concerns to the Executive Director. If your concern is about the Executive Director, you must report your concern to the Board Chair. You

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should report any actions that you believe may violate our policy no matter how slight the actions may seem.

Sankofa Montessori will investigate the report and then take prompt, appropriate remedial action. Sankofa Montessori will protect the confidentiality of employees reporting suspected violations of this or any other School policy to the extent possible consistent with our investigation. However, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

You will not be penalized or retaliated against for truthfully reporting improper conduct, harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or other actions that you believe may violate this policy.

An individual who retaliates against someone who has reported a concern in good faith is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Sankofa Montessori is serious about enforcing our policy against harassment. We cannot resolve a potential policy violation unless we know about it. You are responsible for reporting possible policy violations to us so that we can take appropriate actions to address your concerns. Managers and supervisors are required to report possible policy violations and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Any questions about this policy should be addressed to:

Sankofa Montessori
Sarah Harvey
Executive Director
5881 Phillips Drive
Forest Park, GA 30297

For complaints that fall under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), please refer to the Sexual Harassment Policy.

Sexual Harassment Policy ([link to public policy](#))

Grievance Policy ([link to public copy](#))

Whistleblower Policy ([link to public copy](#))

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Handling Of Reported Violations

Sankofa Montessori will promptly investigate all reports filed in accordance with this policy with due care. Matters reported internally without initial resolution will be investigated to determine if the allegations are true, whether the issue is material and what actions, if any, are necessary to correct the problem. Sankofa Montessori staff will issue a full report of all matters raised under this policy to the Governance Committee. The Governance Committee may conduct a further investigation upon receiving the report from the Executive Director.

For matters reported directly to the Governance Committee or the chair of the Board, the Governance Committee shall promptly acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant if the identity of the complainant is known and conduct an investigation to determine if the allegations are true and whether the issue is material and what, if any, corrective action is necessary. Upon the conclusion of this investigation, the Governance Committee shall promptly report its findings to the Sankofa Montessori Board of Directors.

Authority of Governance Committee

The Governance Committee shall have full authority to investigate concerns raised in accordance with this policy and may retain outside legal counsel, accountants, or any other resource that the Committee reasonably believes is necessary to conduct a full and complete investigation of the allegations.

No Retaliation

This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable board members, advisors, employees and volunteers to raise serious concerns within the organization for investigation and appropriate action. With this goal in mind, no director, advisor, employee or volunteer who, in good faith, reports a concern shall be threatened, discriminated against or otherwise subject to retaliation or, in the case of an employee, adverse action as a result of such report. Moreover, a volunteer or employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a concern in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from the volunteer position or termination of employment.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone reporting a concern must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the matter raised is a violation of law or policy or of accounting or auditing procedures. The act of making allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated and that prove to have been made maliciously, recklessly, with gross negligence, or with the foreknowledge that the allegations are false, will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and may result in discipline, up to and including dismissal from the volunteer position or termination of employment. Depending on the circumstances, such conduct may also give rise to other actions, including civil or criminal lawsuits.

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Confidentiality

Sankofa Montessori will treat all communications under this policy as confidentially as possible, but may need to disclose information for business reasons, including: 1) to conduct a complete and fair investigation, or 2) for review of Sankofa Montessori's operations by Sankofa Montessori's board, Finance Committee, independent public accountants, and/or legal counsel.

SECTION 5: WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

Standards of Conduct

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and responsible manner and to serve as role models for our students. In this regard, there are certain standards of conduct that all employees must know and follow while employees of Sankofa Montessori, whether on or off Sankofa Montessori premises. These rules are designed for the protection of our employees, for the benefit of our students, to ensure families and members of the public have confidence in the services we provide, and for the good of Sankofa Montessori as a whole.

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable during your employment, but the following are examples of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension or termination of employment:

- Being absent from work without approval or valid excuse
- Being repeatedly late for work without approval or valid excuse
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice
- Unauthorized or unnecessary absence from the workplace during the workday
- Abusing leave
- Inappropriate and unprofessional attire during the school day or at Sankofa Montessori events
- Falsifying timekeeping or other Sankofa Montessori records
- Providing intentionally false or misleading information
- Engaging in residency fraud
- Misusing your position for personal gain or benefit or engaging in a conflict of interest
- Misuse of or unauthorized use of telephones, mail system or other Sankofa Montessori property
- Engaging in negligent or improper conduct leading to damage of Sankofa Montessori property
- Theft or unauthorized removal or possession of property belonging to Sankofa Montessori or another
- Unauthorized use or disclosure of confidential business information
- Failing to properly supervise students
- Disrespectful language towards staff or students
- Failing to report unsafe conditions, including failing to abide by mandated reporter obligations

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- Failing to cooperate in or interfering with a Sankofa Montessori investigation
- Exhibiting rude or unprofessional behavior toward a member of the Sankofa Montessori community, including students, parents, volunteers, and staff members
- Reporting to work or working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs (or abusing prescription medication)
- Smoking in prohibited areas (Sankofa Montessori 's entire campus prohibits smoking)
- Improper restraint of, and use of excessive force, with students
- Engaging in physical altercations at work, including pushing, hitting, punching, kicking, or otherwise fighting with members of the Sankofa Montessori community
- Threatening violence in the workplace
- Engaging in discriminatory or harassing behaviors
- Discriminating against or retaliating against members of the Sankofa Montessori community
- Possessing dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms in the workplace or while on duty for Sankofa Montessori
- Being convicted of a felony or misdemeanor charge that would adversely affect your employment at Sankofa Montessori
- Engaging in inappropriate activities involving children
- Failure to disclose romantic relationships involving staff to Executive Director
- Inappropriate touch or sexual activity on school grounds
- Any other act which in the sole discretion of Sankofa Montessori jeopardizes the School's standing in the community

Where, in the judgment of Sankofa Montessori , an employee's performance or conduct does not meet our standards, Sankofa Montessori will take the action that it determines to be appropriate. Employees shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge without advance notice. Both Sankofa Montessori and the employee have the right to end the employment relationship at any time with or without cause or notice.

Progressive Discipline

As described above, Sankofa Montessori expects all employees to maintain the highest standards of conduct and act in a mature and responsible manner at all times. Each staff member is expected at all times to perform the responsibilities of her/his/their position to the best of her/his/their ability. Employees shall not engage in activities that violate federal, state, or local laws or that diminish Sankofa Montessori in any way. Key in the success of this task is effective communication of those responsibilities and any concerns about the performance of those responsibilities.

Most performance and/or misconduct problems will be addressed using the below progressive discipline model. The School reserves the right, however, to skip steps based on the severity of the situation or for

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any other legitimate reason, at its sole discretion. In cases of serious misconduct, immediate termination may be warranted.

- Verbal Warning+Email from your Direct Manager
- Informal Letter: Reprimand/Letter of Concern from your Direct Manager
- Formal Letter: Letter of Direction from your Direct Manager
- Unsatisfactory Evaluation, Performance Improvement Plan, or Suspension Without Pay from the Executive Director
- Termination of Employment from the Executive Director

Employee Interaction With Students

Sankofa Montessori expects employees to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all of our students and alumni, and use their best judgment during all interactions with students and families. This policy is intended to guide all Sankofa Montessori staff members in conducting themselves in a way that reflects the high standards of behavior and professionalism required of school employees and to outline our expectations for staff- student interactions. All certified and classified staff shall at all times comply with the Code of Ethics for Educators published by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, particularly as it pertains to the care of students.

Student Supervision

Students must be supervised by a Sankofa Montessori staff member at all times. They should be monitored throughout all parts of the day, including at recess, transitions, on field trips, and during dismissal. Students should not be left unsupervised in classrooms, offices, or other parts of school buildings. In addition, students (regardless of age) should not be permitted to roam school hallways for prolonged periods, and adults should use appropriate systems, such as attendance procedures, hall passes, and referral sheets to track student whereabouts. Staff members must also take care not to release students to persons who are not on their authorized pick-up list.

Appropriate Staff-Student Boundaries

General

Fostering healthy, supportive relationships between staff and students is vital to Sankofa Montessori's success. Trespassing the boundaries of a student/ Sankofa Montessori employee relationship and violation of this policy can lead to disciplinary consequences up to and including termination of employment. In addition, criminal penalties and sanctions against an educator's certificate may result for certain conduct with students.

All staff must carefully review this policy along with each of the examples given in the policy related to acceptable and unacceptable employee behavior (see examples section below). Although this policy gives specific examples of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, it is each staff member's obligation to

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avoid situations, whether or not explicitly listed, that could lead parents, students, colleagues, or Executive Director to suspect that one is engaging with a student in an inappropriate manner. If you are ever unsure if certain conduct is acceptable, ask yourself: “Would I be engaged in this conduct if my family member or supervisor were standing next to me?”

Note that some activities may seem innocent from a staff member’s perspective, but can be perceived as flirtatious or sexually suggestive from a student or parent point of view. The objective of providing the examples of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors listed below is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between staff and students, but to prevent relationships from becoming, or being perceived as, sexual or otherwise inappropriate.

Staff members must understand their own responsibility for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this policy. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of the established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is crucial that all employees learn this policy thoroughly and apply the lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors to their daily activities.

Safe Touch

In general, staff members should not touch students or ask students to touch them. This general rule is not designed to preclude staff members from showing appropriate affection, but to ensure staff members do not inadvertently hurt a student, make students or parents uncomfortable, or engage in conduct that casts doubt on their good intentions. If you have questions about how you should interact with a student in a given circumstance, please consult the Executive Director and the examples of unacceptable and acceptable behaviors listed below.

Safe Places

At Sankofa Montessori, no staff member or volunteer should be alone with any student, regardless of age or gender, behind a closed door or in any other isolated situation. If you believe your job requires you to be alone with a student in an isolated situation, please speak to the Executive Director about how best to proceed and to protect your and your student’s interests in that situation (see below for guidance on conducting counseling sessions).

When a situation arises that calls for a staff member to be alone with a student, it is the staff member’s responsibility to take steps to ensure that his or her interaction with the student is visible to others. This may be done by leaving the room door open, moving to an open space for the interaction, or asking another staff member to join in the conversation. Staff members should not completely block or cover up all classroom windows in such a way as to prevent outsiders from being able to see into a classroom. Teachers and students must be visible through the doorway, or door window, of any classroom. If

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covering a window is required for testing or some other extraordinary circumstances, such covering should be removed as soon as possible (i.e., as soon as testing is completed).

When a counselor or other administrator needs to meet with a student in private to have a confidential conversation, they are expected to notify the Director of Operations that such meeting is occurring.

Examples Of Unacceptable Behaviors

- Giving gifts to students that are of an intimate nature, or giving gifts of any kind to an individual student in secret.
- Massaging a student.
- Asking a student to sit on our lap.
- Flirting with a student.
- Initiating unnecessary physical contact with a student in a private situation.
- Making sexually inappropriate comments to, or in the presence of, a student.
- Making sexual jokes or references to, or in the presence of, a student.
- Telling a student stories that are sexually oriented.
- Discussing your own sexual encounters or intimate issues with a student.
- Spending time outside of regular school hours with a student or alumnus alone unless it has been approved by your Executive Director or Supervisor, and, in the case of a student, by the student's parent.
- Visiting a student in their home unless a parent, guardian, or another adult is present.
- Allowing a student to visit your home alone.
- Allowing a group of students to visit your home without supervisor and parent permission.
- Spending the night with a student. If an overnight stay at a hotel is required, the staff member must have parental consent, Executive Director approval, more than one adult on the outing, and a legitimate school reason (e.g., field trip, out of area tournament) for the trip. This rule does not apply if an employee has a student at Sankofa Montessori and hosts a sleepover for the friends of their child who may also attend Sankofa Montessori.
- Excessive texting or e-mailing; exchanging texts or emails at hours when a student reasonably should be sleeping.
- Sharing alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes with a student, purchasing such substances for a student, consuming such substances around a student, or discussing such substances with a student in a manner other than to educate.
- Moving, restraining, or picking up a student against his or her will, unless specifically trained and authorized to restrain students.
- Pulling, pushing, or dragging a student.
- Engaging in any activities that would endanger any of our student(s) or alumni.

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- Engaging in any inappropriate acts or behaviors with any Sankofa Montessori student(s) or alumni.
- Engaging, or attempting to engage in, romantic relationships with students or alumni.

Examples Of Generally Acceptable Behaviors

- Getting school and parental written consent for any after-school activity.
- Obtaining formal, written approval to take students off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions.
- E-mails, text, and phone messages to students that are professional and pertain to school activities or classes and that are sent from official Sankofa Montessori accounts.
- Meeting alone with a student in a room with windows, cracked door or in an otherwise observable/interruptible setting. (Counselors may also need private space. They should log their meetings and inform a member of the leadership team.)
- Giving gifts that are not intimate in nature to students, so long as gifts are not given in secret and are given to all students.
- Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries.
- Asking for advice from fellow staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries.
- Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with a student.
- Informing your Executive Director about situations that have the potential to become more severe.
- Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students or coworkers.
- Giving students praise and recognition without touching them.
- Giving students required physical support (e.g., necessary assistance with toileting).
- Giving students physical touch that they expressly request and is professional - hugs, high fives, fist bumps, and handshakes.

Duty to Report

Any employee who witnesses or suspects staff misconduct that endangers the safety, interests, or rights of all of our students and alumni, including inappropriate behavior between students and staff members, parents, volunteers, or other Sankofa Montessori affiliated personnel (whether or not such behavior is explicitly listed in this policy), must notify Sankofa Montessori 's Executive Director and Director of Operations. All reports shall be regarded as confidential and will only be disclosed to those with a legal right to such information.

In addition to reporting to Sankofa Montessori staff outlined above, known or suspected abuse must be reported by all staff members, parents, volunteers, or other Sankofa Montessori affiliated personnel in accordance with the Mandated Reporting policy below.

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Reports of acts of abuse or misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of abuse or misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of abuse or misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the Board and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

Where a report of suspected abuse or neglect involves a Sankofa Montessori staff member, the Sankofa Montessori Executive or Director will, in consultation with legal counsel, determine what, if any, school community notifications are appropriate and legally required. Any such notification to members of the school community shall maintain the integrity of any investigation and protect the confidentiality of those involved.

Failure to Follow this Policy

Failure to follow this policy is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, depending on the severity of the violation. Additionally, the violation may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency, as required by law. Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Executive Director.

Transportation of Students

Overview

Staff, chaperones, and volunteers of Sankofa Montessori are prohibited from transporting students in their private motor vehicles, except in cases of extreme emergency. This policy refers to any current Sankofa Montessori student.

Non-field Trip Transportation

If a student requires assistance with transportation of any sort, whether to go home or to a school-related event, follow these mandatory steps until transportation is arranged:

- Contact the front office, the front office will then follow the steps below:
 - Contact the student's emergency contacts to request that he/she transport the student.
 - Follow student abandonment procedures if there is no one available to transport the student.

Field Trip Transportation (Academic events, performance off campus)

Student transportation on field trips must be:

- Provided by a third party school bus company and/or other hired vehicle.

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- Coordinated between school staff and School Ops Leader.
- Thoroughly vetted and scheduled at least two weeks in advance.
- Permitted in writing by a parent/guardian.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of extreme illness, injury, or other medical emergency, school staff must:

- Call 911.
- Alert the School Nurse.
- Alert the appropriate manager(s) (typically the Executive Director).
- Call the student's parent/guardian. If they are unavailable, call the student's emergency contacts.
- Wait with students for medical transportation.
- Log incident in Student Information System (Infinite Campus).
- If the incident was especially serious, the Executive Director will also notify the Board of Directors.

Employee Fraternization Policy

Sankofa Montessori permits the employment of qualified family members, domestic partners, and significant others as long as such employment does not create a conflict of interest or undermine Sankofa Montessori operations. In accordance with Sankofa Montessori's employment policies, employee hiring or promotion shall be based on an employee's job qualifications and performance. Relationships by family, marriage, domestic partnership, or romantic involvement shall neither advantage nor disadvantage an employee's selection, promotion, salary, or other conditions of employment.

To safeguard against personal relationships interfering with, or appearing to interfere with, workplace operations, Sankofa Montessori will not knowingly place family members, domestic partners, significant others, or individuals who are engaged in a romantic relationship in a supervisor-supervisee relationship. Further, Sankofa Montessori discourages supervisors from engaging in romantic relationships with direct reports and from hiring family members. Sankofa Montessori also discourages Sankofa Montessori staff from engaging in romantic relations with parents and other family members of students. Individuals who are related to, or engaged in a romantic relationship with, a supervisee, supervisor, or a student's family member, are required to report their relationship to the Executive Director. Upon receiving such a report, Sankofa Montessori will take appropriate action to address the situation, while causing the least possible disruption to workplace operations. For purposes of this policy, a supervisor is someone who has the ability to hire, fire, promote, demote, discipline, evaluate, or determine the compensation of his/her/their supervisee.

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Professional Development Policy and Procedures

*This policy does not apply to school-sponsored professional development programs, such as Montessori Teacher Training, which are governed by separate agreements and expectations.

Purpose

Sankofa Montessori is committed to the growth and development of its team members in alignment with our mission, values, and instructional priorities. This policy outlines expectations, eligibility, and procedures for professional development (PD).

Types of Professional Development

School-Sponsored Professional Development These are learning opportunities that are:
Initiated, approved, and funded by Sankofa Montessori Aligned to organizational priorities and role-specific goals Scheduled during work hours or designated PD days Examples include:
Internal training sessions Conferences or workshops aligned to school initiatives Coaching cycles or certification programs identified by leadership

Independent Professional Development

These are learning activities pursued by staff that are:
Required by an external program (e.g., degree programs, certifications)
Personally or professionally beneficial but not directly sponsored by the school
Examples include: Coursework for advanced degrees External observations or practicums

Self-selected conferences or trainings not approved by the school

Time Off for Professional Development Sankofa Montessori does not grant additional professional development days for independent or externally required activities. Staff may use accrued Paid Time Off (PTO) to participate in independent professional development. Requests for time off must be submitted in accordance with standard PTO procedures and are subject to approval based on staffing needs. Certain dates may be restricted (“locked”) due to operational priorities.

School Sponsored Professional Development

Guiding Principles

- Alignment to school priorities, instructional model, and student outcomes
- Equity in access to meaningful learning opportunities
- Accountability for implementation and impact
- Stewardship of time and financial resources

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Eligibility Requirements

- Minimum of 6 months employment
- Not on a Performance Improvement Plan
- Good standing with performance expectations
- Aligned to organizational priorities

Approval Process

- [Complete PD Request Form](#)
- Manager approval required
- HR final approval required (HR may deny based on budget or alignment)

Funding & Reimbursement

- Registration and lodging may be covered
- [Mileage reimbursed at federal rate](#)
- Airfare is not covered for non-leadership staff; all travel must be within driving distance.
- Alcohol and incidental expenses not reimbursed

Expectations

Adhere to Travel-related employee reimbursement and expectations-read more at this link [HERE](#)

Attendance And Punctuality

Attendance and punctuality are important factors for an employee's success at Sankofa Montessori . Personal issues requiring time away from your work, such as doctor's appointments or other matters, should be scheduled during your non-working hours whenever possible.

If an employee will be late to work due to illness or other personal reasons, the employee must notify their direct manager on the agreed upon mode of communication by 6AM before the start of the workday, or the evening before if possible. The employee will also need to send an email to HR@sankofamontessori.org in addition to scheduling the time off in paylocity. An employee will be asked to submit a doctor's note to explain his/her/their absence from work if they are out sick for longer than 3 days. If an employee does not notify their manager, hr@sankofamontessori.org and input their absence in paylocity, that he/she will be missing work, and does not report to work with a valid excuse, disciplinary actions up to, and including, termination may occur.

Lateness is defined as arriving after an employee's scheduled start time. Lateness will not be tolerated at Sankofa Montessori and repeat breaches will result in disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.

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If you are absent for three consecutive days without notifying Sankofa Montessori, the school reserves the right to assume you have voluntarily abandoned your position and will remove you from benefits and payroll.

Fundraising

Staff may not independently fundraise or solicit monetary donations on behalf of the school (including cash or funds directed to personal accounts). All financial donations must be processed through Sankofa Montessori, either via check submitted to the Executive Director or through the school's official donation platform, to ensure proper oversight and accountability. Any large-scale or school-impacting contributions (e.g., facilities improvements or sponsored projects) require prior approval from the Executive Director. Classroom-level donations (e.g., snacks or supplies) are permitted without Executive Director approval, provided they align with school policies; however, staff are encouraged to consult with their manager and Operations.

Sharing of Sankofa Montessori Proprietary and Intellectual Information

To ensure that Sankofa Montessori protects its intellectual and proprietary information, Staff members are prohibited from sharing any Sankofa Montessori intellectual or proprietary information (ie, logo, brand colors, documents..etc) without the explicit permission of the Executive Director or Board Chair..

Mandated Reporting

All Sankofa Montessori employees and volunteers are required to complete Mandatory Reporting training prior to beginning service with Sankofa Montessori, and annually thereafter.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5, School employees or volunteers having reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred are required to make a report of such abuse. The statute defines "child abuse" to include physical abuse, neglect, exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation, as explained in more detail in the statute and below.

The reporter shall provide an oral report to the Executive Director immediately, but in no event later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe that child abuse has occurred. The reporter should subsequently provide a written report to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will immediately contact the Division of Family and Children Services ("DFCS"). The Executive Director shall not modify the information provided by the reporter in any way.

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If the Executive Director is not available, the reporter should notify and provide their report to the Director of Operations. If neither is available, the reporter should make the report directly to DFCS.

Mandatory reporting records are confidential under law. As such, the reporter and additional administrative personnel involved in making the report should refrain from discussing this report with any other staff, students, parents, or members of the community.

Known or suspected mental or physical abuse or neglect of a child includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- A student reports:
 - Being abused at home.
 - Witnessing drug use in the home.
 - Being sexually abused.
 - Engaging in child pornography or prostitution.
 - Witnessing domestic abuse.
 - Being threatened at home.
 - Being afraid to go home.

- A staff member suspects or witnesses:
 - Physical abuse
 - such as bruises, burns, fractures, etc.
 - Other potential indicators of abuse
 - such as wariness of adult contact, behavioral extremes (aggression, withdrawal), fear of parents/guardians or going home, difficulty walking or sitting.
 - Neglect
 - including lack of basic food and clothing, poor hygiene, consistent hunger, fatigue or falling asleep in class, lack of appropriate supervision, lack of medical treatment, or the child is residing in an inappropriate or dangerous environment.
 - Suicidal ideation
 - Threats to kill or seriously harm another person.
 - Engagement in risky behavior (including sexual behavior, drug use, etc.) where the parents/guardians are either unable or unwilling to intervene.

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- Absence from school to care for family members or to do chores/work around the house.
- Absence from school to hold down a job.
- The accrual of ten or more unexcused absences.
- Parents/guardians:
 - Repeatedly fail to return phone calls, respond to notes/letters home, or attend school meetings.
 - Withdraw a student and fail to provide documentation enrolling the student in another education institution within ten days.

More information about child abuse and neglect, including common signs of abuse or neglect, may be found at compliance director.

Employees who fail to make a mandated report when required to do so may prevent a student from receiving needed assistance and may be subjected to disciplinary action by Sankofa Montessori , and/or prosecution.

If any employee has any questions about the mandated reporter requirements, the employee should contact his/her/their Supervisor or School Leader, and take DFCS-approved Mandated Reporter training, available at compliance director.

As explained above, Sankofa Montessori 's Whistleblower Policy prohibits retaliation against any employee, volunteer, board member or student who reports a good faith complaint, or who participates in any related investigation.

Background Checks And Duty To Report Criminal Proceedings

All Sankofa Montessori employees, interns, volunteers, contractors, consultants and other third parties working for Sankofa Montessori , or at our schools, must have a background completed prior to working at our organization. Depending on one's involvement with Sankofa Montessori , the type of background check may vary. Each individual, regardless of their position, will complete a Background Criminal and Sexual Offender Check Consent Form prior to working or volunteering at Sankofa Montessori . Such consent authorizes Sankofa Montessori to obtain additional background checks that may take place at any time during employment. This policy outlines the disclosure notice, policies and procedures surrounding the background check. Please note that Sankofa Montessori complies with all rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act and Georgia Law.

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All Sankofa Montessori employees will be required to renew background checks once their clearance certificate is expired.

School-based Employees, Contractors, and Volunteers

All Sankofa Montessori employees, interns, volunteers, contractors, consultants and other third parties working for Sankofa Montessori, and who are in contact with Sankofa Montessori students are required to obtain an FBI Fingerprint Background Check prior to their start date with Sankofa Montessori through Accurate Fingerprinting. Sankofa Montessori covers the cost of background checks. Sankofa Montessori will contact the individual directly before any adverse action is taken based in whole or in part on the information contained in the background check.

Sankofa Montessori will also process an online background check along with an official National Sex Offender Check. All information used to complete these searches will be from the completed Background Criminal and Sexual Offender Check Consent Form. All results will be reviewed and before any adverse action is taken, based in whole, or in part on the information contained in the consumer report, Sankofa Montessori will provide a copy of the report, the name, address and telephone number of the reporting agency, and a summary of rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

All Other Employees

All other Sankofa Montessori employees, interns, volunteers, contractors, consultants and other third parties must also complete a background check and National Sex Offender Check prior to their start date volunteering and/or working at Sankofa Montessori. Additionally, any Sankofa Montessori employee with financial authority must also have a Federal Criminal Check completed. All results will be reviewed and before any adverse action is taken, based in whole, or in part on the information contained in the consumer report, Sankofa Montessori will provide a copy of the report, the name, address and telephone number of the reporting agency, and a summary of rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

References

Prior to being offered a position at Sankofa Montessori, all potential employees will provide a minimum of two references to Sankofa Montessori's recruiter. Human Resources will contact each reference and keep the notes from the conversations and/or e-mails for one year. If you have any questions concerning reference checks, please contact HR at hr@sankofamontessori.org

Duty To Report Arrests, Charges, Convictions, And Pleas

Employees must notify hr@sankofamontessori.org of any arrest, warrants, conviction, entry of a guilty plea or plea of nolo contendere (or its equivalent) for any criminal offense, or other initiation of criminal procedure. This reporting obligation includes drug- and alcohol-related offenses but does not apply to minor traffic tickets or citations unless the employee has an independent obligation to report under

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another policy. In addition, employees must notify Human Resources via hr@sankofamontessori.org of being charged of any crime of violence, drug trafficking, or sexual activity involving a minor. All reports required under this provision must be made in writing within three calendar days of the arrest, charge, conviction, or plea, or immediately upon reporting to work following such charge, conviction, or plea, whichever occurs first. Employees must provide HR via hr@sankofamontessori.org with a report explaining the basis of the charges lodged against the employee, and the date of conviction or entry of a guilty plea. Failure to report such incidents to the HR via hr@sankofamontessori.org will be considered a violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Immigration Reform And Control Act And E-verify

In compliance with the federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, as amended, and any state law requirement, Sankofa Montessori must employ only individuals who are authorized to work in the United States. As a condition of employment, each new employee must complete a Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification and present documentation establishing his/her/their identity and employment eligibility within three days of starting their employment. Sankofa Montessori uses E-Verify, an Internet-based system operated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), to determine the employment eligibility of our employees. E-Verify electronically checks the information provided by the employee on his or her Form I-9 against records contained in DHS and Social Security Administration (SSA) databases. Employees may be separated from employment with Sankofa Montessori for failing to provide proof of employment eligibility.

If an employee is authorized to work in the USA for a limited time period, the individual will be required to submit proof of renewed employment eligibility prior to expiration of that period to remain employed with Sankofa Montessori. Employees may be separated from employment with Sankofa Montessori for failing to provide proof of renewed employment eligibility.

Confidential Business Information

During employment, Sankofa Montessori employees may have access to confidential business information. Confidential business information is a valuable and unique asset of Sankofa Montessori or third parties who have furnished it to Sankofa Montessori. Employees are prohibited from revealing confidential business information to anyone outside Sankofa Montessori unless given specific permission to do so by Sankofa Montessori's Executive Director or Board of Directors.

Representatives of government or law enforcement agencies, in the course of their duties, may be allowed access to file information. The decision to reveal confidential business information will be made at the discretion of Sankofa Montessori in response to the employee's request, a valid subpoena, or valid court order.

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Information that is or later becomes publicly available in a manner wholly unrelated to any breach of this policy will not be considered confidential business information as of the date it enters the public domain. If you are uncertain whether something is confidential business information, you shall treat it as confidential until you receive clarification from the Executive Director that it is not confidential business information.

Conflicts Of Interest Policy

Employees should be aware of situations and activities that may be construed as a conflict of interest. A “conflict of interest” occurs when an individual’s private interest interferes with, or appears to interfere with, the interests of Sankofa Montessori .

For example, a conflict of interest would arise if an employee, or a member of his/her/their family, receives improper personal benefits as a result of his/her/their position with Sankofa Montessori . Any transaction or relationship that could reasonably be expected to give rise to a conflict of interest should be discussed with the School Leader. Such situations may include:

- influencing or attempting to influence anyone who is involved in making or administering a contract or arrangement with Sankofa Montessori ;
- soliciting or receiving any gift, reward or promise for recommending, influencing or attempting to influence the award of a contract or arrangement with Sankofa Montessori ;
- drafting, negotiating, evaluating, administering, accepting or approving any contract or subcontract or procurement or arrangement of any type on behalf of Sankofa Montessori if he/she has, directly or indirectly, any financial interest in such a contract or subcontract or arrangement;
- non-School employment which adversely affects the employee’s availability or effectiveness in fulfilling job responsibilities;
- any type of private business conducted during School time or on School property;
- the receipt of excessive entertainment or gifts of more than nominal value from any person, entity, or organization with whom or with which Sankofa Montessori has current or prospective dealings;
- being in the position of supervising, reviewing, or having any influence on the job evaluation, pay, or benefits of any immediate family member employed by or otherwise associated with Sankofa Montessori ; and
- selling anything to Sankofa Montessori or buying anything from Sankofa Montessori on terms and conditions that are not pre- approved by the School Leader.

This is not an exhaustive list of all possible situations which would constitute a conflict of interest. Further, any relationship or action which creates an expectation of benefit or profit beyond an

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employee's normal employment relationship with the School can impair an employee's ability to exercise good judgment on behalf of the School, and therefore creates an actual or potential conflict of interest. It is the School's policy that all School employees must scrupulously avoid all such situations.

Any such transaction or relationship that would present an actual or potential conflict of interest for an employee also would likely present a conflict if it is related to a member of such person's family, including without limitation, spouse, parent, child or spouse of a child, brother, sister, or spouse of a brother or sister.

In connection with any actual or potential conflict of interest, an employee must disclose the existence of the conflict in writing and all facts material to the conflict to the Executive Director.

Employees must refrain from any activity or from having any financial interest that is inconsistent with Sankofa Montessori 's best interest and also must refrain from activities, investments or associations that compete with Sankofa Montessori , interferes with the employee's judgment concerning Sankofa Montessori 's best interests, or exploits the employee's position with Sankofa Montessori for personal gain.

Before accepting a gift from any vendor, individual, or organization that sells or provides a service to, purchased from, or competes with Sankofa Montessori , you must first contact and consult with your School Leader. The purpose of this policy is to prevent any real or perceived conflicts of interest on the part of Sankofa Montessori and/or any of its individual employees. This policy is effective regardless of either the value of the proposed gift, or an employee's specific position of employment at Sankofa Montessori . This policy is inapplicable to any gifts, donations, or grants solicited by Sankofa Montessori staff for purposes of funding or supporting Sankofa Montessori 's programs and activities.

Sankofa Montessori does not retaliate against any employee who in good faith discloses a violation of the Conflict of Interest policy.

Corporate Credit Card

Please see published [fiscal policies](#) for corporate credit card policies (only allowed for usage by Executive Director and Director of Operations).

Employee Lifting Requirement

Due to the nature of Sankofa Montessori 's work, Sankofa Montessori asks that all school-based employees, both part time and full time, are able to lift and carry 40 pounds (with reasonable accommodations). If you are unable to lift and carry 40 pounds with reasonable accommodations, please consult with HR via hr@sankofamontessori.org to discuss the possibility of receiving workplace accommodation.

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Employee Acceptable Use Policy

Sankofa Montessori adheres to the federal requirements and guidelines stipulated under TITLE XVII—CHILDREN'S INTERNET PROTECTION ACT (CIPA). Visit

<http://www.fcc.gov/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act> to view this document in its entirety.

Overall, Sankofa Montessori's policy of internet safety is enforced to and includes measures that block or filter internet access for both minors and adults to certain visual depictions. These include visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors.

Sankofa Montessori adheres to the federal requirements and guidelines stipulated under the FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA). The full text of this document can be viewed at <https://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/>. Sankofa Montessori employees should not access Sankofa Montessori accounts and services from personal devices. In order to protect confidential data as defined in FERPA, Sankofa Montessori will take reasonable steps to protect such data if an employee uses their personal device to access Sankofa Montessori accounts and services. Such steps may include, but are not limited to: restricting access to certain days/times, requiring a passcode, disabling specific applications and services, and wiping ("erasing") some or all data from a personal device upon an employee's resignation or termination.

Sankofa Montessori computers, phones, and internet systems are provided for the use of its employees solely for educational purposes, which include the performance of the employee's job duties and related activities. This provision covers the use of these computers and phones while both on and off Sankofa Montessori grounds as well as after normal work hours. The computer, phones, documents, and information stored and processed by the computer or phone remain the property of Sankofa Montessori. Employees shall have no expectation of privacy in the use of any Sankofa Montessori computer, phone, or internet system.

All of your Sankofa Montessori computer and account passwords must be made available to the Executive Director upon request. Employees can use different passwords that are unknown to Sankofa Montessori, but will need to disclose their password to authorized users upon request (including, but not limited to Executive Director, and information technology personnel). Employees are prohibited from attempting to gain unauthorized access to the Sankofa Montessori network or to any other computer system through the network or to exceed their authorized access, including attempting to use the passwords of other employees, log in through another person's account, or access another person's files. Employees are also prohibited from making deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means. Employees will not use the network to engage in any other illegal act, including, but not limited to, arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, or threatening the safety of another person.

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Sankofa Montessori 's policies against sexual and other types of harassment and discrimination apply in full to use of the internet and e-mail. Employees are prohibited from using their assigned computers or phones in a way that may be offensive to others. Forbidden transmissions include but are not limited to sexually explicit messages or artwork, ethnic or racial slurs, unwelcome or inappropriate sexual propositions, offensive comments based on gender identity, age, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, religious or political beliefs, or anything construed as harassment or disparagement of others including communications that classify as personal attacks or cyberbullying, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks. This includes information sent, or viewed on, an employee's personal computer, blackberry, or cell phone on, or around, the premise of a Sankofa Montessori school. Information sent, during operating hours, on a non Sankofa Montessori network are included in this statement.

Any violation of the prohibitions set forth in these policies may result in disciplinary actions, including, without limitation, termination of employment.

Other Compliance Issues

All documents, information or messages created, sent or retrieved over Sankofa Montessori 's computer or phone systems are the property of Sankofa Montessori . Sankofa Montessori reserves the right to access and monitor all documents, information, messages (including emails and voicemails) and files on Sankofa Montessori -provided equipment or systems at any time without notice. All communications including text and images can be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or receiver. Employees should not assume that communications that they send and receive via Sankofa Montessori 's email and voicemail systems are private or confidential.

The internet and e-mail systems are not secure methods of communication and there is the potential that information sent over these systems might be intercepted and read by unauthorized individuals. Employees must take every precaution to protect proprietary and confidential information about Sankofa Montessori , its employees, students or families.

Employees who become aware of misuse of Sankofa Montessori 's equipment or systems, including but not limited to email, internet, and voicemail should promptly contact the Executive Director. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Media Release

As a member of the Sankofa Montessori team, an employee may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed as part of our marketing campaign. If you do not feel comfortable with this exposure, please contact HR via hr@sankofamontessori.org.

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Non-solicitation

Solicitation by employees, of any kind, is prohibited on Sankofa Montessori property during working time in working areas. Such solicitation is prohibited regardless of the method by which the solicitation is accomplished, including but not limited to, e-mail, flier, or other forms of advertising or petitioning. This includes but is not limited to, selling goods, collecting money, or soliciting support for an organization, company, political candidate, or association. If a Sankofa Montessori employee is found to have violated this policy, the employee shall be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination. This policy does not apply to solicitation on behalf of Sankofa Montessori and any of its affiliated clubs or extracurriculars.

Sankofa Montessori prohibits nonemployees from solicitations or distributions of any kind on Sankofa Montessori property. If a nonemployee is found soliciting on Sankofa Montessori property, that individual will be removed from the premises.

Personal Property

Sankofa Montessori is not responsible for loss or damage to personal property. Valuable personal items, such as purses, wallets, personal computers, cell phones, and all other valuables, should not be left in areas where theft or damage might occur.

Personal Cell Phones

School-based staff are not permitted to use personal cell phones for non-work matters during school hours or when in a classroom with students (however, personal calls are permitted during planning periods or when staff is on break). If employees need to use their cell phones for a personal matter (such as a family emergency) they should arrange coverage with their supervisor.

Communication Expectations

To model professionalism for our students, employees are expected to make all reasonable efforts to respond to families and faculty within 24-48 hours, and 48-72 hours for all other stakeholders.

Professional Attire

To model professionalism for our students, employees are expected to dress professionally when school is in session and at Sankofa Montessori events. ***As a guiding principle, employees are expected to dress as professionally as students or more so.*** Please ensure that clothing is modest (ie, non form fitting, no club attire). The following are generally regarded as unprofessional attire: revealing clothing, clothing with curse words, or any article of clothing that degrades the image of the school or Sankofa Montessori. Any employee appearing for work in unsuitable attire or not in dress code may be asked to go home and change clothes and will be unpaid for that day.

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- **Monday-Friday:** Staff may choose to wear:
 - Sankofa Montessori Branded shirt with Jeans (**Jeans are not permitted if worn without Sankofa Montessori Branded shirt**)
 - **If wearing jeans, any covering (sweater, jacket, blazer, cardigan..etc) must be Sankofa Montessori Branded.**
 - Button-down/collared shirt, blouse, sweater, polo shirts, other professional top. Tank tops are acceptable if covered by a sweater/blazer/cardigan
 - Dress pants/slacks (including khakis)
 - Dress/skirt (should not show more than 3 inches of skin above the kneecap when sitting/crouching)
 - Sneakers/dress shoes, etc. (no flip flops/shower shoes/shoes without a back or constraint around the foot's heel).
 - Head coverings: Staff may wear cultural and religious headwear, headwraps, and hairbands; however, staff are not allowed to wear casual head coverings such as hats, bonnets, du-rags, or sweatbands in the building during instructional time.
- **Field trips, virtual teaching, and professional development days:** same professional attire described above *or* items described below may be worn. We want to promote career & legacy awareness, school/educational spirit, and Sankofa Montessori pride. All staff are welcome to wear the following on field trips, virtual teaching days or professional development days
 - Shirts or sweatshirts that are:
 - Sankofa Montessori branded
 - Collegiate (your college shirt should clearly represent a school. If it is a student organization shirt (i.e. frat/sorority, BSU, etc.), make sure the college or university name is large enough to know what school it is from)
 - Honoring previous legacy/impact of leaders (e.g. "because of them, we can" shirts)
 - Jeans
- Sankofa Montessori teachers move around a lot - bending, sitting, and crouching to interact with students in small groups at tables and on the carpets, and their clothing needs to allow them to be able to do so. **Please do not wear:**
 - Jeans that are distressed in nature, Jeans with holes, excessive fraying or rips.
 - Clothing that reveals your chest, upper thighs, buttocks, stomach, or undergarments (while standing up or bending down). Examples include sheer/see-through clothing, short skirts, low-cut tops, off-the-shoulder tops, crop tops, or "cut-out" tops.
 - Skirts/dresses that show more than 3 inches of skin above your kneecap when sitting/crouching.
 - Sweatpants, leggings, casual fabrics, or relaxation/yoga/work-out clothing.

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- Leggings are permitted to be worn under a dress or skirt in the same way thick tights would be, but should not be worn as a bottom.
- Outdoor/seasonal shoes (snow boots, rain boots, etc.) – Please switch in to work shoes (sneakers or dress shoes) when inside the school
- Shoes with heels higher than 3 inches (ie, stilettos, high platform shoes)
- Hats or sunglasses
- ***If in doubt, do not wear it.*** If you are questioning whether you should or should not wear it to school, it is likely that you should not wear it.
- **Other important dress code information:**
 - Every day, check your attire. Please ensure that when sitting (both in a chair and on the floor), crouching, or bending your attire complies with our guidance above.
 - If students or families are in the building, remain in professional dress (e.g. arriving at school in rain boots or flip flops is permissible, but need to be exchanged for work shoes prior to students’ arrival). After school, there are many events and student programs. Family members are still very present, so professional dress should be followed after school as well.
 - Please feel free to change into more comfortable, casual gear immediately before leaving the building (e.g. if heading to a workout), but not if you are planning to stick around in the building longer.
 - Operations personnel that may be fixing/building furniture or completing facilities tasks that require a lot of physical movement, may dress in field trip attire.
 - Injuries/medical conditions: If you have a medical issue that is making the dress code inhibitive for you, please reach out to HR via hr@sankofamontessori.org, or your supervisor to request accommodations.

Virtual Environment

All staff should ensure that their background is clear of any inappropriate items. Background should be free of:

- Inappropriate items/graphics/posters
- Alcohol or drug related images/paraphernalia
- Surrounding individuals

Media Inquiries

All media inquiries regarding Sankofa Montessori and its operations must be referred to the Executive Director. Employees are not permitted to speak to the media on behalf of the school unless specifically authorized in advance to do so by the Executive Director.

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Social Media Guidelines

Sankofa Montessori recognizes the value of promoting our organization's mission, values, and goals through the use of online social media sites such as blogs, wikis, videos, podcasts, social networks, and other forms of online communications. Accordingly, Sankofa Montessori has provided the following policies and guidelines to help support and guide employees when they communicate online. While using social media, employees shall abide by all policies as contained in this handbook. Failure to do so shall be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

Internet Access

While at work, or while using Sankofa Montessori equipment, Internet access and use – including access and use that relates to or involves social media – is a privilege and must be carried out in a manner that is consistent with job responsibilities and Sankofa Montessori policies, which address appropriate use of scheduled work time and resources.

Use Of Social Media

Sankofa Montessori expects its employees to strive to be fair and courteous to fellow Sankofa Montessori staff and students at all times, including through their use of social media. If during your online communications you identify yourself as an employee of Sankofa Montessori, you should not represent yourself as an official spokesperson for the school. Accordingly, you should not imply that you represent Sankofa Montessori's views in any way.

Employees are far more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with co-workers or by utilizing Sankofa Montessori's Grievance Policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if an employee decides to post complaints or criticism, Sankofa Montessori expects employees to avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that maliciously disparage students or fellow staff, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or Sankofa Montessori policy. Further, you should take special care not to disclose confidential or proprietary Sankofa Montessori, student, or parent information in your online communications.

Staff members should not communicate with current students using personal social media accounts. Staff should use group emails/classroom websites to communicate with students. In the case of an emergency, make sure to notify your Head of School or manager to inform them of such use. "Communication" includes adding students as "friends" on social media networks such as Facebook or Instagram and "following" a student on Twitter.

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Separating From Employment

Employment at Sankofa Montessori is at-will. This means that employees may resign at any time, and may be terminated at any time, without notice or cause. This also means that Sankofa Montessori may change the terms of the employment relationship, including an employee's hours, salary, title, job duties, or place of work, without notice or cause. Nothing in this handbook limits your or Sankofa Montessori's right to terminate your employment without notice or cause. No Sankofa Montessori representative is authorized to enter into a contrary agreement—express or implied—except Sankofa Montessori's Executive Director or his/her/their designee and you. Any such contrary agreement must be in writing and signed by the employee and Sankofa Montessori's Executive Director, or their designees.

Voluntary Termination paid time

An employee may terminate his/her/their employment for any reason upon two weeks' written notice to the School. If Employee terminates her employment without providing two weeks' written notice, employees will be required to pay an early termination payment to compensate the School for the costs associated with such early termination, which may include, but are not limited to, disruption to the educational process and recruitment of new staff (which would be withheld from the employee's final paycheck).

If the employee fails to make the early termination payment and his/her/their final paycheck(s) or reimbursement check do not cover the full termination amount, the School reserves the right to pursue legal action for any remaining amounts due.

This early termination payment provision does not apply if the early termination is the result of serious injury, illness, death or incapacitation. Additionally, the School may, in its sole discretion, waive this provision, determine the Employee's departure date, and/or agree not to seek recovery of any replacement costs.

The early termination amount varies based on the employees classification and can be located in each employees offer letter.

An employee will be asked to turn in all Sankofa Montessori property included but not limited to, cell phones, laptop, keys, and other Sankofa Montessori equipment on their last day at Sankofa Montessori . All Sankofa Montessori property should be returned to an employee's Director of Operations unless otherwise specified.

If an employee voluntarily terminates their employment with Sankofa Montessori , he/she/they will receive their last paycheck the following pay period either through direct deposit or a manual check.

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Involuntary Termination

If an employee is involuntarily terminated from Sankofa Montessori , the Associate Director of Operations will individually determine when, where, and to whom the employee should return his/her/their Sankofa Montessori property.

He/she/they will receive their last paycheck the following pay period either through direct deposit or a manual check.

Employment Verification Policy

All employment verification requests from current or former employees, prospective employers of current or former employees, governmental agencies, or other organizations such as a financial institution, should be directed to hr@sankofamontessori.org. Employees asked to serve as a reference, who have concerns about doing so, are also encouraged to contact HR at hr@sankofamontessori.org

Under no circumstances is any other employee authorized to provide a written or official employment verification response for Sankofa Montessori . During the employment verification process, HR may provide a requestor with the following information:

- Whether an individual is currently employed at Sankofa Montessori ,
- An individual's current or last job title,
- An individual's dates of employment at Sankofa Montessori ,
- An individual's salary history, if the individual provides written authorization to release such information, and
- Any other information mandated by law.

Please allow 72 hours for hr@sankofamontessori.org to complete an employment verification. Sankofa Montessori will not assist an individual in obtaining a new job involving direct interaction with minors, where Sankofa Montessori knows or has probable cause to believe the individual engaged in sexual misconduct or sexual abuse regarding a child or student.

General Termination Information

If a voluntarily or involuntarily terminated employee has any questions in regard to his/her/their Sankofa Montessori benefits, those questions may be directed to HR via hr@sankofamontessori.org . All Sankofa Montessori property must be returned upon termination.

You should also notify HR via hr@sankofamontessori.org if your address changes during the calendar year in which termination occurs so that your tax information will be forwarded to the proper address.

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SECTION 6: SAFETY At Sankofa Montessori

Sankofa Montessori has a fundamental interest and commitment in maintaining a safe and supportive working environment. If any Sankofa Montessori employee observes a safety issue at a Sankofa Montessori school, please contact the HR via hr@sankofamontessori.org

Clocking In and Out

All employees are required to clock in and clock out each day. This ensures we have an accurate record of who is in the building at all times for safety purposes. Additionally, payroll uses this information to verify attendance prior to processing salary payments.

Alcohol, Drug And Tobacco Free Workplace

Employees who work while under the influence of drugs or alcohol present a safety hazard to themselves and their co-workers. Sankofa Montessori is committed to maintaining a drug, alcohol and tobacco free environment.

The following conduct is prohibited on Sankofa Montessori 's property, including but not limited to school buildings, grounds, parking lots, garages and fields, along with off-site activities with staff or students, and may result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination:

- Possession, transfer, sale, distribution, use or solicitation of illegal drugs on Sankofa Montessori property (including the parking lot and adjacent areas) or during working hours.
- Possession or consumption of alcohol on Sankofa Montessori property (including adjacent areas), Sankofa Montessori sponsored events, or during working hours. This does not include the authorized use of alcohol at Sankofa Montessori sponsored functions or activities.
- Possession or use of tobacco products on Sankofa Montessori property (including the parking lot and adjacent areas) or during working hours.
- Reporting to work or being present at work while being intoxicated or impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- Reporting to work, or being present at work, with a detectable amount of any illegal drug or its metabolites in the employee's body.
- Abuse of prescribed drugs. Prescribed drugs will be allowed only when taken in accordance with a physician's prescription, and where such use will not adversely affect the ability of an individual to properly and safely perform his or her duties. Any employee who is taking prescription drugs that may affect the employee's ability to perform the job properly and safely should inform his/her/their Head of School or Supervisor before or immediately upon reporting to work. Abuse of prescribed drugs will not be tolerated and will be treated in the same fashion as use of illegal drugs.

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Consistent with its fair employment policy, Sankofa Montessori maintains a policy of non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation with respect to recovering addicts and alcoholics, and those having a medical history reflecting treatment for substance abuse conditions. Employees are encouraged to seek assistance before their drug and alcohol use renders them unable to perform their essential job functions or jeopardizes the health and safety of themselves or others. Sankofa Montessori will attempt to assist its employees through referrals to rehabilitation, appropriate leaves of absence and other measures, consistent with Sankofa Montessori's policies and applicable federal, state or local laws.

Sankofa Montessori further reserves the right to take any and all appropriate and lawful actions necessary to enforce this alcohol, drug and tobacco free workplace policy including, but not limited to, the inspection of Sankofa Montessori issued lockers, desks or other suspected areas of concealment, as well as an employee's personal property when Sankofa Montessori has reasonable suspicion to believe that the employee has violated this drug, alcohol and tobacco free workplace policy. Furthermore, if there is any reasonable suspicion that an employee has taken illegal drugs, or is on illegal drugs, while on Sankofa Montessori's property, Sankofa Montessori reserves the right to conduct a drug test.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Children Of Employees At Work

As part of our mission to foster safe, healthy, and productive learning and working environments, staff members are not permitted to bring their minor children to work, during on-duty times supervising Sankofa Montessori students. Instead, staff members are expected to make arrangements for childcare during their normal working hours. Children are not to be left unattended in the front office.

If an unforeseen emergency should arise and a staff member is unable to secure childcare for their minor child, the staff member should consult their supervisor about their options, including taking leave.

Employees and supervisors must consider how a child's presence in the workplace may affect that child's safety, the safety of students and staff, confidentiality, efficient operations, provision of services, the work of other employees, and legal liability.

This policy does not apply at events intended to include the family members of Sankofa Montessori staff, such as holiday parties. It also does not apply where Sankofa Montessori has made arrangements to provide childcare to a given staff member and child during a Sankofa Montessori event.

Sankofa Montessori does not accept any liability for injuries to children who are on Sankofa Montessori grounds in violation of this policy.

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Staff Children on Campus Policy

Staff members whose children attend Sankofa Montessori must ensure appropriate childcare arrangements are in place during contracted work hours. If a staff member's child is in their care while on campus, the child must remain under their direct supervision in a manner that does not interfere with the staff member's professional responsibilities.

For example, children may not be present during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), team meetings, or any time the staff member is actively engaged in instructional, planning, or operational duties. Staff are expected to fully participate in all required responsibilities without distraction.

This policy is designed to ensure a safe, professional, and focused work environment for all students and staff.

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills at the schools and Sankofa Montessori campuses are scheduled periodically throughout the year. These drills are an important aspect in school safety. Complete adherence with the appropriate emergency protocol is expected during these drills. Any questions concerning evacuation procedures should be directed to the Executive Director.

Emergencies

Please alert the Associate Director of Operations as soon as you become aware of an emergency. Emergencies include all accidents, medical situations, bomb threats, other threats of violence, and the smell of smoke. If the Executive Director is unavailable, contact the nearest Sankofa Montessori leadership team member and the Clayton County Police Department.

Should an emergency result in the need to communicate information to employees outside of business hours, the Executive Director or Director of Operations will contact you. Therefore, it is important that employees keep their personal emergency contact information, including personal email address, up to date. Notify HR at hr@sankofamontessori.org when this information changes.

When events warrant an evacuation of the building, you should follow the instructions of the Executive Director or any other member of the Sankofa Montessori leadership team.

School Closing

In most cases, Sankofa Montessori generally follows Clayton County School District in regards to inclement- weather related school delays and closings. So, in most cases, Sankofa Montessori is closed when Clayton County Public schools are closed, and Sankofa Montessori is delayed when Clayton County Public Schools schools are delayed. However, due to differences in the length of our school day

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and our school calendar, we will sometimes elect to make a different decision than Clayton County Public Schools.

Please help us ensure that you receive information regarding closures, delays and other emergencies via our robocall/email system by confirming that we have the correct phone number(s) and email address(es) on file for you. Please contact the Office Assistant to confirm the information we have on file is accurate and up-to-date.

Please note the following information on delayed openings and early dismissals:

- Delayed Opening Start Times: For a two (2) hour delayed opening, Sankofa Montessori schools will open at 10:00 AM
- Early Dismissal Details
 - Walkers will be sent home immediately upon dismissal
 - Carpool riders will wait at school until they are picked up in a timely fashion

Student Safety

If you notice that a student is in danger or you suspect that a Sankofa Montessori student is being abused or neglected, immediately contact the Executive Director and Director of Student Supports and Culture to report this matter to ensure the student receives appropriate support. In addition, please ensure that you comply with your obligations as a mandated reporter of abuse and neglect, as discussed above.

Reporting of Students Committing Certain Acts

Any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a student at the school committed any of the following acts on school property or at a school function must immediately report the act and the name of the student to the Executive Director.

- Aggravated assault involving a firearm (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-5-21);
- Aggravated battery (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-5-24);
- Sexual offenses (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-6-1 et. seq.);
- Carrying a weapon or long gun in an unauthorized location (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-11-127);
- Carrying weapons on school property, at a school function, or within a school safety zone (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-11-127.1);
- Illegal possession of a handgun by a person under 18 years of age (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-11-132); and
- Possession and other activities regarding marijuana and controlled substances (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-13-30).

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The Executive Director receiving this report who has reasonable cause to believe that the report is valid must make an oral report immediately to the appropriate police authority and district attorney. Any person making a report under this law who is acting in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability. Any person required to make a report under this law that knowingly and willfully fails to do so is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Student Reporting of Alleged Sexually Inappropriate Behavior

Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator, or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor, or administrator at his/her/their school.

Any teacher, counselor, or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the Executive Director, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the Executive Director within 24 hours. If the Executive Director is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Chairperson of the Governing Board

Any School Leader receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. §§ 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by School personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the Executive Director shall make an immediate written report to the Chairperson of the Governing Board, and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

Pet Policy

Sankofa Montessori is responsible for assuring the health and safety of all employees. Animals may pose a threat of infection, may cause allergic reactions in others, may cause distraction and/or elicit emotional distress from other employees or members of our school community. Employees are not permitted to bring any animals on Sankofa Montessori property (including parking lots and athletic fields) with the

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exception of approved service animals for individuals with disabilities or approved search and rescue dogs. Sankofa Montessori classrooms will have class pets that are pre-approved by the Executive Director.

Weapons Prohibited

Possession, use or sale of weapons, firearms or explosives on work premises, or while engaged in Sankofa Montessori business on or off premises is forbidden. This policy applies to all employees, including but not limited to, those who have a valid permit to carry a firearm.

Employees who are aware of violations or threats of violations of this policy are required to report these to your supervisor or Head of School immediately. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Workplace Searches

To protect Sankofa Montessori property and to ensure the safety of all employees, Sankofa Montessori reserves the right to conduct personal searches consistent with local and federal law, and to inspect any packages, parcels, purses, handbags, backpacks, lunch boxes or any other possessions or articles carried to and from Sankofa Montessori's property, when there is reasonable suspicion that a search will turn up evidence of misconduct. Under these same conditions, Sankofa Montessori reserves the right to search any employee's office, desk, files, locker, equipment or any other area or article on our premises. In this regard, it should be noted that all offices, desks, files created in conjunction with your work at Sankofa Montessori, lockers, equipment, etc. are the property of Sankofa Montessori, and are issued for the use of employees only during their employment. Inspection may be conducted at any time at the discretion of Sankofa Montessori.

Persons entering the premises who refuse to cooperate in an inspection conducted pursuant to this policy may not be permitted to enter the premises. Employees working on or entering or leaving the premises who refuse to cooperate in an inspection, as well as employees who after the inspection are believed to be in possession of stolen property or illegal substances, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, if upon investigation they are found to be in violation of Sankofa Montessori's security procedures or any other Sankofa Montessori rules and regulations.

Workplace Violence

Violence by an employee or anyone else, against another employee, Supervisor, student, parent, colleague, or any member of the Sankofa Montessori community will not be tolerated.

Employees should not engage in either physical or verbal confrontation with a potentially violent individual. If you encounter an individual who is threatening immediate harm to an employee, student,

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or visitor to our premises, you are required to contact the Executive Director or Associate Director of Operations or contact an emergency agency (such as 911) immediately.

All reports of work-related threats will be kept confidential to the extent possible, investigated and documented. Employees are expected to report and participate in an investigation of any suspected or actual cases of workplace violence and will not be subjected to disciplinary consequences for such reports or cooperation.

Violations of this policy, including your failure to report or fully cooperate in the Sankofa Montessori 's investigation, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Annual Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act Notice (“AHERA”)

This information is being provided to comply with the requirements of the federal Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), which requires schools to perform certain tasks in regard to the presence and control of asbestos containing materials (ACM) in school buildings. These tasks include:

- Sankofa Montessori has developed an asbestos management plan which is designed to outline procedures and guidelines for the inspection, re-inspection and periodic surveillance of the ACM that are present in the buildings.
- Sankofa Montessori provides awareness training and additional training to selected school employees.
- Sankofa Montessori provides periodic notification to all employees, students (via their parents/guardians), and building occupants of the availability of asbestos management plans, the location of the same, and the times that the plans may be reviewed.

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SECTION 7: Receipt OF Sankofa Montessori Employee Handbook and Employee Handbook and Employment At-Will-Statement

I acknowledge that I have received my copy of the Sankofa Montessori Employee Handbook, which outlines the policies, practices and employee benefits of Sankofa Montessori . I understand that this edition of the Employee Handbook supersedes all previous verbal or written descriptions of Sankofa Montessori 's personnel policies and procedures and employee benefits.

I understand that employment at Sankofa Montessori is at-will. This means that I may be terminated at any time, without notice or cause, and may resign at any time, with or without notice or cause, by providing two weeks' written notice. This also means that Sankofa Montessori may prospectively change the terms of my employment relationship, including my hours, salary, title, job duties, or place of work, without notice or cause. Nothing in this handbook limits my or Sankofa Montessori 's right to terminate my employment without notice or cause. No Sankofa Montessori representative is authorized to enter into a contrary agreement. Any such contrary agreement must be in writing and signed by Sankofa Montessori designees and myself.

The Employee Handbook is not a contract and nothing contained herein should be construed to create a contract of employment or a contract of any kind.

I understand that the Employee Handbook describes important information about Sankofa Montessori . I have read the entire Handbook. I agree to abide by all the policies and procedures contained in the Handbook. If I have any questions about the Handbook or other personnel policy issues, I will consult with my manager or the appropriate Head of School.

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

I also understand that if a written agreement is inconsistent with the Employee Handbook, the written agreement is controlling.

Signature:	Date:
Name (printed):	

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