

# TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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## **I. Overview**

This Handbook has been prepared to answer the most frequently asked questions regarding TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT's employment practices and policies, as well as the benefits provided to you as a valued employee.

We ask that you read this Handbook carefully and refer to it whenever questions arise.

TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT's policies, benefits, and rules as explained in this Handbook may be changed from time to time as business, employment legislation, and economic conditions dictate. The policies in this handbook apply to all employees for any school-sponsored activity whether on or off campus. If and when provisions are changed, replacement pages will be given for those that have become outdated.

## **II. Employment Policies**

### **A. Equal Employment Opportunity**

TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT provides equal employment opportunity for everyone regardless of ethnic group identification, race, national origin, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability that does not prohibit performance of essential job functions. Decisions relating to employment are based upon ability to perform the job, as well as dependability, reliability and competence once hired.

### **B. Discrimination & Sexual Harassment**

TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of discrimination and sexual harassment. In keeping with this commitment, we will not tolerate discrimination or sexual harassment of employees by anyone, including any supervisor, co-worker, parent, student, community partner, or vendor based on a person's ethnic group identification, race, national origin, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability. Discrimination of any person because of their ethnic group identification, race, national origin, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and mental or physical disability is strictly prohibited, whether directed at an employee, student or a participating member of the community.

If you are the victim of, or witness to, discrimination or sexual harassment, you are requested and encouraged to make a complaint to the Executive Director within 24 hours of the incident. TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT is committed to investigating any complaint or report of violation of this policy in a timely manner.

### **C. Pay Period & Time Records**

The workweek at TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT begins on Sunday and runs through Saturday. Paychecks will be released two times per month, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> in all months except May; there will be 3 paychecks in May – on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup>.

By law, TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT is obligated to keep records of the time worked by "non-exempt", or hourly, employees. Timesheets must be submitted on for each pay period. "Exempt" employees, such as teachers and coordinators, are not required to submit timesheets,

except in the event that a portion of their salary is funded by grants and therefore needs to be tracked for grant reporting requirements.

#### **D. Work Schedule**

All full-time teaching staff should report to school no later than 8:15 a.m. and remain at school until at least 4:00 p.m. Schedules for part-time teachers and other employees will be determined with the Executive Director or Principal based on job roles and responsibilities and FTE. Staff participation will be required at occasional after-hours events, such as City High School's annual Back-to-School Night (August) and Graduation (May).

#### **E. Leaves of Absence**

##### **Teachers and Other Exempt Employees on School-Year Calendar**

As a small school and a non-profit organization we need and expect all employees to be present at work everyday. In the event of an illness, bereavement, or other personal commitment, teachers and other staff members on a school-year calendar are allotted 8 illness/family emergency days and 2 personal days. (Personal days immediately before or after a school holiday must be requested at least 3 weeks in advance.) If additional of either type of day are needed due to extenuating circumstances, requests should be submitted to the Executive Director with significant advance notice. Teachers and other employees working on a 10-month calendar receive vacation days equivalent to school holidays.

When absent, teachers must contact the Office Coordinator and Principal in a timely manner, at least one hour before the start of the school day. Teachers are expected to contact a substitute teacher to cover their classes; when this is not possible (due to emergencies), school staff will contact a substitute for the teacher. Teachers need to communicate lesson plans to the substitute via phone, email, paper note, or in person. Emergency sub plans need to be submitted by September 1 and on file in the front office.

##### **Full-Time Employees on Year-Round Calendar**

Exempt employees on a 12-month calendar receive 30 days of short-term leave and 10 federal holidays\*. (\*The number of federal holidays may vary depending on the annual City High School calendar; Columbus Day is credited if a fall break occurs in mid-October, and Veterans Day if it falls during the work week and a school holiday is scheduled.) Non-emergency short-term leave must be pre-approved by the Executive Director, preferably 3 weeks in advance. It is expected that the bulk of the short-term leave will be taken when school is not in session.

##### **Non-Exempt Part-Time Employees**

Non-exempt part-time employees (.5 FTE and over) receive 10 illness/family emergency days and federal holidays that coincide with their work schedule. Additional short-term leave benefits for non-exempt part-time employees will be established on a case-by-case basis, depending on total FTE and years of experience at TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT.

##### **Longer Leaves of Absence/Family Medical Leave**

TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT abides by all of the provisions in the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Employees who anticipate needing a longer leave of absence due to family or medical reasons should contact the Executive Director as early as possible to organize the arrangements of the leave. Under FMLA, eligible employees are entitled to up to twelve weeks of leave in a 12-month period for certain family and medical reasons.

## **F. Professional Days**

All staff have the opportunity to take professional days for professional commitments. Staff must get pre-approval from the Executive Director or Principal for professional leave. Days absent for professional workshops shall not be deducted from personal days or vacation time.

## **G. Jury Duty**

An employee who must be absent for jury duty will receive his or her full salary for those days, for a maximum of five business days. Days absent for jury duty shall not be deducted from personal days or vacation time.

## **H. At Will Employment**

All employment with TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT is "AT WILL" in that it can be terminated with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time, at the option of either TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT or yourself, except as otherwise provided by law. This Handbook, office practices and other communications do not create an employment contract or term. "At will" terms and conditions of employment can be altered in writing only by the TSSP Board of Directors.

## **I. Termination**

It is the expectation that TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT or the employee will give at least two weeks notice in the event employment is to be ended. Upon leaving, the employee should leave a forwarding address and return any TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT facility keys and all other school equipment.

## **J. "Whistle-Blower" Protection**

As employees and representatives of TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. It is the responsibility of all employees to comply with the Standards of Conduct and to report violations or suspected violations. Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Standards must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Standards of Conduct. No employee who in good faith reports a violation of the Standards shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequence. Any allegations that prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

## **K. Conflict of Interest Policy**

The Board of Directors of TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT has drafted a Conflict of Interest policy in order to provide guidance to the TSSP Board of Directors, staff and volunteers in those situations which present conflicts or potential conflicts between the interests of TSSP on the one hand, and the personal, professional and/or business interests of board members, staff or volunteers on the other. (Expected approval date for the new policy is September 1, 2011.) The policy is propounded to avoid actual conflicts of interest as well as perceptions of conflicts of interest. Its purpose is to protect the integrity of TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT's decision-making process, to enable our constituencies to have confidence in our integrity and to protect the integrity and reputation of Board members, staff, and volunteers. Additionally, it is intended to supplement and not replace any Arizona laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to not-for-profit and charitable corporations.

This Policy applies to every Trustee, staff member and volunteer of TSSP and any committee of the Board of Directors with power and authority to influence, carry out or direct the carrying out of any Board action. This Policy is also applicable when there is participation in any matter in which a member of the immediate family, close personal friend, business partner or client of a board member, staff member or volunteer has an opportunity for personal gain, financial benefit or advancement of a proprietary interest.

Each staff member (and board member and volunteer) has an ongoing responsibility regarding conflicts of interest and is expected to continually follow the three basic principles of 1. Awareness; 2. Disclosure; and, 3. Disinterested review (by others).

In the event that there is a conflict of interest, each staff member (and board member and volunteer) is required to:

1. Announce that you will not participate in the discussion on the matter and that you will not vote.
2. State generally the nature of your interest;
3. Refrain from voting or soliciting favorable votes on the matter;
4. Request that the records of the meeting reflect accurately your statements and actions regarding the matter.

Minutes or meeting notes taken shall record:

1. The names of persons who disclose a conflict in a proposed transaction; the names of the persons determined to have a conflict of interest; the nature of the interest and any actions taken regarding the disclosure or the conflict of interest presented;
2. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the proposed transactions itself, a summary of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction that were considered and a record of any votes taken.

### **III. Standards Of Conduct**

By accepting employment with us, you have a responsibility to TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT and to your fellow employees to adhere to certain rules of behavior and conduct.

#### **A. Expectations**

We expect that employees act in a mature and responsible manner at all times. The following list, while not exhaustive, highlights routine daily expectations for all staff.

- Prompt arrival to work with enough time to prepare fully for daily responsibilities.
- Professional interaction with staff, students, parents, volunteers, and visitors at all times.
- Sense of responsibility for the safety of all students and concern and care for TSSP facility and resources.
- Completion of all responsibilities (tasks, reports, etc.) in a timely manner, especially daily attendance for instructional staff.
- Support and implementation of TSSP and City High School policies; behavior that models school rules and expectations for students.

## **B. Unacceptable Activities**

The following list of unacceptable activities, because of their seriousness, may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment. This list is not exhaustive and does not include prohibited activities mentioned in other sections of this Handbook.

- Unauthorized possession of dangerous or illegal firearms, weapons or explosives on company property or while on duty.
- Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence, or making threats of violence toward anyone on company premises or when representing TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT; fighting, or provoking a fight on company property, or negligent damage of property.
- Threatening, intimidating or coercing fellow employees or students on or off the premises at any time, for any reason.
- Engaging in an act of sabotage or theft; willfully or with gross negligence causing the destruction or damage of company property, or the property of fellow employees, students, or visitors.
- Dishonesty; willful falsification or misrepresentation on your application for employment or other work records including attendance records; falsifying the reason for a leave of absence or other data requested by TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT; alteration of school records.
- Negligence or any careless action that endangers the life or safety of another person.
- Sexual harassment, contact, abuse or molestation of a student.

## **C. Employee Evaluations**

The goal for all performance appraisals is to promote professional growth of the individual, and to keep the work of all personnel aligned with the vision for the various programs of TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT.

Teaching personnel will receive a written performance appraisal at least once per academic year by the Principal or another administrator. The appraisal will be based upon all roles of the teacher – classroom teaching, student advising, and general school-wide participation. This evaluation will become part of the teacher's personnel record with TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT, and a copy of it will be shared with the teacher.

Other personnel (administrative staff) will receive a written performance appraisal by the Executive Director or the employee's supervisor at least annually. The written evaluation will be discussed by the employee and supervisor, and may be used as a session to exchange ideas about changes to responsibilities, training and future goals.

## **D. Disciplinary Actions**

Unacceptable behavior on the part of employees may lead to immediate dismissal. Unacceptable behavior that does not lead to immediate dismissal will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Actions taken will depend on the severity of the infraction, but might consist of a written warning, a notice of probationary status, or suspension. Disciplinary procedures may be adjusted or modified at the discretion of TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT and the TSSP Board of Directors.

Written notices of disciplinary action will include a description of the unacceptable behavior(s) and any supporting evidence. All pertinent facts will be carefully reviewed, and the employee

will be given a full opportunity to explain his or her conduct before any decision to terminate employment is reached.

## **IV. General Policies and Procedures**

### **A. Confidential Information**

Personnel of TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT are entrusted with confidential information regarding students. Please be respectful of this obligation in discussing your work life with those outside of TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT. This is more than a TSSP expectation; in some cases, state or federal law dictates the confidentiality.

All requests for information regarding students' coursework, academic progress or grades, or behavior on TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT premises or field trips, from a source other than a student's parent(s), should be routed to the Principal, Dean of Students, or other administrator. If you have any questions about what is or is not considered confidential information, please check with an administrator.

### **B. Reporting Student Concerns**

As an employee of TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT you are required to report any concerns regarding student well-being to the Principal or another administrator and to appropriate authorities as necessary. Employees must immediately and independently ensure that the information regarding suspected abuse, neglect, physical injury, or specified sexual offenses is reported to a peace officer or child protective services as required by law.

### **C. Medical Emergencies**

If a medical emergency arises, employees should call 911 immediately. In addition, the Principal and/or Dean of Students, front office staff, and parent/guardian should be contacted immediately. If the emergency occurs with a student, his/her file should be consulted to check for medications, allergies and/or other medical conditions. With the exception of aspirin, ibuprofen, Tylenol and tums, no medicine whatsoever, outside what has been previously authorized in the student's medical file, shall be administered without express permission from the parent/guardian.

### **D. Drug Free Work Place**

TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT maintains a drug free work place policy. If an employee's appearance, statements, actions or other circumstances create a reasonable suspicion that the employee is affected by or under the influence of illegal drugs, controlled chemicals or alcohol while on duty or in the work place, the employee may be requested to submit to a drug test. Disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment may result if any employee refuses to consent to such testing when a request is made in these circumstances.

If you are taking prescription medicine that may impair your ability to perform your job duties, you must inform your supervisor. Persons who are involved in a work related accident that results in an injury may be required to take a drug or alcohol test.

### **E. Smoking**

All areas of the TSSP facility are designated as non-smoking. The immediate areas in front of and around the building are also designated as non-smoking areas.

## **F. Personal Auto Use**

TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT does not assume any liability for any loss or damages you may sustain while driving to and from work or when your vehicle is parked while you are at work.

Since TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT does not own any company automobiles, there may be occasions when you run company errands in your personal vehicle. Employees who use their personal vehicle for company business are required to have automobile insurance that covers their vehicle in the event an accident occurs during incidental business use. If you operate your own vehicle in performing your job, you will be considered responsible for any accidents, fines or traffic violations incurred.

## **G. Personal Phone Calls and Use of Cell Phones**

Please keep personal phone calls to a minimum. Emergency calls regarding illness or injury to family members, changed family plans, or calls for similar reasons may be made during the workday. The employee is responsible for any personal charges incurred for long-distance calls. All staff are expected to model the school rules for students regarding cell phone use.

## **H. Safety**

In accordance with safety standards, fire drills and shelter in place drills will be scheduled for employee and student training. You will be instructed in your responsibilities prior to a drill.

Any on-the-job accident, injury or illness to you or another employee must be reported immediately to your supervisor. Report all accidents, injuries, or illnesses, even if you feel no medical treatment is needed. If it appears serious, TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT will make arrangements for medical evaluation.

## **I. Staff Meetings and Collaboration**

A high degree of collaboration is expected of all employees of TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT. Full-time employees will participate in all regularly scheduled meetings that pertain to their role, including weekly staff meetings for all staff (Wednesdays 8:00-8:25 a.m.), weekly team meetings for teaching staff (Mondays 3:30-4:15 p.m.), professional development sessions (Fridays 2:00-4:00 p.m.). Part-time employees will participate as their schedule dictates, in agreement with the Principal or Executive Director.

# **V. Technology**

## **A. Technology Resources – General Overview**

TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT provides a computer and accompanying software for each employee to use to fulfill their job. All computers and other technology (digital projectors, printers, cameras, etc.), including hardware and software owned or leased by TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT, are considered to be TSSP property. Technology is provided to employees to conduct and enhance job performance. Use of TSSP technology by employees is for job-related purposes and reasonable personal use at appropriate times. Employees are expected to treat all technology carefully and will be held responsible for loss or for repairs that are beyond normal wear and tear.

TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT reserves the right to inspect and audit all computer systems, network activity or data, including internal and external email sent and received by employees. Users should have no reasonable expectation of privacy in the use of TSSP technology.

### **B. Technology Use – Specific Expectations**

Employees are expected to use the technology resources to achieve a high level of professionalism in their job. The following list, while not exhaustive, highlights daily and weekly expectations:

- Read and respond to electronic mail (email) in a timely manner; ideally all email messages from colleagues and parents are responded to within 24-48 hours.
- Post grades to Power School in a timely manner; grade updates should take place at least weekly.
- Check the various TSSP on-line (Google) calendars to maintain awareness of events.
- Communicate regularly (at least once per quarter) with parents by sending general curriculum updates.
- Use computers to develop, revise, and store documents related to job responsibilities.

### **C. Student Communication (including Social Networking)**

TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT prohibits employees from initiating electronic and internet communication with students on an individual basis, except for solely academic purposes. This includes social networking sites. Employees should respond to student communication, including connections on social networking sites, in a limited and professional manner at all times.

### **D. Prohibited Content**

Prohibited Content means defamation; copyright infringement; disclosure of statements, records or material considered by TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT to be confidential; discrimination or harassment, as well as unacceptable business content including, but not limited to, pornography, hate mail, racism, sexism and other content. Email containing Prohibited Content transmitted or forwarded by any employee is a violation of business and ethical practices and may constitute cause for disciplinary action, up to and including termination. TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT must ensure its use of the Internet is legal, productive, and inoffensive to co-workers; therefore downloading Prohibited Content or surfing sites containing Prohibited Content using company computers at any time is a violation of TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT business and ethical practices.

### **E. Software Use and Licenses**

TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT has the legal responsibility to ensure that compliance with proper software licensing regulations is maintained at all times. Software acquired through the Internet should be done through legal means, and must be approved prior to installation on TSSP computers by the IT Coordinator. Do not make copies of any company purchased software unless you are authorized to do so. Personal software shall not be loaded on any computer equipment owned by TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT without prior permission.

*Sections VI-IX are distributed as separate documents.*

## **VI. Annual School Information**

- A. School Calendar**
- B. Calendars for Professional Development Program, Division Meetings**
- C. City High School Assessment Calendar**
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## **VII. Teacher Evaluation Process and Instrument**

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**IX. Business Office Procedures**