

# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

2022-2023



THE WOODLANDS  
CHRISTIAN  
ACADEMY



# THE WOODLANDS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

## A Message from the Head of School *Julie Ambler*

### **Welcome to The Woodlands Christian Academy!**

You are an integral part of a team of professional and dedicated teachers and employees who are, like you, responding to the Lord's call to serve Him at Woodlands Christian. We appreciate you and the God-given talents that you bring to this ministry. We are committed to helping you achieve your highest level of service for the Lord in the ministry of educating children in godly principles and knowledge. A unique blessing of a Christian school is the coming together of a Christian family. It is this bond of believers that provides the foundation for a working environment that is unique in the professional world. The eternal impact of your ministry to children and their parents will outweigh anything the world has to offer!

This handbook applies to all employees and is intended to provide guidelines, personnel policies, procedures, responsibilities, benefits and rules of conduct. It is important that you read, understand and become familiar with this handbook and comply with the standards that have been established. This handbook may be updated from time to time with or without notice and is available on the School's employee electronic directory or from the Director of Human Resources. We will always be available if you have any questions or need additional information.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." Colossians 3:23-24

Again, welcome to The Woodlands Christian Academy (TWCA) team. We are blessed to have you!

Julie H. Ambler – Head of School

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## Notice of Possible Revisions to Handbook Policies and Procedures

As stated in greater detail in the Handbook Policies and Procedures section, no set of rules or guidelines can cover every conceivable situation that might arise. The rules, policies, and procedures set forth in this handbook are intended to apply under normal circumstances. However, from time to time, there may be situations that require immediate or nonstandard responses.

The Woodlands Christian Academy may from time to time, need to deviate from the normal rules and procedures for the safety and well-being of all. We encourage careful monitoring of school communications and the School website for important updates, changes and news.

Thank you for your understanding, patience and support during this time.



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## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

## Mission Statement

The Woodlands Christian Academy is an independent, Christ-centered, college preparatory school that integrates learning with Biblical faith and spiritual growth, and challenges students to reach their highest potential – intellectually, creatively, physically and socially – for the glory of Jesus Christ.

## Vision Statement

At The Woodlands Christian Academy, we equip servant leaders to impact their world and all eternity for Jesus Christ.

## Core Values

At The Woodlands Christian Academy,

### We Relate

We thrive in a connected and nurturing community.

“There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.”

1 Corinthians 12: 6

### We Transform

It’s not just what we learn but who we become while learning.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Romans 12:2

### We Celebrate

We rejoice in relationships and transformation.

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

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## Ends Goals

The Woodlands Christian Academy exists to graduate Christ-centered students inspired to fulfill God's purpose for their lives as leaders - intellectually, creatively, physically and socially.

1. Students are rooted, built up, and strengthened in Christ (Colossians 2:6-8).
  - Students seek to be in God’s presence as their highest priority, spending daily, unhurried time alone with God by experiencing His love, reading His word, and seeking His will.
  - Students can articulate and defend a Christian worldview and understand how this worldview defines their values, beliefs and personal choices; and are equipped to courageously and compassionately transform the culture for Christ within the university and the marketplace.
  - Students are in community with other believers.
2. Students achieve their highest academic and creative potential equipped to think critically and discern Truth (2 Timothy 2:15).
  - Students demonstrate knowledge and are measurably proficient in all academic disciplines.
  - Students demonstrate academic integrity.
  - Students attend four-year colleges and universities upon graduation.
  - Students are equipped to be lifelong learners in an ever-changing world.
3. Students achieve their highest creative potential and appreciate Beauty (Genesis 1:31(a), Romans 12:6(a))
  - Students are encouraged and equipped to discern and develop their God-give talents.
  - Students appreciate the God-given talents of others.
  - Students utilize the arts and sciences to inspire, encourage, uplift and heal the human spirit.
4. Students develop and care for their body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17).
  - Students pursue Biblical purity.
  - Students pursue lifelong physical fitness and nutritional health.
  - Students demonstrate a Christ-like attitude toward sportsmanship and competition.
5. Students foster relationships with people for the sake of the Kingdom (Mark 10:43-45, Matthew 28:19-20).
  - Students seek to be discipled and to disciple others.
  - Students uphold the dignity and respect due each individual as God’s image bearers.
  - Students develop a heart for service toward those in their family, their church and their community.
  - Students are responsible citizens.



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## Statement of Faith

The following truths are to be held in continual agreement by all persons involved with Woodlands Christian.

1. **We believe in the Trinity:** God eternally exists in three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – and these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes and perfection.
2. **We believe in the full deity and humanity of Christ:** We believe that Jesus Christ is both God and man. Although He is fully God, He was born of a virgin and lived a perfect sinless life as a man.
3. **We believe in the spiritual lostness of the human race:** All men have sinned and have separated themselves from God by their sin.
4. **We believe in the substitutionary atonement and bodily resurrection of Christ:** Christ's death on the cross paid the penalty for sin and removed humanity's separation from God. Christ physically rose from the dead and is now at the right hand of the Father making intercession for all who trust in Him.
5. **We believe in salvation by faith alone in Christ alone:** Salvation is a gift of God to all who trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We believe that at the time of salvation, the Holy Spirit indwells the believer.
6. **We believe in the physical return of Christ:** Jesus Christ will one day return in power and glory; the believer will be united with Christ to live eternally in His presence, while the unbeliever will be eternally separated from God.
7. **We believe in the authority and inerrancy of Scripture:** The Bible is the only inspired word of God and is inerrant by His design.

### Human Life

Woodlands Christian believes that human life is sacred from conception to its natural end; and that we must have concern for the physical and spiritual needs of our fellow persons (Psalm 139:13; Isaiah 49:1; Jeremiah 1:5). It is our firm conviction that we uphold the dignity of each individual as we embrace the unchanging and longstanding principles of scriptural truth. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. The gift of gender, as predetermined by God and revealed at conception, is part of the goodness of God's creation.

Together, the two distinct and complementary genders reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27).

### Marriage and Family

We believe marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a covenant commitment and that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. Family is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. We also believe that God has given parents the responsibility to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6). We believe that a consistent and whole education will occur when home, church, and school, work closely together and are in agreement on these principles.

### Biblical Purity

We believe that God's design for the gift of sexuality is to be exercised and enjoyed only within the covenant relationship of marriage between one man and one woman. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 condemns a variety of lifestyles that stand outside God's created design for sexual intimacy, including those associated with adultery, prostitution, and homosexuality. The Bible makes it clear that the only God-ordained form of sexual expression is within a monogamous, heterosexual union. As a result, in order to maintain our Christian witness, we cannot sanction, approve, or promote in any way adultery, premarital sex (a sexual relationship between an unmarried man and woman), pornography, or homosexual unions.

For purposes of The Woodlands Christian Academy's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Governance Board is the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application. Employment at The Woodlands Christian Academy is contingent upon execution of and adherence to the School's Statement of Faith and all provisions therein. As an employee of Woodlands Christian, you represent the School in both your work life and your private life. Accordingly, any violation of the School's Statement of Faith, Guiding Principles, or written policies may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, at the sole discretion of the School.



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## Philosophy of Education

Woodlands Christian will:

- Uphold a thoroughly Christian worldview believing that all truth is God's truth.
- Demonstrate the integration of learning, faith, and life.
- Challenge students to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- Promote a rigorous academic standard in the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom in every area.
- Foster an atmosphere that encourages critical thinking through innovative teaching techniques, in order to engage students in the discovery of truth and promote a life-long appreciation for learning.
- Recognize the parent's ultimate responsibility for the child's education and discipline by affirming the model of the family, church and school, working together to direct the child.
- Encourage the expression of a Christ-like community within the ethnic, racial, cultural, and Christian denominational diversity of our school.
- Guide students to be responsible citizens while upholding the dignity due each individual.
- Inspire a love of virtue through self-discipline fostered by precept and example.
- "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words, which I command you today, shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children."  
Deuteronomy 6:5-7
- "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it."  
Proverbs 22:6
- "Fathers do not provoke your children to wrath but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4

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## TWCA Employee Statement of Commitment

Woodlands Christian employees are dedicated to challenging students to reach their highest potential intellectually, creatively, physically and socially for the glory of Jesus Christ. Our employees are committed to go beyond their classroom and office duties to have a personal knowledge of students and involvement in their lives. Personal mentoring, discipling, and guidance from employees on a daily basis continues to have a powerful impact upon Woodlands Christian students' lives. It is the relationships between TWCA employees, and students that contribute to the testimony of Woodlands Christian. All employees have ascribed to the Woodlands Christian Statement of Faith.

"A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher." Luke 6:4





# **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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## School Governance and Accreditation

The Woodlands Christian Academy (Woodlands Christian, TWCA, or School), founded in 1993, is an interdenominational Christian, college preparatory, day school governed by a self-perpetuating Governance Board. The School enrolls students Pre-Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

The Woodlands Christian Academy is accredited by Cognia, the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), the Council on Educational Standards and Accountability (CESA), and the Evangelical Counsel for Financial Accountability (ECFA). Woodlands Christian is exempt from state licensing based on its Cognia/ACSI accreditation. Woodlands Christian maintains an expectation that early childhood and extended care employees know and comply with applicable licensing regulations.

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## 2022-2023 Governance Board

The Woodlands Christian Academy is governed by a self-perpetuating Governance Board of Directors that represents both God and the moral owners of our School. Moral owners include parents, faculty and members of the greater Christian community who share the vision for the School and have a vested interest in its success. The Board is responsible for the School's long-term mission and vision. The Board hires only one employee, the Head of School, and delegates all day-to-day operations through explicit governing policies to the Head of School.

Anthony George – Chief Governance Officer  
Carolyn Atkinson  
Billy Brown  
Lucas Duvall  
Patricia Gutknecht  
Shawn Young

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## Definition of Campus

The Woodlands Christian Academy campus is located at 5800 Academy Way in The Woodlands, Texas. All buildings, athletic facilities/fields, school parking areas, shared parking areas adjacent to the school, and lockers utilized by TWCA students and/or faculty within the property perimeter are considered part of the TWCA Campus as it relates to school activities.

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## Definition of 'Parents'

Throughout this handbook, the term "parents" includes a parent, legal guardian, or other person having lawful control of the child.

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## Chain of Command

The Governance Board hires the Head of School. The hiring of all other employees is the responsibility of the Head of School. The Head of School implements the spiritual vision and direction of the School and provides spiritual leadership to the TWCA employees, students and parents. The Head of School is the principal executive officer of the School. The Head of School appoints a Chief Financial/Administrative Officer, Directors, and Principals to assist him or her as an integral part of the Administration. The Principals assists him or her in all aspects of the day-to-day academic operation of the School. The CFO/CAO and Directors assist him or her in all aspects of financial and administrative functions and operations of the School. The teachers are responsible to the respective Principals, Assistant Principals, and Deans for carrying out the program of instruction. Teachers are responsible for providing safe, attractive, well-maintained environments. The well-being and safety of each child along with maintaining order in the classroom at all times is the priority of each employee.

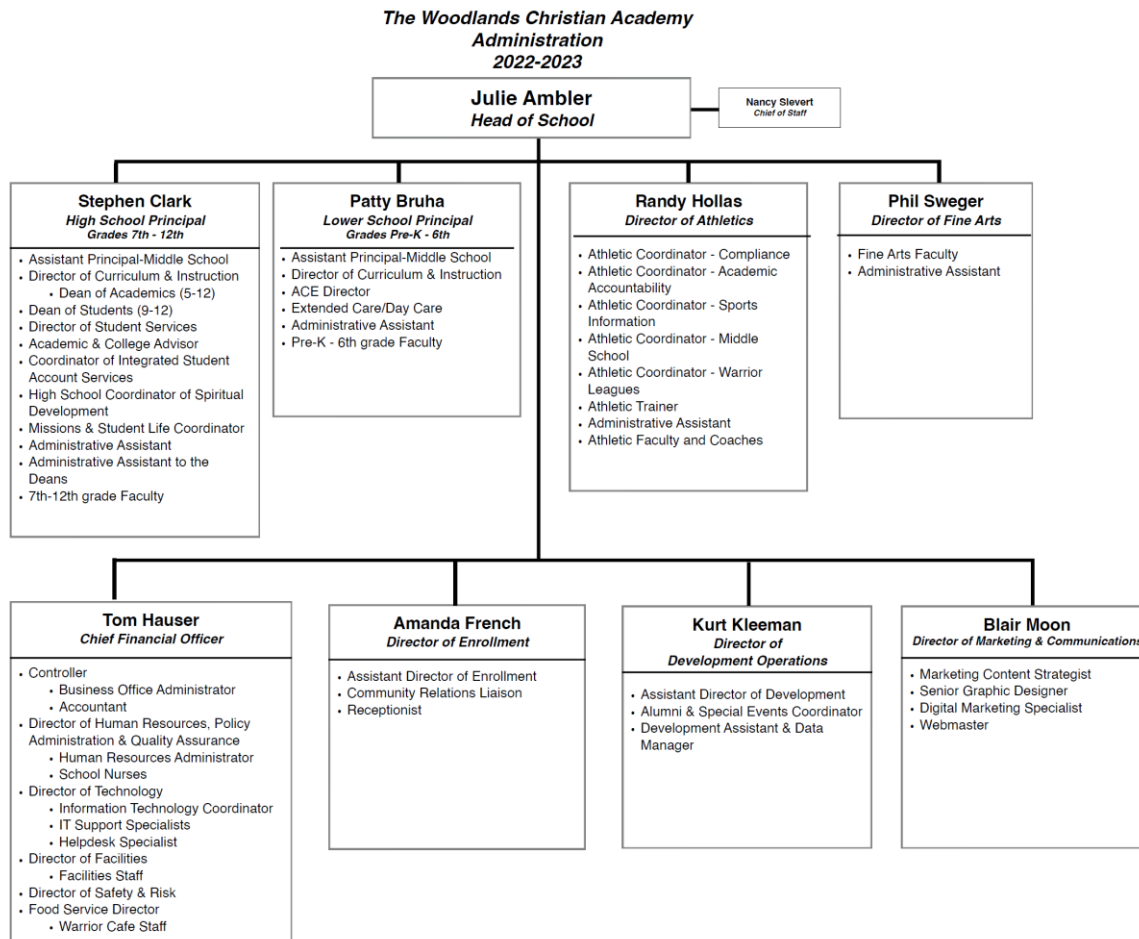
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## Handbook Policies and Procedures

This handbook has been prepared for the information and guidance of employees who work at The Woodlands Christian Academy. Although it cannot address every situation, it is intended to cover the procedures, rules, and policies most often encountered in day-to-day activities. Some of the information or policies in this Employee Handbook may change from time to time. Violation of any policy by an employee contained in this Employee Handbook can lead to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. No set of policies, procedures or rules can cover every situation that might arise. Accordingly, the Employee Handbook does not restrict the School's right to deviate from the Employee Handbook as deemed appropriate by the School. Non-enforcement of any provision of the Employee Handbook does not waive future enforcement. Neither this Employee Handbook, nor any of the policy statements contained in this Employee Handbook, are a contract or create any contractual rights.



# Organizational Chart



07-12-22

## Senior Leadership Team

Head of School	Julie Ambler
Chief of Staff	Nancy Sievert
Chief Financial/Administrative Officer	Tom Hauser
Principal – Lower/Middle School	Patty Bruha
Principal – High/Middle School	Stephen Clark
Director of Athletics	Randy Hollas
Director of Fine Arts	Phil Sweger
Director of Enrollment	Amanda French
Director of Development Operations	Kurt Kleeman
Director of Communications	Blair Moon





# **EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

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## Equal Employment

The Woodlands Christian Academy provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status or any other legally protected status applicable to Woodlands Christian. This applies to all employment practices, including recruitment, hiring, compensation, benefits, promotion, training, discipline, transfer, demotion, selection for lay-off, termination, and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

*The School reserves the right to use religion as a hiring criterion, due to the mission and nature of the school as a faith-based institution, as permitted by law.*

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## At-Will Employment

Employees of Woodlands Christian have voluntarily entered into their employment. Absent an express contract between an employee and the School for a definite term governing the employment relationship, all employees of the School are employed “at-will”. At-will employment means that both employees and the School have the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice, and with or without cause. Nothing in this Employee Handbook, or other policy or practice, modifies the at-will nature of employment with Woodlands Christian.

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## Force Majeure

The School’s duties and obligations under this Agreement shall be suspended immediately without notice during all periods that the School is closed because of force majeure events including, but not limited to, any fire, act of God, hurricane, war, governmental action, act of terrorism, epidemic, pandemic or any other event beyond the School’s control. If such an event occurs, the School’s duties and obligations in this Agreement will be postponed until such time as the School, in its sole discretion, may safely reopen. In the event that the School cannot reopen due to an event under this clause, the School is under no further obligations under this Agreement, including any payment obligations beyond the last day that the Employee actually worked.

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## Immigration Law Compliance

Woodlands Christian complies with the Immigration and Control Act of 1986 and is committed to employing only United States citizens and those non-citizens who are authorized to work in the United States. Any employee with questions or concerns about immigration law issues is encouraged to contact Human Resources or the Head of School. Employees may raise questions or complaints without fear of reprisal.

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## Background Checks

Woodlands Christian performs background checks on all employees including substitutes, stipend coaches, and chaperones for overnight trips. The School reserves the right to recheck an employee’s criminal record at any time during employment at Woodlands Christian.

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## Whistleblower Policy

Woodlands Christian is committed to pursuing high standards of ethical, moral, and legal business conduct. To uphold these standards, Woodlands Christian encourages all employees who have knowledge or suspicions of any abuse, illegal or dishonest activity within the school to report such activities to one or more of the parties specified in this policy. Conduct that must be reported includes, without limitation, any illegal or potentially illegal conduct or any conduct that threatens or may threaten the well-being of any student, employee, or other individual.

If an employee has knowledge of or a concern about illegal or dishonest activity, the employee is to contact the Head of School or the Director of Human Resources. Due to the serious and sensitive nature of such complaints, the employee must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to corrective action up to and including termination.

Woodlands Christian reserves the right to refer allegations of unlawful conduct to appropriate law enforcement agencies. The filing of a criminal complaint or conduct of a criminal investigation shall not affect the School’s right to investigate allegations of discrimination, harassment, or other misconduct.



All interviews, allegations, statements, and identities will remain confidential to the extent possible and allowed by the law.

### Retaliation Prohibition

Woodlands Christian prohibits retaliation against an employee who reports an activity that he or she considers to be abusive, illegal or dishonest. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, or poor work assignments.

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## Employment Categories

Due to the nature of work at School, it is understood that employees of the School will work a variety of schedules to accomplish the task for which they were hired. TWCA maintains standard definitions of employment and classifications according to the following definitions:

- **Exempt** – positions that meet specific requirements established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Exempt positions are not eligible for overtime pay. Faculty and other employees exempt from the overtime requirements of federal law are not paid for overtime work and are not required to keep track of time worked. The salary paid to an exempt employee is a predetermined amount that is not subject to deductions for variations in the quantity or quality of the work performed and is compensation for all hours worked.
- **Non-exempt / Hourly** – positions that do not meet FLSA exemption requirements. Non-exempt positions are eligible for overtime pay as required by applicable federal and state law. Non-exempt employees may be paid on a salaried or hourly basis but are paid overtime for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per work week. All non-exempt employees must keep accurate records of all time worked. Non-exempt employees are required to report all hours worked and are paid for every hour worked. No off-the-clock work is permitted, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. In the event an employee is asked or instructed to work and not report hours, the employee should report this immediately to Human

Resources. An employee will not be retaliated against in any way for making this report, and the School will take prompt corrective action and will also correct the employee's paycheck.

- **Full-Time** – Employees and administrators scheduled to work at least 30 hours per week are classified as full-time employees as long as they maintain continuous employment with the School.
- **Part-Time** – Employees hired to perform regular and continuing work on a consistent work schedule that would generally require less than 30 hours per week are classified as part-time employees.

**Auxiliary Personnel** – Individuals employed or retained on a temporary or supplementary basis, stipend-only basis, or as an independent contractor are considered auxiliary personnel. These positions include but are not limited to substitute teachers, teacher's aides, interns, coaches, security officers, summer camp workers, contracted personnel, and vendors. Not all auxiliary personnel are employees of the School (e.g., independent contractors are not employees). Auxiliary personnel who are not employees of the School are not eligible for any employee benefits provided by the School.

It is the School's policy to compensate employees for all time worked in compliance with the FLSA and all other applicable laws. To ensure that employees are properly paid for all hours worked, and that no improper deductions are made, employees must review their paychecks promptly and report any errors to Human Resources. All errors will be promptly corrected.

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## Defining Faculty & Employee

The terms "faculty" and "employee" are sometimes used interchangeably in a way that can be confusing. For TWCA purposes, the terms are defined as follows:

- **Employee** – an individual who is hired by TWCA to do a specific job in exchanged for wages including all full-time, part-time, stipend, and temporary employees.
- **Faculty** – individuals who work in a teaching role.
- **Staff** – non-instructional individual who provide support services.



- Administrator – term specifically designating an employee in a leadership role or having responsibility to manage.
- Senior Leadership Team – team of administrators reporting directly to the Head of School and responsible for the administration of the School.

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## References

Any request for references (verbal or written), such as a reference letter for current or past employees, must be directed in writing to Human Resources. Employees are not permitted to give any type of reference with respect to any current or former employee. Please be aware that violation of this policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action including immediate termination. Employment reference requests from outside companies will be addressed by Human Resources. The information provided will be name, position, and dates of employment.

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## Mandatory Training

All employees, overnight trip chaperones, and substitute teachers are required to complete online mandatory training through SafeSchools. Required courses are determined annually by administrators and tracked for completion. TWCA employees also complete CPR/AED training biennially.

Additional training requirements apply to coaching employees as outlined in the Coaches Athletic Handbook.

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## Faculty Certification

Faculty will submit copies of their college transcripts, showing the degree(s) earned, and a copy of their state teaching certificate to Human Resources.

All faculty are required to be Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) certified. The School will pay the initial fee for certification, and the faculty member will be responsible for the renewal fees.

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## Professional Development and Continuing Education

### Returning Teachers

Woodlands Christian embraces a commitment to a ‘life-long learning’ philosophy. Consequently, professional development and continuing education is an ongoing focus for Woodlands Christian. There are always new concepts and ideas to learn, different methods to try, and gains to be made from personal reflection. Professional development also generates ideas that correlate to evolving student needs.

The field of education is constantly changing. Continuing education is required for teachers to stay current with the latest developments, skills, and new technologies required for their field. TWCA requires every teacher (except teachers new to TWCA) to acquire a minimum of **three (3) CEU's per year**. Teachers are strongly encouraged to pursue CEU's towards their ACSI certification requirements.

**Six (6) hours of direct instruction are required for one (1) CEU. Study assignments, reading, writing, and research time are not included in the six hours.** The following requirements apply for required CEU's:

- One must be in the area of instructional technology and approved by the Information Technology Coordinator.
- Another CEU must be in the area of Biblical Studies.
- The third CEU is employee's choice.

### Obtaining CEU Credits

Please go to the link below for more information on obtaining CEU's.

<https://www.acsi.org/professional-development/continuing-education-units>

CEU's can be obtained in a variety of ways:

- Through the ConNEXUS Premium online PD platform.
- Attendance at approved professional conferences or workshops (a certificate of completion or similar will be required).



- Through workshops at Woodlands Christian. Woodlands Christian is an approved ACSI CEU provider.
- Through other approved online providers and platforms (e.g. Atomic Learning).

### **New Teachers**

Teachers new to Woodlands Christian are required to fulfill parts 1 and 2 of the Philosophy of Christian Education requirement for their ACSI teacher certification by the conclusion of their first year of employment.

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## **Outside Employment**

All employees must devote their full attention to Woodlands Christian during working hours. Full-time employees are permitted to maintain outside employment so long as it does not impede the employee's performance or interfere with required job duties at Woodlands Christian. Employees may not work at or for a competitor. Employees are expected to contact their immediate supervisor and Human Resources for approval of any outside employment.

### **Tutoring**

Teachers may only tutor for remuneration with the prior written consent of their Principal. Teachers may not tutor their own students for remuneration.

Fine Arts teachers may give lessons to their students for remuneration with written consent of the Director of Fine Arts.

### **Coaching**

Coaches are limited to coaching/giving lessons for remuneration that fall within TAPPS guidelines, and only then with the prior written consent of the Director of Athletics.

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## **Nepotism**

The School's standards for employment decisions such as hiring, promoting, reappointing, evaluating, awarding salary, and terminating employees are based on qualifications for the position, ability, and performance. The School attempts to avoid favoritism, the appearance of favoritism, and conflicts of interest in employment decisions and reserves the right to take action when

relationships or associations of employees impact its mission.

The School does not employ individuals who are related by blood, marriage, adoption, or other personal relationship in superior - subordinate positions due to the potential appearance of favoritism and conflict of interest. (This policy does not apply to the employment of substitute teachers or community coaches.) For example, a son cannot be employed as a teacher who reports to his mother as a department chair.

In other cases where a conflict or the potential for conflict arises because of the relationship between employees, even if there is no line of authority or reporting involved, the employees may be separated by reassignment or terminated from employment. Employees should refrain from inappropriate public displays of affection while at school or school-related activities.



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**BENEFITS & COMPENSATION**

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## Benefit Package and Eligibility

In addition to receiving compensation and an equal opportunity for professional development and advancement, employees may be eligible to enjoy other benefits provided by the School. All statements of coverage are subject to the terms, conditions, and restrictions as set forth in applicable plan documents. If there is any discrepancy between statements in this Handbook and the plan documents, the plan documents will control. The School reserves the right to modify or terminate any benefit plan at any time for any reason.

### Eligibility for Benefits

Full-time employees may enjoy the benefits described in this handbook as soon as they meet the eligibility requirements for each particular benefit.

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## Group Health-Related Insurance

All full-time employees will be eligible for health benefits on the first of the month following thirty (30) days of employment. Health benefits include medical, dental, life insurance, short-term disability, long-term disability and a health savings account. The School contributes a portion of the premiums toward certain benefits. See Human Resources for more details.

All employee changes to elections under the plan must be made during the annual open enrollment period unless a qualifying event has occurred. A qualifying event is defined as any of the following:

- The marriage of the employee
- The birth of a child
- The placement of a child for adoption or foster care
- The loss of insurance through a spouse due to death, divorce or loss of spouse's job

A qualifying event must be reported to Human Resources within thirty (30) days from the date of event. Please see Human Resources for further information and/or to complete forms for change of address or other personal information.

Insurance will terminate when the employee ceases to be employed as a full-time employee, when the employee ceases to be eligible for coverage or when the employee fails to make an agreed contribution when due. In the event of termination of employment or loss of eligibility, to remain covered under group

health insurance program, the employee and his/her eligible dependents may have the right to continued coverage under the health insurance program for a limited period of time at the employee's or the dependent's own expense. Please see the Continuation of Benefits Section for information on COBRA eligibility or contact Human Resources.

### Continuation of Benefits

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) requires that most employers sponsoring group health plans offer employees and their families the opportunity for a temporary extension of health coverage (called "continuation coverage") at group rates in certain instances where coverage under the plan would otherwise end. This notice is intended to inform you, in a summary fashion, of your rights and obligations under the continuation coverage provisions of the law.

If you are an employee of the School, covered by the School's medical insurance plan, you have the right to choose continuation coverage if you lose your group health coverage because of a reduction in your hours of employment or the termination of your employment for reasons other than gross misconduct on your part. Your eligible dependents may also have the right to elect and pay for continuation coverage for a temporary period in certain circumstances where their coverage under the Plan would otherwise end. If you have any questions concerning your rights under COBRA, please contact the Plan Administrator for details.

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## Life Insurance

Full-time employees will receive life insurance on their benefit eligibility date. Life insurance is paid by the School; therefore, there is no cost to the employee.

Supplemental life insurance is available to purchase by the Employee.

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## Short Term Disability

Full-time employees are provided with short term disability insurance coverage on their eligibility date. This School provided benefit is for any non-work-related illness or injury after the employee has been disabled for a period of greater than seven (7) calendar days. It is the employee's responsibility to file the appropriate paperwork with Human Resources when



seeking disability coverage. An employee who is receiving short term disability is required to pay any share of insurance premiums to the School.

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## 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan

Full-time employees are eligible to enroll in the School's retirement savings plan on their date of hire. Employees are eligible for the School's matching program after completing one (1) year of employment. See Human Resources for information and enrollment instructions.

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## New Student Fee Waiver

The new student fee will be waived for employees' children who enroll at Woodlands Christian.

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## Warrior Café

The Warrior Café will be open on school days for lunch. TWCA employees and enrolled children receive discounted pricing on meals.

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## The Armory

The online school store, The Armory, provides convenient access to school logoed products and clothing. Woodlands Christian employees are eligible for a discount on items purchased for themselves or their family.

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## Employee Referral Program

The Woodlands Christian Academy Employee Referral Program is designed to identify highly qualified candidates and reward employees for referral of candidates successfully placed. The Employee Referral Program includes a referral bonus and is available to all current employees. Employees must refer the candidate for a currently open (posted) position to Human Resources through the Employee Referral Program Form prior to the hiring of the potential candidate. Contact Human Resources for more information.

### General Requirements

- Employees involved in the hiring decision are not eligible for referral awards for that position.

- The name of the employee referring the applicant must be present on the original application submitted to Human Resources. In the case of duplicate referrals, only the first referral submitted will be eligible for the bonus.
- There is no limit to the number of referrals an employee can submit, or the number of monetary referral awards received.
- The referral bonus for a full-time position is \$500; part-time is \$250; and stipend is \$100. All payment is considered taxable income.
- The referral bonus will be paid in the employee's payroll check on the pay date following 90 days of the new hire's start date as long as both the referring employee and the new hire are still employed at the time the award is to be paid.

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## Overtime

All overtime must be documented and approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. While all the time worked by the non-exempt employee will be paid, even if not authorized, working without authorization is a violation of School policy and may lead to disciplinary action.

Overtime is actual hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a single workweek. Nonexempt employees will be paid overtime compensation at the rate of one and one-half their regular rate of pay for all hours over 40 hours actually worked in a single workweek.

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## Pay Periods

Each employee shall be paid the compensation agreed upon with Woodlands Christian. All paychecks will be automatically deposited electronically into the employee's designated bank account on each payday, or a live check will be handed out on payday or mailed if payday falls on a holiday break. Salaried exempt employees will be paid on a monthly basis and hourly and salaried non-exempt employees will be paid semi-monthly.

The standard workweek is from Monday 12:00 a.m. until Sunday 11:59 p.m. and generally consists of 40 work hours. Regular hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Individual work schedules may vary depending on the needs of each department.



**Part-Time Hourly and Auxiliary Personnel** will be responsible for timely completing timesheets using the current payroll system. Employees are not allowed to fill out another employee's time sheet.

**Non-exempt employees** must submit their hours using the online payroll system.

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## Holidays

Full-time employees receive the following as paid holidays when the Woodlands Christian campus is closed (8 hours). If staff works on a holiday, you will receive hours worked plus holiday pay. Holiday pay is not eligible for overtime. Please refer to the approved academic calendar for specific holiday dates.

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving Break
- Christmas Break
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Spring Break
- Good Friday and Easter Monday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July

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## Faculty Day Care

Brighton Academy provides on campus day care services for children ages six weeks to 4 years of age for TWCA employees.

Please contact Brighton Academy for more information.

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## Time Off

Employees are eligible for both illness/emergency and personal paid time off (PTO). PTO hours are pro-rated based on hire date if hired after start of academic year.

### Faculty

- Full-time faculty members are granted 64 hours of time off per year based on the following:
  - 16 hours for PTO at the employee's discretion.
  - 48 hours for illness/emergency time off.

- Part-time faculty members are granted 16 hours of illness/emergency time off per year.

Due to the finite number of instructional days in an academic year and the adverse effect on the quality of instruction resulting from the absence of the primary faculty member in the classroom, the use of illness/emergency days for reasons other than sickness, critical doctors' appointments, and family or personal emergencies is strongly discouraged.

**Note: Time off before or after a holiday or the first or last week of school will only be granted with a doctor's note (either faculty member or child) upon return or evidence of a family emergency.**

All faculty must enter time off requests into the payroll system, and all absences must be pre-approved by their administrator. It is each faculty member's responsibility to have a substitute in place before taking time off. See the Work Schedules and Attendance Section for additional absence procedures.

To limit the number of substitutes working at Woodlands Christian at any one time, requests will be approved in order of receipt.

PTO/sick time may not be used once resignation notice has been received unless approved by supervisor.

### Faculty Unused Balances

**Unused faculty illness/emergency or PTO days (up to 16 hours) for the current year will be reimbursed at a rate of \$100/day after the end of the school year, to be paid no later than end of July, for full-time faculty. Any absence that is not entered into the system will be counted against time off.**

### Administrative Employees

- Full-time office/administrative employees are granted 80 hours of illness/emergency or PTO per year.
- Part-time office/administrative employees are granted 20 hours of illness/emergency or PTO per year.



Time off requests must be taken during the current school year, entered in the payroll system, and be pre-approved by the supervisor.

PTO time may not be used once resignation notice has been received unless approved by supervisor.

### **Facilities Employees**

Facilities employees will receive all paid School holidays and will be granted 80 hours of illness/emergency or PTO per year. Hourly facility employees are required to work during the summer months. No more than 40 hours of PTO may be used during summer break.

### **Warrior Café Employees**

Warrior Café employees will receive all School holidays except for Juneteenth and 4<sup>th</sup> of July unless scheduled to work. Café hourly employees are granted 40 hours of illness/emergency or PTO per year. Café salaried employees are required to work during the summer months, including during administrative break if student/camper meals are required. Café salaried employees are granted 80 hours of illness/emergency or PTO per year plus 120 hours (3 weeks) during the summer. Summer PTO must be arranged so the coverage is adequate.

### **Part-Time Hourly Employees**

Part-time hourly employees do not receive any paid illness/emergency or PTO.

### **Time Off Balances**

Unused time off will not be accumulated, carried over to future years, or paid out upon separation from employment. New balances start August 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

If the number of illness/emergency or personal days taken in a school year is greater than the individual's available PTO balance, the School may deduct their daily rate for each additional day taken.

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## **Leaves of Absence**

### **Jury Duty/Subpoenas**

Since Woodlands Christian has a vested interest in our community and the justice system, we encourage employees to do their civic duty and represent the

Christian community. All full-time employees serving on a jury or witness duty will be paid for the time absent for up to 80 hours. Time spent on jury or witness duty is not time worked for purposes of overtime. Part-time employees are provided unpaid time off to serve jury or witness duty. If the employee's service as a juror or witness is not required for the entire day, the employee is expected to report to work for the remainder of the day. The employee shall give a copy of the summons to Human Resources or appropriate direct supervisor before leaving for jury or witness duty. The summons shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.

### **Subpoenas**

Employees may, on occasion, be contacted by lawyers or subpoenaed in court proceedings relating to students or their families. In such cases, the employee should immediately contact the Head of School/HR before replying or speaking with lawyers.

### **Bereavement Leave**

In case of death in the immediate family (spouse, child, or stepchild), employees will be allowed up to 10 leave days (max 80 hours) with pay. In case of death of an employee's father, mother, sibling, father-in-law or mother-in-law, employees will be allowed up to 5 leave days (max 40 hours) with pay. In case of death of a grandparent, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, first cousin, or any other member of the employee's household, employees will be allowed up to 2 leave days (max 16 hours) with pay. Four hours to attend the funeral of a close personal friend or any other relative not listed above is allowed. In addition to bereavement leave, an employee may, with his or her supervisor's approval, use any available PTO/sick time for additional approved time off as necessary. Reasonable proof of bereavement leave will need to be submitted to Human Resources upon return to work.

### **Worker's Compensation**

Woodlands Christian subscribes to workers compensation insurance. Any employee injured on the job should immediately report the injury to the Human Resources department. An accident report should be filed as soon as possible. Workers' Compensation reports and claims are filed through Human Resources.



## **Family and Medical Leave**

Woodlands Christian provides qualifying leave pursuant to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to eligible employees consistent with the requirements of the FMLA. Also, please keep in mind that, except with respect to leave to care for a covered service member, in determining the 12-month period in which the 12 weeks of FMLA leave entitlement may be taken, Woodlands Christian utilizes a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave.

Please see the Employee Rights under the FMLA notice included at the end of the Handbook for more information. Please note there are some unique rules for certain School employees under FMLA. If you have any questions about those unique federal rules related to Schools, or otherwise about FMLA leave, please feel free to speak with the Human Resources Department.

## **Disability Accommodations**

The School is committed to complying with the laws protecting qualified individuals with disabilities to the extent required by law. The School will provide a reasonable accommodation for any known physical or mental disability of a qualified individual with a disability to the extent required by law, provided the requested accommodation does not create an undue hardship for the School and/or does not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others in the workplace and/or to the individual. If an employee requires an accommodation to perform the essential functions of their job, they must notify Human Resources preferably in writing. Once made aware of the need, the School will engage in an interactive process to identify possible accommodations to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the job.

If you believe that you have been treated in a manner not in accordance with this policy, notify the School immediately, by contacting the Human Resources Department. You are encouraged to utilize this procedure without fear of reprisal.

This policy extends to all aspects of our employment practices with regard to disability accommodations, including but not limited to, recruiting, hiring, discipline, firing, promoting, transferring, compensation, benefits, training, leaves of absence, and other terms and conditions of employment.

## **Lactation Breaks**

The School will provide a reasonable amount of break time to accommodate a female employee's need to express breast milk for the employee's infant child for up to one year after the birth of the child. The break time should, if possible, be taken concurrently with other break periods already provided. Non-exempt employees should clock out for any time taken that does not run concurrently with normally scheduled rest periods, and such time generally will be unpaid. The School will also provide a space, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.

Employees should notify their immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Department to request time to express breast milk under this policy. The School does, however, reserve the right to deny an employee's request for a lactation break if the additional break time will seriously disrupt operations.



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**EMPLOYEE CONDUCT  
AND EXPECTATIONS**

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## Standards of Conduct

Woodlands Christian employees share responsibility for observing certain standards of conduct. These standards emphasize personal and professional integrity in all activities. Generally, treating others with the respect and consideration with which you expect to be treated and maintaining open, ongoing communication with your supervisor and associates will create the basis for a successful work experience.

All employees are expected at all times to conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner so as to promote the best interest of Woodlands Christian. It is essential that the integrity and trust of the student/adult relationship is maintained at all times. Such conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Reporting to work punctually as scheduled and being at proper workstation, ready for work, at the assigned starting time.
- Giving adequate advance notice whenever unable to work or report on time.
- Complying with all Woodlands Christian's safety and security practices and policies.
- Abstaining from the use of tobacco products or alcohol on campus or during any time when supervising students, whether on campus or off campus. **See Drug Free Work Place.**
- Keeping work area and the school in general clean and orderly.
- Treating all children, volunteers, parents and fellow employees in a courteous manner.
- Refraining from offensive or undesirable behavior which is contrary to Woodlands Christian's policies.
- Performing assigned tasks efficiently and in accordance with quality standards.
- Keeping grade book and lesson plans up to date.
- Meeting deadlines.
- Maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with students at all times.
- Working while under the influence of alcoholic beverages.
- Inappropriate behavior or excess alcohol consumption at School sponsored events.
- Engaging in the illegal use, sale, dispensing, or possession of a drug at anytime and anywhere, either on or off duty.
- The use of profanity or abusive language.
- The possession of firearms or other weapons anywhere on Woodlands Christians' premises.
- Insubordination or the refusal; directly or indirectly, by an employee to follow supervisors' instruction concerning a job-related matter.
- Fighting or assault of any kind.
- Threatening of administration, supervisors, parents, children, or fellow employees.
- Theft, destruction, defacement, or misuse of The Woodlands Christian Academy property or of another employee's or student's property.
- Falsifying or altering any Woodlands Christian records or reports, such as, but not limited to an application for employment, medical records, student records, an absentee record, a time record, expense records, or shipping and receiving records.
- Improper disclosure of confidential information, including without limitation, confidential student, parent or donor information.
- Behavior on or off the job that is inconsistent with the School's mission and values or that may damage the reputation of the School.
- Engaging in an improper relationship with a student.
- Engaging in any form of sexual misconduct including, but not limited to an improper relationship with a co-worker, the adoption of a homosexual lifestyle, premarital sex, extra-marital sex, or sexual harassment.

### Prohibited Conduct

The following are examples of conduct prohibited and may subject the individual involved to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. This list is not comprehensive as there are other behaviors that can lead to discipline as well as immediate termination.



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## Addressing Conflicts or Disputes

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” Matthew 18: 15-16

It is the obligation and responsibility of each employee at Woodlands Christian to work on resolving problems and conflicts by focusing on solutions, keeping issues work-related (as opposed to personal), and communicating directly with the person or persons with whom they have a conflict. All employees should settle all conflicts in a Christ-honoring way and always follow and insist that others follow the principles of reconciliation found in the Matthew 18 Principle. The Matthew 18 Principle is implemented among all administration, faculty, employees, students, and parents.

The employee agrees that all differences are to be resolved by utilizing Biblical principles always presenting a united front. Gossip of any kind will not be tolerated because of the damage gossip does to relationships, reputations and one’s self-esteem.

Everyone should be “quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” James 1:19

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer (our words reflect the meditation of our heart).” Psalm 19:14

In the event the situation is not resolved, bring it to a member of the administration. The Board has delegated to the Head of School the authority to operate the school on a day-to-day basis. The Board does not involve itself in resolving conflicts and asks parents not to call Board members into school-related issues. Grievances may only be brought to the Board when written Board policies have been violated and the internal chain of command has been exhausted.

In the case of actual or potential harassment or other discrimination prohibited under Woodlands Christian policies or in the case of any unlawful or potentially unlawful conduct or any violent or potentially violent threats or behavior, no employee should attempt to resolve such a matter on his or her own, but rather should immediately report the concern to a Principal, the Director of Human Resources, or the Head of School.

### Matthew 18 Principle

In addressing concerns, we adhere to and require parents to adhere to the following steps taken from the pamphlet entitled, *The Matthew 18 Principle for Solving School Problems* by Dr. Paul A. Kienel, ACSI Founder and President Emeritus:

1. **Keep the matter confidential.** Share only with those directly involved and respect confidentiality (Proverbs 11:9). Do not involve other parents or Woodlands Christian personnel.
2. **Keep the circle small.** Person-to-person problems are usually solved at the two-person level. Be straightforward and lovingly forthright (Proverbs 27:6). Anger is a work of the flesh and should not be present during the meeting.
3. **Be forgiving.** Once the matter is resolved, wholeheartedly forgive and restore the person who has offended you (Galatians 6:1). Close your meeting in prayer.
4. **Seek assistance.** If both parties agree that you have been unable to resolve the concern, then share the matter with the appropriate school administrator. Meet together, parent, teacher, and appropriate school administrator, in a spirit of prayer and humility, willing to submit to the Lord’s will in the matter and also willing to submit to reproof and correction if needed. An open and honest discussion and submission to godly principles will most likely result in an amiable solution.
5. **Accept final resolution.** If further intervention is deemed necessary, all parties concerned will be required to meet together for a final resolution with a member of the senior administration.

Additionally, employees are expected to keep their language above reproach. No form of profanity will be tolerated. No disrespectful speech to other employees, parents, or children is acceptable. Tone of voice should always be kept at a respectable level and all employees should remember that all children are a gift from God and should be spoken to as such.



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## Confidentiality Agreement

It is the policy of The Woodlands Christian Academy to protect the confidentiality of sensitive information related to the School, students, faculty, and employees. Through the course of employment with the School, employees may have occasion to use, access, or to otherwise acquire confidential information. As a condition of employment, all employees agree to protect any such confidential information. Confidential information includes but is not limited to:

- Education records, or information in education records, pertaining to students
- Disciplinary records, or information contained therein, pertaining to students
- All information contained in an individual employee's or applicant's personnel files
- Any medical records or other medical information related to employees or students
- Any information pertaining to a grievance or disciplinary action concerning an employee
- Any information or knowledge, formal or informal, regarding any student or employee's behavior or academic or professional accomplishments or deficiencies that is not general knowledge or would cause harm or embarrassment outside of normal operating and academic processes
- Any confidential information about the School, its practices, faculty, employees or students/families
- Any information the disclosure of which would cause an embarrassment to an employee, student or the School. Employees must hold all confidential information in the strictest confidence and not disclose or otherwise utilize confidential information except as necessary to perform his or her customary and regular job duties or as required by law. This means that employees will:
  - Only access confidential information for which they have a legitimate business need to know.
  - Not in any way disclose, divulge, copy, release, review, alter or destroy any of the School's confidential information except as properly authorized within their employment with the School; and
  - Not otherwise misuse or misappropriate the School's confidential information.
  - Prevent unauthorized use of confidential information and immediately report the misuse of any accidental disclosure of confidential information to their immediate supervisor.
  - If an employee has any doubt as to whether any information is confidential or whether any information should be disclosed, he or she shall request clarification from his or her immediate supervisor.
  - Not discuss confidential information in or outside the workplace with any individual or organization that does not have a valid business reason to have access to this information.

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## Church Attendance

We believe the church is divinely ordained of God to fulfill His mission in the world. The church plays a crucial part in the growth of Christians. All employees are expected to faithfully attend a local Christian church whose fundamental beliefs are in agreement with The Woodlands Christian Academy's Statement of Faith. This is a condition of continued employment. This requirement is consistent with the religious mission and role that all Woodlands Christian employees have as part of the performance of their duties.

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## Conflict of Interest

Woodlands Christian employees shall not derive any personal profit or gain, directly or indirectly, by reason of his or her participation with Woodlands Christian. Each individual shall disclose to Woodlands Christian any personal interest, which he or she may have in any matter pending before Woodlands Christian and shall refrain from participation in any decision on such matter. Employees are not permitted to provide childcare for current Woodlands Christian families without



prior written permission from the Head of School. This includes traveling or vacationing with families for purposes of providing childcare. Employees may house sit or pet sit for current Woodlands Christian families so long as students are not on the premises.

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## Work Schedules

All TWCA employees are required to be punctual and be at their duty station no later than 7:30 a.m. and leave no earlier than 4:00 p.m., unless they have permission from their principal or supervisor. Upon arrival, any employees who are not on duty elsewhere will get ready for the day in their classrooms or offices.

### Weekly Meetings

Monday meetings will be held on a regular basis during the school year. All full-time and part-time faculty are required to attend. In the event of these required meetings, employees must be available until 5:00 p.m.

### Faculty/Staff Development Days

The Woodlands Christian Academy will hold faculty/staff development days to enhance instruction and grow faculty and staff toward common goals. Attendance at faculty/staff development is required. In case of individual emergencies, the employee's supervisor may approve an absence. In this case, the employee will take a personal day to make up the required development with a supervisor-approved alternative development activity during off-school hours.

### Faculty Planning Periods

All teachers are assigned at least one planning period a day. This period is provided so the teacher will have a definite time during the school day to plan work, check papers, conduct parent conferences, conduct teacher-student conferences, and perform similar duties.

### Student Assistance Periods

It is important that teachers are available at least one hour per week to assist students who need extra help. Teachers must give the office and students a copy of the day(s) and time the teacher

plans to be available to assist students whether during open periods or after school.

### Supervisory/Duty Assignments

Supervisory duties are to be taken seriously. Lunch and recess duty require monitoring students by walking around and remaining standing while on duty, carefully observing and being attentive to surroundings. Preventative, proactive measures such as this provide for a much safer environment for students. ON DUTY means to be at all times with the students for whom you are responsible. Furniture removed from the building to be used outside while on duty must be returned inside the same day. Teachers may also be asked to supervise student competitions or club meetings.

### Summer Break

All employees are expected to be available as needed during the summer months at mutually agreeable times.

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## Extended Care

All children of employees must be under supervision at all times. This includes before and after school. All employees' children must be placed in extended care or be in their parent's rooms at all times when employees are still working on campus. This is imperative for safety and in order to keep children from disturbing other employees. Before school care for children of faculty is at no charge. After school care for employees' children enrolled at TWCA is available with Brighton Academy.

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## School Calendar

School sponsored events may be posted to the School's online calendar through the completion of an Event Request. Contact the division administrative assistant for steps required to post an event or book a room on campus.

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## Personal Property

Employees are expected to exercise reasonable care to safeguard personal items of value brought to work. Such items should never be left unattended or in plain view. The Woodlands Christian Academy does not assume responsibility for the loss or theft of personal belongings.



Employees are advised not to carry large amounts of cash or other valuables with them to work.

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## Faculty Absences / Substitute Policy

Absences for faculty members are categorized as scheduled and unscheduled. Should a prolonged illness keep a teacher out of class, the teacher must update the Divisional Administrative Assistant and Substitute Coordinator by email or text by 1:00 p.m. each day during the absence, unless a definite date of return has been provided.

**Note: Time off before or after a holiday or the first or last week of school will only be granted with a doctor's note (either faculty member or child) upon return or evidence of a family emergency.**

Visit the TWCA website - Faculty Portal for detailed absence instructions, links, current substitute list and master teacher schedules.

Faculty absence procedures are as follows:

### Scheduled Absences

1. Enter time off request into payroll system for approval by appropriate administrator. Once approved, also enter the substitute request into the substitute system.
2. When a substitute is located, an email confirmation notice will be received. Substitutes may also be contacted by phone or email using the approved substitute list found on the TWCA website – Faculty portal.
3. If a substitute is found by contacting the substitute personally, assign the substitute in the substitute system, then send an email to the Administrator, Divisional Administrative Assistant, and the Substitute Coordinator informing them of the substitute's name.
4. Ensure that lesson plans, attendance rosters, and additional pertinent materials are available in a substitute folder kept in the classroom.
5. If a substitute is not confirmed within 24 hours of the absence date, the Administrator, Divisional Administrative Assistant, and Substitute Coordinator must

then be contacted via email or group text to cancel the absence.

### Unscheduled Absences

1. Enter the absence into payroll system and also the substitute system.
2. Text the Divisional Administrator and the Divisional Administrative Assistant advising them of the unscheduled absence.
3. If the absence is less than 12 hours from start of school (after 7:30 p.m. the day before), call substitutes on the substitute list located on TWCA website – Faculty portal.
4. If a substitute is found, assign the substitute in the substitute system, then send an email to the Administrator, Divisional Administrative Assistant and the Substitute Coordinator informing them of the substitute's name.
5. If coverage is not found using the substitute list, email faculty for coverage using the master schedules on the TWCA website – Faculty portal. Email the Administrator, Divisional Administrative Assistant and Substitute Coordinator giving details of coverage by period.
6. Email Divisional Administrative Assistant and team teacher lesson plans.
7. Text Divisional Administrator and Divisional Administrative Assistant if no coverage is found by 7:00 a.m. on the day of absence.

**Important:** Scheduling doctors' appointments during the workday (7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) is STRONGLY discouraged. Please avoid scheduling appointments during these hours, as this puts an unnecessary burden on other members of the faculty. If emergencies arise which necessitate time off during the workday, please request a half-day of illness/emergency leave and follow the policy for time off. If the primary teacher is not on campus at any time during the regular school day (7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.), an absence report must be submitted in the payroll system.



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## Employee Absences

All TWCA employees are expected to begin work on time as scheduled. All time off must be entered into the payroll system by the employee and be pre-approved by the supervisor. In the event of an illness, the individual should notify his/her supervisor and follow the process for an absence.

**Important:** Scheduling doctors' appointments during the workday (7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) is STRONGLY discouraged. Please avoid scheduling appointments during these hours, as this puts an unnecessary burden on other employees.

If emergencies arise which necessitate time off during the workday, please request a half-day of time off and follow the policy for time off.

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## General Communication

TWCA departments are assigned a communication mailbox and is responsible for checking his/her mailbox daily. The mailbox is not for storage. Do not leave material in it for long periods of time. During the summer, mailboxes should be checked periodically.

TWCA employees are also assigned an email address and should check the email inbox daily. During the summer, faculty and employees should check their email weekly. Email communication should be used for School business. All Woodlands Christian employees must use work phone numbers and email addresses for School business rather than personal phone numbers or email addresses.

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## Professional Attire

All employees are expected to dress professionally in clothing that is clean, pressed, modest, and appropriate for the nature of work in their departments and projects the high standards of Woodlands Christian. It is expected that employees will maintain a clean and neat appearance and will project a professional, Christ-like image.

All final decisions on appropriate attire are at the discretion of the Administration. Any employee who does not meet the standards of this policy will be required to take corrective action, which may include leaving the premises. Repeated violations of this policy will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**A professional appearance for women will include:**

- Dress pants/capris, skirts, blouses or dresses. Skirts/dresses must be of proper length (no shorter than 4 inches above the knee).
- No tight or revealing clothing of any kind. Tank tops, yoga pants, leggings, or spandex-type materials are not permitted.
- No jeans or T-shirts (except for spirit wear or designated jeans days).
- Warm up/wind suits are not considered professional attire and should not be worn, with the exception of PE teachers.
- No crocs, plastic shoes, flip flops, or any slick bottom shoes or other type of footwear that is not safe on stairs, wet surfaces, etc. Sandals suitable for professional attire are permitted.

All visible tattoos should be covered while on campus.

- Piercings (other than earrings) may not be worn on campus.
- Hair should be of a natural color and conservative.

**A professional appearance for men will include:**

- Slacks, a shirt with a collar, and dress shoes.
- No tight or revealing clothing of any kind. Tank tops, yoga pants, leggings, or spandex-type materials are not permitted.
- No jeans or T-shirts (except for spirit wear or designated jeans days).
- Warm up/wind suits are not considered professional attire and should not be worn, with the exception of PE teacher
- No crocs, plastic shoes, flip flops, or any slick bottom shoes or other type of footwear that is not safe on stairs, wet surfaces, etc.
- All visible tattoos should be covered while on campus.
- Piercings may not be worn on campus.
- Hair should be of a natural color and conservative



## Summer Dress

During summer months, employees should maintain a professional appearance; however, summer dress may be more casual as is appropriate to the task being performed. At all times, clothing should be modest and appropriately represent the high standards of Woodlands Christian.

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## Parent Volunteers

Woodlands Christian offers parents a variety of opportunities to volunteer at the school, including Parent Teacher Fellowship, Warrior Boosters, and the annual Auction/Gala. All parent volunteer opportunities are coordinated through the Development Department.

### Parent Teacher Fellowship

The Parent Teacher Fellowship (PTF) is an appointed group of parents representing each grade at The Woodlands Christian Academy.

The purposes of the PTF are to:

- Promote the ideals of the School.
- Foster a sense of community and parent fellowship.
- Encourage the building of lasting relationships between parents.
- Serve as ambassadors to new families.
- Facilitate parent involvement.
- Assist the administration of Woodlands Christian with special events.
- Coordinate and disseminate information about events sponsored by PTF.

During the school year, PTF hosts grade level meetings to share information and recruit volunteers to assist with activities and events that support the school. These events include Homecoming, Warrior Fund, Middle School Mixer, GrandDays, Field Days, and end-of-year parties. PTF also coordinates a fall and winter Bible study, Mom's in Prayer, and the Used Uniform Facebook Page.

### Warrior Boosters

Warrior Boosters support athletic and fine arts programs at Woodlands Christian by:

- Promoting school spirit, sportsmanship, and encouraging attendance at all athletic and fine arts events.

Organizing and managing fundraising activities for membership drive, sponsorship, and special events.

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## Fundraising

TWCA employees may not solicit or accept any donations or gifts without prior approval from the Development Office. Woodlands Christian parents are encouraged to support the School financially through Worthy Servants program, auction, and capital campaign. Hence, additional fund drives and collections of any other kind (chapel, missions, bake sales, t-shirt sales, etc.) are not to be scheduled without the explicit approval of the Development Office. Such approval can be sought by using the Fundraising Request Form available online. Budget funds are allocated to each lower school classroom or middle/high school grade. These funds are managed through PTF and cover the cost of holiday parties and other miscellaneous items needed throughout the year. Supplemental items needed to correlate with curriculum are included in classroom budgets. Requesting parents to bring in additional items for classroom needs is discouraged and allowing parents to purchase materials or equipment for classrooms is not permitted.



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## Gift Policy

Students and parents often wish to express their gratitude for employees through gifts. Families are strongly encouraged to express their gratitude through the annual Worthy Servants program. The Worthy Servants program is a tradition begun several years ago by Woodlands Christian parents to show love and appreciation to TWCA employees who touch our children's lives each day and to offer an alternative to buying individual teacher gifts.

Occasionally for birthdays, holidays and end of the year gifts, students and parents may wish to express their gratitude. In order prevent a conflict of interest, any gift received should follow these guidelines:

Faculty are prohibited from accepting monetary gifts.

Individual gift cards/presents should be modest in nature. (any gift value over \$250 should be reported to the Development Department and may not be allowed.)

Coaches and fine arts employees are often presented with an end of the season/production gift. These can be monetary; however, it must be a voluntary, collective gift and in proportion to the number of students participating in the activity. A good rule of thumb is an estimate of \$25 per student. (Gift exceeding this rule, should be reported to the Development department and may not be allowed). Parents are encouraged to present the card from all students not only those that participated.

If an employee has a question about accepting a gift or would like assistance in expressing gratitude but declining a gift from a Woodlands Christian family, the employee should contact the Director of Development.

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## School Visitors and Front Reception Policies

### Visitor Approval and Identification

- Woodlands Christian is a closed campus. Visitors must wear a visitor's badge while on campus.
- All visitors are required to sign in at the main building reception desk, present a valid driver's license, and receive a visitor's badge.
- The visitor's ID will be scanned by the Visitor Management System to check against a registered sex offender and criminal background database.

- The School may, at its sole discretion, deny any visitor access to campus at any time.
- Visitors without a valid identification will only be allowed access to the main building office area.
- Visitors not displaying a badge will be required to return to the main building reception desk.
- Upon leaving campus, visitors must return their badge and sign out at the main building desk.
- Parents/visitors may only go to classrooms during school hours at the invitation of TWCA employee and are not allowed in a classroom unattended.

### Visitor Alert Procedure

If the Visitor Management System identifies an issue, the receptionist shall contact personnel from the emergency list including the Director of Safety and Risk, Law Enforcement, and other designated responders.

### Substitute Employees

Substitutes are required to sign in and wear a substitute badge while on campus. Upon leaving campus, substitutes must return their badge and sign out at the main building.

### Contractors and Vendors

Contractors and vendors who will only be working outside the buildings or who do not need to go past the main reception area will not be required to sign in or wear a visitor badge. If the contractor or vendor must access any other parts of the campus, they must be escorted by TWCA employee at all times, or they must scan their valid ID in the visitor management system and receive a visitor badge. In case of an emergency inside or outside, contractors and vendors with administrator authorization may go directly to the site of the problem.

### Large Events during the School Day

Large campus-wide events held during normal school hours, including but not limited to, pep rallies or school performances, may have modified visitor check-in procedures.



### **Restraining Orders**

Restraining orders due to legal or custody proceedings shall be communicated to the Admissions Office, Head of School and Chief of Staff, nurses, receptionist, Principals, and pertinent faculty members. A complete, file-stamped copy of the Court Order must be provided to the Head of School. If a restricted person arrives attempting to contact a student or person on campus, the receptionist shall follow the Raptor Visitor Alert Contact Procedure as well as contacting the Director of Safety and Risk and Law Enforcement officer on duty.

### **Employee Deliveries**

If an employee is expecting a delivery, the employee should notify the receptionist in advance providing the carrier and the expected delivery date. Delivery drivers will not be permitted anywhere on campus other than the main building reception area.

### **Food Orders**

Only employees are allowed to order outside food during the school day. If an employee does so, please notify the receptionist in advance. All money and/or tip should be brought to the front desk in advance, as deliveries tend to arrive earlier than requested. Delivery drivers will not be permitted anywhere on campus other than the main building reception area. Students may not have food, drinks or other items delivered to or near campus.

### **Forgotten Items and Student Deliveries**

Parents may drop off forgotten items. These items will be labeled with the student's name and placed at the front desk. We do not call into classrooms or call students out of class. When possible, an email is sent to the teacher to notify the student. It is at the discretion of the teacher when to release the student to retrieve the items. Delivery of flowers, balloons and gifts for students will be held until the end of the day.

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## **Campus Safety Program**

### **Emergency Procedures**

All employees are required to read and familiarize themselves with the Emergency Operations Plan. The plan includes emergency procedures in the event of fire, inclement weather, bomb threats, and other emergencies requiring evacuation or securing of buildings. Practice drills will be conducted throughout the year in conjunction with state and local

requirements. Emergency binders shall be kept in each classroom/office.

### **Emergency Communication**

If a school-wide emergency occurs, Woodlands Christian will make every effort to communicate information. This will include but is not be limited to text, email, telephone, school website, social media and local media outlets.

### **Inclement Weather**

Woodlands Christian will generally close on the same days as Conroe Independent School District (CISD), for inclement weather; however, there may be times that Woodlands Christian is closed when CISD is not. Woodlands Christian will make every effort to communicate school closure information through the school website, social media, text, email, telephone, and local media outlets. During a severe weather warning, students will generally not be released until the threat has passed unless Woodlands Christian has received written or verbal parental consent for departure.

### **Third-Party Security Enforcement**

Law enforcement officers are on campus each school day as well as during athletic and school events as appropriate and where available. Additionally, Woodlands Christian retains the right to utilize third party resources, including, but not limited to, security consultants, community emergency services, and/or canine units to further enhance security on the school campus.

### **Weapons Policy**

Possession, whether intentional or unintentional, of any weapons of any kind, including but not limited to firearms, ammunition, handguns, knives, chemical dispensing devices, any other weapons, prohibited inhalants or explosives is prohibited on any Woodlands Christian property including but not limited to buildings, driveways, sidewalks or walkways, parking lots, and fields or at any location where an employee is performing duties for Woodlands Christian. This prohibition also applies to such items being stored in an employee's locked motor vehicle or school vehicles. This prohibition does not apply to duly licensed law officers or security personnel while on duty. It does



however apply to all employees, parents, students, agents, independent contractors, clients, and visitors, even if they have a license from any state to carry a weapon regardless of whether the weapon is concealed. Any violators may be subject to immediate removal from the premises by authorized security or other individuals as necessary.

### **Campus Monitoring/Searches**

The School may conduct monitoring and/or searches to help ensure employee and student safety, including video surveillance of non-private areas to identify safety concerns, maintain security, detect theft and misconduct, and discourage and prevent acts of harassment and violence. Aside from bathrooms and locker rooms, students, employees, and visitors must have no expectation of privacy with regard to any area of the School's facilities and other property. Woodlands Christian may search any portion of any School facility or other property without limitation including but not limited to: employees' offices, desks, files, classrooms, lockers, electronic devices, any other personal article on School premises, or vehicles parked on campus.

### **Use/Access of Video Recordings**

Recordings shall be reviewed as needed by Administrators, and evidence of misconduct shall be documented.

### **Personal Device Recordings**

Audio or video recording is prohibited on the TWCA campus without the prior approval of administration and written consent of those being recorded. No photography, audio or video recording is permitted in bathrooms or locker rooms under any circumstances.

### **Threats or Acts of Violence**

Threats of violence or acts of violence by a student, employee, parent or other individual may be reported to law enforcement and any other authorities the School deems appropriate. The School will cooperate with investigations by authorities, and the School may also conduct its own investigation.

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## **Drug Free Workplace**

### **Tobacco Products**

The Woodlands Christian Academy is a smoke and tobacco-free campus. No smoking or any tobacco use is allowed in the buildings or on the grounds of the

School. In keeping with The Woodlands Christian Academy's desire for employees to be Christian role models, no employee of Woodlands Christian will be allowed to smoke or use tobacco products, including vaping devices or e-cigarettes while attending or participating in any School function either on campus or away.

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

Woodlands Christian is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, productive work environment. Because of this commitment, the use, possession, transportation or sale of illegal drugs, or drug paraphernalia is prohibited on Woodlands Christian property. Employees are prohibited from consuming alcohol any time they are supervising students or are representing the School in the presence of students. Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Reporting to work or working under the influence of alcohol or with illegal drugs in an employee's system.
- Drinking alcohol or smoking on campus or during any time when the employee is supervising students. For example, employees are prohibited from consuming alcohol while chaperoning students on overnight field trips or athletic competitions.
- Engaging in the illegal use, sale, dispensing, or possession of a drug at anytime and anywhere, either on or off duty.
- Misuse of prescription or over-the-counter medication, or the possession, use or misuse of synthetic, designer, organic, look-alike drugs or substances, household cleaners, or aerosol propellants.

Additionally, the School will fulfill its reporting obligations regarding such behavior and cooperate with the authorities in any investigation of such behavior. For purposes of this Employee Handbook, the term drug includes all of the aforementioned items.

### **Prescription Medications**

Prescription drugs in their original container, prescribed by a licensed physician as medication for use by the person possessing the medication, are permissible. However, the safety of our students must be a strong consideration. Keep all medication out of reach and unattainable by students.



If an employee is taking a legal drug or medication (such as over-the-counter or prescription medications) which the employee knows, or suspects may adversely affect judgment, coordination, or the ability to perform work in a safe and productive manner, the employee must notify the Head of School, the Director of Human Resources or a Principal. After reviewing the situation, the School's administration will decide whether to allow the employee to remain at work, impose work restrictions, or take other appropriate action to assure the safety and well-being of all individuals potentially impacted.

Any employee convicted of a controlled substance violation, including pleas of no contest, must inform The Woodlands Christian Academy Administration within five days of such conviction or plea.

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## Romantic Relationships

Any involvement of a romantic nature between a supervisor and anyone he or she supervises, either directly or indirectly, is prohibited. Violation of this policy may lead to corrective action up to, and including, termination of the supervisor involved in the relationship.

If a relative relationship or romantic relationship is established after employment between employees who are in a reporting situation, it is the responsibility and obligation of the supervisor involved in the relationship to disclose the existence of the relationship to the Head of School. The Head of School may attempt to modify the work relationship through transfer of one or both of the employees within the school. The Head of School will decide who is to be transferred to another available position or, if necessary, terminated from employment.

In the event of any relationship developing between TWCA employee and a School parent, the relationship must be reported to Human Resources.

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## Technology

Employee use of technology is a privilege and must be consistent with the School's mission and values, including the Statement of Faith. Employees shall report any violation of this policy to the Director of Technology or Head of School. Violation of this policy

may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

- Employees have no expectation of privacy in their use of the School's technology including but not limited to its computers, electronic devices, software, network, internet access or other systems. The School may monitor, review, record, or log employee use of the School's technology including but not limited to personal devices connected to the School's network or systems.
- All documents, data, files, folders, communications and other materials created using the School's technology are property of the School. The School does not warrant the functioning of its technology and consequently encourages employees to backup important material on the cloud via Microsoft OneDrive, flash drives or external hard drives. The School has the right to monitor, review, edit, remove, disclose or delete any material stored, created, received, accessed or maintained on Woodlands Christian's computers, electronic devices, network or other systems without notice to the employee. This includes but is not limited to all emails, documents, files and data.
- Employees shall use their Woodlands Christian email address rather than personal email addresses to conduct school business including but not limited to communications with students and families. Employees may not use their school email address for any inappropriate, offensive or illegal activity.
- All employee communications sent to students/parents should originate through the school's Student Information System. Email replies may be made using the school email via Outlook.
- Internet use is generally limited to scholarly research and other educational purposes. Employees may not access or exchange unlawful or inappropriate materials including but not limited to sexually explicit material, threatening, harassing or hateful materials and games. If an inappropriate website is mistakenly or accidentally accessed, it should immediately be reported to the Director of Technology.



- The School may block certain internet content including but not limited to social media and instant messaging services. Employees shall not “friend”, “follow” or have other social networking relationships with current students or alumni under age 18. Employees should not actively peruse student’s social media pages or accounts unless given permission to do so by the Principals or Head of School. In case an employee inadvertently becomes aware of a discipline or safety issue of a student through social media, they should contact their principal or supervisor, before responding to the student. Employees are strongly encouraged to avoid social networking relationships with parents of current students. The only exception to this rule is that teachers may have social media pages and accounts that are used exclusively for the class they are teaching. Employees are responsible for any material posted on their social media accounts.
- School-issued computers and electronic devices are owned by the School. Employees may only install software, applications, upgrades or games that have first been approved by the Director of Technology and are owned by the School. Changes to operating systems must also first be approved by the Director of Technology. Employees should return the computer to the Technology Department whenever repair, service or cleaning is needed. Employees should also ensure that all computers and electronic devices have current antivirus software, security patches, and application updates.
- Employees should safeguard School computers and electronic devices to prevent damage or theft. If a School owned computer or electronic device is lost or stolen, the employee must immediately report it to the Director of Technology.
- Security is the responsibility of all technology users at Woodlands Christian. Passwords must be kept confidential and not shared with others. Employees are responsible for use of their accounts, including use by other people. Employees should never allow students or others to use their accounts. Compromised passwords should be immediately changed and reported to the Director of Technology. Employees must lock their screens or logout

when their computers and electronic devices are not in use. Unauthorized access of any of the School’s computers, electronic devices, software, network, internet access or other systems is prohibited.

- Employees may not use the School’s technology for personal business ventures, mass e-mailing (SPAM), or storage of personal materials.
- Copyright laws must not be violated. Before using copyrighted materials, employees must receive permission for its use from the author and be sure to use proper citation. The librarian is available to assist employees in this regard.

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## School Marketing and Communication

### Marketing

The School’s logo may not be used by employees without the express permission of the School.

All advertising, promotional products, publications and other printed material must first be approved by the Marketing team and purchased through The Woodlands Christian Academy from an approved vendor.

### Media Correspondence

Please refrain from speaking to or contacting the media and refer all calls from reporters or the media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, news agencies, and other news services) to the Head of School or the Chief of Staff.

### Social Media Responsible Use Guidelines

All employees are expected to reflect a positive Christian testimony and serve as Christian role models, in and out of School.

For purposes of this Employee Handbook, social media refers to online tools and services that allow any Internet user to create and publish content or communicate with others. Many of these sites use personal profiles where users post information about themselves.

The School’s policies against discrimination and harassment apply to any Internet communications. Therefore, any Internet communications that are inappropriate in any manner, including but not limited



to those that adversely reflect on the employee's or the School's Christian testimony, that contain confidential student or parent information, that contain confidential School information, that disparage students, parents, or that violate the School's policies, may result in requests to remove the communications and employee discipline, up to and including termination.

If an employee is uncertain about anything related to TWCA social media content, the employee should consult the Communication Team.

- Know and follow the School's Acceptable Use Policy.
- Regardless of your privacy settings, assume that all of the information you share on your social network is public information.
- In the event of a major posting mistake (e.g., exposing private information or reporting confidential information), please let your department head or supervisor know immediately so the School can take the proper steps to help remedy.

### Confidentiality Guidelines

- Do not publish, post, or release information that is considered confidential or private. Online conversations are never private.
- Never share or transmit personal information of students, parents, TWCA employee, or colleagues online.
- School employees should not identify students or their families in social media posting unless doing so with permission of the School.
- Do not caption or tag photos of the students.
- Do not post photos of students unless doing so with permission of the School.
- Do not post details (exact time and exact locations) of travel itineraries, including field trips.

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## Health Considerations

A registered nurse is on campus during school hours. For the protection and well-being of all students, faculty, and employees, the nurse follows school guidelines as well as current guidance from the Center for Disease Control, the Texas Department of Health Services and the Montgomery County Health District.

### Student or Employee Illness

Students or employees exhibiting the following symptoms should stay home from school for the well-being of the school community and to prevent the spread of communicable diseases:

- Fever or temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater
- Uncontrolled Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Vomiting, diarrhea or abdominal pain
- Severe headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Muscle or body aches
- Other suspected contagious condition, including head lice
- Inability to remain in class due to injury

In the event a child or employee contracts a communicable disease, the school nurse should be notified immediately.

The School will follow local health district guidelines for restriction from school or school closure and contact parents and employees with relevant details as appropriate.

Students and employees must be fever and symptom free for 24 hours without the use of symptom-reducing medication before returning to school.

The School may require a doctor's note for the student or employee to return to school.

In the event of an outbreak of any vaccine preventable disease within our immediate and surrounding community, employees may be asked to inform the nurse of their vaccination history. Inclusion or exclusion from school for an employee will be guided by the recommendations of the CDC and Texas Department of Health. In the event of an outbreak or exposure, any employee who, for whatever reason, is not immunized may be excluded from school and all school-related activities.



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## Financial Policies

The Head of School, working with the Governance Board and the Chief Financial Officer manages Woodlands Christian's budget. Certain designated employees will have authority over portions of the budget. In order to make an acquisition or incur an expense, employees will follow procedures set by their supervisor and the School's financial policies.

### Money in the Classroom

There should be no cash or checks collected by employees for any purpose. All monies are processed through the Business Office or the Development Office.

### Purchasing Policies and Procedures

If a teacher needs to order classroom supplies during the School year, he/she must obtain an approved purchase order from the appropriate administrator before making any purchases. Employees must use the School's tax-exempt number for School-related purchases. Sales tax exempt certificates may be obtained in the Business Office.

Failure to obtain a properly executed purchase order prior to placing an order or making a purchase may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees may not enter into any contractual agreements for services with outside vendors or with Woodlands Christian employees for supplies or labor without written approval from the Head of School or Chief Financial Officer. If an employee has written approval for services with an outside vendor, the employee must obtain a list of approved vendors from the Business Office.

### Reimbursement

To receive reimbursement for a purchase, employees must prepare a check request form and obtain the signatures necessary for approval. Any supporting documents (i.e., receipts) should be attached to the check request form. Check request forms are available in the Business Office and in most workrooms.

Once the check request has been approved it should be returned to the Business Office before 4:00 p.m. on Tuesdays as checks are issued on Wednesdays.

### Vehicle Rental

Vehicle rentals should be made in the name of the School using a School credit card. Verify that the rental company has an account set up with the School prior to renting the car. (TWCA's auto policy will extend for the liability coverage.) The driver must sign the contract on behalf of TWCA. The signature line normally reads that the person signing is personally responsible.

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## Facilities and School Property

### Workplace Cleanliness and Security

TWCA employees should keep rooms and offices clean at all times. Students should be taught to keep areas about their desks clean. Great care must be taken in the use and handling of markers, paints, etc. Teachers are also responsible for the appearance of the area directly outside of their classroom.

Lock all doors upon leaving for the day or extended periods of time. Remove all sensitive material and personal belongings from open areas. No Woodlands Christian keys should be given to or be left in a place accessible by students at any time.

It is the responsibility of all employees to clean up after themselves in order to keep the workrooms clean at all times. All items are to be removed from refrigerators prior to leaving for School holidays.

### Keys/Gate Cards

TWCA employees are not to give their building key to anyone for any reason. Keys should be kept in a safe place. **NO DUPLICATE KEYS SHOULD BE MADE, EXCEPT BY THE FACILITIES DIRECTOR.**

If a key/gate card is lost, please report this loss to the office immediately, lost keys/gate cards will be replaced at employee's expense of \$10.00 per key/gate card. All keys/gate cards must be returned at the close of the school year unless otherwise instructed. **Gate cards should never be shared and only used by those they are issued to.**

### Gate Entrance System

Security gates along the front fence of the campus will stay locked at all times. Gates may be temporarily secured in open position only for events approved through administration (e.g., car line, supervised deliveries, sponsored after hours events).



## **Maintenance**

Employees should report all needed maintenance requests using the electronic form on [x47.emaint.com](mailto:x47.emaint.com).

## **Safety**

Employees must promptly report all observed safety and health violations, potentially unsafe conditions, and any accidents resulting in injuries to their supervisors and/or the Director of Safety and Risk. Suggestions concerning safety and health matters are encouraged.

## **School Equipment**

Use of School equipment is a privilege, not a right. Employees who treat equipment in a negligent manner or lose, damage or deface equipment will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

School issued electronic devices must be kept in approved cases and not placed in conventional book bags. Employees will be charged accordingly for loss or negligent damage to equipment (including electronics).

## **Vehicles and Transporting Students**

Use of School vehicles must be scheduled in advance with the Vehicle Coordinator. The vehicles must be returned to School with a full tank of gas, and the inside and outside clean. Only employees who have been approved by the Vehicle Coordinator, the Director of Safety and Risk, and Human Resources may drive and/or transport students for TWCA. Please refer to Driving TWCA Vehicles and Transporting Students Policy.

## **Theft**

Any employee guilty of theft of School property may be terminated immediately.

## **End of Year Check Out**

Teachers are responsible for obtaining books and any items owned by the School from their students during student checkout and prior to the teacher leaving for summer break. All returning and non-returning employees will complete an employee checkout form before the summer break.

Classrooms should be left in a good, non-cluttered condition with all items in their proper place or disposed of. All empty boxes should be broken down and arrangements made for them, and any other trash, to be hauled away by Facilities. Trash and unwanted items should not be left in the classroom, hallways, or the breakroom. All personal items should be removed from the refrigerators in the breakroom.





# **EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT WELFARE**

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## Employee and Student Welfare Policies

Woodlands Christian is committed to maintaining an environment of respect and dignity for its employees and students, an environment that is free from all forms of unwanted, improper, or unprofessional behaviors or communication. All Students and adults are to be treated with dignity, respect, sensitivity, and fairness.

Woodlands Christian establishes policies for employee and student welfare. These policies include expectations for hiring protocols, mandatory training, use of technology, appropriate conduct, reporting responsibilities and more.

### Employee, Volunteer, and Student Training

Employees and overnight trip volunteers complete mandatory training each year including but not limited to harassment, bullying, and sexual harassment. School administration determines the required courses and tracks completion. School administrators also assign and track required student training for applicable grade levels.

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## Non-Discrimination Statement

Woodlands Christian prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any employee or student. Discrimination is defined as conduct directed at an employee or student based on race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or any other legally protected status applicable to Woodlands Christian, that adversely affects the employee's employment or student's educational decision or benefit.

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## Anti-Harassment and Bullying

Woodlands Christian prohibits all forms of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and bullying-including conduct that violates any applicable law or conduct that may not necessarily be unlawful but is determined to be inconsistent with the provisions of this policy or other applicable school policies. Submission to such policy is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment or a student's enrollment status.

### Harassment

Harassment involves physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual because of his/her identity with regard to race, color, religion, gender, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, political beliefs, any other distinguishing

physical or personality characteristics, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Prohibited harassment includes not only harassing behavior by another employee or student, but also harassment by a third-party such as a vendor, parent or volunteer. Harassing conduct may:

- Have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work or educational performance.
- Create an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive environment; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the individual's performance, environment, or opportunities.

### Bullying Behavior

Bullying is an act of aggressive behavior in order to intentionally hurt another person. Bullying is frequently a persistent, focused, and targeted pattern of behavior resulting in pain or distress to the target. Bullying usually involves a perceived imbalance of power between the bullying child/adult and the child/adult being bullied.

Types of bullying include:

- **Verbal** - using words to threaten, tease, or harm
- **Physical** - using physical force such as tripping, hitting, pushing, or damaging/taking belongings
- **Emotional** - repeatedly harassing, tormenting, laughing at, and embarrassing
- **Social/Relational** - intentionally harming reputation and relationships by excluding, spreading rumors, gossip, or rallying others to tease or harm
- **Cyberbullying** - using electronic information and communication devices to send hurtful messages, images, spreading rumors on the internet, social media, cell phone, etc.

### Hazing

Hazing is reckless, humiliating, or threatening acts that endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student on or off campus. Any hazing directed against a student by another student acting alone or with others and intended as a prerequisite to the initiation into, affiliation with, or participation in any organization is strictly prohibited and considered a serious disciplinary infraction.



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## Anti-Harassment and Bullying, Continued

### Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or educational decision or benefit, or when submission to or rejection of the conduct is the basis for action affecting the employee/student; or
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Males and females can both be victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment. A series of incidents taken together may constitute sexual harassment even if one of the incidents considered on its own would not be harassing. Sexual harassment behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual advances or propositions.
- Visual conduct such as making sexual gestures, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures.
- Verbal or written conduct such as making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, or jokes.
- Verbal or written abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, or obscene letters, notes, or invitations.
- Physical conduct such as touching, assaulting, impeding, or blocking movements.

### Sexting

Sexting is prohibited at all times including inside and outside of the school day. Sexting includes, but is not limited to, sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to one's own or another's reputation, or illegal.

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## Employee-Student Communication

Communication within the Woodlands Christian Community is an integral part of building relationships. The following communication policies apply:

### General Communication

- Employees and students should maintain appropriate communications, following all School policies.
- Employees shall limit electronic communications with students to matters within the scope of their professional responsibilities (e.g., for teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for staff with extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- Avoid promising to keep students' secrets; all TWCA employees are mandated to report observed or suspected child abuse or neglect, as required by law.
- **Note:** Employees do not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.

### Text Messaging

- Refrain from sending text messages to individual students. Group texts are allowed for professional communication of a timely manner. Otherwise, email is preferred.

### Email

- Employees shall use their Woodlands Christian email address rather than personal email addresses to communicate with students and families.
- All communication through electronic media with parents and students must be professional and of the appropriate nature, purpose, timing, and amount.

### Social Media

- Employees are prohibited from having social media relationships such as "friending", "following", or messaging with current students or alumni under age 18. The only exception to this rule is that teachers may have social media pages and accounts that are used exclusively for the class they are teaching.



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## Adult-Student Professional Boundaries

Building relationships is a Woodlands Christian core value. In building Christ-centered relationships of trust with students, employees and volunteers shall remain uncompromised in their Christian, legal, and ethical responsibilities. The following applies to all:

- Promote and maintain an atmosphere in which students are encouraged to be Christ-like.
- Help all students to take personal responsibility for their behavior.
- Invest in a personal knowledge of students through mentoring, discipling, and guidance on a daily basis.
- Be appropriately invested, referring students to administrators for deeply personal or mental health issues.
- Avoid preferential treatment to any one student.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students. Personal relationships of an intimate, emotional, physical, sexual, or other inappropriate nature between employees and students are strictly prohibited.
- Take affirmative steps to avoid compromising situations with students, including but not limited to being alone with individual students either on or off campus.

### Interaction/Contact with Students

In general, student interactions with adults should be readily interruptible and observable. This means that students interacting with an adult are or could be within hearing or visual range of another adult and/or other students whenever possible. The following applies to all:

- Physical contact with students should be minimal and only in the presence of other adults. Employees and volunteers may not have students sit on their lap or engage in physical actions including but not limited to tickling, wrestling, or roughhousing. Never touch a student in any way that could be interpreted in a sexual manner.
- At least two adults should be present whenever possible. If a teacher is alone with a student, the classroom door must be open or, if possible, engage another adult in the area until other students or adults arrive.

- Never host students in an employee's home, except (a) with approval from the principal, (b) in a group, (c) with parent approval, and (d) with another employee present.
- Never drive a student alone and never drive students without parent/guardian permission.
- Do not provide childcare for current Woodlands Christian families or employ a current Woodlands Christian student(s) without prior written permission from the Head of School. Never remain at a home alone with a student if a student is employed as a babysitter or in some other capacity.

### Restroom/Locker Room Procedures

- Adults should use the adult only restrooms located in most major buildings on campus.
- Adults should avoid being alone with a student in the restroom.
- It is strongly recommended when taking children to the restroom that adults take children of their same gender. Provide as much privacy as possible and only enter a bathroom stall to assist a child when absolutely necessary, keeping the door open.
- Personal electronic devices with video/picture capabilities such as cell phones, smartwatches, cameras or video recorders should **NEVER** be used in bathrooms or locker rooms.
  - Coaches should never dress, shower, or use the restroom in the student's locker room.
  - For more locker room guidelines, see the Coaches Athletic Handbook.

### Overnight Trips

On overnight trips, employees and volunteers are not permitted to enter a student's hotel room, cabin or tent. For room checks or an emergency situation, employees are required to leave the door of the student's hotel room open at all times. In addition, coaches and trainers will not use their hotel room, cabin, or tent to conduct meetings or provide treatment at any time.

Woodlands Christian parents may be asked to serve as chaperones. All chaperones must have a background check on file with the school and must also complete chaperone training. For more information, see the Overnight Trip/Event Policy.



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## Response and Reporting Procedures

Anyone, whether student, employee, volunteer, or family member who witnesses, or has knowledge of an incident of harassment, bullying, sexual misconduct, or other inappropriate behavior MUST report the incident immediately according to the following procedures:

### Students

Report incidents immediately to a Principal or the Dean of Students. When providing information or reporting an incident, be very clear and truthful. It is a serious matter to bring allegations of misconduct against another person.

### Employees and Volunteers

Woodlands Christian's employees and volunteers have an affirmative duty to promptly report any situation that could constitute sexual misconduct, harassment, bullying, abuse, or neglect of students to a Principal or Dean of Students. Additional reporting requirements are required if related to child abuse/neglect. (Refer to section Allegations of Child Abuse/Neglect) It is important to understand the signs of these behaviors in order to act quickly.

### Discrimination/Harassment

Any employee of the School who feels he or she has been or is being subjected to or has witnessed discrimination or harassment from anyone must immediately bring this to the attention of the School Administration, including, without limitation to Human Resources. Persons to whom an employee can report include the Head of School, the Director of Human Resources and a Principal. An employee is not required to make an initial report to any particular one of these three administrators rather an employee can report as the employee chooses.

### Sexual Misconduct/Inappropriate Behavior

An internal report must be filed (see next section) and/or appropriate authorities as indicated in section entitled 'Allegations of Child Abuse/Neglect,' if an employee or volunteer becomes aware of or witnesses an inappropriate adult-student interaction or if they become aware of interactions that appear inappropriate. Also, if an employee or volunteer experiences a situation in which a student becomes overly friendly or acts

inappropriately, they shall leave the situation and immediately consult a principal or direct supervisor for guidance.

### Retaliation Prohibition

Woodlands Christian prohibits retaliation against an employee, volunteer, or student who, in good faith, makes a claim alleging sexual misconduct, harassment, bullying, abuse, or neglect of students or another employee. There shall not be retaliation for anyone who serves as a witness or otherwise participates in an investigation.

### Investigations

Reports concerning harassment, bullying, sexual misconduct, or other inappropriate behavior will be investigated in a timely manner that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved.

The investigation must include documented interviews of the victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses. Each individual must be interviewed separately and at no time will the alleged perpetrator and victim be interviewed together. The School may notify a student's parent or appropriate government officials at its discretion.

All interviews, allegations, statements, and identities will remain confidential to the extent possible and allowed by the law. All investigations shall produce a final report to be kept on file. Based on the investigation outcome, the appropriate disciplinary or other action will be taken.



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## Allegations of Child Abuse/Neglect

Texas law broadly defines "abuse" and "neglect" so that every action in which a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected is potentially covered; it excludes an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent or guardian that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm. The Texas Family Code requires: that *ANYONE* with knowledge of *SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT* must report to it to the *APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES*

According to state law, educators and other professionals must make the report immediately but no later than the 48th hour after first suspecting a child has been abused or neglected. This cannot be delegated to another person to make the report.

Failure to report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, neglect and inappropriate relationships between teacher and students, is a crime and may result in prosecution as a misdemeanor or felony.

Under state law, any person reporting in good faith or assisting in the investigation of a reported child abuse or neglect allegation is immune from criminal or civil liability.

As professional reporters, it is important for educators and other TWCA employees to remain informed on the signs of child abuse. The School will annually, or any time upon request, provide employees training on child abuse and their reporting obligations.

Follow these steps when reporting allegations of child abuse or neglect.

- 1) Immediately share information with Principal or Supervisor (if time permits). Principal or Supervisor will notify the Head of School.
- 2) Determine whether the reports needs to be made to Law Enforcement or The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

(If the alleged perpetrator is the person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare then report to DFPS, otherwise report to local law enforcement.)

There are two ways to report alleged abuse/neglect to DFPS: Calling the Texas Abuse Hotline 1-800-252-5400 or reporting online at TXABUSEHOTLINE.ORG

The Hotline must be called rather than reporting online if the following situations exists:

- The alleged victim faces immediate risk of abuse or neglect that could result in death or serious harm.
- There is a need for immediate medical treatment.
- There is alleged sexual abuse where the alleged perpetrator will have access to the victim within the next 24 hours.
- Anytime an injury is to a child age 5 and younger or a child under age 5 is likely to be left alone.
- Anytime you believe the situation requires action in less than 24 hours.

**After reporting allegations of abuse or neglect, it is critical that you document the following in an email to your Principal or Supervisor and copy the Head of School:**

If you called Law Enforcement, ask for the name of the person collecting the information and ask for a report number. Document both in writing.

If reported to DFPS via the hotline get:

- 1) CALL ID #
- 2) Intake worker's NAME and ID.

If reported to DFPS online obtain and document:

- 1) The ONLINE REPORT CONFIRMATION (a system generated number acknowledging that DFPS received the information via email)
- 2) The REPORT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (The number DFPS uses to track the information you submitted in the system AFTER an intake



worker has reviewed and assessed it. You will get this number in an email that is sent back to you.)

If there is an immediate safety concern and the local CPS office has not contacted you prior to release of the student, call local law enforcement or 911. *In addition, according to the Texas Family Code, employees must cooperate with investigators of child abuse and neglect. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited. The DFPS investigator also has the right to take the child off campus for purposes of the investigation as long as they have ATTEMPTED to notify the parent.*



# EMPLOYEE RIGHTS UNDER THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION

## LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS



Eligible employees who work for a covered employer can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the following reasons:

- The birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- To bond with a child (leave must be taken within one year of the child's birth or placement);
- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a qualifying serious health condition;
- For the employee's own qualifying serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job;
- For qualifying exigencies related to the foreign deployment of a military member who is the employee's spouse, child, or parent.

An eligible employee who is a covered servicemember's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin may also take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the servicemember with a serious injury or illness.

An employee does not need to use leave in one block. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, employees may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule.

Employees may choose, or an employer may require, use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. If an employee substitutes accrued paid leave for FMLA leave, the employee must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

While employees are on FMLA leave, employers must continue health insurance coverage as if the employees were not on leave.

Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to the same job or one nearly identical to it with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions.

An employer may not interfere with an individual's FMLA rights or retaliate against someone for using or trying to use FMLA leave, opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA, or being involved in any proceeding under or related to the FMLA.

## BENEFITS & PROTECTIONS

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An employee who works for a covered employer must meet three criteria in order to be eligible for FMLA leave. The employee must:

- Have worked for the employer for at least 12 months;
- Have at least 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months before taking leave;\* and
- Work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the employee's worksite.

\*Special "hours of service" requirements apply to airline flight crew employees.

## REQUESTING LEAVE

Generally, employees must give 30-days' advance notice of the need for FMLA leave. If it is not possible to give 30-days' notice, an employee must notify the employer as soon as possible and, generally, follow the employer's usual procedures.

Employees do not have to share a medical diagnosis, but must provide enough information to the employer so it can determine if the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. Sufficient information could include informing an employer that the employee is or will be unable to perform his or her job functions, that a family member cannot perform daily activities, or that hospitalization or continuing medical treatment is necessary. Employees must inform the employer if the need for leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

Employers can require a certification or periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. If the employer determines that the certification is incomplete, it must provide a written notice indicating what additional information is required.

## EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Once an employer becomes aware that an employee's need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, the employer must notify the employee if he or she is eligible for FMLA leave and, if eligible, must also provide a notice of rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. If the employee is not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for ineligibility.

Employers must notify its employees if leave will be designated as FMLA leave, and if so, how much leave will be designated as FMLA leave.

## ENFORCEMENT

Employees may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.



For additional information or to file a complaint:

**1-866-4-USWAGE**  
(1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627

**www.dol.gov/whd**

U.S. Department of Labor | Wage and Hour Division





WH1420 REV 04/16



# **EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

# 2022-2023

## Employee Acknowledgement

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read The Woodlands Christian Academy 2022-2023 Employee Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read The Woodlands Christian Academy 2022-2023 Parent Student Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ I commit to cooperation and philosophical support of the School Mission and Statement of Faith.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will adhere to the policies, standards, and guidelines as detailed in this Employee Handbook, as updated.

I understand that nothing in the Handbooks creates or is intended to create a promise or representation of continued employment and that employment at The Woodlands Christian Academy (TWCA/School) is employment at-will, that may be terminated at the will of either the School or me. I understand that I have the right to terminate my employment at any time, with or without cause or notice, and that the School has a similar right. I further understand that my status as an "at-will" employee may not be changed except in writing signed by the Head of School. My signature below certifies that I understand that at-will status is the sole and entire agreement between the School and myself concerning the duration of my employment and the circumstances under which my employment may be terminated. It supersedes all prior agreements, understandings and representations (whether written or oral) concerning my employment with the School.

I understand and acknowledge that nothing in the Handbooks or in any other document or policy is intended to prohibit me from reporting concerns, making lawful disclosures, or communicating with any governmental authority about conduct I believe violates any laws or regulations.

I also acknowledge that TWCA reserves the right to revise, delete or add to the provisions of the Handbooks at any time, at its discretion. No oral statements or representations can change the provisions of the Handbooks.

Employee's Name (*please print*): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Each employee *must* have this signed form on file.

Return completed form to the Human Resources Department.

