



# Staff Handbook

**2021-2022**

## Hope Charter School/Legacy Charter High School 2021-2022 School Calendar

Monday	August 2-9	Pre-Planning
Tuesday	August 10	First Day of School
Monday	September 6	Labor Day Holiday
Thursday	October 7	End of First Marking Period
Friday	October 8	Teacher Workday/Student Holiday
Monday	October 11	Begin Second Marking Period
Friday	October 29	Teacher Professional Day/Student Holiday Teacher Non-Workday
Monday – Friday	November 22 – 26	Thanksgiving Break
Friday	December 17	End of Second Marking Period
Two Weeks	December 20 – 31	Winter Break
Monday	January 3	Teacher Workday/Student Holiday
Tuesday	January 4	Begin Third Marking Period Begin Second Semester
Monday	January 17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
Monday	February 21	Presidents' Day Holiday
Thursday	March 10	End of Third Marking Period
Friday	March 11	Teacher Workday/Student Holiday
Monday – Friday	March 14 – 18	Spring Break
Monday	March 21	Begin Fourth Marking Period
Wednesday	May 25	End of Fourth Marking Period/Last Day of School

***Please note:*** Paid personal days may not be taken preceding or following a scheduled school break (holidays/long weekends, etc.). Unless the absence is reported with an accompanying doctor's note, the absence will be unpaid and deducted from the next paycheck.

# **HCS/LHS LEGACY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL STAFF HANDBOOK**

Hope Charter School and Legacy High School (hereinafter referred to as HCS/LHS) were founded to meet the educational, social, emotional, and physical needs of students. Programs such as Brain-Based Education, Brain Power, the nutrition plan, hydration, inclusion of special needs students, and more individualized academics have been placed in our charters to provide an environment most conducive to learning.

But the best environment and programs are meaningless without a very special staff. HCS/LHS strive to bring committed, enthusiastic, loving, gifted, and hardworking people to our team. The opportunity to read this handbook says that you have been chosen to fulfill a very high calling.

The following pages will assist you in understanding how to perform your responsibilities well and what you can expect from HCS/LHS. As we grow and experience different situations, it may become necessary to make changes, additions, or deletions to our policies, which will become effective at time of publication. Publication may include, but not be limited to, staff memos, announcements, or postings. All staff will be responsible for following these policies from the time of publication. Unfortunately, due to the ever-evolving nature of such policies, it is not possible to cover every contingency in a handbook. However, we try to establish our policies based on common-sense practices. If you aren't sure about something, ask the office of the CEO before acting.

The Boards of HCS/LHS and we welcome you. You are embarking on a great adventure to be an example for and a mentor to 650+ students, and an encouragement to 105 staff members. Read on!

Crystal Yoakum  
CEO, HCS/LHS

Allen Quain  
Principal, HCS K-6

Kristy Castellanos  
Principal, LHS / HCS 7-8

## Academics

In addition to entering attendance into Skyward each day (and each period for 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades) and entering grades into Skyward as soon as they are determined so parents can monitor their child's progress on a weekly basis at a minimum, each teacher is responsible for completing all quarterly calculating on time, according to the academic schedule given to them by their principal. This includes semester and final grade calculations, as well. The instructions on how to calculate these grades in Skyward are located on the faculty server in the Teacher Forms Folder. The document is titled "Skyward – Calculating Grades." If students are required to have their academics modified as stated in an IEP or 504 Plan, grades are to be designated as modified.

## Accounting

We are audited twice a year and must maintain accurate financial records. Therefore, we must follow certain procedures when collecting and dispersing money through the school. All money that is collected from students for field trips, lunches, supplies, fundraisers, etc., must be turned in to the front office **every day**. If you expect to need cash to be distributed among parent drivers for parking, tolls, gas, etc., you must inform the bookkeeper when you begin collecting funds so she can make the necessary arrangements to have the cash available. Do not wait until the week of the field trip; that is too late. All field trips will be paid by the school through a school check or credit card and the school must receive a receipt. If no receipt is received before the trip, the teacher is responsible for acquiring a receipt at the field trip location and returning it to the office.

**All supplies must be requested through the office. No staff member is authorized to purchase school materials for reimbursement or credit unless pre-approved by the CEO.** All reimbursements must be requested through a reimbursement form and must include an itemized receipt. The reimbursement form is located in the Teachers Folder on the faculty server. **No other form should be used to request reimbursement.** No reimbursement or credit will be given without a receipt. Please do not make any personal purchases along with school purchases on the same receipt. Such receipts will not bear up under audit scrutiny and will not be able to be reimbursed. ***NOTE: Sales tax cannot be reimbursed!***

If an employee loses a school-issued check and the check must be cancelled or voided at the bank, the employee will be responsible for the bank cancellation fee (currently \$25.00).

## Attendance

The 10-month school term for employees includes pre- and post-planning. Pre-planning will begin one week before the first day of school and post-planning will continue until at least a week after the last day of school. Attendance is required for the entire time.

All full-time employees are required to **clock in and out** using the KeepNTrack system. This system is easy to use with your personnel number. However, the system uses machine logic. That means that if you forget to clock in, you will not be able to clock out. Machine logic says that you cannot leave if you never arrived. **If you clock in but forget to clock out, the system automatically records you as being present for just 4 hours!** While forgetting occasionally happens to everyone, you should make every effort possible to remember to clock in/out...this includes any time you leave the school premises for lunch, appointments, etc. **This is the only documentation of your presence.**

***NOTE:*** Staff who work in the B building should park in front of the A building. Staff who work in the C/D buildings, should park in front of the C building (the area next to the pond). KeepNTrack is located in the A and C offices. For the **occasional** times that you forget to clock in or out, there is a form in the

office where you can record your time. Do NOT send notes to anyone asking that your time be corrected. This cannot be done. **Under NO circumstances** should an employee ask anyone to clock in or out for them, or have their time written in by anyone else.

Any employee paid on an hourly basis should not use KeepNTrack. Hourly employees must complete timesheets that are kept in a book in each office, and should NEVER fill out timesheets in advance.

Full-time employees are expected to be at school for 8 hours per day. For grades K-6, you need to be at work by 7:45; after 7:45, you are late. Since class start times vary for 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade, teachers should arrive 15 minutes before his/her first class begins. Staff who are late without prior approval must report to the Principal before going to class and complete an Absence Report. The 8 hours includes a lunch period; time is not added to the work day to make up for the lunch period. **Because employees are paid for lunch time**, whether or not you take lunch, working through lunch is not valid make-up time. Skipping lunch does not allow you to leave early. If you do need to leave campus, the office must be notified and you need to clock out when you leave and clock in when you return. Please be accountable for your time and be honest in your habits. Any after-school activity for which a staff person receives additional pay, whether extended day or tutoring or extra-curricular activities, must be scheduled **AFTER** the staff person's regular 8 hours. ***Example:*** If you come in at 8:00 a.m. and you want to sponsor an after-school activity for which you plan to charge parents, you cannot begin receiving payment until 4:00 p.m. (the end of your regular 8 hours).

**Absenteeism** - Absence is the failure to report to work and to remain as scheduled. It includes late arrivals and early departures, as well as absence for an entire day or leaving for a time and then returning. Being late or leaving early chronically will result in a poor annual review. Extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the Principal. Under no circumstances should a classroom partner "cover" for the other partner to be absent without authorization.

If you are going to be absent or late, **you must call the office as soon as possible; THIS IS THE FIRST CALL TO MAKE AND IS MANDATORY!** As well, K-6 should text Allison Roebke and 7-12 should text Dawn Boyd ASAP to arrange for coverage. Failure to report your absence will be recorded as unexcused. An employee who fails to call in for two successive days to report such absence may be considered to have voluntarily terminated employment with HCS/LHS. **Calling your classroom partner is considerate, but is secondary to calling the office. Do not just call your classroom partner.**

An Absence form **must be completed and turned in for any absence**, whether a day or any part of a day, or if you arrive late or leave early. If the absence is pre-planned, the form should be turned in before the absence. If the absence is unplanned, the form should be turned in as soon as you return. The same form is used for both pre-planned and unplanned absences. An absence before or after a scheduled school break (a long weekend, Thanksgiving, Winter Break, Spring Break), will be unpaid and cannot be made up. "Makeup time" is allowed only after all eligible sick/personal time has been used. If you are going to make up the time, it must be approved in advance by the CEO and a Makeup Form completed and signed by the Principal and CEO. Please notify the office as soon as possible to give ample time to make arrangements for class coverage. In addition, K-6<sup>th</sup> staff should write the pre-planned absence on the calendar kept by Ally and 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> staff should turn in the form to Dawn.

Employees who work Extended Day should arrange coverage with another staff person when absent. Aftercare pay begins after 8 regular hours have been completed by the employee; if beforecare is worked, 8 additional hours must be worked in order to be paid for the extended day hours. For example, if you come in at 7:30 a.m., your 8 hours will not be over until 3:30 p.m. so you should not record any hours for extra pay until 3:30 p.m., even if you start extended duties before then. You cannot be paid double for the same time period (regular pay and extended pay).

Leave of Absence as defined by the Family Medical Leave Act will be accepted as legally applicable in the State of Florida. Remember that Leave of Absence refers to the time you are allowed to be absent; it does not guarantee payment for that time if it exceeds the benefits provided by the school.

Sick and Personal Leave Days – Each full-time employee will be eligible for 2 personal and 8 sick days per school year. **These are not vacation days.** Sick days should only be used when necessary due to illness or doctor's appointments for the employee or employee's child. Personal leave should be reserved for death in the family, or other such emergencies. They may not be taken to extend holidays. Staff are expected to be at school before and after each scheduled school break. **If the day or consecutive days before or after a scheduled school break (holidays/long weekends, etc.) is missed, the day or days will not be paid and cannot be made up.** If an emergency situation occurs, up to 3 "flex" sick days may be used as personal days. This does not mean that additional sick days will be added to what is available. Rather, the available sick days will be decreased by the number of "flex" days used. The "flex" time **MUST** be approved in advance by the CEO. Leave time is a benefit, not an entitlement. It should be used only when needed for the purposes listed. Part-time (hourly) employees are not eligible for paid sick leave or paid personal leave. **NOTE:** A teacher who must complete certification exams as part of the state requirement to teach must schedule the exam on personal time (summer, Thanksgiving week, Winter Break, Spring Break) or use available personal time benefits. This is not the same as school-approved training, which is specific to Hope Charter School/Legacy High Charter School. State certification is required for teachers to be employed as a teacher, regardless of the employer.

**An excessive number of absences over the provided sick/personal benefits, even if "unpaid", may jeopardize the employee's job status.**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Current OCPS 10-month employees receive 6 paid holidays and are required to work on designated Teacher Workdays. However, the administrations for HCS/LHS have decided to allow salaried staff the entire Thanksgiving break, Winter Break, and Spring Break (as long as the OCPS designated academic calendar reflects this availability) without reduction in salary (please refer to "Salaries" below for an explanation of how salaried payroll is determined). In addition, the Teacher Workdays at the end of each mark period are not required attendance unless training is scheduled or academic reports are not completed. Therefore, any time taken immediately **preceding or following** any of the following days will be deducted from the next paycheck: 9/6, 10/8, 10/29, 11/22-26, 12/20-1/3, 1/4, 1/17, 2/21, 3/14-18, 5/31.

While the last day of each marking period is considered a "Teacher Workday," the administration has decided that teachers do not have to report on that day IF all their grades are entered, calculated and saved, and any additional reports have been completed. The only exception would be if the administration arranges for special training on that day. However, if a teacher does not have all his/her expected work completed before the "Teacher Workday," then he/she must come in to complete all required work. **If the teacher does not come in and does not have the required work completed, he/she will not be paid for the "Teacher Workday" ...it IS a workday, not a holiday.**

Whether anticipating use of a personal day or having had to use a sick day, a request/report of absence form must be used to document days missed. Staff are responsible for turning in the proper form. Days will only be paid when forms are turned in to the office. Missed classroom time can be made up only if approved in advance by the administration. **Since classroom time is student-interactive, makeup time is expected to be student-interactive as well.** Also, makeup time cannot be counted until after the employee has completed his/her regular 8 hours. For example: if you arrive at 8:00 a.m. and work extended day to make up for missed hours, you cannot start counting your makeup time until 4:00 p.m., when your regular 8 hours are complete. Since staff lunch time is part of the 8-hour paid day, it cannot be used to make up missed work time. **Never use the hourly time sheet to record make up time.** Make up

time should be recorded ONLY on the Makeup Time Form located in the Teachers Folder on the faculty server.

Employees who are called to serve on jury duty may take up to two (2) paid days off work for jury duty purposes. Such time off work shall not count against the employee's paid time off. Upon completion of jury duty, the employee must provide HCS/LHS with proof they attended jury duty, Courts will provide documentation of attendance upon request. Employees who are excused from jury duty for the day, or are excused early, should report to work when it is practical to do so. If an employee is called to serve on jury duty at a time that would unreasonably interfere with normal educational and business operations, he or she may request that the required service be rescheduled for a later date.

## **Benefits**

Salaries - Reviewed each year in August before the school year begins. Salary will be based on availability of funds, performance in the classroom, items placed in the employee file throughout the year and additional education obtained by the employee. Salaried employees are paid based on a 10-month employment period (August through early June) with the first paycheck issued August 15 and the last paycheck issued June 30. An employee may request that his/her salary be divided over 12 months, or 24 paychecks. Salaried employees' pay is based on 1,520 hours per school year. The salary is evenly distributed over 22 or 24 pay periods (as requested by the employee). Hourly employees are paid based on the actual number of hours worked, and are paid on a semi-monthly basis (the 15<sup>th</sup> and last day of the month). Direct deposit is available and recommended. Employees must use the direct deposit form located in the Teacher Forms folder on the faculty server to request or change a direct deposit. The form **MUST** be turned in at least two weeks before the payday for which the employee wants the direct deposit or change to become effective. A void check or bank letter must accompany the form or the direct deposit cannot take effect.

Workman's Compensation – Provided for all employees. Information is available in the CEO's office. Employees are responsible for reporting a work-related injury immediately so that they may call the appropriate Worker's Compensation nurse who will assign the employee to the closest medical facility for treatment.

Health Insurance – All full-time employees will be offered the opportunity to take part in the HCS/LHS health benefits package. New employees are eligible for health benefits 60 days following the first day of employment, and coverage will begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month immediately following eligibility. The policy will terminate upon request by the employee, or the last day of the month in which employee termination occurs. The employee will be required to pay a small portion of the health insurance cost each pay period which will be deducted from the paycheck. Your spouse and children may be added at the expense of the employee, and premiums will be deducted from each paycheck.

Life Insurance – Available at the employee's expense with premiums deducted from the employee's paycheck. Your spouse and children can be covered as well at the employee's expense.

Retirement Plan – Employees may contribute funds to an already established 403-B program, which allows contributions to be made pre-tax or post-tax. Employees will meet individually with AXA or Thrivent representatives to personalize their retirement plan.

Supplemental Insurance – AFLAC is available at employee's expense.

Wellness Program – This program is a benefit approved by the IRS. Each person who earns over a specified amount is eligible to use a percentage of pre-tax earnings as a "benefit bank." This benefit bank includes AFLAC and wellness policies, in addition to or in place of policies you may purchase

independently. Since benefit bank deductions are made pre-tax, some employees may see an increase in net pay. However, a pre-tax deduction can “appear” to decrease your gross earnings on your W2. This is because your benefit bank deductions are taken from your gross earnings before your taxable income is determined (pre-tax). You will not owe income tax in April due to benefit bank deductions. Here is an example (NOT representative of anyone): Monthly earnings = \$1,000.00 (gross pay). Taxes are owed on \$1,000.00. Benefit Bank = \$100.00. Gross Pay of \$1,000.00 minus Benefit Bank of \$100.00 leaves \$900.00 of taxable Gross Pay. The amount that appears on your W2 is your taxable Gross Pay, and this is the amount on which is based your taxable income. A benefit bank can be utilized only for this purpose; it cannot be used to receive more money in your paycheck.

## Communications

Each employee should email the Principal whenever written communication is appropriate or required. This would include questions; requests for supplies; concerns with parents, students or staff; and requests for an appointment with the Principal to discuss work or personal issues. The regular use of email will help facilitate constant communication, quicker responses, and documentation of issues raised. If an appointment with the CEO is desired, the Principal should be contacted first unless the reason for a desired meeting with the CEO is because of concerns with the Principal. In that case, the Hope Office Manager should be contacted to reserve an appointment with the CEO. You may use your com log to address the CEO if desired, as well.

Concerns or issues with other staff members should be resolved only between the people involved. If resolution is not possible, the situation should be communicated only to the Principal or CEO – not to other staff members and especially not to parents. Requesting a meeting with the Principal or CEO is the appropriate response.

**Complaining or gossiping among staff is very destructive and must be avoided.** Parents should never hear complaints or gossip from staff members. This is a serious breach in trust and could result ultimately in dismissal. Use of social networks should not involve communication about work, or work-related posts, particularly regarding students, staff or parents. This is an ethical breach.

Cell phones may only be turned on in the classroom for work related purposes, such as dojo, calculator, clock or timer, not for receiving or making calls, texting or email. The only appropriate time to use them for personal purposes is during lunch break or planning period when you are not responsible for students, and not outside in view of students or parents. If a staff member is found to be using his/her cell phone inappropriately, it may result in disciplinary measures, and a dated note will be placed in the person’s personnel file. If staff members receive calls at the office, they will receive a message to that effect so that calls may be returned. **Staff must adhere to school guidelines prohibiting the use of cell phones while driving on campus.**

While emailing parents is a good communication tool, there are some precautions that should be observed when emailing more than one parent, such as for class activities or field trips. When an email is being sent to more than one parent, address the email in the **To** slot to [office@hopecharter.org](mailto:office@hopecharter.org). That way, the office will have a copy for its records. Then in the **Bcc** slot (blind carbon copy), enter the parents’ addresses. Do NOT enter them in the **Cc** slot which allows everyone to see everyone’s email address. By putting them in the **Bcc** slot, no one will be able to view the email addresses of others. If the **Bcc** is not visible in your email program, click on either the **To** or **Cc** link and the **Bcc** will be at the bottom of the box. Be aware of which parent is to receive communication from you if there is a court order.

If a parent, such as a room mother, asks for the email addresses of all class parents, the teacher must have permission from each parent to distribute their email addresses to that person. The “hopecharter.org” address attached to your name and/or email, implies that you are acting on behalf of HCS/LHS and, as

such, you are expected to conduct yourself as a professional. Staff should refrain from providing their personal email address to parents or students. All communications transmitted to or from the Hope Charter network are considered the property of HCS/LHS and users are not entitled to any expectation of privacy with regard to the information contained in such communications. These communications can be requested by an attorney due to Sunshine Law requirements. Staff does not need to accept rude or threatening communications from parents. If, during a conference, a parent becomes angry or rude, please state to the parent that you are ending the conference and will schedule the next conference with an administrator present. If staff receive an email or note that is rude or threatening, please provide a copy to an administrator. If a teacher has concerns about a parent's reaction or the subject matter being presented at a parent conference, please invite the Principal to the conference.

For policies concerning social media and how staff may utilize it, please read the Social Media section.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**

The management style of the administration at HCS/LHS is one that includes servant leadership, affirmation of employees, regular availability to staff for the purpose of communicating, mentoring and discussing current issues, and from time to time constructive correction. Though we hope never to use it, a discipline and dismissal policy must be part of the HCS/LHS's staff manual.

Resolving issues is of great importance at HCS/LHS for the welfare of the students. Action will be taken to make sure staff issues do not affect students. When an employee violates a HCS/LHS policy or is demonstrating substandard job performance, the Principal or CEO will normally follow this process:

1. First violation – Counsel the employee and issue a counseling warning. Make every effort to determine and resolve the cause of the problem. At the same time, the Principal or CEO will state specifically that the employee is receiving a warning. An informal memo will be placed in the employee's personnel file describing the incident and action taken. The Principal will sign the memo. A copy will be given to the employee and the employee will have the opportunity to provide a written reply to be placed in the employee's file
2. Second violation – (a) Hold a meeting with the employee at which the Principal explains the nature of the incident and warns the employee that any repetition could lead to suspension or discharge; (b) offer to help the employee solve the problem; (c) issue a formal written warning of the offense, including a reference to the prior incident; (d) give one copy to the employee; place another copy in the employee's personnel file signed by the Principal and employee.
3. Third violation – The Principal will call a hearing with the employee. A review of the previous offenses will be discussed. The employee will be placed on supervised probation for two months. During that time, the employee will receive extra attention and scrutiny. The main purpose of this period will be to try to solve the employee's problem. The employee will be warned that even a single further offense will be grounds for immediate discharge. A formal written notice of probation will be placed in the employee's file.
4. Fourth violation – Discharge the employee with written notice of involuntary discharge placed in the employee's file.

## **Dismissal Policies**

HCS/LHS is an at-will employer. An employee can be discharged at any time and for any reason, without regard to the preceding steps, including if he/she commits an offense for which immediate discharge is specified as a penalty or if, in the Principal's or CEO's judgment, the employee's continued presence would be contrary to the well-being of the school or any of its employees or students.

### **Grounds for dismissal:**

1. Taking students off-campus without prior notice to or approval from the administration.
2. Violating the school policy on Social Media.
3. Discussing confidential information concerning any child, parent or staff member with parents or community members. This is illegal, as well.
4. Discussing any grievance or complaining about salary or benefits to parents or community members. This is considered unprofessional conduct.
5. Discussing negative opinions of a fellow staff member with other staff members. This is considered unprofessional conduct, as well.
6. Treating a student in any way other than positively will result in dismissal.
7. Physical, verbal, or emotional abuse of students. This is not only inappropriate, but illegal.
8. Leaving the class unattended or sending a student or students in K-6 anywhere unattended. If this is not possible, call the office so someone can observe the student on their way.
9. Sexual harassment of students or colleagues or sexual discrimination.
10. Any form of racial discrimination or targeting.
11. Refusing to follow through with responsibilities or undermining the authority structure.
12. Drug or alcohol use on campus; working while under the influence of drugs or alcohol; any violation of established laws; profanity, stealing, or committing any type of felony are all very unprofessional and grounds for dismissal.
13. Excessive absences over the benefit amount.
14. Continued non-compliance after issues have been addressed constitutes a resistant and insubordinate attitude and could lead to dismissal at the Administration's discretion.
15. Carrying on a relationship with students or parents that transcends a professional distance between students or families and educational staff such as vacationing with a student's family, or taking non-school related day trips or local excursions such as shopping or airport trips in one's automobile along with students. Educational staff must maintain an ethical professional distance at all times with students and their families. Prior friendship, church, or social media relationships must be distanced as long as the child of a friend or acquaintance is a student. Violation of this policy is an ethical breach and will cause dismissal if continued.

### **Dress Policy**

Remember that you are a professional. Dressing professionally is very important since you are setting an example for the students. Shoes **cannot** be "thong" style (if any type of strap goes between toes, it is a "thong" style). Shoes must have a back-strap. **Blue jeans of any kind or style cannot be worn at any time, including field trips.** Nor can shorts, skirts, shirts, or jackets be any style or color of denim, cannot be "sweat" material, and cannot be form-hugging or "skinny" style. Shorts should reach the top of the knee; skirts must be no shorter than 3" above the knee. Leggings or tights do not make short garments acceptable and should only be used under already-compliant skirts. Tops can be sleeveless but should **not have spaghetti-straps nor show lingerie straps**, and should not show midriff or cleavage. Straps should be wide enough to cover most of the shoulder. Shirts or tops that come only to the waist, therefore showing the midriff when bending or reaching, or are low enough to show cleavage when bending, are not appropriate school wear. No clothing item should be flimsy enough to see through, even if worn over another item such as a sleeveless top.

Please check in your mirror when bending or reaching so it isn't an issue at work. Ladies, be aware as well, of what can be seen if someone is taller than you or has a vantage point if standing while you're sitting.

If a staff person has a tattoo, it must be kept covered so as to not be visible in any way to students. Staff may not wear to school excessive jewelry such as nose rings, lip rings, eyebrow rings, or rings in any visible location other than the ears. Earrings, modest in style and quantity, may be worn on the lobes only, and only by female employees.

Staff appearance should be professional at all times. This includes, but is not limited to hair style, color, and, in the case of male staff, length. Hair color must be a “naturally occurring” color...no crayon or neon colors. Male staff should keep their hair length no longer than their collar following the same guidelines as for students. Male staff may have facial hair (mustaches/beards) as long as it is kept neatly trimmed. A scruffy look is not acceptable.

Any appearance that can present a distraction to students is inappropriate.

Please be circumspect when applying perfume, lotions, hair products, powders, or **any** scented product. We have both staff and students who are allergic to scents, and the symptoms can range from severe headaches to difficulty breathing; this can affect their health to the extent that they would be unable to stay in a classroom, office, or meeting.

## **Employee File**

Each employee must have a copy of his/her social security card, driver’s license, employment application, payroll paperwork, and insurance paperwork in his/her employee file. Documentation of absences, tardies, performance reviews, complaints, or commendations will also be placed in the employee file. Each staff member must submit to an OCPS background check at the expense of the employee. Certification items and proof of training must also be in the personnel file. We are audited on this.

Contract Employment – Each employee receives and must sign an employment contract each August for the upcoming school year. While teaching staff are employed for a 10-month period, they may choose to spread out their salary over 12 months and should indicate this choice on their contract. All employees are expected to act as professionals at all times including, but not limited to, integrity and honesty at the time of signing their contract, following all school policies and guidelines, performing all their duties to the best of their ability, dressing appropriately for working in an educational environment, and keeping communications and relationships with parents distanced for the sake of objectivity and propriety.

Employees are expected to complete their contractual term, ending with the last day of post-planning. If an employee feels that a change is necessary and an opportunity presents itself before the end of the contractual period, a 2-week notice is required. When an employee resigns his/her employment, he/she will receive whatever salary is due up to the date of resignation, minus any personal/sick time that has been taken beyond that time given as a benefit. HCS/LHS will consider it a professional courtesy if any employee who is considering a change notifies his/her principal ASAP. Giving such a professional courtesy will not jeopardize the employee’s job in any way. This just gives HCS/LHS the opportunity to prepare for the possibility of any opening so as not to be left without necessary coverage.

When an employee resigns, he/she must turn in any school materials/property such as keys, books, etc. In addition, a teacher must include his/her Skyward logon and password so grading is not interrupted.

Grievance Policy - Every employee with a complaint is to be given a full and impartial hearing. HCS/LHS will make every effort to straighten out the complaint, using the following procedures:

1. The employee and the supervisor will talk over the problem honestly and sincerely. A written account of the discussion will be documented and signed by both parties with a copy of the hearing discussion given to the employee.

2. If the problem remains unresolved, the employee can bring it to the school Principal or CEO for a fair hearing. The goal is to resolve any honest difference of opinion about HCS/LHS policies, working conditions, and any other area creating problems. HCS/LHS cannot do anything about a problem until the employee tells management what it is. A written account of the hearing will be given to the employee and signed by both parties.
3. If the problem still remains unresolved, the employee can bring the problem to the HCS/LHS Board or CEO for a fair hearing. A written account of the hearing will be documented in the board minutes.

## Evaluations

Evaluations will be conducted twice a year and walk-throughs more often to observe specific items, with a rubric that includes classroom management, student achievement, adherence to the employee handbook, and professional skills.

## Field Trips

Field trips are learning opportunities and must be supervised by a staff member at all times. At least one staff member must plan to arrive before or with the first group of students at the field trip destination, and at least one staff member must plan to return to the school before or with the first group of students to return. Staff members may NOT ride together on field trips. If something happens to delay the staff members, then the level of supervision is dangerously reduced. This is not acceptable. The teacher is the authority on any field trip and must be accessible at all times by group leaders. Non-compliant students are the responsibility of staff even if the parent is in attendance.

Field trips or guest speakers may be planned to enhance unit learning and should be planned at least 6 weeks in advance. Dates should be coordinated with the office so the master calendar can be consulted. Parents should be notified at least 3 weeks in advance, then again 4-5 days in advance. Parents who attend and/or drive must be willing to abide by all of HCS/LHS's guidelines while participating and must give a copy of his/her driver's license to the office to be kept on file.

The teacher will keep a copy of permission slips and take them on any field trips planned.

The support staff will help plan field trips and gather parent drivers or volunteers.

Any field trip or class party, no matter where it is located or of what duration, must be in accordance with the school food policies.

Any off-campus trip, though not technically a "field trip," cannot be done without the knowledge of the administration. Transporting students to/from the Hope campus or to/from the Cornerstone campus requires the permission of the parents.

## Home Visits K- 6

Because of COVID, 2021-22 home visits will be conducted virtually on Zoom, etc.

**Home visits will be conducted after regular school hours only and must be completed by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.** Teachers for students in grade K-6 will be expected each year to conduct a home visit for each child in their class. The teacher must meet with at least one parent. In the case of dual guardianship, the teacher will determine whether each of the parties desires a visit. An additional visit per child is permitted but not mandatory, depending upon whether the additional visit is desired and depending on distance and time factors. The teacher will interview the parent to determine the learning style of the child, will build a sense of teamwork between the parent and teacher, and will engage the student in

his/her home environment. The home visit is expected of all K-6 teachers and no additional remuneration is awarded for it. However, compensation time off may be given, with 2 additional days for teachers with 18-22 students and 1 additional day for teachers with smaller classes. Teachers will be limited to travel within 15 miles of the school. For anyone outside that parameter, a Zoom meeting will be permitted instead of a home visit. Under special circumstances, parents within 15 miles may need to meet at the school instead of their home. If the teacher believes a special circumstance exists (the parent requests a school-campus visit or the teacher has a personal reason for not going to the home), coordination of the meeting must be done through the Principal. If the teacher doesn't feel comfortable going to a home alone, another staff person or administrator will go as well.

Teachers may not bring their own children or spouse to a student's home visit. Confidential information is being discussed and should not be overheard by anyone other than the student's family. A spouse may wait in the car. Your own children may attend Aftercare without charge if you notify the Aftercare staff in advance. The TA may attend home visits with the teacher but will only receive the additional personal time if the TA attends all the home visits with the teacher.

## **Incident/Accident Reports**

First aid materials are available in the office. Please document use of first aid materials.

Teachers are responsible for reporting any and all incidents to the Principal using the incident report form. Incidents include:

1. Aggressions on other students (pushing, hitting, biting, kicking, slapping, pinching, throwing objects, etc.)
2. An injury to another student or self (bruise, mark, bite, injury to teeth, or unseen injury such as the head hitting an object)
3. Aggression toward staff (hitting, biting, kicking, slapping, pinching, etc.)
4. Willful damage to school property
5. Use of inappropriate language or topics (i.e. of a sexual or threatening nature, swearing, repetitive teasing of a student, etc.) or obscene gestures.

Office staff will make five copies for distribution as follows:

1. Original – school file of the student responsible for the incident
2. One copy – to the parents of the student responsible for the incident
3. One copy – to the parents of the student aggressed upon (unless done to/by self)
4. One copy – to the Principal
5. One copy – to the Behavior Tech

The report should state the facts and what was done. Do not reveal the name of the student who committed the aggression on the copy to the parents of the injured student. Just explain the incident and what was done to assist the student. Do not use the name of the injured student on the copy going to parents of the aggressor.

The teacher is to sign the original incident report. If the teacher is not in the area when the incident occurs, the staff member present will sign and the teacher in charge will co-sign (teacher may add "as reported to," if the teacher did not witness the incident/accident). The Principal will also sign the original report.

If an accident occurs, follow the same procedure on the Accident Report form. If an injury occurs, parents should be notified by a call or email as well as receiving the written report.

## **Keys**

Each staff member will be issued a classroom key and will be expected to keep the issued key secure. Lost keys must be reported to the office immediately. If a key is lost or stolen, the staff person responsible will be liable for a \$20.00 replacement fee. Under no circumstances is an employee authorized to duplicate school keys unless approved by the CEO or her/his representative. Keys must be turned in at the end of Post-Planning each year and will be re-issued at Pre-Planning. If a staff person needs to access the school during the summer, he/she can check out a key from the office and return it before leaving campus each day. Keys are never to be given to a non-staff member without approval of the Principal or CEO. Lanyards will be provided to every key holder to insure faculty and staff do not inadvertently get locked out of their room or office. A file will be kept documenting who is in possession of campus keys.

## **Mandatory Reporting**

Educators have a legal responsibility for the welfare of their students while students are in attendance at school. That responsibility extends to reporting any indications of or suspicions of abuse, neglect or abandonment to the proper authorities. Hope Charter School and Legacy High School are committed to involving law enforcement and DCF for the purpose of reporting, as the law requires. If child abuse, neglect or abandonment is suspected, report it immediately to the Principal. The Principal will assist the employee in contacting the DCF child abuse hotline (1-800-962-2873). **NOTE:** Making a report to the Principal about suspected abuse, neglect or abandonment does not satisfy your legal obligations. You must make a report to the child abuse hotline with the assistance of the Principal.

If you notice a child's self-injury or threat of violence (to self or others), report it in person immediately to the Principal or Mental Health Designee. The Principal will then be responsible for follow-up with law enforcement. Determination will be made regarding contacting DCF.

## **Media Policy**

HCS/LHS expects to interact with various members of the media from time to time. In the event that members of the media show an interest in speaking to members of HCS/LHS's staff, or desire an interview or sound bite, all inquiries must be directed to the administration of the school. The school Principal or CEO will make decisions regarding who speaks to the media, what statements are made, or what interviews are given. Only those who have received training regarding dealing with the Media will be permitted to speak to media personnel.

In the event that members of the media are on the HCS/LHS campus uninvited, they are to be directed immediately to the front office. If questions are asked or a request for comments is made, the appropriate response is, "Please let me refer you to the Principal or CEO of the school."

Any staff member who takes information to the media without the consent of the Principal or CEO or the board member responsible for making media related decisions will be considered in willful violation of this policy.

Violation of this policy could result in dismissal.

## **Medications**

If medication is to be administered during the school day, the following procedures **MUST** be followed:

- All medication will be kept in the infirmary and dispensed by trained office staff only.
- All medication must be in the original prescription bottle with proper labeling.
- Medication can only be dispensed according to the label.
- Parents must fill out an authorization to administer medication before medication is given, including over-the-counter medication. **WE WILL NOT GIVE MEDICINE WITHOUT THIS FORM.**
- **HCS/LHS cannot dispense aspirin, Tylenol, Neosporin, or any other over-the-counter medication without a physician’s note of authorization.** This includes cold medicine or cough drops. All medication must be provided by the parents.
- If dosage changes, parents must complete a new medication authorization form.
- Staff should never dispense personal medication or pain reliever to students. This could result in dismissal.
- Staff should never call or text a parent about an ill student, or ask them to pick up their child unless on a field trip. A student being sent home is at the discretion of office staff trained in the policies and procedures of OCPS clinic operation. Any ill student should be escorted by a staff member to the clinic and logged in. We are required to keep a log of students coming to the clinic with physical complaints or injuries. The student must be seen by staff trained in policies and procedures by OCPS; otherwise, we could risk the safety of the student or be in violation of an OCPS and/or Health Department policy as well. Our clinic is audited by the Orange County Health Department.
- If a parent asks you to keep track of headaches, stomachaches, reactions to medication, amount of food eaten at lunch, etc., please notify Ally Roebke( K-6) or Lily Moses (7-12) so they are aware of these issues.

## **Pet Policy**

To maintain a healthier atmosphere, pets of any kind (especially cats and dogs) including emotional support animals are not allowed in the school buildings or classrooms at any time...including nights, weekends, holidays, or summer break.

## **Personal Visitors**

On the occasion that an acquaintance, friend, or relative wishes to visit you during the school day, you must obtain prior approval from an administrator for the visitor to remain on campus for an extended period of time. You may have visitors during your lunch break, as long as you are not on duty with students present. Staff should keep in mind that your first obligation is to your students.

Having a relative in the classroom, even to provide assistance, could create a distraction in the classroom and potentially be a breach of students’ confidentiality rights. Therefore, inviting relatives in to provide assistance is discouraged during school hours.

Visitors must obtain a Visitor’s Badge from the office. All visitors must comply with school policies about texting, and emailing, and food while on campus. Visitors are expected to dress appropriately, as well.

## **Professionalism**

***Being a professional means “being worthy of the high standards of a profession.”*** There can be no higher profession than education because teachers have the opportunity to affect the lives of thousands of people, not only their students but those with whom their students interact throughout their lives. With such a wonderful opportunity comes serious responsibility. Some responsibility is obvious; some is not.

That is why such a large section of this handbook is dedicated to detailing the responsibilities, both obvious and not obvious, that are expected of professionals. Setting an example of a good work ethic is the beginning of education.

**How to use common sense and professional judgment to avoid legal complications in teaching:**

**“Maintain a professional relationship with students. Avoid putting yourself in a position where you have to defend or justify your actions.” These common sense suggestions may appear obvious to the reader. Yet each year, careers are endangered or ended because staff members place themselves in untenable positions.**

1. **Dress and act appropriately and professionally.** You are a role model in the community as well as in the school. Be a good example for students.
2. Use common sense and good judgment. Ask yourself how someone else could perceive your comments or actions. Ask yourself if your comments or actions could be taken out of context and/or misinterpreted.
3. Avoid putting yourself in a position where you have to defend, explain, or justify your behavior or actions. Avoid putting yourself in a position where it’s your word against another person’s word.
4. Maintain a professional reputation in the community. When you “party,” be discrete. Remember that your public behavior conveys an impression on you, your school and the entire profession.
5. **Keep in mind that illegal and/or notorious conduct could be reported by the media and be cause for dismissal.**

*General Responsibilities for All Staff:*

- **Obey laws and the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida.**
- **Parents may not walk their students to the classroom.** This policy is in effect on the first day of school for all students. If you see parents doing so, please direct them to the office. As well, this policy applies at all times throughout the school year. If you are having an activity in the classroom during the school year to which parents have been invited, they must go to the office first to acquire a Visitor’s Badge.
- **Read and enforce the Student Handbook.** HCS/LHS is required to abide by the Orange County Public Schools Code of Student Conduct in regard to disciplinary procedures, which is available on the school website. Corporal punishment is not used at HCS/LHS for any reason. Orange County does not permit use of corporal punishment in public schools. Therefore, anyone violating this policy will be subject to dismissal.
- **Follow the same food guidelines at school as the students.** Eating candy, sweets, sodas, chewing gum, etc. at school does not set a good example for the students. This policy is in effect on field trips as well. Sneaking foods and beverages on campus will be treated as a willful offense, including keeping candy and snacks in the teacher desk drawer or middle room. Staff may drink water, coffee, or tea; however, all containers must have a secure lid. Sweetened coffee or tea drinks should not be brought on campus.
- **HCS/LHS is a drug free workplace.** Staff should be prepared to submit to random drug testing from time to time. It is also a tobacco-free and vape-free workplace. Use of tobacco products is not permitted on campus, even in an individual automobile.
- **Do NOT use your cell phones (talking, texting, IMing, emailing, etc.) during class time or while supervising students. Academic purposes only. Texting parents is not permitted, except on field trips when a temporary text address can be set up. Establish a google # for parent communication.**
- **Do NOT participate in, or be “friends” on, any personal social network with students until they have graduated from High School.**
- **Never discuss anything about the school or anything relating to your job on social media, not even to say “I’m out sick today.”**

- **Do not list Hope or Legacy as a place of employment; use “charter school.”**
- **Profanity/slang is not appropriate**, including “Oh, my God,” “pissed off,” “sucks,” or “crap.” Students are not permitted to use such inappropriate language and you are the example.
- **As a professional sign of respect**, no student should EVER be allowed to address any staff person, whether a teacher or support staff, by his or her first name. Students are required to address or refer to all staff by Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms. (or Coach) and last name at all times.
- **Document every conversation with a parent concerning a student’s progress**. Confidential information concerning children, parents, and staff must remain confidential. Staff are not to discuss children with other parents. If parents have questions or concerns about other children, staff, etc., they should be referred to the Principal. Support staff should not give any advice or inform parents of specific issues. It is illegal to discuss students with anyone but his/her own parents, including grandparents or other relatives unless that person has Educational Guardianship, or are the Principal and other appropriate school staff. A teacher who violates this confidentiality is subject to losing his/her teaching certificate. Since financial situations are confidential, staff members should never discuss past-due financial matters with parents, or make any financial matters public in any way.
- **Student records should be viewed and discussed only by and with the student’s teaching team**. No staff should view records of students from other classes unless specifically asked to do so by the Principal, nor should such records be discussed with anyone other than the class teacher. Records must be signed for if viewed, and must not be taken from the office area.
- **All memos, letters, notifications, etc. that are sent home to parents must be approved by the CEO or Principal before being sent home**. Requests from parents to send information to other parents via our email system, or a flyer, etc. are to be sent to the Principal for prior approval.
- **NEVER leave students unattended, either in a classroom or outside**. Students must be in visual contact at all times (seeing or observing students out the window is not considered visual contact). Photocopying and consulting with other staff must only be done when another adult is in the room supervising, or before or after school. Students must never be sent to the shed by staff, to a teacher’s/staff person’s car, to the water jug in the pavilion, back to the classroom to go to the restroom, or sent unattended anywhere.
- **Do NOT leave the recess area unattended**. If a student needs to use the restroom or if there is an emergency, the staff member should locate another staff member to assist. Staff should not be seated during recess but should be standing and alert, able to quickly deal with students. When on the playground, staff should not be standing and “visiting” or sitting and watching. Staff should be moving throughout the playground at all times. During lunch, if a staff member chooses to eat with the students, he/she should be at a table with students, not sitting with other staff members.
- **Do not send students to Hope Hall restrooms whether students are K-6 or 7-12.**
- **Monitor student snacks and lunches for appropriateness**. Meals should be eaten out at picnic tables unless inclement weather prohibits – then eat in class. Inappropriate lunch and snack items must be noted so parents are aware of violations. A form is available to communicate the violations to parents.
- **NEVER allow students to use a teacher’s computer.**
- **Disputes or disagreements with school policies should never be a subject for gossip, should never be discussed with parents, and should never appear on the internet or social media**. Staff are not to take personal grievances to the parents. If you have a grievance, the Principal or CEO is the only appropriate person with whom to discuss the situation. Staff disagreements are NEVER to be discussed in front of parents, or students, or other staff members. Staff should maintain professionalism in all school situations involving parents, especially those parents with whom staff may have a personal relationship. Every staff member deserves respect and privacy. Personal or professional information about staff members should not be shared with parents, unless approved by the staff member or administration.

- **Staff members should be loving, kind, firm, and affirming.** Each child and parent should be greeted in a friendly manner. Building a positive self-image in our students is essential. Please use the following guidelines when interacting with students:
  - Do greet the students in a friendly manner.
  - Do give encouragement through verbal praise, a handshake, high five, or other affirming forms of physical contact.
  - Do not prolong physical contact or be excessive in use or intensity; and be aware if the student is uncomfortable with any physical contact, and modify use.
  - Do not engage in any inappropriate touching. When a student is in need of assistance that requires close proximity for a prolonged period of time, make sure there are other people around in order to avoid the appearance of impropriety.
  - Do not single out any student to be the recipient of favoritism in any way.
  - Be very careful when using nick-names, especially ones you attach to a student. These may be offensive to students or their parents.
  - Do not single out any student to be the recipient of criticism or ridicule. This is never appropriate. Do not announce or comment on individual grades. Correct individual students quietly.
  - Do correct students using a calm, non-confrontational tone of voice, stating clearly the expectations and consequences for non-compliance.
  - Do not take student non-compliance personally. Keep emotions under control.
  - Consult with the Behavior Team if there is a continuing or severe behavior issue in class.
- **The appearance of the campus and classrooms should be a source of pride for staff, students and parents.** In the classroom: keep trash picked up; don't allow shelves or work spaces to become cluttered; clean furniture; empty trash cans. Outside: pick up trash from sidewalks and lunch/snack areas; pick up clothing items and return them to your classroom or the front office if they do not belong to your students.
- **Before leaving, turn off computers, all lights (including bathroom lights), and make sure your door is locked. If you are not sure if someone sharing your classroom has left, assume he/she has left, turn off all lights, and make sure your door is locked.**
- **Do not allow parents to expect you to go purchase food for a student.** The office will keep simple items on hand in the event a student doesn't have lunch. Fast food should not be purchased by staff for a student, even if the parent is a friend or another staff member. Please do not open the door to this becoming an expectation.
- **Do not microwave student meals.** Besides the fact that this is a health department violation, if you do so, then the parent's expectation is there for other staff members to do likewise when they are subbing in your class, in violation of school policy.
- **If you are questioned by a parent why there were police or firemen on campus, please refer the parent to an administrator.** In no way confirm or deny rumors.
- **If a parent requests a particular class assignment for the next year and seeks your assistance in securing that assignment,** please advise the parent that there is a process for class assignment, and they may speak to an administrator about it.
- **Remunerative Conduct** – a teacher needs to maintain integrity when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, soliciting students or parents of students to purchase materials or services from the teacher who will benefit financially, unless approved by the CEO. The established hours of duty may not be used for conducting personal business.
- **Tutoring** – no teacher shall provide tutoring for compensation to any student who is currently assigned to the teacher. Teachers receiving compensation from parents for providing tutoring on campus should have the activity approved by the CEO. Teachers cannot make up absence time by

providing tutoring for compensation. The teacher must check out in KeepNTrack before providing tutoring services for compensation.

- **Teachers sponsoring after-school clubs or activities** for compensation by parents must submit a plan to the CEO for approval.
- **Teachers ordering pizza, etc. for a class celebration** must notify the office that food is being ordered. All foods brought to the classroom must be from a catering service, grocery store, restaurant, or other Health-Department-Inspected facility. Food must be individually wrapped and not prepared in the classroom. Exceptions to this rule are fruits like grapes or uncut apples or oranges.

### Educational Responsibilities in Addition to the General Responsibilities.....

#### *For All Teachers -*

- **The teacher will keep a substitute folder that includes extra work for the class in case of unexpected absence.** The file will be kept in the office so subs can easily access them from the Office Manager. The Principal will expect to be shown this file by the end of August each year.
- **The teacher will maintain a web page that is updated weekly with material covered, homework given, test and project dates, and school late work policy.** It should be attractive and welcoming.
- **Grades should be entered into Skyward as soon as determined.** Parents should be able to keep up with student progress on a weekly basis. For Language Arts, grades should be entered for Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar, and cursive handwriting (for those grade levels in which it is a Florida standard).
- **Attendance must be entered into Skyward on a DAILY basis for K-5 and PER CLASS PERIOD for 6-12.** Attendance is audited by DOE/OCPS. All absences should be marked as AU (Absent Unexcused). Excuses for absences will be collected and sent to the office. The office will change the absence based on the parent note or doctor report. Under no circumstances should any other code be entered at any time!
- **The class management plan** will be shared with the Principal, Behavior Tech, students and parents. As well, class expectations will be prominently posted.
- The teacher will be responsible for monitoring each student's academic progress and initiating the evaluation process for any child potentially needing extra services.
- Teachers will learn and use brain-based teaching strategies and positive behavior supports in their classrooms daily.
- **The teacher will progress-monitor each child** and cooperate on formulating an intervention plan for each child, including a file with enrichment or remediation materials if warranted.
- **The teacher will complete weekly lesson plans** with a copy to be emailed to the Principal each Friday afternoon for the following week. Lesson plans will include a schedule for each day, as well as plans for group and individual learning in each subject or for each unit. These must be clear enough for the assistant or a sub to use. If there are students who need remediation, intervention or enrichment, or are working independently, weekly documentation must be done for these as well. Students in MTSS should have separate plans weekly for meeting the required interventions and data collection criteria. Pacing of lesson plans will allow the teaching of all Florida Standards/NGSSS by the State Assessment period.
- **Implementation of accommodations** as specified on 504 plans and IEPs must be documented. Teachers will be given monthly accommodation lists for each student. Teachers will note the date each accommodation was given and return the form to Jessica Mangal in the ESE office at the end of each month.
- **Movies or films** will be used for educational purposes only, and must be rated G unless special permission has been granted by the Principal. Class time must be held in high regard and used thoroughly, leaving no time for entertainment use of videos or DVDs. For use during a class

celebration or rainy recess, videos must be G-rated, as well, and viewing for longer than 30 minutes would be an excessive amount for an entertainment video/DVD.

- **Videos** are not to be used at lunch or during car circle. Students should be encouraged to complete assignments or read a book. Each teacher will have access to a google drive of directives & procedures from the Principal or CEO and staff meetings. These must be on hand for reference, making sure all are in compliance for a better team atmosphere.
- **Parents must be notified if a student is struggling.** The 9-week report should never be the first time a parent finds out his/her child is not succeeding. Teachers will keep a Parent Contact log, with dates of contact, method of contact, and summary of discussion or a copy of emails.
- **The teacher will keep a daily checklist for any ESE students or students on a behavior plan.** The ESE checklists must be turned in each Friday afternoon. Behavior checklists may be required more often. This is absolutely essential. Hope and Legacy are held legally accountable for weekly documentation. MTSS referrals and implementation are required by the state of Florida for low-performing or behaviorally-non-compliant students. Data must be kept and used to direct changes in instruction and to refer for ESE status.
- The teacher will be available for parent conferences. Records, portfolio, and data should be brought. Any meetings must be documented. An additional staff member should be present as support for the teacher holding the meeting.
- **The teacher will attend monthly parent meetings** (1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month at 6:30 for K-6<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 for 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> unless a schedule change is communicated). These are not meant to be appointment times for parents; however, you may want to refer a parent to make an appointment with you at your earliest convenience.
- **The teacher will cooperate with the speech, OT, and behavior therapists as needed.** The teacher will facilitate plans and collect data as needed. This must be a collaborative effort.
- **The teacher will participate in a monthly** consultation conference with the designated gifted teacher if gifted students are enrolled in the class. The teacher will report on gifted students' progress on EP goals as often as specified on the EP (usually at the semester – January and June) on the student's narrative or report card.
- **If a teacher is asked by a parent to complete a form** for a doctor, such as a checklist for possible attention difficulties or other symptoms, please discuss with the Principal before sending home the completed form. The teacher must make 2 copies of the form. One copy should be kept in the classroom student file and one copy sent to the Principal.
- **The teacher will commit to being at work on time every day** and to be on time for scheduled staff meetings, weekly grade-level team meetings, MTSS meetings, parent conference, gifted, and ESE meetings, as scheduled during the school day.
- **The teacher will utilize all materials** provided for student achievement without picking and choosing. Creativity can be used within lessons and units, but the curriculum and programs must be carried out as stated in the HCS/LHS charters.
- **The teacher may NOT discuss a student** with anyone other than his/her parent or guardian, or say/write another student's name on a report or email.
- **Student computer use** – teachers are required to review all resources prior to classroom use for instructional and age-level appropriateness. All student use of computers should be accompanied with active teacher supervision, with teachers circulating throughout the room checking for multi-tasking by students. This includes after-school activities. At no time should students use teacher computers (including staff children). The Software Net...must be turned on daily to keep students compliant.

*For Teachers in Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade -*

- **The teacher will conduct a home visit** during the first grading period of school for each of the students in his/her class, using a prepared questionnaire and the Swassing-Barbe modality inventory. It is an advantage to have the classroom assistant attend as well. Teachers may not

bring their own children or spouse to a student's home visit. Confidential information is being discussed and should not be overheard by anyone other than the student's family. A spouse may wait in the car. Your own child(ren) can be placed in Aftercare without charge if you notify Aftercare staff in advance.

- **The teacher will keep good records** in order to provide a progress narrative each 9 weeks, as well as completing a report based on benchmarks used each quarter in each subject covered. Grades 2-6 will also compute letter grades. Work samples, note cards, or other tools (i.e. educational computer program reports, such as Achieve3000) should be used to accurately reflect comprehension and skills. Teachers in grades 2-6 will prepare a mid-marking period progress report, as well. A schedule for report cards/narratives/progress reports will be given to teachers in the first weeks of school.
- **Teachers will ensure that each student has a planner** and will check it daily to make sure the student is using it properly.
- **Teachers are expected to develop units of study** using the FS for K-8<sup>th</sup> and the NGSSS for 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Science and Social Studies.
- **Teachers will teach the Florida Standards/NGSSS** for their assigned grade level. If data is showing that a student is performing far below grade level and struggling with grade-level material, that student must be referred to the MTSS team. Students must not be taught with below-grade curriculum materials, except during intervention time or as specified in an IEP.
- **When attempting to assist students with behavior or academic difficulties**, the teacher will team with the resource teachers who are available – ESE teacher, Gifted teacher (if a gifted student), Behavior Tech, or Staffing Specialist. The teacher is welcome to consult with the Principal at any time.
- The teacher will be responsible for working closely with his/her classroom assistant to provide a great learning environment, consistent class management, communication with parents, and providing an individualized education for each child in the class. You are a team. The giftings of the class assistant should be maximized in the classroom setting. Lesson plans should be shared with the assistant.
- **The teacher will keep an updated and accurate portfolio of each child's work.** The portfolio will contain regular samples of the child's classroom work, which will serve as accountability for the teacher, detailing progress made. This will be sent home in the report card at the end of the year. Third-grade teachers must keep a portfolio of reading standards assessed and the results for each student at risk of retention.
- **The teacher will be responsible for conducting a weekly comprehension check on Friday.** The comprehension check can be the weekly reading test, Saxon phonics assessment, or a selection from a reading computer program such as Achieve3000. The teacher will provide a small group reading skills intervention the next week for students not scoring at 80% on the comprehension check. Students having continuing comprehension difficulties after attempts at intervention must be referred to the MTSS team.
- **Teachers will adhere to the daily schedule as provided to them in pre-planning.** Any change to the schedule, including adding time to recess or giving an additional recess time, must be approved by the Principal. By State Statute, reading instruction in grades K-5 must be in an uninterrupted block of 90 minutes. During State testing periods, times may need to be flexible, but instruction must continue. At the end of the year, instruction will continue until the last regular school day, except for special planned events.
- **The teacher will use a homework communication system** that parents are able to understand and follow. The homework may be given daily or weekly, according to the teacher's discretion. Some homework, such as spelling, may be given the Friday prior to the week the homework is due. Parents should be notified if homework has not been turned in. Be specific. The teacher may notify through a specific notation on the planner, or an email or other system made known to parents. Documentation of this notification should be kept by the teacher.

- **Guidelines for homework** – Homework has been found to be useful as a way to develop study habits, time management, and responsibility, and to practice skills that can be acquired through repetition. The National Association of School Psychologists endorses the 10-minute rule of thumb: 10 minutes of homework for each grade level ([http://www.nasponline.org/resources/home\\_school/homework.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/home_school/homework.aspx)).
  - **Grade K-1:** 10 minutes
  - **Grade 2:** 20 minutes
  - **Grade 3:** 30 minutes
  - **Grade 4:** 40 minutes
  - **Grade 5:** 50 minutes
  - **Grade 6:** 60-90 minutes (including studying for tests, completing projects, etc.)
  - **Reading a book may be above these times.**

*For Teachers in 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> Grades -*

- **Teachers are expected to stand at their door** during transitions to oversee students in the hall, at lockers, or on the sidewalk. A cheerful attitude will allow adults to be seen as helpful and available rather than domineering. Students should be greeted by name as they enter the classroom.
- **Teachers are expected to develop units of study** using the NGSSS for 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades for Science and Social Studies, and FS in ELA, math, and content areas.
- **Teachers are expected to monitor the use of the student planner for homework.**
- **(Grade 6 and above) Attendance must be entered in Skyward at every class period.** If forgotten, the office must be notified of absences not recorded on Skyward; otherwise, there are discrepancies on the report card and attendance records.

*For Support Staff (Classroom Assistants) -*

- **The support staff will observe students during teacher-directed activities and will be up and circulating throughout the classroom.** Correcting papers should be done at other times.
- If parents ask for information about the student, the parent should be directed to speak with the teacher or set up an appointment with the teacher. The support staff will never speak to parents about students' progress or behavior. The teacher is responsible for this.
- **The support staff will assist the teacher as directed** as related to classroom activities and educational and behavioral programs; assist the teacher in classroom preparation, activities and reports; be prepared to lead the class in the event of teacher absence; and help enrich and remediate students weekly.
- **Teaching assistants will report to the teacher any student behaviors** on the playground, lunch, or whenever the teacher is not present, that indicate that the student may need social skills support or other intervention (inappropriate interactions with peers, isolation from peers, repetitive behaviors, difficulty with turn-taking, inappropriate language or topics, crying for little reason, meltdowns, anger display, etc.).
- **Teacher assistants should complete incident/accident reports** in collaboration with classroom teacher, if they are the sole witness to an incident/accident. Both teacher and assistant should sign the report. Teacher may specify "as reported to."
- **TA should only be requested to teach core subjects** (math, reading, LA, science, social studies), in an emergency situation, such as when a teacher has to immediately remove a student or needs to attend a school meeting (MTSS, ESE, etc.) TAs may daily teach an intervention group, rotation center, or remediate 1-1 with a student, using the teacher's lesson plan.
- **In addition, TAs will attend home visits** with the teacher if possible; attend monthly parent meetings; attend scheduled staff meetings; and commit to being at work on time every day.
- Support staff should take responsibility for the cleanliness of the room, bathroom, and outdoor backpack area.

*Responsibilities For Extended Day Staff (in addition to the General Responsibilities):*

The extended day support staff will be responsible for tending children in Beforecare and Aftercare during scheduled times. They will attend any offered training and will keep an orderly schedule for extended-day participants. Only G-rated movies may be used in extended-day programs. Children must be signed in by staff and out by a parent, and must be supervised at all times. Children must be handled in a positive way, using positive reinforcement and fair consequences. When an assigned extended-day staff member is absent, he/she should arrange coverage with another staff person. Behavior problems will be reported to the Behavior Tech. Extended-day pay begins after the regular 8-hour day has been completed. The extended-day staff will facilitate homework time as well as snacks and a reasonable amount of play.

## **Safety Measures**

There are security cameras installed and monitoring all classrooms, hallways, and outside areas. These cameras provide security for both students and staff. Whenever an incident is called into question, the security video feed can go a long way in documenting the facts.

## **Sexual Abuse/Harassment/Discrimination**

Hope Charter School and Legacy High School do not discriminate in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, marital status, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other reason prohibited by law. The following individuals at Hope Charter School and Legacy Charter High School, 1550 E. Crown Point Road, Ocoee, Florida 34761, attend to compliance matters: ADA Coordinator & Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer: Crystal Yoakum; Section 504 Coordinator: Michelle Anderson; Title IX Coordinator: Jill Medley (407-656-4673)

Every employee will be fingerprinted in order to facilitate a background check of each person working with the students at HCS/LHS. One of the reasons for this is to make sure that we do not inadvertently hire anyone with a history of sexual abuse. HCS/LHS will not tolerate any form of inappropriate behavior toward our students or staff, including verbal abuse, physical abuse or sexual abuse.

Any misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety or welfare of a student or fellow staff member must be reported to the Hope Charter School and Legacy High School CEO. Failure to report misconduct will result in an investigation, potential suspension without pay, and possible dismissal. The Board or CEO will be informed and a formal inquiry may be conducted by them at their discretion. If dismissal occurs, OCPS will be notified and further employment within the Orange County Public School District could be refused. Physical or sexual abuse will result in police involvement.

It is imperative that all employees are aware that they must set a positive example and that even the appearance of abuse will bring about an investigation.

In addition, HCS/LHS believes that each individual we employ has the right to work in an environment that is free from harassment of any kind, whether because of age, color, creed, national origin, or any other factor. This includes sexual harassment, which is defined as including:

- Unwelcome physical contact
- Sexually explicit language or gestures
- Uninvited or unwanted sexual advances
- An offensive overall environment, including the use of vulgar language, the presence of sexually explicit photographs or other materials, and the telling of sexual stories or jokes.

It must be stressed that this school will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment. Should you feel you are being harassed, please follow these guidelines to help remedy the problem:

- Harassment by other employees must be brought to the attention of the administration. The supervisor will investigate the matter and, if the allegations are sustained, the responsible employee will be disciplined, up to and including discharge. A second proven charge of sexual harassment against any employee will result in immediate discharge.
- Should you feel that the administration has not investigated the matter to your satisfaction, contact the HCS/LHS Board of Directors immediately.

If any employee suspects staff or students to be engaging in inappropriate physical contact, it must be reported to the Principal immediately. Students engaging in physical or sexual abuse toward one another, including sexual harassment, will be subject to disciplinary procedures, up to and including expulsion.

## **Social Media**

Social Media refers to any and all types of communication via computer, cell phone, smart phone, postings, and social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) or others that have not been mentioned here or have yet to be invented. Staff are NOT to communicate in any way on any type of social media that involves or refers to their employment..., their frustrations, their classroom, their school-related trips, any discussion of students (even anonymously), etc. Anything related to school or a school activity, whether during the school day, after school hours, on weekends or during school holidays, is off-limits for social media. Also, “friending” of any current Hope/Legacy student is not allowed. Care should be taken in friending parents, even those from church, neighborhoods, etc. since objectivity is difficult to maintain. Personal information such as financial problems, marriage problems, inappropriate language or pictures is ethically inappropriate for educators and mustn’t be seen on social media. Pictures that are physically revealing or show the employee with alcoholic beverages or other inappropriate items, should not be displayed, as well. Your example must be above reproach as an employee and professional. Consider the information being distributed and its impact on your credibility as a staff member and your ability to perform your duties. Be aware of the image you present. Anytime you engage in social media, you’re representing yourself and HCS/LHS. Do not do anything that discredits you or your service as a professional educator or employee. Don’t violate privacy. Don’t post information that would infringe upon the personal rights of others. Public social media, outside of those sponsored by the school, may not be used for classroom instruction or school-sponsored activities, without the prior authorization from the CEO. It is vital that you conduct yourself in such a way that use of social networking sites or blogs does not adversely affect your professional career. Dismissal is a real likelihood if care is not taken to be discreet.

During the work day, staff should refrain from participating on any social networking website for personal reasons, even from personal equipment (i.e. smartphone, tablet, laptop, etc.). Such activities, even though it’s your lunchtime or break, leave time-stamps that could be misinterpreted by others.

## **Staff and Staff Children**

Staff whose children attend HCS/LHS are in a unique, and sometimes difficult, position. Staff should always remember the extra responsibility this situation places on them. The following applies equally (where applicable) to staff children who do not attend HCS/LHS.

1. Discussions about other students, staff, or parents should never be held in front of your child(ren).
2. When the class to which you are assigned participates in a field trip or other school activity, your child may **not** participate. This activity is for the assigned students only.

3. Staff should always act professionally when meeting with your child's teacher or coach, remembering that your comments may be viewed in your dual capacity as a parent and fellow staff member. Your child's teacher should never feel pressured to treat your child differently from other students. To this end, you should respect the teacher's time as you want your time respected; make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher rather than "drop by" during a break or, especially, during a class period or catch them on the sidewalk or parking lot.
4. **Staff and staff children are expected to follow all school rules and policies as are other students and parents.** This includes signing in when late, signing out when leaving early or any time during the day, not going to your child's classroom for any reason, not having your child come to your classroom or office during the school day, being financially responsible for all school fees, never going into your child's classroom when the teacher is not there to take materials for your child to use at home, etc. Staff children may not be unattended.
5. Extended Day is available at no charge for staff children and the procedure is that you take your children to Beforecare immediately upon arrival and your children stay in Aftercare until you are ready to leave for the day. Once you are at work, you are at your job and need to fulfil your job-related responsibilities. This is not the time to be doing your child's grooming, homework or serving them breakfast. Please make sure to make time for these things before coming to work. **Extended Day is available only as long as the staff person is working on campus or at a school activity, including home visits (before 6:00 p.m.).** Otherwise, staff children are to be picked up by the end of car circle or the staff person will be responsible for the cost of Aftercare **at the same rate as non-staff parents.** Aftercare is not to be used as "free" babysitting while the staff parent runs errands. As is required of non-staff parents, staff children attending Before Care must be escorted there by their parent. Staff children are never to be "sent" by themselves to Beforecare. Additionally, staff children must be picked up from aftercare by their parent, they may not be picked up by a sibling or "sent for" via electronic communication. The benefit of Beforecare and/or Aftercare is a privilege for the children of staff only, not grandchildren, nieces, nephews, godchildren, educational guardianships, friends, neighbors or anyone who car pools.
6. **Since we cannot microwave food for students in general, staff should not do so for their children either.** Staff children would then be regarded by other children as having special privileges.

While the lines between staff and parent may seem indistinct, it may be easier if you remember that while you are working, you are a staff member. Your role as parent supercedes that only if your child becomes ill. If your child becomes ill, they will be sent to the office, and you will be notified. At no time should a staff member's child who is ill be brought to the classroom. This not only violates school policy, but could introduce illness to the students in your classroom, for whom you are responsible. Any sick child must be held in the office.

## Technology

As our lives and the world become more technologically advanced, we must be vigilant in protecting our students, ourselves, our families and our school. As an employer, we do not wish to dictate people's personal lives; but we feel we do need to establish some policies when certain things directly affect the school. As such, all staff are required to respect and adhere to the following: (1) It is the policy of OCPS and HCS/LHS that no employee should "friend" students or communicate in any way with them through social media; (2) No student, including staff children, should ever use or have access to a staff member's computer; (3) No student or parent should be given a staff member's cell phone number without that person's permission; (4) Staff must always sign out of their computer and email account before leaving the classroom; (5) Staff cannot discuss anything concerning the school, their classes, or their students online or through social media...even if it is just to discuss how your day went since that would involve your time at school.

# Commitment Statement

The goal of the Board and Administration is to maintain a culture of camaraderie, professionalism, and support. Structure is necessary. Creativity is valued as well. Our faculty and staff make these schools what they are. Abiding by handbook expectations allows everyone to work together well with common expectations of each other. This helps avoid discouragement among staff members. Please be aware that attitudes affect those around us, and choose to be encouraging as well as compliant.

I have read, understand and agree to follow the guidelines for staff at HCS/LHS. I understand that this includes professional conduct with students, parents, and fellow employees not only while in the classroom but also on field trips. I understand the necessity of confidentiality in matters pertaining to students as well as subjects discussed at staff meetings. Also, I agree to abide by HCS/LHS's healthy eating plan while at school and on field trips.

This Handbook constitutes a contract between employee and employer. Continued disregard of these guidelines can result in disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal from HCS/LHS.

Signature of the Salary Statement includes agreement to abide by this Staff Handbook.

***Failure to read this Staff Handbook does not relieve you of the responsibility to abide by the schools' guidelines and policies, and does not exempt you from the consequences.***