



#wearethevillage

2020-2021 Employee Handbook

Introduction

These policies are subject to change at the sole discretion of the HCA Executive Board in coordination with the Executive Director and the Leadership Team. Should you have any questions regarding any policies, please direct them to the Executive Director. Please read this document thoroughly and retain it for future reference.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to create a challenging learning environment with high academic and social expectations through developmentally appropriate, flexible, and innovative instruction that allows each student to realize and confidently possess their full potential.

Inclusivity Statement

The Board of Directors for Horse Creek Academy and the HCA leadership team emphasize our core belief to educate every child and the whole child, without exception to race, culture, creed, citizenship, social-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or identity. We stand with open arms to welcome all students, families, and staff who come to our community and our school. Without reservation we will bring to bear all our resources to educate each child who walks through our doors. We invite all to come! All who join us will find that because of our diversity, we will have one thing in common – we will all be enriched by it. We recognize current and historic bias and purposefully move above possible discourse to dedicate our focus to promoting excellence and equity for every single student.

We strive to provide parents and children with a choice in a free public education.

Our endeavor is to promote a safe, supportive environment where self-esteem is fostered, and diversity is celebrated.

We strive to actively involve students' families, teachers, and community members in the educational process, as we believe that enthusiasm for education by everyone in a child's life directly impacts the child's enthusiasm for learning.

This manual and the policies and procedures contained herein supersede any and all prior practices, oral, or written representations, or statements regarding the terms and conditions of your employment with Horse Creek Academy.

I understand I represent Horse Creek Academy at all times. As a representative of HCA, I understand my position must be in accordance with HCA policies and procedures.

I understand and agree that this Employee Handbook does not create, nor is intended to create, a promise or representation of continued employment. Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document.

I understand that as a Charter School, HCA operates on a year to year At-Will contractual basis with all employees. The existence of HCA school from year to year is dependent on our success and the need in our community.

Legal Requirements

All HCA employees must abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; or any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance; or of any sexual offense; or any laws applicable to the profession or provided for in this Employee Handbook.

Employees must not be convicted of a crime. Conviction includes a finding of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

Open Communication Policy

Horse Creek Academy strives to develop effective communication among our employees. Communication and trust are important aspects of our job because positive attitudes are a necessary factor for achieving our mission. Communication and trust must be a two-way process in order to foster the development of positive attitudes among personnel. The administrative team will maintain an open communications policy. All questions/concerns should be brought to the appropriate member of the administrative team. An open communication policy does not mean that the members of the administrative team is available at all times solely to the teachers. If you need to speak to a member of the administrative team, please note that an appointment may need to be scheduled; however, if there is an immediate need, please feel free to stop by the administrative office to speak to the appropriate member of the administrative team.

If, at any time, you feel that you have not been treated fairly or if you wish to discuss a school policy, please follow the appropriate chain of command, which would be your Executive Director.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Horse Creek Academy provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other unlawful discriminatory characteristics in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, leaves of absence, compensation, and training.

Honesty

Horse Creek Academy employees should exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

- Professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit
- Degrees, academic awards, and employment history
- Information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other government agencies
- Information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel
- Reasons for absences or leaves
- Information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation
- Information submitted in the course of professional practice.

Professional Conduct

Unethical conduct of HCA employees is prohibited and includes but is not limited to any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position, or that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.

Horse Creek Academy employees shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the teaching profession.

Unethical conduct by HCA employees is prohibited and includes not soliciting students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from an HCA employee.

Unethical conduct by HCA employees is prohibited and includes administration of state-mandated assessments in accordance with test security procedures enacted by the SC State Department of Education.

Horse Creek Academy Social Media Policy

Guidelines for functioning in an electronic world are the same as the values, ethics and confidentiality policies employees are expected to live every day, whether you're Twittering, talking with students and families or chatting with a neighbor. Remember, your responsibility to the HCA Village doesn't end when you are off the clock. For that reason, this policy applies to both HCA sponsored social media and personal social media as it relates to HCA.

What You Should Do Online:

- State That It's Your Opinion: Unless authorized to speak on behalf of HCA, you must state that the views expressed are your own when speaking on HCA related matters. If a media outlet or anyone asks you to make a statement on behalf of HCA, do not comment; reach out to the Executive Director immediately.
- Protect Yourself: Be careful about what personal information you share online.
- Act responsibly and ethically: When participating in online communities, do not misrepresent yourself. Think of our norms, our expectations, and our Inclusivity Statement.
- Honor Our Differences: Live the by our values. HCA will not tolerate discrimination (including age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, disability, or marital status or any other legally recognized protected basis under federal, state, or local laws, regulations or ordinances). See our Inclusivity Statement for more details.

What You Should Never Disclose:

- Student Information: If posting on an official HCA social media page, ensure any student photos or names have parent permission of a Media Release; otherwise you should not post or must block out any identifying info/faces. Ensure to never release any confidential information about a student. If posting students on your own page, do so carefully and at your own risk; gain parent permission first.
- Legal Information: Do not post or comment on anything to do with a legal issue, legal case, or attorneys without first checking with the executive director.
- Confidential Information: Do not publish, post, or release information that is considered confidential or top secret.

What You Should Be Very Careful About:

- Friend Requests: You should not friend/connect with current HCA students; do not post anything on social media of a current HCA student. While you certainly may friend/connect with parents, you do so at your own risk. Similarly, while it may be acceptable to friend/connect with former students and alumnae over 18, you do so at your own risk. The uneven power of dynamics of a school, in which adults have authority of students, may continue to shape relationships with current alumnae as they may see faculty and staff as authority figures.

Basically, if you find yourself wondering if something you post may offend, hurt, or jeopardize others in the HCA Village, please don't post it; take some time. Reach out to the Executive Director with questions.

Follow HCA policies and live our values and philosophies. They're there for a reason.

Just in case you are forgetful or ignore the guidelines above, here's what could happen. You could:

- Be terminated
- Get HCA (or yourself) in legal trouble
- Negatively impact others' positions as well as the overall well-being of the school.
- Be placed on an improvement plan/required to partake in professional development
- Receive a consequence at the discretion of the Executive Director

Relationship with Parents

Things for faculty to remember about our parents

- Parents/Guardians are our ally, not our enemy
- Our parents want to be informed, and they want to know that you know about their child. Err on the side of giving too much information to a parent.
- Be as objective as possible when talking to parents. Speak in terms of the student's performance. Do not speak on the student's intent. Remember the only person that knows the student's intent is the student.
- Use positive statements to begin a conversation with a parent.
- Do not offer a problem without offering a possible solution and a plan.
- It is extremely important that a student knows academic concerns before reporting them to the student's parent/guardian. This goes a long way in establishing relationships with a student. If necessary, have the student present when you meet with the parent/guardian.
- Always inform the main office when you are to hold a conference with a parent/guardian. If you need a member of the Administrative Staff present, please let us know.

Phone Usage

Personal phone calls/social media communication are prohibited during instructional time. Parents can be contacted before 8 a.m., during planning, or after 3:15 p.m. In the event that an emergency arises, please contact a member of the administrative team for temporary relief while you make the call. This will ensure the safety of all students at all times and a continuation in instruction.

Employee or Student Harassment

Horse Creek Academy expressly prohibits any form of employee or student harassment. Harassment is defined as a reasonable threat of intimidation or bullying by means of documented gestures, electronic communication, written communication verbal communication, or physical contact that can:

- (a) harm a student or employee physically or emotionally or place a student or employee in reasonable fear of personal harm or property damage, or,
- (b) damage a student or employee's property
- (c) place a student or employee in reasonable fear of personal harm
- (d) insult or demean a student, employee, or group of students or employees causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Each employee of HCA is responsible for creating an atmosphere free of discrimination and harassment. Furthermore, employees are responsible for respecting the rights of their co-workers, their students and the parents of said students.

If it determined an employee is guilty of harassment, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the offending employee using the disciplinary practice outlined later in this manual.

HCA prohibits any form of retaliation against any employee for filing a bona fide complaint under this policy, or for assisting in a complaint investigation. However, if after investigating any complaint of harassment or unlawful discrimination, HCA determines the complaint is not bona fide or that an employee, student or parent provided false information regarding the complaint, action may be taken against the individual who filed the complaint or who gave the false information.

Teacher Conduct – For SC Teacher conduct please see: <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/teaching-in-south-carolina/professional-practices/conduct-standards/>

Communication Systems Policy

All business equipment, electronic and telephone communications systems, and all communications and stored information transmitted, received, or contained in Horse Creek Academy's information systems are the school's property and are to be used solely for job-related purposes. To ensure proper use of communications systems and business equipment, the school may monitor the use of these systems and equipment from time to time.

HCA reserves the right to inspect all equipment, files, and software at any time and without prior notice. The employee has no expectation of a right of privacy in the use of school owned property and equipment.

Employees who violate this policy are subject to discipline, up to and including termination from employment using the disciplinary practice outlined later in this manual.

Computer Usage

Computers, computer files, the e-mail system, and software furnished to employees are HCA's property. It is the responsibility of each employee to check their email daily. This is a vital source of communication between administration and staff.

HCA purchases and licenses the use of various computer software for business purposes and does not own the copyright to this software or its related documentation. Unless authorized by the software developer, HCA does not have the right to reproduce such software.

Employees should notify their A, ED, or the HR department in writing upon learning of violations of this policy. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Internet Policy

All employees using school computer resources and the internet shall comply with the HCA's Acceptable Use of Computer/ Internet Resources policy regarding such use. For an employee to gain access to the internet through school system equipment, the employee must sign a Staff Computer/Internet Access Agreement.

In addition, all teachers must receive and retain a signed copy of the internet policy for each student in their homeroom.

Internet users should ensure school provided anti-virus software is in use before downloading or copying any file from the internet. All downloaded files are to be checked for viruses.

Abuse of the internet access provided by HCA in violation of law or school and school board policies will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Copyright Policy Statement

All employees shall comply with all copyright laws. Employees who fail to follow copyright laws shall be held personally liable for copyright infringement. Horse Creek Academy will not be responsible for any violations of copyright laws by its staff, and hereby notifies all employees that a willful infringement of the law will result in disciplinary action.

Safety and Health Policies

HCA provides employees and students with a safe and healthy working and learning environment. Employees can help promote this safe environment by being alert to unsafe conditions, equipment, or methods of operation, and by reporting these hazards to a member of Administration.

If an incident should occur, it must be reported immediately to the Administration Team and the school nurse. Any incident should be reported no matter how insignificant it may seem at the time it occurs.

Should an employee appear to be unable to perform their duties safely, administration may deem it necessary for the employee to seek medical treatment and require a doctor's note to return to work.

All employees must have a TB screening test in their files and in accordance with the South Carolina Teacher Employment requirements. This test is the responsibility of the employee and results are placed in their permanent file. A record of this test must be in the employee's file prior to employment.

Information on an employee's medical condition or history is kept separately from other employee information and maintained confidentially.

HCA will operate within HIPPA rules and regulations. All medical information concerning employees and students will be kept confidential. Any breach in confidentiality concerning health issues could result in immediate contract termination.

Special Education

Students for whom the HCA Data Team feel should be referred for Special Education will be brought up for consideration of Special Education testing. This team will be responsible for targeting students that are weak in areas based on Progress Monitoring used by the school. If tiered leveled interventions do not work, then the intervention team will refer for consideration of Special Education testing. At this point the Special Education Case Manager, along with the School Psychologist will review the information given and recommend special education testing or not.

School Closings

Emergency closings will be posted on the news, the school website, the school Facebook page as well as sending out a schoolwide ROBO call. At times, other emergencies such as fires, power failures, etc. can disrupt school operations. In extreme cases, these circumstances may require the closing of the school. The Executive Director or their designee will make this determination.

Security Inspection

It is HCA's policy to maintain a work environment that is free of illegal drugs, firearms, explosives, or other improper materials. To this end, the school prohibits the possession, transfer, sale, or use of such materials on its premises. HCA requires the cooperation of all employees in administering this policy.

Desks, chairs, and other storage devices may be provided for the convenience of employees but remain the sole property of HCA. Accordingly, they, as well as any articles found within them, can be inspected by any agent or authorized representative of the school at any time, either with or without prior notice.

Drug Free Work Force

Horse Creek Academy is a smoke free campus. The use and/or possession of alcohol, tobacco, controlled substances (not prescribed by a physician) or paraphernalia by employees, students, or any visitors on school grounds and school-

sponsored events is strictly prohibited. This will result in appropriate disciplinary action, which may include, but is not limited to, being asked to leave, referral to law enforcement, and/or termination of employment.

If an employee is arrested or charged with a drug or alcohol-related crime, at or away from work, the employee is required to notify the Executive Director in writing within 24 hours of being arrested or charged. If an employee is found guilty of a drug or alcohol-related offense, the employee may be required to participate in substance abuse treatment or counseling.

Weapons

Horse Creek Academy is committed to maintaining a safe and secure working and learning environment. Employees are prohibited from carrying, bringing, using, or possessing any weapon in any school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle, or at any school-sponsored activity.

Reporting

Employees are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible, but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach, unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Employees should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, personnel director, superintendent, etc.). The Horse Creek Academy notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions.

Fee/Payment Procedure

At HCA, we have a certain procedure which must be followed for receiving and accounting for any incoming money, from parents and/or students, brought into the classroom. Please help us by doing your part and acting in accordance with the following fee payment procedure:

Parents have been instructed to send money to the school, via their student, in the following manner:

1. Money has to be brought in by 8 a.m. each morning, contained in a labeled sealed envelope and the following information should be written on the outside of the sealed envelope: Student Name, Grade, Teacher, Amount, Reason for Money (i.e. Canteen, Catering, Donation, Fee, Field Trip).
2. Payments must be in exact change. The office cannot keep cash on hand and change is NOT guaranteed. Money is deposited daily.
3. If multiple payments for different purposes are being made each item must be listed on the envelope.
4. Checks should be made to Horse Creek Academy unless noted by a fundraiser event.
5. DO NOT ENCLOSE A SIGNED PERMISSION SLIP in a field trip payment envelope.
6. Deadlines for fee payment should be honored as this directly impacts our ability to move forward in securing the services that you are paying for.

All payments, collected by the teacher, must be placed inside the appropriately labeled pickup envelope and put in the mailbox outside of their classroom door before 8:30am each school day.

Attendance and Punctuality

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, HCA expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work hours. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on the other employees and on the school. In the rare instances when employees cannot avoid being late for work, they should notify their respective AP and follow the proper procedures for requesting coverage, as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated tardiness or

absence. Poor attendance and excessive tardiness is disruptive to the function of the school. Attendance issues and tardiness that directly effects school function and student learning will require disciplinary action and possibly termination.

Employees must call or text their respective AP and follow the proper procedures for requesting coverage, as determined and communicated, at the HCA Staff Back to School Training, if they will arrive at work after their instructed time. Excessive tardiness will be examined. (See below for arrival times, per grade level)

If you are not on carline duty, you may leave at 3:30 p.m. If an employee needs to leave prior to 3:30 p.m., please speak with the respective Assistant Principal. If your respective AP is unavailable, you may speak with one of the other APs for approval. You will still need to sign in when you arrive and leave for each day on the Teacher Sign in Sheet in the front office. Approval must be sought prior to signing out.

Medical conditions that will cause the employee to incur excessive absences must be noted in the employee's permanent file. This notification must be documented by the employee's physician. A doctor's excuse is a good way to document any time missed for medical reasons for the employee. These medical notes should be submitted to the Director of Operations, HR/Fiscal. All medical notes submitted will be filed accordingly.

Any employee that does not show up to work and does not call their designated AP and follow the proper procedures for requesting coverage, will risk immediate termination as leaving students unsupervised is a liability HCA is not willing to incur.

Elementary and Middle School teachers should report each day by 7:30. If you are assigned early morning duty, please report by 7:25. Each teacher can leave for the day at 3:30 pm.

High School teachers should report each day by 8:15 and by 8:00 am if they are assigned morning duty. High School teachers are dismissed at 3:30 pm when serving on morning duty and 3:45 pm if they are not serving on morning duty.

Calling in and Leaving Early Due to Illness

An employee calling in sick must follow the proper procedures for requesting coverage, as determined and communicated at the HCA Staff Back to School Training, no later than 6:00 a.m. to obtain a substitute for that day. If you know you are going to be out, please notify in advance.

If an employee becomes ill during the day, he/she should inform their AP of the condition and work with them, and follow the proper procedures necessary to arrange coverage. No employee may leave early without Administrative approval.

Teachers are responsible for emailing lesson plans for the day of absence, and/or communicating instructions for lessons and daily tasks. Each classroom teacher is required to submit a 5-day emergency substitute folder to be stored in the teachers' classroom. These plans must be submitted as directed by Administration before the school year begins.

If the employee has morning or afternoon duty, it is the responsibility of the employee to arrange to have the duty covered.

Length of School Year

The length of the HCA school year for teaching staff employees and designated office staff is listed on the employee's contractual agreement. All 190 day employees will report to work one week before the first day of school and work 5 days after the end of the school year. All 210 day employees will report to work two weeks before the first day of school and work two weeks after the end of the school year. All 220 day employees will report to work three weeks before the first day of school and work three weeks after the end of the school year.

Lunch

A lunch schedule will be provided for each teacher. Teachers are to eat with and supervise students during their lunch.

Additional Duties

All teachers may be required to perform additional duties before, during, and after school hours.

Teachers may be required to be present at parent meetings, school performances, and after school fund raisers held at the school.

Teachers are welcome and encouraged to attend HCA Board Meetings. The Executive Director, as a Member of the Executive Board, will attend all meetings.

Teachers and administrators are expected to attend all pertinent school functions. This includes school dances and any outside activity that HCA chooses to participate in as a school.

Teachers and administrators must submit written notice, to the respective director, 24 hours in advance in order to be excused from a required event.

Contracts and Certification

Our fiscal year begins on July 1.

All teachers must have a South Carolina teaching certificate, unless HCA and a teacher agree in writing to special conditions. It is the responsibility of all teachers to be certain they possess a valid certificate.

For more information on certification, log on to www.ed.sc.gov

Paydays

Employees are paid on the 20th day of each month. In the event the 20th falls on the weekend, employees will be paid the Friday prior. All payrolls are made through direct deposit; therefore, you must have an account established at a financial institution. Pay stubs are available to employees online via our payroll provider, currently NETCHEX. If you have any questions, please see the Director of Operations, HR/Fiscal.

Pay Deductions

The law requires HCA make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state, and local income taxes. HCA also must deduct Social Security taxes from each employee's earnings up to a specified limit called the Social Security wage base. State Retirement will be automatically deducted according to the current percent determined by the SC PEBA. These deductions, as well as all authorized voluntary deductions such as insurance premiums, will be withheld automatically from your paychecks. Any other pay deductions must be signed by you and approved by the Executive Director. If you have any questions, please see the Director of Operations, HR/Fiscal.

Administrative Pay Corrections

HCA takes all reasonable steps to assure employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck, and that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday.

In the unlikely event there is an error in the amount of pay, the employee should promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of the Director of Operations, HR/Fiscal so the corrections can be made as quickly as possible.

Once the underpayments are identified, they will be corrected immediately, and in no case later than the next regular paycheck.

Overpayments will also be corrected in the next regular paycheck unless this presents a burden to the employee (where there is a substantial amount owed). In that case, HCA will attempt to arrange a schedule of repayments with the

employee to minimize the inconvenience to all involved. If you have any questions, please see the Director of Operations, HR/Fiscal.

Timekeeping

Federal and state laws require HCA to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. Time worked is all the time spent on the job performing assigned duties.

Overtime for hourly employees must have prior approval from the Executive Director.

Altering, falsifying, and/or tampering with time in and time out sign-in sheets, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

If an employee feels his/her time report is inaccurate, the employee should contact the designated administrator immediately.

Personnel Policies and Procedures

Access to Personnel Files

HCA maintains a personnel file on each employee. The personnel file includes such information as the employee's job application, resume, records of training, documentation of performance appraisals, salary increases, and other employment records. It is the responsibility of the employee to send records of training and educational changes to be added to their personnel file. It is also the responsibility of the employee to make sure the State Department information is updated. Personnel files are the property of HCA.

Employees who wish to review their own file should contact the Director of Operations, HR/Fiscal. Employees may review their own personnel files in the HR office and in the presence of an individual designated by HCA.

Personnel Data Changes

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify the school of any changes in personnel data, personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of emergency, educational accomplishments, and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times.

Employment Reference Checks

When asked by an outside firm for a reference check on an HCA employee, Director of Operations, HR/Fiscal will respond to those reference check inquiries that are submitted. Responses to such inquiries that are submitted will be limited to factual information that can be substantiated by the school's records.

Performance Evaluations

Walk through evaluations will be conducted on each employee regularly by the Administration. Anyone going through a formal evaluation will be evaluated more frequently by the assigned evaluation team.

The Executive Director will be evaluated by the Executive Board as outlined in Board Minutes. A meeting will be held as outlined early in the process for the purpose of setting goals and objectives. A formal evaluation will take place during the last months of school to determine how many and how well these goals and objectives were met. The Executive Director will evaluate the Assistant Principals and other administrative staff.

Confidentiality

Employees must comply with state and federal laws and state/local school board/governing board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material, and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Sharing confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law
- Sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law
- Violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing, including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests, or test items
- Violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy
- Sharing confidential information regarding other employees obtained in the course of performing job duties
- Looking into cumulative record files other than those students in your class.

Disability Act

HCA is committed to complying fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. All employment practices and activities are conducted on a non-discriminatory basis.

Hiring procedures have been reviewed and provide persons with disabilities meaningful employment opportunities. Pre-employment inquiries are made only regarding an applicant's ability to perform the duties of the position.

Reasonable accommodation is available to all disabled employees, where their disability affects the performance of job functions. All employment decisions are based on the merits of the situation in accordance with defined criteria, not the disability of the individual.

Qualified individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal pay and other forms of compensation (or changes in compensation), as well as, in job assignments.

Personal Appearance

Horse Creek Academy employees are professionals and should dress in a way that promotes the profession. Articles of clothing prohibited for student wear are also not appropriate for staff members. All personnel will be expected to dress in a manner that reflects his/her job description. Employees must look professional even on dress down Fridays or Spirit Days.

Outside Employment

An employee may hold a second job with another employer, provided he or she satisfactorily performs his/her job responsibilities with Horse Creek Academy. All employees will be held by the same performance standards and will be subject to HCA's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements.

If the school administration determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of the school as they are modified from time to time, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment if he or she wishes to remain employed by HCA.

Grievance Procedures

Horse Creek Academy Grievance Procedure for Employees

1. Employees are encouraged to initially discuss grievances informally with those involved. Often, the cause of a problem or concern is merely a misunderstanding between the individuals involved. If, however, an issue cannot be resolved informally, the issue should be taken to the Executive Director.

2. If the Executive Director cannot handle the issue, the Grievance Form should be completed.
3. It is in the interest of all parties to resolve grievances in a timely manner.
4. Grievances may only be raised on behalf of oneself or oneself.
5. Grievances will be kept as confidential as may be appropriate at all levels of procedure.
6. If after the Grievance Form is completed and a resolution cannot be agreed upon with the Executive Director, the person who completed the Grievance will go in front of the school Board.

GRIEVANCE FORM

Full Name: _____

Title (job assignment or parent/guardian): _____

Describe the action(s) you feel was a violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of HCA policies or practices and/or a violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of federal or state law (use attachments if necessary):

Date(s) the action(s) described above occurred:

Describe what you are asking to be done, if anything:

Signature

Printed Name

Date

Retaliation Prohibited

Horse Creek Academy, Section 504, Title 504, Title II, Title IX, and the Age Discrimination Act strictly prohibit any type of retaliation against any individual who files a complaint or participates in the investigation of a complaint under these laws.

Disciplinary Action

Violation of these procedures will be subject to disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, training, oral or written warnings, demotion, termination, transfer, dismissal, suspension, or expulsion.

Remedial Action

The School will take steps to remedy the effects of discriminatory conduct. Remedial action available to victims of discrimination may include, but is not limited to, compensatory educational services, supplemental educational services, regarding, and classroom transfer.

Contact Information:

Dr. Ann Marie Taylor, Age Discrimination Act Coordinator, Title IX Coordinator, IDEA and 504 Administration
Horse Creek Academy
1200 Toolebeck Road
Aiken, SC 29803
803-226-0160

Dr. Ann Marie Taylor, Executive Director
Horse Creek Academy
1200 Toolebeck Rd
Aiken, SC 29803
803-226-0160

Kevin Murray President, Board of Trustees
Horse Creek Academy
1200 Toolebeck Road
Aiken, SC 29803
803-226-0160

Employment Termination and Resignation

If the Executive Director/Principal decides, in his or her discretion, to recommend an employee for termination, the following process will apply:

- The Executive Director will provide the employee with written notification of the recommendation setting forth the reason(s) for the termination.
- The employee shall have an opportunity to meet with the Executive Director to discuss the termination if notice is given in writing within 5 days of receiving the written notice.
- The employee shall then have an opportunity to meet with the HCA Board prior to a final decision if the employee notifies the HCA Board President in writing within 10 days of the date of the Executive Director's written notification. The employee must copy the Executive Director on any communication with the HCA Board.
- If the employee timely notifies the HCA Board President, the Executive Director shall provide the HCA Board with a written record of the recommendation prior to the meeting with the HCA Board.
- The Executive Board shall meet with the Executive Director, and the employee in executive session, and the Executive Board shall make a final decision and issue a written explanation.

HCA's Executive Director may, in his or her discretion, place any employee on administrative leave with pay at any time to be followed up in writing.

Disciplinary Action

The purpose of any disciplinary action by Horse Creek Academy is to correct the problem, prevent recurrence, and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future. Discipline is given in the following manner; this procedure can be modified at the discretion of the school administration and the approval of the HCA Board:

- Verbal warning
- Written reprimand
- Discharge/Termination

Verbal warnings are issued for a first offense of a minor nature. In issuing verbal warnings, the date and the fact of the warning is documented in the employee's record. Repeated offenses will bring on a written reprimand, which shall be read to the employee. All warnings and reprimands are signed by the employee and their respective Director and a copy is filed in the employee's record.

If verbal and/or written reprimands fail to bring about desirable performance, the employee could receive more serious discipline up to and including discharge. The type of discipline to be applied in this case is at the discretion of the administration. The employee may appeal as described above. Serious misconduct may result in immediate discharge or suspension without pay.

Return of Property

Employees are responsible for the return of items issued to them by HCA or in their possession or control, such as the following: equipment, keys, manuals, tools, or written materials. This must occur during normal business hours and under the supervision of the respective Director or designee. HCA may take all action deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property including holding a final payment until property is received and/or deducting the amount owed from a final paycheck.

Employment Benefit Programs

Eligible employees of Horse Creek Academy are provided a range of benefits. A number of the programs (such as Social Security, Medicare and Workers' Compensation) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law. The following additional employee benefits are available for eligible employees:

- Medical Insurance
- Paid Personal Days
- Paid Sick Days
- Leaves of Absence (up to 12 weeks per FMLA to secure a position with HCA)
- Retirement contribution

Medical Health Insurance

State Medical Benefits are offered to HCA employees through Aiken County Public Schools. When employees are hired, they receive an appointment with the HR department at the Brookhaven district office where they will choose which benefit plan best suits their needs. The HCA pays a portion of the cost and the employee pays the remainder through payroll deductions. Employees receive an Insurance Benefit Guide annually and may access information regarding their benefits at the following website: www.ed.sc.gov

Workers' Compensation Insurance

HCA provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. In accordance with the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Law, this program covers injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment.

Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or if the employee is hospitalized. Neither the school nor the insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of

workers' compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by HCA.

Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses should inform their supervisor immediately. All on-the-job injuries, no matter how minor they may appear, must be reported immediately and assessed. This enables an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible.

Retirement Plan(s)

All full-time employees are required to participate in one of the states provided retirement plans. They must choose either the South Carolina Retirement System (SCRS) or the State Optional Retirement Plan (ORP). Part time employees have the option of participating. For more information on these two retirement plan options visit the web site: www.ed.sc.gov

Holidays and Break Weeks

Horse Creek Academy observes the following holidays and break weeks:

- Labor Day
- October Break Week
- Thanksgiving Break Week
- Election day (when applicable)
- Winter Recess
- Martin Luther King Day
- February Break Week
- Good Friday
- Spring Break
- Memorial Day
- July 4th Break Week

Paid Leave Time

Full time HCA staff members shall receive 10 days of paid time off per year. Only 10 total days can be used for sick time, vacation time, etc, per year at HCA. Any time off days, not used in a school year, can be rolled over to the next school year. However, the use of any days, over the 10 days given by HCA every school year, must be used for medical or family emergencies only.

Only 25 rollover days are permitted to be brought in from a previous South Carolina state school employer and proof of these days (from your previous school) is required. Approval from the Executive Director is required before the 25 rollover days can be added to your personnel file.

Any days that are accumulated, over 10, can be used for medical emergencies, up to 35 days total for the year (including the 10 given from HCA), and must be approved by your Executive Director. Any days that are not used, while working at HCA, can be saved/banked. Please refer to the South Carolina Retirement System for their policy regarding the use of saved/banked time off days at retirement.

Although personal time is permitted for each employee annually, please note the school calendar allows for ample time off throughout the year and the Administration Team expects vacations and other personal matters to be scheduled during that time to limit disruption of classroom learning

This time is for the express use of personal illness or injury, exposure to a contagious disease, appointment for a medical or dental examination or treatment, sickness during pregnancy or other temporary disabilities, caring for a sick family member of the immediate family and personal leave. This time is not to be used to plan vacations as teachers need to be present to teach and for children to learn. Leave extending beyond (3) consecutive days must be accompanied by a doctor's note upon return. No more than 2 personal days should be taken consecutively without the express permission of Administration.

Professional Development Time

If you find a workshop or conference that will help your innovativeness as a teacher, please see the respective Director. Employees are encouraged to further their education and broaden their skills. Professional development days are provided for this purpose. These days may be used to attend in services, conferences, college courses, workshop, etc. that are directly related to their duties at Horse Creek Academy. Requests for these days must be submitted in writing to the employee's AP and be pre-approved. Professional development days do not count against time off/leave time.

Family Leave

HCA provides family leaves of absence without pay under FMLA to eligible employees who wish to take time off from work duties to fulfill family obligations relating directly to childbirth, adoption, or placement of a foster child; or to care for a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition. An employee must have worked for HCA for at least twelve (12) months and meet the 1250 hours of service requirement in the twelve (12) months preceding the leave.

A serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider.

If possible, leave must be requested at least thirty (30) days in advance of foreseeable events, and as soon as possible, for unforeseeable events. Employees requesting family leave related to childbirth, a serious health condition of a child, spouse, or parent may be required to submit a healthcare provider's statement verifying the need for a family leave to provide care, its beginning and expected ending dates, and the estimated time required.

Eligible employees may request up to a maximum of twelve (12) weeks of family leave within any 12-month period. The 12-month period is a school year and runs from July 1 to June 30. Any combination of family leave and medical leave may not exceed this maximum limit. Employees will be required to first use any accrued paid leave time before taking unpaid family leave.

So that an employee's return to work can be properly scheduled, an employee on family leave is requested to provide the school with at least two weeks' advance notice of the date the employee intends to return to work. When the approved family leave ends, the employee will be reinstated to the same position, if it is available, or a position nearly identical to it.

Bereavement

Employees with more than 3 months' service may take up to 3 days of paid bereavement leave upon the death of a member of their immediate family. "Immediate family members" are defined as an employee's spouse, domestic partner, parents, stepparents, siblings, children, stepchildren, grandparent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, or grandchild. All regular, full-time employees may take up to one (1) day off with pay to attend the funeral of an extended family member (aunts, uncles, and cousins). Horse Creek Academy may require verification of the need for the leave. The employee's AP and Human Resources will consider this time off on a case-by-case basis.

Jury Duty

HCA encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. Regular full-time employees will be granted an excused absence by HCA. Either the school or the employee may request an excuse from jury duty if, in HCA's judgment, the employee's absence would create serious operational difficulties. This request may be to serve during the summer months when school is not in session.

Witness Duty

HCA encourages employees to appear in court for witness duty when subpoenaed to do so. If employees have been subpoenaed, or otherwise requested to testify as witnesses by the school, they will grant an excused absence for the

entire period of witness duty. Employees are not granted an excused absence to appear in court as a witness at the request of a party other than the school unless approved by the Executive Director.

The subpoena must be shown to the Principal immediately after it is received so that operating requirements can be adjusted, where necessary, to accommodate the employee's absence. The employee is expected to report to work whenever the court schedule permits.

Military Leave

A military leave of absence is granted to employees, except those occupying temporary positions, to attend scheduled drills or training if called to active duty with the U.S. armed services. A military leave of absence will be granted to employees who are absent from work because of service in the U.S. uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Right Act (USERRA). Advance notice of military service is required, unless military necessity prevents such notice, or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable.

The leave will be unpaid. However, employees may use any available paid time off for the absence.

Employees on two-week active duty training assignments or inactive duty training drills are required to return to work immediately following the end of training, allowing reasonable travel time. Employees on longer military leave must apply for reinstatement in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws.

Every reasonable effort will be made to return eligible employees to their previous position or a comparable one. They will be treated as though they were continuously employed for purposes of determining benefits based on length of service.

School Board Information as it pertains to this Handbook:

- First reading: June 2019
- Second reading: July 2019
- Approval date: August 2019
- Amendment: June, July, August 2020

I have read, I understand and will abide by the 2020-2021 HCA Employee Handbook (check box).

Employee First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Signature of Employee: _____ Date: _____