



# Uwharrie Charter Academy

## Employee Policy Handbook

(Section 400)

**2026–2027**

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# SECTION 400 ~ EMPLOYEE POLICY HANDBOOK

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## 401 ~ Mission Statement

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Uwharrie Charter Academy will exist to provide a truly relevant and rigorous pathway to career and college readiness by establishing relationships with students, families, and community partners.

## 402 ~ Introduction/Disclaimer

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This Employee Policy Handbook (hereafter “Handbook”) applies to all Education Partners (faculty) and all other employees and staff of UCA and is designed to acquaint you with UCA and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and some of the policies affecting your employment. We trust this Handbook will serve as a useful reference document throughout your employment with UCA. Please read it with care; it is your responsibility to be in compliance with the policies and procedures it describes. It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the programs developed by UCA to benefit employees. You must sign an acknowledgment that you have received and reviewed the Handbook and that you understand the information included herein.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. As UCA continues to grow, the need may arise, and UCA reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portions of the Handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion. UCA will make every effort to notify employees of changes to the Handbook as they occur. Subsequent changes will supersede any prior policies regarding information provided therein. This Handbook supersedes all existing policies and practices relating to the matters addressed herein.

**THIS HANDBOOK IS NOT A CONTRACT AND DOES NOT GUARANTEE EMPLOYMENT FOR ANY PERIOD OR GUARANTEE ANY SPECIFIC TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT. EMPLOYEES OF UCA ARE EMPLOYED AT WILL. UCA AND ITS EMPLOYEES MUTUALLY RETAIN THE RIGHT TO**

**TERMINATE THEIR EMPLOYMENT AT ANY TIME WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE AND WITH OR WITHOUT A REASON NOT OTHERWISE PROHIBITED BY LAW. UNLESS SET FORTH IN WRITING, APPROVED BY THE UCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND SIGNED BY THE CHAIR OF THE UCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND SUPERINTENDENT, EMPLOYMENT AT UCA IS FOR NO SPECIFIC PERIOD OF TIME, AND ANY STATEMENT INCONSISTENT WITH THIS POLICY IS UNAUTHORIZED.**

Throughout this manual, policies are stated regarding specific actions, which may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment. These policies in no way limit or alter UCA's "At Will" policy.

This Handbook summarizes the policies and procedures that are in effect as of July 1, 2026. None of the benefits or policies in this manual are intended, by reason of their publication, to confer any rights or privileges or to entitle the employee to be or remain employed by UCA. The contents of this manual are presented as a matter of information only. The plans, policies, and procedures described herein do not constitute a contract of employment and are subject to change by UCA. Any benefits outlined in this manual are for general guidance, the specifics of any such benefits, including eligibility, are controlled by the plan documents and should there be any inconsistencies between this manual and the plan document, the plan documents will control. Please consult those documents directly.

If you are uncertain about any policies or procedures, whether or not they are referred to in this manual, please direct your questions to the Superintendent or if related to a benefits plan, contact the plan directly.

### **403 ~ Equal Employment**

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It is UCA's policy to provide equal employment opportunities for all applicants and employees. UCA does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), gender identity, religious creed, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, genetic information, legally protected medical condition, family care or medical leave status, veteran status, sexual orientation, or on any other basis made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. This policy governs all aspects of

employment, including hiring, job assignment, compensation, promotion, discipline, termination, and access to employee benefits and training. It is the responsibility of every supervisor and employee to conscientiously follow this policy.

UCA also makes reasonable accommodations required by law, including accommodations for disabled employees and accommodations for women with pregnancy-related disabilities who request an accommodation for pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

### **403.1 ~ Policy Against Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation**

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UCA is committed to having a community in which every individual is treated with sensitivity and respect, and in which each student and teacher has an equal opportunity to work, learn, and develop to his or her full potential in an atmosphere free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. To that end, the UCA prohibits any form of harassment or discrimination (including sexual harassment) on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation or other protected characteristic, whether by a supervisor, administrator, co-worker, volunteer, contractor, student, or non-employee. The purpose of this policy is not to regulate our employees' personal morality. It is to assure that in the workplace, each employee is able to accomplish his or her job without being subjected to harassment.

While it is not easy to define precisely what harassment or discrimination is, it certainly includes verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct that denigrates, belittles, or puts down an individual or shows hostility, distaste, or aversion toward that individual based on that individual's race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran status, any other protected class or participation in a protected activity.

Discrimination involves intentionally treating anyone in an unequal or disparate manner because of that person's inherent or natural personal characteristics, including race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran status, any other protected class or participation in a protected activity, when such treatment causes the victim to suffer adverse educational, employment, or other school-related consequences.

Harassment is any unwelcome offensive verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive as to significantly affect the conditions of one's employment or a student's learning. Harassment includes, but is not limited to the following: slurs, epithets, threats, derogatory comments, unwelcome or abusive jokes, insults, name calling, threats, bullying or intimidation, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct such as uninvited touching or sexually-related comments or the exchange of benefits for performance of sexual or other favors.

Other conduct that can be unlawful harassment includes verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct that shows aversion, denigration, or hostility because of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or other protected classification and that:

- Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment;
- Unreasonably interferes with an individual's work; or
- Adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Of the various types of harassment, sexual harassment is worthy of special considerations beyond those applicable under UCA's general policies. No employee, student, volunteer, or contractor shall engage in sexual harassment against any other student, employee, volunteer, or contractor or another person in the UCA community.

## **DEFINITION**

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination involving unwelcome sexual, or sex-based conduct that interferes with the employment of others. Sexual harassment is any unwanted or unwelcomed verbal or physical advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements, requests for sexual favors, or sexually discriminatory remarks made by someone in the workplace which is offensive or objectionable to the recipient or which causes the recipient discomfort or humiliation or which interferes with the recipient's job performance. Harassing behaviors can be verbal, non-verbal, or physical, range from subtle innuendo of a sexual nature to coerced sexual activity, and other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that usually takes place under the following circumstances:

- When submission to such conduct is made, explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of instruction, participation in school activities, or employment;
- When submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions or benefits; or
- When such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic, extracurricular, or work performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment or working environment.

## **EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Workplace behavior that is sexually harassing includes but is not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual remarks or inferences;
- Offensive comments about sex or gender-specific traits;
- Unwelcome sexual propositions, threats, bribes, written notes, or phone calls;
- Unwelcome gestures or sounds or the display of sexually suggestive objects, signals, or pictures;
- Unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature (e.g. touching, pinching, kissing, holding);
- Promise of promotion, favorable performance evaluations, etc. in return for sexual favors, known as “quid pro quo” or “this for that”;
- Threatening or insinuating, whether explicitly or implicitly, that an employee's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the employee's employment, evaluation, wages, advancement, assigned duties, shifts or any other condition of employment;
- Pressure for sexual activity, continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions;
- Continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body; or
- Sexually degrading words used toward, or in the presence of, an individual or to describe an individual.
- A hostile environment exists if the conduct of a sexual nature is sufficiently

severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program or creates a hostile or abusive educational or work environment.

Romantic or sexual advances toward students by employees or romantic or sexual relationships between school employees and students are always prohibited in all circumstances. Academy employees are prohibited from engaging in romantic or other inappropriate relationships with students and are required to report such relationships or reasonable suspicions thereof, to the Superintendent or any other administrator/principal with whom they feel comfortable. Procedures established by UCA for reporting suspected sexual harassment shall be followed in any instances involving such conduct.

### **APPLICATION**

Either men or women can be sexually harassed by someone of the same or opposite sex, and the law protects both sexes equally from this discrimination. This policy applies to sexual harassment by staff, students, volunteers, vendors, and service providers of either gender against someone of the same or opposite gender.

### **RETALIATION**

UCA prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of discrimination or harassment or who participates in an investigation as a witness or in any other capacity. Employees should report any such retaliation to the Superintendent or to any other administrator/principal with whom they feel comfortable. This policy, however, shall not be used to bring frivolous or malicious complaints.

### **PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS OF HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION**

- Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation should immediately discuss and report to his or her direct supervisor, the Superintendent, or any other supervisor with whom the person feels comfortable. While the person should report sexual harassment to a supervisor or the Superintendent, there is no requirement that the person report sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation to a particular

supervisor.

- Any supervisor receiving a complaint of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation shall report such complaint to the Superintendent. If the Superintendent is the subject of such complaint then the supervisor shall report to the Chair of the Board of Directors or to any other Board member that the supervisor believes is appropriate.
- Any complaint made under this policy will be investigated thoroughly and promptly. To the maximum extent possible, UCA will protect the privacy of the parties involved.
- Any attempt to interfere with or influence the investigation of a harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation complaint is strictly prohibited, and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.
- There will be no adverse action against an employee who acts in good faith and reports an incident, or who participates in or cooperates with an investigation of an alleged incident.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Any individual found to have engaged in harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. In addition, some forms of sexual harassment, such as sexual relations between an adult and minor, may violate criminal laws. UCA will cooperate with local authorities in the investigation of any alleged criminal activity.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS**

UCA will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of the parties involved in the investigation of a sexual harassment, discrimination and retaliation complaint. All written materials related to the investigation of allegations of harassment will be placed in confidential files, which are separate from student and personnel records. Reasonable efforts will be taken to ensure that access to these records is limited to those persons with a need to know. However, UCA will comply with any state or federal law that requires disclosure.

## **SEXUAL AND OTHER TYPES OF UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION ON SCHOOL GROUNDS BY CONTRACTORS, VOLUNTEERS OR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT SCHOOL EMPLOYEES**

The policies contained in this section, including the reporting procedures and no retaliation policy, regarding harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination, shall also apply to contractors, volunteers or individuals who are not employees of UCA when such individuals are on school property or during school events.

### **IMPLEMENTATION: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION/TRAINING**

This policy will be distributed to all employees and will be discussed as part of the staff orientation at the beginning of each school year. The Superintendent is authorized to establish training and administrative procedures to help eliminate discrimination and harassment, and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all individuals.

### **HELPFUL CONTACT INFORMATION FOR REPORTS/QUESTIONS - UCA TEAM**

#### **MEMBERS:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>
Superintendent	Dr. Chris Wheat	chris_wheat@uwharriecharter.org
Assistant Superintendent	Ms. Beth Kearns	beth_kearns@uwharriecharter.org
High School Principal	Dr. Whitney Smith	whitney_smith@uwharriecharter.org
Middle School Principal	Mrs. Kristy Priest	kristy_priest@uwharriecharter.org
Elementary School Principal	Mrs. Lauren O'Brien	lauren_obrien@uwharriecharter.org

## **403.2 ~ Disability Accommodation**

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UCA is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities, those regarded as having disabilities and those associated with individuals with disabilities. Accordingly, UCA does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training or any other terms, conditions and privileges of employment. UCA complies with all federal and state laws concerning

the employment of persons with disabilities including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAA) and acts in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

## **ELIGIBILITY**

UCA will engage in an interactive process to find reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with a disability to enable them to perform the essential functions of a job, unless doing so causes an undue hardship to the School, or a direct threat to these individuals or others in the workplace, and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation.

When an individual with a disability is requesting accommodation and can be reasonably accommodated without creating an undue hardship or causing a direct threat to workplace safety, he or she will be given the same consideration for employment as any other employee or applicant.

All employees are required to comply with UCA standards. Current employees who pose a direct threat to the health and safety of themselves or other individuals in the workplace will be placed on appropriate leave until UCA can make a lawful and reasonable decision in regard to continued employment. Individuals who are active illegal drug users are excluded from coverage under UCA's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy.

Applicants and employees are assured that all information regarding a disability shall be kept confidential except that:

- Appropriate supervisors may be informed regarding restrictions on the work or duties of disabled employees and any accommodations that have been made; and
- Government officials investigating compliance with federal laws may be informed.

All employees with responsibilities, which may require knowledge of disabilities, are advised that they are to treat the knowledge with confidentiality.

## **PROCEDURES**

The Superintendent or his/her designee is responsible for implementing this policy, including requests for and resolution of reasonable accommodations, safety and

direct threat determinations, and undue hardship issues. All requests for reasonable accommodations should be presented to the Human Resources Coordinator at UCA, in person or via email, and request such an accommodation. Such applicant or employee may also contact the Superintendent directly and request such an accommodation.

Any employee or job applicant who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of disability should immediately bring the problem to the attention of their supervisor/administrator, or any other supervisor/administrator with whom the individual feels comfortable, including the Superintendent or the Board of Directors. No applicant or employee will be subject to coercion, intimidation, interference, discrimination or retaliation for registering a complaint or for assisting in an investigation of any alleged violation of laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability.

### **403.3 ~ Genetic Information**

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UCA prohibits discrimination against employees based on genetic information. It does not seek to collect genetic information through any of its policies or programs, and employees should not provide genetic information including family medical history to UCA for any reason.

## **WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH**

### **404 ~ Workplace Safety and Health**

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#### **404.1 ~ Drug and Alcohol-Free School**

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Uwharrie Charter Academy (UCA) is committed to a safe and healthy work environment, free of the presence of alcoholic beverages or unlawful controlled substances. UCA prohibits employees, independent contractors, or business associates from possessing, using, manufacturing, dispensing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs, and from the use, sale, distribution or possession of drug paraphernalia. Employees, independent contractors, or business associates are also prohibited from unlawfully possessing, using, manufacturing, dispensing, selling, distributing or being under the influence of alcohol. This policy is

in effect: (a) during school hours, (b) while on any property owned or leased by UCA, (c) at any time during which employees, independent contractors, or business associates are acting in the course and scope of employment with UCA, (d) while driving, and/or (e) at any other time that violating this policy has a direct and adverse effect upon job performance. This policy does not include the lawful and proper use of drugs prescribed by a doctor or over-the-counter medications; however, employees, independent contractors, or business associates shall not report to work or engage in normal duties, if drugs prescribed by a doctor or over-the-counter medications visibly and/or knowingly cause impairment. Failure to observe this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

In order to protect the interests of UCA, its students, its employees, and the public, the School may take reasonable measures to ensure that the school property remains free of illegal drugs, the illegal use of legal drugs, and alcohol at all times. The measures taken may include, at the discretion of management, but shall not be limited to, the following:

- **Testing of Applicants.** The School reserves the right, as a condition of employment, to implement a drug testing procedure as a routine part of the pre-employment application process for all job applicants who have otherwise been approved for employment, but before hire. If an applicant refuses to submit to a drug test or tests positive for drugs, he or she will not be considered for employment.
- **Testing of Employees.** The School reserves the right, as a condition of continued employment, to require any employee to submit to a breathalyzer test, urinalysis or other drug and/or alcohol test in any one or more of the following circumstances:
  - **Reasonable suspicion testing** – Any employee of the School may be required to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test when a supervisor or other management employee has reasonable suspicion to believe that the employee is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or is abusing prescription drugs during working hours or while on the School’s property. Factors which may raise reasonable suspicion include, but are not limited to:
    - Excessive absenteeism or tardiness

- Deterioration of job performance
- Significant changes in personality, dramatic mood swings, abusive behavior, or insubordination
- Reliable reports from employees or other credible sources
- Unexplained, frequent absences from normal work area
- Unusual, irrational or erratic behavior
- Difficulty in motor coordination, poor muscle control, unsteady walking, nervousness, slurred speech
- Direct observation of drug or alcohol use or discovery of evidence of drug or alcohol possession or use in the employee's vicinity
- Impaired short-term memory or logical thinking
- **Post-accident testing** – The School may require a drug and alcohol test of any employee involved in an injury, accident or near accident (one in which safety procedures were violated and/or unusually careless acts were performed) on school grounds or during working hours.
- **Periodic or random testing** – The School may require employees to submit to drug and alcohol testing as a follow-up upon returning to work after illness or injury, after a positive test result, or on a random basis if the employee is a school bus driver or other commercial motor vehicle operator employed by the School.

All positive test results will be confirmed by a second test. Employees have the right to retest a confirmed positive sample at the same or another approved laboratory, at their own expense. If an employee refuses to participate in a requested test, or tests positive for drugs or alcohol, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Alcohol is prohibited everywhere on campus.

This policy is intended to comply with all state and federal laws, including anti-discrimination laws and procedures for conducting drug and alcohol testing.

## 404.2 ~ Weapons Ban and Threat/Violence Policy

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### WEAPONS BAN

UCA prohibits weapons (or replicas of weapons) on School property, in school vehicles and at school-sponsored activities on or off school property. Weapons are generally defined as guns, knives and other objects universally considered a weapon by the vast majority of society. A “weapon” can also be any object which would do harm to another when used as such. UCA shall deem any such object used to do harm a “weapon” for the purpose of enforcing this policy. Weapons and replicas of weapons also constitute any item (regardless of its nature) used to threaten or cause actual harm, including but not limited to: firearms, knives, metal knuckles, chains, razors, explosives, poisonous or noxious gases or any other tool or instrument capable of inflicting bodily injury as determined by school administration. On-duty Law Enforcement Officers (LEO) or School Resource Officers (SRO) are the only approved individuals to carry weapons on school property or at other school-sponsored activities on or off school property.

Possession of weapons is prohibited while on duty performing business at any location.

Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from school. The Superintendent will review each alleged violation of this policy and will exercise discretion for expulsion on a case-by-case basis in compliance with North Carolina law and regulations governing student discipline. See Student and Parent Handbook.

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including termination. The Superintendent will review each alleged violation of this policy and will exercise discretion for disciplinary action on a case-by-case basis.

Visitors or volunteers who violate this policy will be subject to local law enforcement action.

Any employee who is aware that a student, volunteer, parent or employee is carrying a weapon must report the infraction to their supervisor or an administrator immediately.

All acts of violence and possession of weapons as defined in this policy shall be reported to parents of the violator, appropriate law enforcement agency and any other government agency as required by law.

The Superintendent is required to report immediately to the appropriate local law enforcement agency whenever the Superintendent has personal knowledge or actual notice from school personnel that any of the following acts has occurred on school property:

- assault involving the use of a weapon
- unlawful possession of a firearm
- unlawful possession of a weapon

This reporting requirement applies regardless of the age or status of the person thought to have committed the act. The report to law enforcement is only required if the act occurs on School property, which includes any public-school building, bus, campus, grounds, recreational area or athletic field.

## **VIOLENCE AND THREATS**

UCA strives to maintain a work and school environment that is free from intimidation, threats or violent acts. This includes, but is not limited to, intimidating, threatening or hostile behaviors, physical abuse, vandalism, arson, sabotage, use of weapons, carrying weapons of any kind onto school property, or any other act, which, in management's opinion, is inappropriate to the workplace. In addition, jokes or offensive comments regarding violent events will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary measures, up to and including termination.

UCA does not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against employees. Employees are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities. This list of behaviors provides examples of conduct that is prohibited:

- Causing physical injury to another person.
- Making threatening remarks.
- Displaying aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person or subjects another individual to emotional distress.
- Intentionally damaging employer property or property of another.

- Committing acts motivated by, or related to, sexual harassment, discrimination or domestic violence.

## **MONITORING**

UCA shall take all reasonable steps to see that this policy is followed by all employees and supervisors.

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE AND INVESTIGATION**

If you believe an employee is in violation of this policy you should report the issue to your supervisor or the Superintendent immediately. Employees who feel they have been subjected to any of the behaviors listed above are requested to immediately report the incident to a supervisor they feel comfortable with or the Superintendent. Complaints will be promptly investigated. Based upon the results, disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may be taken.

All complaints will be promptly investigated and shall be handled as confidentially as possible. The investigator will resolve complaints involving violations of this policy and recommend the appropriate action.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Any employee found to have violated this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, pending the findings of the complaint investigation.

## **RETALIATION**

Any employee bringing a complaint or assisting in investigating such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, or discriminated against or discharged because of the complaint. Complaints of such retaliation will be promptly investigated.

## **404.3 ~ Tobacco-Free Campus**

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UCA is a tobacco-free campus. The use of tobacco products in and around UCA's premises is strictly forbidden.

## **404.4 ~ Workplace Injury and Illness**

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UCA has an established policy of providing a safe workplace for all employees based on current federal, state and local standards as well as proven “common sense” safety practices. UCA strives to maintain working conditions which afford all employees a reasonable degree of comfort and protection from injury or dangerous situations while assuring orderly and efficient performance of duties. However, it is only through the combined efforts and interest of all employees that we can continue to make UCA a safe place in which to work. Employees are expected to work safely, observe safety regulations, and report unsafe conditions. Any unsafe condition must immediately be reported to the Superintendent.

Employees must immediately report to the appropriate Principal any workplace injuries and illnesses, regardless of how serious. Incident reports should be completed and returned to the Principal.

## **404.5 ~ School Safety**

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UCA has a Crisis Management Team that will create and manage the following procedures by outlining the actions and responsibilities of staff and administration in addressing the following issues:

- Evacuation Fire
- Evacuation Non-Fire
- Hazardous Materials
- Lockdown-Perimeter
- Lockdown-Full
- Serious Medical Emergency
- Severe Weather (tornado; hurricane; etc.)
- Public Health Emergency
- Student in Crisis

The Superintendent oversees the Crisis Management Team and it is the responsibility of the Superintendent to ensure that the procedures are current and applicable and that all applicable parties are aware of the procedures.

The Superintendent is also responsible for making sure that drills occur on a regular basis. These procedures will be reviewed annually by the Crisis Management Team and any changes or revisions will be made by the Superintendent. The Superintendent is responsible for communicating these procedures to the Board of Directors.

## PERSONNEL POLICIES

### 405 ~ Personnel Policies

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#### 405.1 ~ At-Will Employment

Except as UCA has otherwise expressly agreed to in writing, approved by the UCA Board of Directors, and signed by the Chair of the UCA Board and the Superintendent, employment is at-will and may be terminated by the employee or by UCA at any time, for any reason, not unlawful, with or without notice.

#### 405.2 ~ Immigration Law Compliance

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UCA is committed to employing only individuals who are authorized to work in the United States as required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. In compliance with that law, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Anyone submitting false documentation shall be immediately terminated. UCA reaffirms its commitment to comply with both state and federal non-discrimination laws and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal. Any questions concerning IRCA and the required documentation should be directed to the Superintendent.

#### 405.3 ~ Staff Criminal Background Checks

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Except as otherwise provided in this policy, applicants must notify the Superintendent immediately if they are arrested, charged with, or convicted of a

criminal offense (including entering a plea of guilty or nolo contendere) other than a minor traffic violation (i.e., speeding, parking, or a lesser violation). Notice must be in writing, must include all pertinent facts, and must be delivered to the director of human resources no later than the next scheduled business day following the arrest, charge, or conviction, unless the applicant is hospitalized or incarcerated, in which case the applicant must report the alleged violation within 24 hours after his or her release. Upon judicial action in the matter, the applicant must report the disposition and pertinent facts in writing to the assistant superintendent of human resources no later than the next business day following adjudication.

A criminal history check and a check of sex offender registries must be conducted on all final candidates for employment with the school system. Criminal history checks must be conducted in accordance with state law and any procedures established by the superintendent. School officials shall not require candidates to disclose expunged arrests, charges, or convictions and shall not ask candidates to voluntarily disclose such information without first advising that disclosure is not required. The superintendent or designee shall report to the State Board of Education any licensed individual who is found to have a criminal history, as required by State Board policy. Special requirements are described below for criminal history checks of candidates for certain positions working with preschool children or working in after school or developmental day programs.

A final candidate for employment or for hiring as an independent contractor will be excluded from hiring on the basis of criminal conduct only when doing so is job-related and consistent with business necessity. If a final candidate is found to have been convicted (including entering a plea of guilty or nolo contendere) of a criminal offense, other than a minor traffic violation, the superintendent shall determine whether the individual is qualified for employment despite the criminal history by considering, among other things, whether the individual poses a threat to the safety of students or personnel or has demonstrated that he or she does not have the integrity or honesty to fulfill the duties of the position. The following factors will be considered in making this determination: (1) the nature and gravity of the offense or conduct; (2) the time that has passed since the offense or conduct and/or completion of the sentence; and (3) the nature of the job sought. Before the superintendent may exclude a final candidate based on his or her past criminal convictions, the superintendent must give the candidate the opportunity to

demonstrate that the exclusion does not properly apply to him or her. Prior to recommending any individual for hiring who has a criminal history that includes a felony, a crime of violence or drug-related crime to the Board of Directors, the Superintendent shall consult with legal counsel and disclose such criminal history to the Board. The requirements of this paragraph do not apply to a child care provider who is determined to be disqualified by the Division of Child Development and Early Education on the basis of a criminal history check conducted pursuant to G.S. 110-90.2, 42 U.S.C. 9858f, and 45 C.F.R. 98.43. (See Section D of this policy).

The board has determined that every position with the school system, regardless of whether the position is located in a school or elsewhere, potentially entails contact with students, either on a regular, occasional, or emergency basis. For that reason, no individual who is a registered sex offender subject to the Registered Sex Offenders Policy, will be hired for any position with the school system.

In addition, each contract executed by the board with an independent contractor or for services of independent contractors must require the contractor to check sex offender registries.

All applicants for employment will be required to submit to Background check screen through Background Investigation Services (BIB.com) or ClearChecks (clearchecks.com) and/or fingerprinting

- All potential UCA employees must pass a comprehensive background check.
- UCA will be fingerprinting potential employees, as well as updating background checks as needed for current employees.
- Background Investigation Services (BIB.com) was selected as the UCA background check resource. BIB serves a large number of school districts in North Carolina. BIB screens candidates through over 450 million unique records from over 3,200 public agencies.
- ClearChecks (ClearChecks.com) was also selected as an alternative UCA background check resource.

## 405.4 ~ Registered Sex Offender Policy

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Pursuant to Session Law 2008-117, The Jessica Lunsford Act for North Carolina (the "Act"), the General Assembly of North Carolina has recognized that sex offenders often pose a high risk of engaging in sex offenses after being released from incarceration or commitment and that the protection of students from sex offenders while on School property and at School-sponsored activities serves an important governmental interest.

UCA is committed to the following

- Sex offenders are banned from all School property and School events

In accordance with G.S. 14-208.18, all persons who (1) are required to register under the Sex Offender and Public Protection Program AND (2) have been convicted of certain sexually violent offenses or any offense where the victim was under the age of 16 years at the time of the offense ("Prohibited Persons") are expressly forbidden to be present on any property owned or operated by the School system, including School buildings, athletic fields, playgrounds, parking lots, School buses, activity buses or other property of any kind for any reason, including attendance at sporting events or other School-related functions, whether before, during or after School hours. In addition, Prohibited Persons may not attend or be present at any student function or field trip on or off of School property which is 1) School-sponsored or 2) otherwise under the official supervision or control of School personnel. This policy applies to all Prohibited Persons regardless of their relationship to, or affiliation with, a student in the School system (i.e. stepparents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.).

**A. Prohibited persons.** The Superintendent or designee shall insure that administration is familiar with the criminal offenses that qualify an individual as a Prohibited Person under this policy. The Superintendent will also subscribe to electronic notification of Registered Sex Offenders and access the state database as needed.

**B. No special permission.** There shall be no "special permission" given for Prohibited Persons to be on Schools grounds or attend events or activities in violation of this policy.

**C. Possible exceptions for students.** Students who meet the definition of a Prohibited Person may be on School property only in accordance with state law.

**D. Limited exception for prohibited persons who are parents / legal guardians of a student**

- a. A Prohibited Person who is the Parent/Legal Guardian of a student may be on School property only for the following reason:
  - To attend a previously scheduled School conference with School personnel to discuss their child's academic or social progress; or
  - At the request of the Superintendent/designee, for any other reason relating to the welfare or transportation of their child.
- b. The procedure for making a request is as follows:
  - For each visit authorized by subsection (a)(1) above, the Parent/Legal Guardian must provide the Superintendent with prior written notice of their registration on the Sex Offender Registry.
  - A request for presence at the School must be submitted to the Superintendent in writing, minimally 72 hours in advance.
  - The request must include the nature and specific times requested.
  - The Superintendent or designee will respond within 48 hours either authorizing or denying the request.
  - The decision of the Superintendent or designee is final.
  - The Superintendent will notify the Board of any such requests and the decision.
- c. For each visit authorized by subsection (c) above, the Parent/Legal Guardian must check in at the front office upon arrival and departure. In addition, during each and every visit, the Parent/Legal Guardian must be under the direct supervision of School personnel at all times. If personnel are not available to supervise the Parent/Legal Guardian during any visit then they shall not be permitted on the School property.

- d. For each visit authorized by subsection (c) above, the Parent/Legal Guardian shall comply with all reasonable rules and restrictions placed upon them by the Superintendent, including any restrictions on the date, time, location and length of meetings.

## **Enforcement**

Any suspected violation of this policy shall be reported by a School administrator to the Superintendent and to law enforcement for immediate investigation. All School personnel should report the presence or suspected presence of a Prohibited Person to a School administrator and take appropriate action. The Superintendent shall immediately notify the UCA Board Chair of any known or suspected Prohibited Person who is a student, or a parent or legal guardian of a student, at their School.

## **Applicability**

This policy shall supersede any conflicting provisions in all other UCA Board policies regarding School safety, parental involvement, School field trips, School visitors, School volunteers and student transportation.

## **405.5 ~ Grievance Policy**

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This policy is in place to respond to a grievance by an employee or volunteer (herein after “employee”). It is expected that any employee with an issue should try to resolve the issue by using open communication with their supervisor. If an employee feels that their issue is still a concern after speaking to their supervisor and that the issue has risen to the level of a grievance then the employee may initiate the grievance procedures as described below. The goal of filing a formal grievance would be to use the process to come to an equitable solution.

- **Definition of a grievance:** a grievance is defined as a formal written complaint by an employee stating that a specific action has violated a School policy, board policy, law or regulation, including a violation of Title IX.

Complaints that do not raise an alleged violation of School policy, board policy, law or regulation do not raise grievance issues and are not subject to these procedures. In addition, a grievance does not include: the non-renewal or termination of employment, disagreements on day-to-day operation issue,

employee discipline or employee reviews unless a specific violation of law or policy is alleged. And, a grievance does not include a Title IX complaint or a complaint of sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation, which shall be handled pursuant to the Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Harassment policy and Title IX policy in the Employee Handbook and consistent with state or federal laws.

- **Time Limits:** A grievance will only be heard if the complaint has been filed within fifteen calendar days of the act that is being reported or fifteen days from the date the issue was brought to the attention of a supervisor, whichever is shorter. The fifteen-day deadline may be extended at the discretion of the Superintendent.
- **The grievance process is as follows:**
  - **Step 1:** To file a grievance, an employee must submit a letter in writing (email accepted) stating the School policy, board policy or law/regulation that was violated including details of the actions and the place, date and time of the violation. The employee should make all efforts to include any details about the event that may be helpful in the decision making process. The written letter should be submitted to the Superintendent. If the Superintendent is implicated in the grievance, the grievance should be submitted to the Chair or Vice Chair of the Board of Directors or to any other Board member with whom the individual(s) feel comfortable disclosing the information.
  - **Step 2:** In response to the formal grievance, the Superintendent shall have up to five business days from the time they receive the formal grievance to respond to the grievance in writing. If the employee is satisfied with the decision after they receive the response from the Superintendent, the issue is considered resolved. The employee shall submit their satisfaction to the Superintendent in written form such as email.
  - **Step 3:** If the employee is not satisfied with the response from the Superintendent, the employee may file an appeal by submitting a letter in writing (email accepted) stating the School policy, board policy or law that was violated including details of the actions and the place, date and time of the violation. The employee should make all efforts to include any details about the event that may be helpful in the decision making process

to the

Board of Directors. This must be done within five business days of the initial response from the Superintendent.

- **Step 4:** Where the grievance is filed directly with the Board as set forth above or after receiving the appeal letter, the appeal shall be considered by the Board at its next regularly scheduled board meeting provided such meeting is more than seven days after the filing, or the Chair of the Board of Directors may call a special meeting of the Board to consider the appeal in accordance with the School's bylaws. The Board will consider and discuss the grievance at the meeting in accordance with Open Meetings laws. Prior to the meeting, at the Board's sole discretion, the Board may conduct an investigation or gather additional information regarding the grievance, including interviews, if needed. The individual filing the grievance or appeal will be given the opportunity to attend the meeting. At that meeting the Board of Directors will make a decision on how to handle the grievance. If the board decides that it needs additional time to consider the grievance or gather information, it may defer its decision until the next regularly scheduled board meeting or schedule a special meeting. Once the board reaches a decision, the Board will communicate that decision to the individual who filed the grievance within five school days. The Board's decision concerning the grievance is final.

## 405.6 ~ Nepotism

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The employment of immediate family (defined below) can cause various problems including but not limited to charges of favoritism, conflicts of interest, family discord and scheduling conflicts that may work to the disadvantage of both the School and its employees. It is UCA's goal to avoid creating or maintaining circumstances in which the appearance or possibility of favoritism, conflicts or management disruptions exist.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "immediate family member" is set forth in N.C.G.S. Section 115C-12.2 and means a spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild. The term includes the step, half, and in-law relationships. The term also includes domestic partners (a person with whom the

employee's life is interdependent and who shares a common residence) and, a daughter or son of an employee's domestic partner.

The School may allow existing personal relationships to be maintained or employ individuals with personal relationships to current employees under the following circumstances:

- No voting members of the Board shall be an employee of UCA that provides substantial services to the School for a fee;
- No employee of UCA shall be immediate family to any member of the board of directors;
- No employee of UCA shall be a voting member of the Board of directors;
- No employee that is immediate family of the Superintendent shall be hired without the Board of Directors evaluating their credentials, establishing a structure to prevent conflicts of interest, approving such contract or hire, and, where required, notifying the Department of Public Instruction, with evidence, that this process has occurred;
- They may not create a supervisor/subordinate relationship with an immediate family member;
- They may not vote on any Board action in regards to immediate family member;
- They may not supervise or evaluate a family member;
- The relationship will not create an adverse impact on work productivity or performance;
- The relationship may not create an actual or perceived conflict-of-interest;
- They may not audit or review in any manner the individual's work; and
- They may not be employed if a member of the employee's immediate family (spouse, children, parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, step family members, in-law family members) serves on UCA's Board or any Committee, which has authority to review or order personnel actions or wage and salary adjustments, which could affect his/her job.

No personal employee relationship covered by this policy will be allowed to be maintained, regardless of the positions involved, if it creates a disruption or potential disruption in the work environment, creates an actual or perceived conflict

of interest or is prohibited by any legal or regulatory mandate.

This policy must be considered when electing, hiring, promoting or transferring any employee. Should relationships addressed within this policy be identified with either candidates for employment or current employees, the matter should be immediately reported to the Superintendent and/or Board of Directors and the following policies and procedures will be followed:

- A determination will be made whether the relationship is subject to UCA's Nepotism policy based on the conditions described above.
- If the relationship is determined to fall within one or more of the conditions described in this policy the Superintendent in consultation with the affected employees and the Board of Directors, will attempt will to resolve the situation through the transfer of one employee to a new position or identifying some other action (e.g., supervisory reassignment) which will correct the conflict or issue identified. If accommodations are not feasible then, with affected employee suggestions, the Superintendent in consultation with the School's Board of Directors shall determine which employee must resign in order to resolve the situation.

UCA reserves the right to exercise appropriate managerial judgment to take such actions as may be necessary to achieve this intent of this policy. UCA reserves the right to vary from the guidelines outlined in this policy to address unusual circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

The burden of disclosure of such personal relationships covered in this policy shall be on the applicable Board member or employee with supervisory authority. If the requirements of this policy are complied with, UCA may employ the immediate family of any member of the Board or an UCA employee with supervisory authority consistent with this policy and applicable law.

Every employee is responsible for identifying and communicating to the Superintendent or the Board of Directors any potential or existing personal relationships.

## **405.7 ~ Internal Investigation and Search Policy**

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From time to time, the School may conduct internal investigations pertaining to security, auditing or work-related matters. Employees are required to cooperate fully with and assist in these investigations if requested to do so. Whenever necessary, UCA reserves the right to search without notice work areas (i.e., desks, file cabinets, computers, etc.) and personal belongings (i.e., backpacks, purses, vehicles, etc.) if there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that any School policy or law is being, or has been violated. The School may provide desks, computers, lockers and other items for the use by the School's employees. At all times, these items remain the property of the School. Employees are expected to cooperate with the School's workplace searches. While the School will generally try to obtain an employee's consent before conducting a search of work areas or personal belongings, it may not always do so. Any employee who refuses to submit to a search or is found in possession of prohibited articles will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees with questions regarding this policy should contact the Superintendent. Finally, if any employee is under an investigation, they are not to discuss this outside of their administration, unless otherwise informed.

Additionally, if an employee is under an investigation or knows of an investigation and they compromise the investigation by communicating with a student (i.e. in person or through other means like group chats), it could result in that employee's immediate termination, regardless of the outcome.

## **405.8 ~ Driving Qualifications and Records**

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To operate a school bus in North Carolina, an individual must be at least 18 years old, have at least six months of driving experience, have a School Bus Driver's Certificate and hold a commercial driver license with both "S" (school bus) and "P" (passenger) endorsements. The requirements for the driver of a school activity bus are the same except a School Bus Driver's Certificate is not required. The Director of Transportation will keep records of all driver requirements in a locked cabinet in their office.

## Driving Record

- An individual must certify at the time of application that they do not hold more than one driver license and that their license is not suspended, disqualified or revoked.
- Some convictions will make a driver ineligible to operate a school bus.
- All drivers will be required to provide a certified copy of their Motor Vehicle Records upon hire and each subsequent year.
- Driving records will be reviewed on at least an annual basis by the Director of Transportation.

## Medical & Physical

- School bus drivers must meet federal qualifications to be certified as being physically and mentally competent to operate a school bus.
- All drivers will be required to provide a copy of medical certification from an accredited provider upon hire, and annually or bi-annually upon the expiration of such document.

## Training & Testing

- School bus drivers must:
- Successfully complete the required three-day school bus driver training class
- Pass up to four different knowledge tests with a score of 80 percent or better on each test
- Successfully complete the required behind-the-wheel training with a driver education program specialist
- Pass a skills test
- All drivers must provide proof that they have successfully passed this training.

## Suspensions & Revocations

In addition to the rules that apply to the driving public, commercial driver license holders are required to follow rules specific to commercial motor vehicle drivers and comply with the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act to maintain their commercial driver license and keep their school-bus driver certification.

If at any time the driver's license is suspended or revoked, the driver must inform the Director of Transportation and the Superintendent IMMEDIATELY.

### Drug and Alcohol Use

No driver may:

1. operate any school bus or school activity bus while consuming alcohol or while alcohol remains in the driver's body;
2. use alcohol while performing safety-sensitive functions;
3. perform safety-sensitive functions within four hours after using alcohol;
4. report for or remain on duty requiring the performance of safety-sensitive functions when the driver is impaired by the use of any Schedule I drug or substance;
5. report for or remain on duty requiring the performance of safety-sensitive functions when the driver is impaired by the use of any non-Schedule I drug or substance, unless such use is pursuant to the instruction of a licensed medical practitioner who is familiar with the driver's medical history and has advised the driver that use of the substance will not adversely affect the driver's ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle. Safety-sensitive functions include but are not limited to inspecting, servicing, or conditioning any commercial motor vehicle; operating any commercial motor vehicle; participating in or supervising the loading and unloading of a commercial motor vehicle; or repairing, obtaining assistance, or remaining in attendance upon a disabled vehicle. All Drivers are subject to the Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy 404.1 Any driver found in violation of any part of this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. ANY STAFF DRIVING STUDENTS Any staff member who is driving a student, even

intermittently or ‘one off’, is subject to the following policy.

## Driving Record

- All drivers will be required to provide a certified copy of their Motor Vehicle Records upon hire and each subsequent year.
- Some convictions will make a driver ineligible to operate a school bus.
- Driving records will be reviewed on at least an annual basis by the Director of Transportation. Suspensions & Revocations If at any time the driver’s license is suspended or revoked, the driver must inform the Director of Transportation and the Superintendent IMMEDIATELY. Drug and Alcohol Use No driver may:
  1. operate any school bus or school activity bus while consuming alcohol or while alcohol remains in the driver’s body;
  2. use alcohol while performing safety-sensitive functions;
  3. perform safety-sensitive functions within four hours after using alcohol;
  4. report for or remain on duty requiring the performance of safety-sensitive functions when the driver is impaired by the use of any Schedule I drug or substance;
  5. report for or remain on duty requiring the performance of safety-sensitive functions when the driver is impaired by the use of any non-Schedule I drug or substance, unless such use is pursuant to the instruction of a licensed medical practitioner who is familiar with the driver’s medical history and has advised the driver that use of the substance will not adversely affect the driver’s ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle. Safety-sensitive functions include but are not limited to inspecting, servicing, or conditioning any commercial motor vehicle; operating any commercial motor vehicle; participating in or supervising the loading and unloading of a commercial motor vehicle; or repairing, obtaining assistant, or remaining in attendance upon a disabled vehicleAll Drivers are subject to the Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy 404.1 Any driver found in violation of any part of this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

# STAFF EXPECTATIONS

## 406 ~ Staff Expectations

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### 406.1 ~ Standards of Conduct

UCA expects all employees to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. An employee should not conduct business that is unprofessional and unethical in any way, nor should an employee influence other employees or students to act unethically.

UCA strictly prohibits all sexual contact between employees and students. Employees shall not engage in sexual innuendo or contact with students and should maintain a professional physical proximity with students that shows sensitivity to avoiding student discomfort. Employees are not only prohibited from engaging in sexual contact or relationships with students, but employees should also avoid the appearance of sexual contact or relationships with students, parents, or other employees. Employees should make every effort to avoid one-adult-with-one-student situations in which others are not present or immediately available. For example, if an employee is tutoring or counseling a student, the employee should move the tutoring to an area where others are present or leave the classroom door open and let other employees know that the tutoring is occurring. This is an example and not all-inclusive.

An employee should report any dishonest activities or damaging conduct to an appropriate supervisor or the Superintendent. Employees shall also report to the Superintendent and to appropriate law enforcement any complaints of sexual or other abuse that are reported by a student. Employees should encourage, not discourage, students to report any abuse that they believe has occurred. If an employee becomes aware of another employee's behavior or actions which are believed to be inappropriate, illegal, or in any way inhibit or affect the former's job performance or UCA's work environment, the employee should discuss such behavior or actions with his or her supervisor or the Superintendent. Employees shall also comply with North Carolina law regarding reporting suspicions of the neglect or abuse of students, and mandatory reporting laws, including child abuse

and sex trafficking laws.

## **406.2 ~ Workplace Attire**

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UCA has a professional dress environment. Employees are expected to use good judgment and taste, and to show courtesy to their co-workers, students, and parents by dressing in a fashion that is presentable and appropriate. It is expected that employees dress appropriately for their position. No spandex/yoga pants or shorts should be worn. There should be no T-shirts worn Monday through Thursday. Clothing should fit appropriately and should have no holes. Men should wear khakis or dress pants with a collared shirt, nice tennis shoes, or dress shoes. Women are permitted to wear sleeveless dresses or skirts to the knee, and the clothing should have no holes and shouldn't show cleavage or undergarments. Please ask if you have any questions. On Fridays, jeans are permitted unless otherwise specified by administration.

## **406.3 ~ Electronic Communications**

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UCA provides computers, electronic data storage, Internet services, electronic mail ("e-mail") and voice mail communications systems (collectively "the school's communication systems") as important tools to support the school's business and assist employees in performing their job responsibilities. It is the responsibility of every employee to ensure the school's communication systems are used for authorized school purposes only and in a fashion that does not improperly disclose confidential, sensitive or proprietary information to unauthorized individuals.

Any communications, in which UCA's communications systems are used, including correspondence such as e-mail, constitute school property. UCA's communication systems are generally to be used for business-related purposes only. Limited personal use is permissible on a reasonable basis. Any unauthorized use of the school's communication systems is strictly prohibited. Unauthorized use includes, but is not limited to:

- Any communications or use which violates the school's equal employment opportunity, bullying, harassment, or non-retaliation policies or any other school policy or procedure.
- Utilizing or accessing the school's communication systems without

proper authorization.

- Disabling or otherwise interfering with the school's communication security or data protection systems.
- Using the school's communication system to disclose confidential, sensitive, or proprietary information to unauthorized individuals.
- Using the school's communication policy in violation of any laws or threats to violate any laws.

UCA reserves the right to monitor, audit, and access, disclose and/or review any use of its communication system in its sole discretion, in the ordinary course of business, without notice. Employees should not consider the school's communications systems as private.

During employment with UCA, employees may be provided with passwords, entry codes and/or access to the school's communication systems. Employees are strictly prohibited from disclosing these passwords or entry codes to any person without prior written authorization. Employees are also prohibited from accessing the school's communication systems without proper authorization.

Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

#### **406.4 ~ Audio and Video Recording Policy (Two-Party Consent)**

To protect the privacy of students, staff, and families, and to ensure a professional working environment, the unauthorized recording of any conversation or meeting is strictly prohibited.

While North Carolina law permits one-party consent for recordings, this school requires explicit two-party (all-party) consent for any audio or video recording conducted in connection with school business.

This directive applies to all staff and includes, but is not limited to:

- Meetings with colleagues, students, or families
- Conferences (academic, disciplinary, IEP/504, or otherwise)
- Telephone or virtual communications

- Classroom or school-related interactions

Staff members may not record any conversation or meeting unless:

1. All participants have been clearly informed in advance, and
2. Explicit consent has been obtained from each participant prior to the start of the recording.

Secret, covert, or undisclosed recordings are strictly prohibited under all circumstances.

Any staff member found in violation of this directive will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **406.5 Acceptable Use of Property and Technology**

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For the purposes of this policy, "technology" refers to all UCA electronic devices and systems, software, and means of electronic communication including, but not limited to: all computers and workstations including laptops and servers; computer hardware and peripheral equipment such as disk drives, flash drives, printers, modems, scanners, fax machines, and copiers; supported and designated computer software applications and associated system and user-created files and data; and phones (standard and cell), voicemail systems, electronic-mail systems, portable computer devices, digital cameras, and video recorders.

The property of UCA refers to objects owned and housed on UCA's premises, including but not limited to: desks, tables, workstations, cabinets, drawers, and shelves, as well as books, textbooks, maps, materials, instruments, tools, machines, and vehicles.

"Acceptable Use" of technology is defined as the collection of individual behavior, interaction, and utilization, with all computing and peripheral equipment, software, and technology services that are procured, implemented, and supported by UCA.

UCA will provide staff and students with access to property and technology as necessary and appropriate to fulfill assigned responsibilities. UCA will not support the use of personal technology resources to create, store, and communicate organizational information or complete assigned responsibilities. UCA will not support, modify, repair, integrate, or perform work on personal technology

resources, such as a teacher's personal cell phones and personal laptops.

UCA staff and students who use UCA technology resources must do so responsibly and are required to comply with all state and federal laws, the policies of UCA, and with standards of professional and personal courtesy and conduct. When using UCA property, staff and students are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance where assigned, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines. Staff and students may not use any school technology to access, transmit, save, share, or print sexually-explicit images, messages, or any other medium containing such content.

In addition, staff and students may not access, transmit, save, share, or print materials that contain ethnic slurs, racial epithets, derogatory, defamatory, obscene or offensive statements or images, or any other content that may be construed as harassing based on someone's race, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religious beliefs or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws. Exceptions may be made for such content if used solely for specific educational purposes, provided approved in advance by the Principal.

UCA's technology resources are to be used for UCA activities. This policy does not prohibit the use of technology resources for personal or social reasons on non-work time, provided such use does not violate any school policies, break local, state, or federal law, result in any monetary cost to the School, impair intended functionality, or detract from the employee's job performance.

UCA does not support the storage and installation of personal hardware or software and related data on UCA technology resources. UCA will not repair or backup such personal data. It is the responsibility of the technology user to back up and protect personal additions to the technology.

**The following activities are prohibited while using UCA technology resources:**

- Attempting to gain unauthorized access to UCA technology resources, disrupting them in any way, or destroying or altering data
- Plagiarism

- Using the organization's time and resources for personal gain
- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images
- Using abusive or otherwise objectionable language in either public or private messages
- Stealing, using, or disclosing someone else's code or password without authorization
- Attempting to break into the computer system of another organization or person
- Accessing, saving, transmitting, or printing pornographic materials
- Sending or posting chain letters, solicitations, or advertisements not related to business purposes or activities
- Changing any computer file that does not belong to the user
- Using another person's password without his or her consent
- Violating state or federal law
- Any other activity that violates any UCA policy or that UCA deems inappropriate

All technology resources are the property of UCA. All Internet traffic and all messages sent and received, including personal messages, Internet browsing traffic, and all data and information stored on UCA's email, voicemail, cell phones, or computer systems are the property of UCA, regardless of the content. UCA reserves the right to access, monitor, and inspect all of its technology resources at any time, at its sole discretion. UCA community members have no right of privacy with respect to any messages or information created, maintained, received, or stored on UCA's technology resources, even if those devices require a personal password to use or access, or if the information has been deleted.

UCA reserves the right to advise appropriate legal authorities of any incident involving technology resources where it reasonably believes a UCA staff member may have violated the law. All passwords used to access technology resources must be made available to UCA upon request. UCA also reserves the right to inspect all other property of UCA, including but not limited to desks, workstations, cabinets, drawers, closets, and vehicles, as well as any contents, effects, or articles contained in such property, at any time, with or without advance notice or consent.

**Return of UCA Property and Technology:** UCA staff members who are issued Academy property or technology resources must return the items when requested by UCA or upon separation from UCA. An Academy staff member will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, if any UCA property or technology resource issued to him or her is lost, damaged, misused, or not returned to UCA upon request.

Any violation or abuse of this policy is just cause for taking disciplinary action, up to and including termination, removal of all UCA network privileges and accounts, and/or legal action.

## **406.6 ~ Social Media Policy**

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At UCA, we understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media. This policy applies to all persons who work or volunteer for UCA.

### **GUIDELINES**

Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the School, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in the School policies and these basic beliefs apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow workers or otherwise adversely affects students, parents, suppliers, volunteers, people who work on behalf of the School, or the School's legitimate business/education interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **KNOW AND FOLLOW THE RULES**

Carefully read these guidelines and the Employee Handbook, including the

communications policy, confidentiality policy, the non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **BE RESPECTFUL**

Always be fair and courteous to fellow teachers or staff, volunteers, students, parents, suppliers, or people who work on behalf of the School. Also keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our open-door policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. If you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating, that disparage students, parents, volunteers, staff, or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying.

### **BE HONEST AND ACCURATE**

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the School, board members, fellow workers, students, parents, volunteers, suppliers, or people working on behalf of the School.

### **POST ONLY APPROPRIATE AND RESPECTFUL CONTENT**

Maintain the confidentiality of School private or confidential information. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal business/School-related confidential communications. Do not post information about individual students or families. Do not create a link from your blog, website, or other social networking site to a School website without identifying yourself as an employee or volunteer of the School. Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the School. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with the School, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the School. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The

postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the School."

### **SOCIAL MEDIA AS A FUNDRAISING TOOL**

All staff are prohibited from developing grants, crowdfunding (Go Fund Me, Donor Choice, etc.), or any other fundraising or donation activities without written permission from the Superintendent or their designee.

### **USING SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK**

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by your supervisor or consistent with all UCA policies. Do not use School email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use.

### **STUDENT PICTURES AND INFORMATION**

Parents, employees, and volunteers shall not post any pictures of students on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or any other form of social media or on the Internet unless the Superintendent has approved such posting. This applies to all School functions, whether or not conducted on school property, including field trips. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit a parent from taking and posting pictures of their own child, provided no other students are featured in such pictures. The School reserves the right to post pictures and images of current and former students on its website, official Facebook page, or for any other School purpose. Parents who do not wish to allow UCA to use their child's picture or image must fill out the Publicity Consent Form and turn it into the front office.

### **RETALIATION IS PROHIBITED**

The School prohibits taking negative action against any employee or volunteer for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee or volunteer who retaliates against another employee or volunteer for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **406.7 ~ Media Policy**

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Only authorized individuals may speak on behalf of UCA to any media outlet. All

media inquiries should be directed to the Superintendent.

## **406.8 ~ Email and Internet Usage and Equipment Responsibility**

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While UCA expects and encourages appropriate use of email and the Internet, employees should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, delete, receive, or display when using UCA's network devices, Internet access, email, voicemail systems, or other technological resources owned or issued by UCA, whether the resources are used at school or elsewhere, and even if the use is for personal purposes. These resources should be used primarily for job-related purposes consistent with UCA's legitimate business interests. UCA may, without notice: (1) monitor, track and log network access, communications, and use; (2) monitor and allocate file server space; and (3) access, review, copy, store, delete, or disclose the content of all user files, regardless of medium, the content of electronic mailboxes, and system outputs, such as printouts, for any lawful purpose.

UCA maintains strict compliance with all copyright laws, and our policies prohibit unauthorized copying or transmittal of copyrighted products. No personal software may be installed on UCA's computers without prior approval, and Academy licensed software may not be installed onto an employee's personal computer without prior authorization from the Technology Department.

In addition, UCA attempts to provide all staff with the equipment and supplies needed to do their job. This comes at great expense to our school, and we expect that employees will protect and care for all equipment and supplies issued to them. All employees are responsible for the cost of lost, stolen, or broken items issued to them including: keys, cell phones, textbooks and teacher guides, laptops, and any other equipment that may be assigned to them or their classroom. Teachers are responsible for the protection of all desks and furniture in their classroom as well as the room's general appearance and upkeep. The appearance of our school, hallways, and classrooms greatly influences the opinions of every student, parent, and visitor, and affects the behavior of our students.

## **406.9 ~ School Fees**

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While we value our staff and their contributions to the school, we rely on all families to pay their school fees. Beginning in the 2024–2025 school year, all UCA employees

will be required to pay school fees for their children who attend the school. The rate for school fees will be half the standard fee; however, this applies to school fees only and not technology fees. Technology fees are separate and will need to be paid for each child at the current rate. All fees will be paid by October or will be deducted in the November payroll.

## **406.10 ~ Fundraising for UCA**

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In order to foster an environment that is focused on learning and student growth, UCA will only raise funds for purposes directly related to school improvement, school community development, or learning enhancement. In order to streamline this process, UCA has created a subgroup of the Finance Committee specifically focused on fundraising with clearly outlined parameters and guidelines.

**Approval:** All fundraisers must be approved by either the school administration or the Board of Directors prior to implementation.

**Purposes of Fundraising:** The following are acceptable fundraising purposes:

- Fundraisers where proceeds go towards enhancing UCA facilities or other budget needs
- Fundraisers where proceeds reduce field trip costs or other student costs as they pertain to educational opportunities
- Fundraisers for charities or causes will only be conducted if there is a direct tie to a school service project in which UCA students are involved

**Restrictions:**

- UCA marketing must be in compliance with the Community Partnership Plan
- Students and parents are prohibited from soliciting UCA staff and other families on school property
- Students and staff will not be required to participate in selling any type of product in connection with school-approved fundraisers. All involvement in such selling activities by students and staff is voluntary (e.g., book fair, selling of UCA spirit wear, student artwork)

**Donors Choose and Internet/Social Media/Crowdsourcing Policy:** All

fundraising, grants, and monies intended to be raised for UCA, or any classroom, activity, athletics, or club or project, through organizations such as Donors Choose or any like organizations or other Internet/social media/crowdsourcing must be pre-approved by either the School Administration or Board of Directors. If the project is for technology or equipment, the technology will remain with UCA if and when the teacher leaves. If the project is for items that are not considered technology or equipment, the teacher may request approval prior to submitting the project for the items to go with him/her if they leave UCA to work at another public school.

### **406.11 ~ Continuing Education**

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Each professional educator's license holder is responsible for obtaining and satisfying the criteria for their license renewal through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Each professional educator will maintain their own file of any continuing education credits and certificates and will provide copies to the Academic Director. Copies provided to the school are for UCA audit purposes only. Only the professional educator's self-maintained files are to be used for renewals and licensure changes. All licensure information will be completed electronically via DPI's licensure website by the professional educator by creating and logging into their own account.

- [NCDPI Online Licensure System](#)

### **406.12 ~ Lesson Plans**

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An essential quality for effective teaching is preparation. Great teachers prepare in advance. Our expectation here at UCA is that teachers prepare lesson plans at least five (5) days in advance. The expectation has a two-fold purpose. First, it provides a destination for the teacher far enough in advance for plans to be modified should a lesson take longer than planned. Next, it provides the principal, building administrator, and the teacher leader a snapshot of the week to come so that observations, walk-throughs, and curriculum clips can be scheduled to see effective lessons taught.

UCA empowers teachers to use the format that fits their style of teaching the best; however, certain components within lesson plans are required. Lesson Plan Characteristics are listed below:

- 1. Common Lesson Plans:** At UCA we will maximize learning by having a common lesson plan framework. The lesson framework integrates content expectations with specific strategies for how students will learn the content successfully. This kind of lesson framework ensures teachers are intentional about their planning and instruction. All teachers are required to submit detailed lesson plans by the times set forth by their Principals.
- 2. Standards Driven:** At UCA we will focus on planning lessons from standards. Teachers identify learning goals to ensure that every lesson is standards driven. The lesson plan uses the goals to establish the distribution of instruction, summarizing, practice, and formative assessments throughout lessons.  
Components include: Learning Goals for this Lesson; Standards; Students Will Know; Students Will Be Able To; Lesson Essential Question.
- 3. Focus on Learning Strategies and Content:** Maximum learning occurs when teachers purposefully plan specific learning strategies and practices, and intentionally connect them in all lessons. The top five Learning Strategies ranked by effectiveness are: (A) Higher Order Thinking; (B) Summarizing; (C) Vocabulary in Context; (D) Advance Organizers; (E) Non-Verbal Representations.
- 4. Collaborative Planning:** Using this planning framework school-wide promotes collaborative planning and reflection that puts the school-wide focus on effective teaching and accelerating learning for all students.
- 5. Plan in Advance:** By planning in advance, exemplary schools are able to provide support for students prior to the lesson to support their success in the lesson.
- 6. Environmental Literacy:** As a part of our mission and vision here at UCA, environmental literacy is incorporated into lessons to enhance our awareness of our ecological impact.

#### **406.13 ~ Peer Observation**

UCA has an abundance of talented teachers whose strengths lie in a variety of areas. It is important for teachers to observe other teachers within the same school.

Collaboration makes us all better and promotes the pedagogical capacity of the UCA. Below are some examples of opportunities for teachers to observe each other. This will be a requirement and for the most part can be accomplished during planning periods throughout the semester.

- **Curriculum Clips:** During their planning, a teacher observes another teacher for 15–20 minutes.
- **Walk-Throughs:** Teachers with a common planning meet to discuss an area of observation (classroom management, etc.) or a learning strategy (Graphic Organizers, etc.). They meet beforehand to discuss what they will be observing, observe at least two teachers, then come back together to share their findings.
- **Vertical Learning Experience:** Teachers observe colleagues within a different grade span — for example, high school teachers observing middle school teachers and vice versa. This is done to better support vertical alignment within UCA. A sub or coverage will be provided to cover the observer's class.
- **Formal Observation:** Teachers will be scheduled to formally observe their peers. The observation will be scheduled in advance and a post-observation meeting will be conducted between the teacher and the observer.

#### 406.14 ~ Parent Contact Log

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Another essential attribute that great teachers possess is communication. It is necessary that teachers communicate and build rapport with parents/guardians of the students we serve. Communication with parents/guardians can help when students are not performing to their potential or are engaging in inappropriate behavior. It is important to understand that positive communication about students is just as important as communication about concerns. Communication can be, but is not limited to, phone calls, emails, conferences, etc., with the intent of using multiple forms of communication when needed. For example, don't just use email as the only form of contact. If the situation is serious, schedule a conference or pick up the phone and call.

#### 406.15 ~ Employee Misconduct

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Employees are expected to observe the highest standards of excellence in their job

performance and conduct. Any employee whose performance or conduct falls below this standard may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. In addition, professional employees shall comply with the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators adopted by the State Board of Education.

Misconduct that may result in disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to:

- Failure to meet performance standards
- Inability or failure to appropriately provide instruction to students
- Dishonesty
- Falsifying, tampering, or concealing information on an employment record (including a resume or time sheet) or other UCA record
- Willfully, maliciously, or negligently making false statements regarding any co-worker or UCA; making threats or using abusive or otherwise inappropriate language toward fellow employees, students, parents, or visitors
- Theft or the deliberate or careless damage or destruction of UCA property, or the property of UCA's employees, students, or anyone on UCA property; or unauthorized removal of UCA property, records, or documents
- Unauthorized use, possession, alteration, or transfer of UCA supplies or resources
- Refusal/failure to comply with any federal or state regulation or law; refusal/failure to comply with any UCA rule, policy, or procedure, including but not limited to safety, health, and security policies
- Failure to obtain or adequately maintain proper certifications and/or licenses
- Behavior, conduct, or inaction leading to the endangerment or harm of a child or children, whether physical, emotional, or mental
- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness, unreliable attendance or punctuality
- Misrepresentation of information in connection with any leave of absence from work or application for or use of UCA benefits
- Knowingly permitting unauthorized persons to be in school facilities or on school property
- Failure to return to work upon expiration of authorized leave

- Engaging in any type of criminal conduct
- Any act or acts which cause UCA to be unable to invest the amount of trust or confidence required to continue employment
- Insubordination, immorality, neglect of duty, or physical or mental incapacity
- Any violation of state or federal law, excluding minor traffic offenses
- Failure to comply with school rules, policies, and procedures
- Breach of employment or other negotiated agreements, oral and written
- Any conduct which endangers or threatens the health, safety, or welfare of any student, employee, or other person
- Release of confidential information without authorization
- Violation of the Smoking, Alcohol, and Drug-Free Workplace Policies
- Fighting
- Providing false information or knowingly omitting a material fact on an application for employment or in response to a pre-employment inquiry
- Any cause that constitutes grounds for the revocation of an employee's teaching or school administrator license
- Failure to maintain one's license or certifications in current status
- Three or more days of consecutive, unauthorized absences

#### **406.16 ~ Disciplinary Action**

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When allegations of employee misconduct arise, the Superintendent, or Designee, will investigate the allegations and will confer with the employee in question. The School reserves the right to have other employees with knowledge of the matter also be present at the conference and to have another UCA supervisory employee present. If the Superintendent concludes that misconduct occurred, he or she may discipline the employee. Discipline may include verbal counseling, a written warning, a formal discipline letter, a performance improvement plan, or termination. There is no requirement that the Superintendent engage in progressive discipline prior to termination of employment. The Superintendent is authorized to immediately

terminate an employee, regardless of whether the employee has been previously disciplined. UCA also reserves the right to place employees on paid or unpaid leave during an investigation into alleged misconduct.

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#### **406.16.1 ~ Disciplinary Action — Poor Performance**

In the case of poor job performance, employees will have documented meetings with their immediate supervisor and may be placed on a modified or action plan to allow for improvement. If job performance continues to be unsatisfactory, the supervisor will recommend non-renewal of their contract. If job performance does improve, the immediate supervisor can revise or remove modified/action plan status with the employee and notify the Central Office of the change. Additionally, an employee may not be moved between schools if they are on an action or modified plan unless under the direction or permission of the Superintendent.

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#### **406.17 ~ Voluntary Termination**

UCA will consider employees to have voluntarily terminated their employment if they resign from UCA; fail to return from an approved leave of absence on the specified date without contacting the Superintendent; or fail to report to work for three (3) or more consecutive workdays without contacting the Superintendent.

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#### **406.18 ~ Advance Notice of Resignation**

Employees planning to resign from their positions must provide written notice of resignation to their direct supervisors at least two (2) weeks in advance of their anticipated departure date (non-certified staff). Teachers and school staff should notify their Superintendent as soon as possible, ideally at least thirty (30) days before departure (certified staff). Supervisors must notify the Superintendent immediately if any employee resigns.

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#### **406.19 ~ Return of Property After Employee Termination**

Upon termination of employment from UCA, the employee must return all supplies, keys, technology equipment, phones, student and family information, and any other property belonging to UCA. The Director of Operations will provide the terminated employee with information regarding any conversion or continuation of rights to

UCA benefits as well as documentation explaining the employee's and his or her dependents' rights to continue group medical benefits under COBRA.

#### **406.20 ~ Employment Reference, Verification and Inquiries**

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All references, inquiries, or verifications of employment regarding any current or former employee of the School shall be directed to the School's Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee. No individual employee is authorized to provide reference or answer such inquiries unless approved to do so by the School's Superintendent or the Board of Directors. This includes but is not limited to inquiries and verifications pertaining to employee compensation, terms of service, or position. It is the School's policy to provide only the following reference for any current or former employee: dates of employment, position, salary, and whether the individual would be rehired.

#### **406.21 ~ Personal Information**

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It is important that the personal data of all employees and staff, such as address, emergency contacts, telephone numbers, name changes, number of dependents, beneficiaries, and tax withholding information, be kept accurate and up to date. Each employee is requested to report any changes to the Director of Operations or Director of Resources as soon as possible. UCA will not release an employee's personal data to anyone who is not employed by UCA or to any outside agency unless specifically authorized by the employee or the disclosure is required by law.

#### **406.22 ~ Non-Title IX Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying**

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UCA takes all complaints of discrimination, harassment, and bullying seriously. The process provided in this policy is designed for those individuals who believe they may have been discriminated against unlawfully, bullied, or harassed in violation of the UCA's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy.

UCA prohibits discrimination, harassment, and bullying of any employee on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (except as addressed under the Title IX Policy), age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by federal or state law. Employees who believe they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment,

or bullying should report the behavior to their direct supervisor, the Superintendent, or any other administrator with whom they feel comfortable. All reports will be investigated promptly and confidentially. Retaliation against an employee for reporting or participating in an investigation of discrimination, harassment, or bullying is strictly prohibited.

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Any employee who believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or bullying should report the matter as follows:

1. Report the incident to your direct supervisor, the Superintendent, or the Board of Directors.
2. If the Superintendent is the subject of the complaint, report directly to the Board Chair.
3. All complaints will be investigated promptly and thoroughly.
4. UCA will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of the parties involved.
5. Findings will be communicated to the reporting party within a reasonable time frame.
6. Substantiated violations will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **RECORDS**

Records relating to complaints and investigations will be maintained as required by UCA's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy.

## **406.23 ~ Title IX Policy**

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Title IX provides that "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

It is the policy of UCA that employees should not be subjected to forms of unlawful discrimination or harassment, while at school or school-sponsored activities. The

School acknowledges the dignity and worth of all employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting work environment. The School prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender or sex, including sexual orientation and LGBTQ+ identification.

## **PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS**

In accordance with Title IX, the School expressly prohibits:

- Discrimination or harassment based on sex or gender, including sexual harassment and sexual violence
- Gender-based harassment — unwelcome conduct based on an employee's sex or failure to conform to sex stereotypes
- Retaliation against any individual who reports or participates in the investigation of a Title IX matter
- Intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive to effectively deny a person equal access to an employment or education program or activity.

**Sexual Violence:** Physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual abuse, and sexual coercion.

**Retaliation:** Any adverse action taken against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under Title IX.

## **406.24 ~ Title IX Reporting and Grievance Policy**

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This Policy sets forth UCA's Notice, Reporting, and Grievance policy for Title IX

matters and should be read in conjunction with UCA's Title IX Policy. This Policy only pertains to Title IX and alleged violations of Title IX.

## **TITLE IX COORDINATOR**

UCA has designated a Title IX Coordinator who is responsible for coordinating compliance with Title IX. The Title IX Coordinator can be reached by contacting the Superintendent's office. UCA will not keep the identity of the Title IX Coordinator confidential.

## **REPORTING**

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of the conduct, to the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, by electronic mail, or by telephone. Such a report may be made at any time, including during non-business hours, by using the telephone number or electronic mail address provided for the Title IX Coordinator.

## **SUPPORTIVE MEASURES**

Upon receiving a report of a Title IX matter, UCA will promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures and consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures. UCA will implement supportive measures as appropriate. Employees seeking additional information about local community resources should contact the Superintendent's office. *[Note for school: Please insert local community resource names and contact information in this section.]*

## **FORMAL COMPLAINT AND INVESTIGATION**

A formal complaint may be filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator. Upon receipt of a formal complaint, UCA will provide written notice of the allegations to the parties involved. The investigation will be thorough, impartial, and conducted by a trained investigator. Both parties will have an equal opportunity to present their case, provide evidence, and suggest witnesses. The standard of evidence applied will be the preponderance of the evidence standard.

## **DECISION AND APPEAL**

After the investigation is complete, a written determination will be provided to all parties simultaneously. Either party may appeal the determination on the basis of a

procedural irregularity, new evidence not reasonably available at the time of the determination, or a conflict of interest. Appeals must be submitted in writing within five (5) business days of receiving the determination. The appellate decision-maker, who was not involved in the original determination, will review the appeal and provide a written decision.

### **INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

With the voluntary consent of both parties, UCA may offer informal resolution processes at any time prior to reaching a determination on a formal complaint. Informal resolution processes are not available when the alleged conduct involves an employee sexually harassing a student.

### **406.25 ~ Requirements for School Activities**

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All full-time salary-exempt employees are expected to work various events/activities outside of the regular school hours. Administrators will communicate which events are required, and those that are optional, at the beginning of each school year. There will be no additional monetary compensation for working these events. However, to encourage and support employee participation, UCA recognizes time worked at school events/activities as **Eagle Time**, which can be used towards the following:

- Applies to full-time exempt teachers
- Non-Instructional Time: Friday Afternoon (unless a required meeting is scheduled)
- Used within a month from worked events/activities
- It is the responsibility of the employee to track and record any volunteered event on the District Eagle Time Log provided at the beginning of the year

In addition, all Middle and High School full-time-exempt salary employees, certified administrators, and directors will also be responsible to serve at least three (3) athletic gate duties per year. Gate Duty will be communicated by the UCA Athletics Department. All eligible employees will be allowed to earn Eagle Time for gate duty as well.

All Elementary School Employees should anticipate a minimum of seven (7)

activities/events per year, whereas Middle/High School Employees should anticipate a combined minimum of seven (7) activities/events and gate duty per year. UCA reserves the right to assign individuals to an event at their particular school in the instance of limited coverage or continual non-participation.

In the event that an employee is unable to fulfill event/activity responsibilities, a minimum of 48 hours' notice is required in order to provide enough time to find a replacement. It is the responsibility of the employee to communicate any changes (switches/replacements) that are over 48 hours to the Athletics Department and School Principal or Designee. Employees who fail to report to self-selected or required events/activities will be handled accordingly by their respective school principal or immediate supervisor.

## **407 ~ OPERATIONS**

### **407.1 ~ Staff I.D. Badges**

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UCA requires every staff member to wear their I.D. badge every day. Please make sure you have one at all times. If you don't have one, please see your school's Principal to order one.

### **407.2 ~ Keys, Security Code, and Intercom System**

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UCA entrance, classroom, and office keys are issued to employees at the beginning of each school year. Employees are responsible for securely maintaining control of assigned keys and not allowing any unapproved individuals access to such keys. Do not give students your keys for any reason. If a staff member loses his or her keys, he or she shall pay a \$10.00 fee to have them replaced and, if needed, for the cost of adjusting the security system and issuing new keys and cards to others. Employees should alert expected visitors that they will be expected to use the intercom system to enter the building.

### **407.3 ~ Visitors**

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Only authorized visitors are permitted on UCA's premises. All visitors must report

directly to UCA's office for authorization, instructions, and a name badge. Any employee who notices an unauthorized visitor or a visitor not wearing an official name badge should notify his or her supervisor immediately or make such other reports as appropriate.

#### **407.4 ~ Volunteers**

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The district depends on the generosity of volunteered time. If you know someone who is interested in volunteering at a specific school, please contact the school's office. Reasonable background inquiries and checks are required for all volunteers (interns, student teachers, tutors, or similar roles) who may have unsupervised contact with students. It is the responsibility of each school's Principal to ensure all volunteers have a completed volunteer form and a completed (passed) Criminal Background Check on file with the Human Resources Department before volunteering. Volunteer forms can be located on the Uwharrie Charter website under the Human Resources tab. The district's Human Resources Division will review the results and notify the principal and/or volunteer coordinator of the results and recommendations. Individuals who provide false information may be denied the privilege to volunteer. Approved volunteer status expires at the end of each school year. Volunteers who seek to continue volunteering for UCA will have to complete a new Volunteer Form at the beginning of each school year.

All UCA Volunteers are subject to a Criminal History background check that covers the following:

- Comprehensive Criminal Check
- Statewide Criminal Check
- Sex Offender Registry
- Other Criminal Record: SW Security Watch List

*Note: Credit Checks will not be performed.*

#### **407.5 ~ Personal Property**

UCA does not assume responsibility for any personal property located on its premises. Employees are to use their own discretion when choosing to bring

personal property onto school property and do so at their own risk.

### **407.6 ~ Equipment Inventory**

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Teachers are issued laptops at the beginning of the year. It is your responsibility to handle these expensive resources responsibly. Excessive damages will incur repair fees.

Teachers and other employees, if applicable, must submit a completed equipment inventory to an administrator before leaving UCA's premises on the final day of each work year and upon termination of employment.

### **407.7 ~ Money Procedures**

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All money collected or received by an employee or agent of UCA will be deposited in accordance with this policy. Each employee or agent of UCA whose duty it is to collect or receive money will turn it into the business office daily. If the money is collected during a time the business department is closed, it is to be turned in immediately the following business day.

The Chief Finance Officer may at any time audit the accounts of any employee or agent collecting or receiving any taxes or other monies and may prescribe the form and detail of these accounts. The accounts of such an employee or agent will be audited at least annually.

### **407.8 ~ Expense Reimbursement**

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It is the official policy of UCA to use a Purchase Order System, which eliminates the need for any reimbursements. If there is something that is needed for a class or the school, a purchase order request should be filled out completely and submitted to the business department for approval before any item may be ordered. All purchases and payments will be processed through our business department. Please adhere to this process, as there will be no exceptions and UCA will not reimburse any unauthorized out-of-pocket expenses.

### **407.9 ~ School Closing**

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UCA follows our own inclement weather policy. Employees must watch television,

and monitor school email and text messages for announcements on closings. Staff team leaders, the UCA Facebook page, and the UCA website will also provide employees with information on school closings.

#### **407.10 ~ Solicitation and Distribution of Literature on School Premises**

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To maintain efficient and safe operations and to encourage employees to give their full attention to their jobs, UCA does not allow the solicitation and distribution of literature on School premises. Please help ensure this by refraining from the following:

- Distribution of literature by employees in work areas on UCA property
- Distribution of literature by employees during working time in non-work areas on UCA property, which in any way interferes with work
- Solicitation by employees on UCA property during working time, which in any way interferes with work
- Solicitation and/or distribution of literature by non-employees on UCA property

#### **407.11 ~ Remote Work Policy**

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UCA may allow certain employees the opportunity to work remotely when business needs require it. Remote work, or telecommuting, is the concept of working from home or another location on a full- or part-time basis. Remote work is not a formal, universal employee benefit. Rather, it is an alternative method of meeting UCA's needs during qualifying circumstances. UCA has the right to refuse to make remote work available to an employee and to terminate a remote work arrangement at any time in its sole discretion.

#### **COMPENSATION AND WORK HOURS**

The employee's compensation, benefits, work status, and work responsibilities will not change when working remotely unless the employee is notified in writing of such a change. The amount of time the employee is expected to work per day or pay period will not change as a result of remote work. However, schedules and hours may change depending on UCA's needs and expectations.

#### **ELIGIBILITY**

Not all employees will be eligible to work remotely. Successful remote workers have the support of their supervisors and UCA. UCA shall provide training and instructions for remote working when applicable.

### **EQUIPMENT AND TOOLS**

UCA may provide specific tools/equipment for the employee to perform his/her current duties. This may include computer hardware, computer software, phone lines, email, voicemail, connectivity to host applications, and other applicable equipment as deemed necessary. The use of equipment, software, data supplies, and furniture when provided by UCA for use at the remote work location is limited to authorized persons and for purposes relating to School business. UCA will provide for repairs to company equipment. When the employee uses his/her own equipment, the employee is responsible for maintenance and repair of equipment.

### **SECURITY**

UCA expects all remote-working employees to comply with the Technology Security Guidelines set out below (Attachment A).

### **WORKSPACE**

The employee shall designate a workspace within the remote work location for placement and installation of equipment to be used while working remotely. The employee shall maintain this workspace in a safe condition, free from hazards and other dangers to the employee and equipment. The workspace shall be professional, appropriate, and conducive to audio and visual interactions with students, families, and co-workers.

### **OFFICE SUPPLIES**

UCA will provide any needed office supplies for remote work when applicable. Out-of-pocket expenses for other supplies will not be reimbursed unless prior written approval has been obtained from UCA in accordance with its fiscal policies.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Employees must be available by phone, teleconference, and email during core work hours.

### **ATTIRE AND CONDUCT**

Remote-working employees are expected to continue to conduct themselves in a professional manner. It is expected that remote-working employees will be available for audio and video conferences/calls during working hours and will dress professionally and appropriately as per School policy during work time, especially when conducting classes, meetings, or communications using video.

## **ATTACHMENT A: TECHNOLOGY SECURITY GUIDELINES FOR REMOTE WORK**

- **Know UCA's remote work policies.** This includes when and where it is acceptable to work away from the office as well as any security measures or best practices.
- **Use only devices approved by your organization.** Avoid using personal computers, tablets, and cellphones — as well as those shared with others — to work.
- **Use VPN when necessary.** Virtual private networks may be necessary when accessing files, working with sensitive information, or using certain websites.
- **Think before you click.** Avoid downloading or clicking on unknown links in emails. Hackers often use fake websites to trick you into giving sensitive information or to install malware onto your device.
- **Guard your devices.** Never leave your laptop, tablet, or cellphone — including any USB or external storage devices — unattended.
- **Connect only to trusted networks** or your cellular Wi-Fi connection. Many public hotspots aren't secure and may not protect your passwords, emails, and work.
- **Create strong passwords.** Include a mix of upper and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols. Make them difficult enough that someone can't guess them.
- **Don't share passwords online.** If you must share log-in information with a coworker, call them with the details instead of sending via email, text, or instant message.
- **Use two-factor authentication** when available for an extra layer of security.
- **Encrypt your email** when sending sensitive data or information electronically.

- **Contact your IT help desk.** If you need technical support, contact UCA's IT department. Don't try to fix technical issues yourself.

## 408 ~ PAYROLL AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

### 408.1 ~ Employee Categories and FLSA

UCA has established and uses classifications of employment status for the purpose of the consistent application of terms and conditions of employment. Each UCA employee is designated as either "EXEMPT" or "NON-EXEMPT" from applicable federal and state wage and hour laws.

- **EXEMPT employees** are generally paid on a salary basis and are not eligible for overtime pay. An exempt employee's salary serves as compensation for all hours worked.
- **NON-EXEMPT employees** are generally paid on an hourly basis. In accordance with applicable federal and state wage and hour laws, all non-exempt employees are entitled to overtime pay for hours worked over 40 in a given week. Non-exempt employees must obtain written approval before working overtime.  
Employees who work overtime without written approval may be disciplined up to and including termination. All non-exempt employees are expected to record their time and clock in and out.

In addition, each UCA employee is designated within one of the following categories:

- **FULL-TIME employees** are those regularly scheduled to work 40 hours or more per week. These employees are grouped as 10-month, 11-month, or 12-month.
- **PART-TIME employees** are those regularly scheduled to work less than 40 hours per week.
- **SALARIED employees** are paid on a salary basis, but if non-exempt, may also be eligible for overtime.
- **HOURLY employees** are paid on an hourly basis and are NON-EXEMPT. All hourly employees are entitled to overtime pay for hours worked over 40 in a given week and must obtain written approval before working overtime.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT (FLSA)**

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) (29 U.S.C. §§ 201–219) was adopted in 1938 and applies to school employees. Exempt employees — such as superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and teachers — are not subject to overtime requirements, but are covered by equal pay and record-keeping provisions. Non-exempt employees — such as custodians, secretaries, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and after-care employees — are entitled to all FLSA protections including minimum wage and overtime.

All hours worked are compensable. Non-exempt employees must be paid for all hours worked, including time traveling between job sites during the workday, coffee and rest breaks, time taken to complete work at home, and time voluntarily worked early or late when the employer "suffers or permits" the extra work. Overtime must be paid for all hours worked over 40 in a work week, and neither the employer nor employee may waive this requirement.

### **408.2 ~ Work Week/Pay Period**

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The work week is Monday through Sunday, although employees generally work Monday through Friday. For FLSA compliance purposes, the workweek is defined as 12:00 a.m. Saturday through 11:59 p.m. Friday.

All salaried employees are paid on the last calendar day of each month. When this day falls on a holiday or weekend, employees will be paid the day before the holiday or weekend, if possible. Payroll deposits will not be released prior to the set pay schedule for any reason, nor will they be released to anyone other than the employee, unless the employee has authorized UCA to deposit his or her payroll directly into the employee's bank account.

UCA complies with all federal, state, and local laws governing compensation of employees, including but not limited to the Fair Labor Standards Act. Improper deductions from pay are prohibited. Employees who believe that a deduction has been made from their pay improperly should contact Human Resources. UCA will investigate and reimburse any improperly deducted amounts.

### **408.3 ~ Payroll Deductions/Garnishments**

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UCA is required by law to withhold certain federal and state taxes from wages paid to employees. UCA will make other payroll deductions such as those relating to retirement plan contributions or expenses owed back to UCA, upon authorization by the employee. At the end of each calendar year, the employee is supplied with his or her Wage and Tax Statement (W-2) form. If UCA receives an order to garnish an employee's wages, it must comply with that order in accordance with applicable law. A wage garnishment can be released only at the direction of the federal, state, or local agency ordering the garnishment.

### **408.4 ~ Health Insurance**

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Employees, if otherwise eligible, may opt to participate in the North Carolina State Health Plan for Teachers and State Employees. Consult the plan document for specific information regarding eligibility, coverage, and enrollment deadlines.

### **408.5 ~ Retirement**

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UCA has opted to participate in the North Carolina State Retirement Plan (Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System — TSERS), and employees and the Academy will make contributions as required under that plan. Eligible employees contribute 6% of gross salary (pre-tax) to the Retirement System. Uwharrie Charter Academy makes a contribution as established by the North Carolina General Assembly for each permanent full-time employee. Monthly benefits at retirement are based upon the employee's four (4) highest consecutive years of salary, years of state service, and/or age at retirement.

#### **EMPLOYEES HIRED ON OR BEFORE JULY 31, 2011**

After five (5) years of creditable service, an employee hired prior to August 1, 2011 is considered "vested" and may be eligible for benefits from the retirement system. Full, unreduced retirement benefits may be received at age 65 with five years of service; age 60 with 25 years of service; or at any age with 30 years of service. Reduced benefits may be received at age 50 with 20 years of service or age 60 with five years of service.

## HEALTH COVERAGE IN RETIREMENT — STATE HEALTH PLAN

Retirees may be eligible for State Health Plan coverage. The cost, if any, is determined by when the employee began state employment and which health plan is selected. Employees first hired on and after October 1, 2006 must have 20 or more years of retirement service credit for noncontributory (premium-free) coverage. Those with 10 to 19 years of service credit (hired on or after October 1, 2006) are eligible for one-half contributory coverage. **Note: Members hired on or after January 1, 2021, will not be eligible to receive retiree medical benefits.**

For more detailed information, refer to the TSERS Handbook: [TSERS Handbook PDF](#) and the ORBIT portal at [orbit.myncretirement.com](http://orbit.myncretirement.com).

## SICK LEAVE AND RETIREMENT CREDIT

Unused sick leave can be converted to additional retirement service credit at the time of retirement if: the sick leave was earned monthly under a duly adopted sick leave policy; you would receive full salary when using the sick leave if absent due to illness; you have not and will not receive any compensation for this sick leave; and your last day of service was within five years before your TSERS effective date of retirement. When you retire, you are allowed one month of credit for each 20 days of unused sick leave.

## 408.6 ~ Workers Compensation

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In the event of a medical emergency, call 911. UCA provides workers' compensation insurance for all employees as required by law. All employees should promptly report injuries to the appropriate school Principal.

## 408.7 ~ Holidays

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All full-time salaried employees are eligible for the following paid holidays: Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Juneteenth, Thanksgiving, Winter Break, Spring Break, and Fall Break. Additionally, all 12-month employees receive the week of July 4th as vacation (unless worked through your immediate supervisor) and salaried-exempt employees will receive an additional 5 days vacation during the summer (days will be worked through immediate supervisor).

## 409 ~ NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

### 409.1 ~ Non-Exempt Employees Breaks and Lunches

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All non-exempt employees are permitted a fifteen (15)-minute paid rest break for each four-hour work period. All non-exempt employees who work eight (8) or more hours in a day are required to take an unpaid meal break of at least thirty (30) minutes.

### 409.2 ~ Non-Exempt Employees Holidays

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Non-exempt employees will be paid for the following holidays: Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Juneteenth, Thanksgiving, Winter Break, Spring Break, and Fall Break. If a non-exempt employee is required to work on a paid holiday, they will receive the applicable overtime compensation in accordance with FLSA requirements.

## 410 ~ VACATION / PERSONAL DAYS / SICK DAY ACCRUAL

### 410.1 ~ Vacation & Sick Days

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**Vacation:** All 12-month employees receive five (5) days of paid vacation (the week of July 4th). Salaried-exempt employees receive an additional five (5) days in summer. Vacation days do not roll over at the end of the school year.

**Sick Leave:** Sick leave is earned at one (1) day per month of active employment. Full-time employees may transfer unused sick leave from prior North Carolina Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in accordance with state policy. Unused sick leave at the end of employment is not paid out; however, it may be applied toward retirement service credit as described in Section 408.5.

When onboarding all new employees have 6 months to transfer all leave to the HR department for credit. Transferred leave will be held in the Transferred Leave Category. Additionally, employees are to check pay statements to ensure accuracy of

transferred leave.

When offboarding, UCA employees recognize that not all schools except leave from charter schools.

**Personal Leave:** All full-time employees receive two (2) Personal Leave days annually. Personal leave days do not roll over to the following year. No personnel leave will be granted during Winter or Spring EOC/EOG testing periods.

### **410.2 ~ Bereavement Leave**

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In the event of the death of an immediate family member (spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or corresponding step and in-law relationships), an employee will receive up to five (5) paid bereavement days. In the event of the death of another family member (aunt, uncle, cousin, or other close relation), an employee will receive up to three (3) paid bereavement days. Additional unpaid time off may be approved at the discretion of the Superintendent.

### **410.3 ~ Family and Medical Leave**

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UCA complies with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Eligible employees — those who have been employed for at least one (1) year and have worked at least 1,250 hours in the preceding 12 months — may take up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year for the following qualifying reasons:

- The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child
- The employee's own serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his or her position
- Caring for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition
- A qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on covered active duty or called to covered active duty status in the Armed Forces

**Military Caregiver Leave:** Eligible employees who are the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered servicemember may take up to twenty-six (26) weeks of unpaid leave in a single 12-month period to care for that servicemember.

Employees requesting FMLA leave should notify the Superintendent as soon as practicable. When leave is for a foreseeable reason, employees should provide 30 days' advance notice. UCA may require medical certification to support a request for FMLA leave.

#### 410.4 ~ Other Leaves of Absence

- **Jury Duty:** Employees summoned for jury duty will receive up to ten (10) paid days for jury service. Employees must provide the Superintendent with a copy of their jury summons as soon as possible.
- **Witness Duty:** Employees subpoenaed to testify in court will receive paid leave for the days they are required to testify, not to exceed those required by applicable law.
- **Military Duty:** Employees called to active military duty will be granted leave in accordance with applicable state and federal law, including USERRA.
- **Parental Educational Leave:** Employees are entitled to up to four (4) hours of unpaid leave per year to attend or participate in their own child's school activities, in accordance with North Carolina law.

#### 410.5 ~ Other Leave Required by Law

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UCA will provide all leaves of absence required by applicable federal and state law. Employees should contact the Superintendent for information about any specific leave required by law that is not addressed in this handbook.

#### 410.6 ~ Absence Management System

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UCA uses the **Red Rover K12** system to manage employee absences. All absences must be entered into the system by 6:00 a.m. on the day of the absence to allow adequate time to find a substitute. Employees are responsible for securing their own substitute or for notifying their supervisor when they are unable to report to work. Medical documentation may be required for absences exceeding five (5) consecutive days.

#### 410.7 ~ Return to Work After Extended Closure

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In the event of an extended school closure due to a public health emergency, natural disaster, or other extraordinary circumstance, employees are expected to return to the workplace when directed by the Superintendent or UCA leadership, in accordance with applicable state and federal guidelines. Employees who have exhausted applicable leave entitlements or whose remote work arrangements have ended will be expected to resume in-person duties. Specific return-to-work protocols, including any safety measures, will be communicated by school administration prior to resumption of on-site work.

## 411 ~ STUDENT-RELATED POLICIES

### 411.1 ~ Administration of Medicine

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Except as authorized by law and/or as set forth below, students should not be in possession of any medication, nor take any medications, during the regular school day or on school premises on their own. UCA will only administer drugs and medications prescribed by a doctor to students at the written request of the parent. If students require a prescribed medication, UCA designees (Office Managers for each school) are the only people on campus authorized to administer medicine if: (1) there is a written request from the parent which gives explicit written instructions describing the manner in which the drug or medication is to be administered, including the type of medication, dosage, and time of administration; (2) a physician has prescribed the drug or medication for use by the student; and (3) the medicine is in its original packaging with the prescriptive label.

Students with asthma or who are subject to anaphylactic reactions may possess and self-administer asthma medication on school property during the school day, at school-sponsored activities, or while in transit to or from school or school-sponsored events, provided that the student's parent or guardian has first provided to the school written authorization for the student to possess and self-administer such medication, together with a written statement from the student's healthcare provider verifying that the student has asthma or an allergy that could result in an anaphylactic reaction, and that the healthcare provider has prescribed medication for such use. The healthcare practitioner will also provide a written treatment plan and written emergency protocol. The student's parent or guardian must also provide

a signed written statement acknowledging that the School and its employees and agents are not liable for any injury arising from a student's possession or self-administration of such medication. Permission to possess and self-administer asthma medication is effective for only 365 calendar days from its receipt by the School and must be renewed annually.

All medicine kept at school for students must be kept in a secure and easily accessible place. Written information maintained by school personnel regarding a student's health and medicinal needs shall remain confidential.

## **411.2 ~ Internet Safety Policy**

It is the policy of UCA to: (1) prevent user access and transmission of inappropriate material via the Internet utilizing UCA's technology resources; (2) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (3) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (4) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554, Title XVII, and 47 USC 254(h)].

This policy applies to all UCA community members, including students, teachers, staff, and designated contractual or temporary staff.

### **TECHNOLOGY PROTECTION MEASURE**

UCA shall filter all Internet traffic to and from all UCA student-assigned devices to ensure it is appropriate for minors and in compliance with all local, state, and federal mandates. The UCA Operations Department shall maintain the necessary licensing annually to ensure all applicable categories of harmful Internet content are blocked and inaccessible by community members. UCA shall also provide for the day-to-day administration of this content filter, including manual blocking and unblocking of sites based on requests with legitimate educational purposes, selection/de-selection of website categories, and review and analysis of usage and filtering logs.

### **MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF ONLINE ACTIVITIES**

It is the responsibility of all UCA staff responsible for allocating UCA technology resources for student use to supervise and monitor appropriate usage, especially Internet access, in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act. This includes logging and reporting of usage, in-classroom monitoring of student use, and

follow-up meetings with students and/or parents concerning student use of technology resources.

## **EDUCATION OF MINORS**

School staff responsible for allocating UCA technology resources for student use shall be responsible for providing instruction to students concerning appropriate online behavior. Such instruction shall include review of specific inappropriate behavior, the consequences of such behavior, and guidance on how staff will assist students to be successful with the use of UCA technology resources while avoiding inappropriate content.

### **411.3 ~ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

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The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all educational agencies and institutions that receive funds under any program administered by the Department of Education. The law prohibits a school from disclosing personally identifiable information from students' education records without the consent of a parent or eligible student, unless an exception to FERPA's general consent rule applies.

UCA employees, contractors, and volunteers are exposed to confidential information daily. Information concerning children and their families should be treated as confidential, including personally identifiable information from students' education records. Staff members with access to this information do not have the right to give this information to anyone who does not have a legitimate professional reason for access. Teachers or other staff members can be held liable for the individual release of information. Staff members are not permitted to discuss information about their students in open areas or where parents or other students have access. Please do not put a student's name in the subject line of an email; treat student names as confidential.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. If you have questions regarding FERPA or have received a request for educational records, please contact the Superintendent. See: [FERPA — U.S. Department of Education](#).

## **RELEASE OF RECORDS**

Student records will be released promptly when a student transfers to another school, and in other circumstances specifically permitted by law. Written permission by a parent, guardian, or eligible student is required for the release of a student's records in any other circumstance. Directory information may be released to the public by the School after providing proper notice and the opportunity for the parent, guardian, or eligible student to object. Directory information includes: student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, dates of attendance, diplomas and awards received, most recent previous school attended, and pictures or videos taken on school grounds or at school activities, unless the picture or video may reveal confidential information about a student.

As required by law, the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of secondary school students shall be released, upon request, to military recruiters or institutions of higher learning. Students or their parents, however, may request that such information not be released.

## **ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM**

The actual address and telephone number of a student who is a participant in the Address Confidentiality Program established pursuant to Chapter 15C of the North Carolina General Statutes shall be kept confidential from the public and shall not be disclosed except as provided in Chapter 15C. Records of such students must show only the substitute address provided by the Address Confidentiality Program.

## **411.4 ~ Management and Protection of Student Records**

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Access to electronic student records shall be managed as follows:

### **APPLICATION MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

Specific data sources such as electronic file records, databases, and applications — such as student information systems and meal tracking systems — shall be appointed an administrator responsible for granting access to the system. These administrators shall grant or deny requests to access student records. The number of administrators with this capability shall be of a quantity greater than two (2) but less than five (5), and UCA shall identify and maintain documentation of the list of administrators at

all times.

## **NETWORK SECURITY MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

Access to the network containing electronic file records, databases, and applications shall also require security and access credentials. A UCA-appointed network administrator shall be designated to implement and manage the system granting access to the network, shall define and provide specifications to outside parties concerning access to the network, shall guide the implementation of new technologies into the network in light of FERPA requirements, and shall specify all other requirements concerning activities on the network. It shall be the sole responsibility of these administrators to grant or deny access to the network containing student records and to specify all requirements and activities concerning this network.

## **SURVEYS AND EVALUATIONS**

No student shall be required, as a part of any applicable program, to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning: political affiliations; mental and psychological problems; sex behavior and attitudes; illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of individuals with close family relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships; or income, other than that required by law to determine eligibility for a program.

## **411.5 ~ Juvenile Records**

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Juvenile records include documentation or information regarding students who are under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. These records may be received from local law enforcement and/or other local agencies authorized to share information concerning juveniles in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 7B-3100. Such documents must not be part of a student's official records but must be maintained by the Superintendent in a safe, locked storage area that is separate from the student's other records. The Superintendent shall not make a copy of such documents under any circumstances.

Juvenile records will be used only to protect the safety of or to improve the educational opportunities for the student or others. The Superintendent may share juvenile records only with individuals who have (a) direct guidance, teaching, or

supervisory responsibility for the student and (b) a specific need to know in order to protect the safety of the student and others. Persons provided access to juvenile records must indicate in writing that they have read the document(s) and agree to maintain confidentiality.

The Superintendent or designee must destroy juvenile documents if he or she receives notification that a court no longer has jurisdiction over the student or if the court grants the student's petition for expunction of the records. If the student graduates, withdraws, transfers, is suspended for the remainder of the school year, or is expelled, the Superintendent shall return all documents not destroyed to the juvenile court counselor.

### **411.6 ~ Child Abuse Reporting**

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All staff must follow state policies on reporting suspected child abuse or neglect. All school employees must report to the County Director of Social Services (DSS) any suspected abuse or neglect if they have knowledge of or observe instances of abuse or neglect, or if they know or reasonably suspect abuse or neglect has occurred. Reports can be made by calling **(336) 683-8000**. Any report must also be reported to the Superintendent immediately. All school personnel will receive training on how to report child abuse. Please see the Superintendent if you have any questions or need assistance making a report.

In the event that a school employee suspects child abuse or neglect, the school employee should communicate with the Guidance Counselor regarding the suspicion. The Guidance Counselor will talk with the student or family in question and will determine whether a report must be made to the County Director of Social Services. The Guidance Counselor may make the call independently or may request the school employee to assist in making the call, as will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

### **411.7 ~ Child Sexual Abuse and Sex Trafficking Training Policy**

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Uwharrie Charter Academy complies with North Carolina law with respect to child abuse and sex trafficking, including N.C.G.S. 115C-218.75(g). Those laws require that Uwharrie Charter Academy adopt and implement a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program in accordance with N.C.G.S. 115C-375.20. Specifically, N.C.G.S. 115C-375.20 states as follows:

*"School personnel" means teachers, instructional support personnel, Principals, and assistant Principals. This term may also include, at the discretion of the employing entity, other school employees who work directly with students in grades kindergarten through 12.*

- Each employing entity shall adopt and implement a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program for school personnel who work directly with students in grades kindergarten through 12 that provides education and awareness training related to child sexual abuse and sex trafficking, including but not limited to: best practices from the field of prevention; the grooming process of sexual predators; the warning signs of sexual abuse and sex trafficking; how to intervene when sexual abuse or sex trafficking is suspected or disclosed; legal responsibilities for reporting sexual abuse or sex trafficking; and available resources for assistance.
- All school personnel who work with students in grades kindergarten through 12 shall receive two (2) hours of training consistent with this section in even-numbered years beginning in 2020.
- No entity required to adopt such a program, or its members, employees, designees, agents, or volunteers, shall be liable in civil damages to any party for any loss or damage caused by any act or omission relating to the provision of, participation in, or implementation of any component of a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program required by this section, unless that act or omission amounts to gross negligence, wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing.

Such a program shall be adopted and implemented beginning with the 2020–2021 school year. The Uwharrie Charter Academy program under this policy shall be conducted in accordance with North Carolina law and supervised by the Operations Officer.

**Uwharrie Charter Academy**

Employee Policy Handbook (Section 400) — 2026–2027

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Uwharrie Charter Academy Employee Policy Handbook (Section 400) for the 2026–2027 school year. I understand that this Handbook is not a contract of employment, that my employment is at-will, and that UCA may amend these policies at any time.

I further acknowledge that it is my responsibility to comply with all policies and procedures described in this Handbook and to remain in compliance with any amendments communicated by UCA throughout the school year.

Employee Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_