

# **SER-NIÑOS CHARTER SCHOOL SYSTEM**

## **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**



**Last updated: August 2021**

## **COVID-19**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** will continue to require all students, staff, and visitors to wear masks and shields on school property and at school events. This requirement is consistent with the advice of health professionals and guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Additionally, **SER-Niños** will continue to follow the guidelines of its Communicable Disease Plan for the safety of all of our students and staff at all **SER-Niños** campuses and library, including practicing physical distancing.

## **WELCOME**

Welcome to **SER-Niños Charter School System**! We are delighted that you have chosen to join our organization and hope that you will enjoy a long and successful career with us. As you become familiar with our culture and mission, we hope you will take advantage of opportunities to enhance your career and further **SER-Niños'** goals.

You are joining an organization that has a reputation for outstanding education, leadership, innovation, and expertise. With your active involvement, creativity, and support, **SER-Niños** will continue to achieve its goals. We sincerely hope you will take pride in being an important part of **SER-Niños'** success.

Please take time to review the policies contained in this handbook. If you have questions, feel free to contact the Human Resources (HR) department.

## **FOREWORD**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** is committed to top-quality education. Our students' success is our primary concern, and all that we do is centered on that goal. For us to perform our duties effectively and to help our students be successful, it is important that each employee be aware of the policies and procedures related to his/her position.

Whether you have just joined our staff or have been at SER-Niños for a while, we are confident that you will find our School a dynamic and rewarding place in which to work, and we look forward to a productive and successful association. We consider the employees of SER-Niños to be one of its most valuable resources. This handbook has been written to serve as the guide for the employer/employee relationship.

There are several things to keep in mind about this handbook. First, **it contains only general information and guidelines**. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies and procedures described. For that reason, if you have any questions concerning eligibility for a particular benefit or the applicability of a policy or practice to you, you should address your specific questions to the Human Resource department. Neither this handbook nor any other School document confers any contractual right either expressed or implied, to remain in the School's employ. Nor does it guarantee any fixed terms and conditions of your employment. Your employment is not for any specific time and may be terminated "at will" with or without cause and without prior notice by the School, or you may resign for any reason at any time. No one other than the Superintendent has the authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to make any agreement contrary to the above. The provisions of the handbook have been developed at the discretion of the Superintendent and approved by the Board of Directors, except for its policy of employment "at-will", may be amended or cancelled at any time, at the School's sole discretion. Also, the procedures, practices, policies and benefits described here may be modified or discontinued from time to time. We will try to inform you of any changes as they occur.

This handbook and the information in it should be treated as confidential. No portion of this handbook should be disclosed to others, except SER-Niños employees and others affiliated with SER-Niños whose knowledge of the information is required in the normal course of business.

The **handbook only briefly summarizes those guidelines and benefits**. Please note that the terms of the written insurance policies are controlling and override any statements made in this or other documents.

### **Mission, Goals & Objectives at SER-Niños**

The Mission at SER-Niños is to empower a community of parents, students, and teachers to create learning opportunities which will develop accountable, responsible and contributing members of society who are independent, life-long learners.

***SER-Niños' goals are aligned to the Core Beliefs and Commitments set by the  
SER-Niños Charter School System School Board***

### **Board of Directors**

Texas law grants the board of directors the power to govern and oversee the management of the school system. The board is the policy-making body and has overall responsibility for the curriculum, school taxes, budget, employment of the Superintendent and other professional staff, and facilities. The Board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal laws and regulations. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the county.

### **Current Board members include:**

- |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| • <b>Rene Gonzalez, Jr.</b> | <b>Chairman of the Board</b> |
| • <b>Dr. Waynel Sexton</b>  | <b>Vice Chairman</b>         |
| • <b>Joseph Soliz, Esq.</b> | <b>Treasurer</b>             |
| • <b>Jocelyn Mouton</b>     | <b>Secretary</b>             |
| • <b>Laurence J. Payne</b>  | <b>Member</b>                |

Customarily, the Board meets monthly on the third Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the middle school building. Meetings are open to the public.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. **Not all school systems or districts' policies and procedures are included. Those that are, have been summarized.**

This handbook is not intended to alter the 'at-will' status of noncontract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a **brief explanation of school policies and procedures related to employment.** These policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may confer with their supervisor, or call the Human Resources Department.

School system policies can be accessed online at [www.serninos.org](http://www.serninos.org) – Human Resources - Employee Portal.

## **EMPLOYMENT AT WILL**

Employment at **SER-Niños Charter School System** is on an 'at-will' basis. This means that either the employee or the organization may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without notice.

Nothing in this employee handbook creates or is intended to create an employment agreement, express or implied. Nothing contained in this or any other document provided to the employee is intended to be, nor should it be, construed as a contract that employment or any benefit will be continued for any period of time. In addition, no organization representative is authorized to modify this policy for any employee or to enter into any agreement, oral or written, that changes the 'at-will' relationship.

Any salary figures provided to an employee in annual or monthly terms are stated for the sake of convenience or to facilitate comparisons and are not intended to and do not create an employment contract for any specific period of time.

Nothing in this statement is intended to interfere with, restrain, or prevent concerted activity as protected by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Such activity includes employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment. **SER-Niños Charter School System** employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY**

### **Equal Opportunity**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, creed, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy-related conditions), gender identity or expression (including transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, genetic information, service in the military, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws and ordinances. Equal employment

opportunity applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leave of absence, compensation, and training.

**SER-Niños Charter School System** expressly prohibits any form of unlawful employee harassment or discrimination based on any of the characteristics mentioned above. Improper interference with the ability of other employees to perform their expected job duties is absolutely not tolerated.

**SER-Niños Charter School System** will endeavor to make a reasonable accommodation of an otherwise qualified applicant or employee related to an individual's physical or mental disability, sincerely held religious beliefs and practices, and/or any other reason required by applicable law, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship upon **SER-Niños Charter School System's** school business operations.

Any employees with questions or concerns about equal employment opportunities in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the Human Resources Department. The organization will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who raise issues of equal employment opportunity. Employees who feel they have been subjected to any such retaliation should bring it to the attention of the Human Resources Department.

Retaliation means adverse conduct taken because an individual reported an actual or a perceived violation of this policy, opposed practices prohibited by this policy, or participated in the reporting and investigation process.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Reasonable Accommodation**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** is committed to the fair and equal employment of individuals with disabilities under the ADA. It is **SER-Niños Charter School System's** policy to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the School. **SER-Niños Charter School System** prohibits any harassment of, or discriminatory treatment of, employees based on a disability or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation.

It is the policy of **SER-Niños Charter School System** to prohibit harassment or discrimination based on disability or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation. **SER-Niños Charter School System** prohibits retaliation against employees for exercising their rights under the ADA or other applicable civil rights laws. Employees should use the procedures described in the Harassment and Complaint Procedure to report any harassment, discrimination, or retaliation they have experienced or witnessed.

### **Commitment to Diversity**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace in which all employees have an opportunity to participate and contribute to the success of the organization and are valued for their skills, experience, and unique perspectives. This commitment is embodied in School policy and the way we do business at **SER-Niños Charter School System** and is an important principle of sound business management.

## **Harassment and Complaint Procedure**

It is **SER-Niños Charter School System's** policy to prohibit intentional and unintentional harassment of or against job applicants, contractors, interns, volunteers, or employees by another employee, supervisor, vendor, or third party based on actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy-related conditions), gender identity or expression (including transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, military service and veteran status, physical or mental disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws. Such conduct will not be tolerated by **SER-Niños Charter School System**.

Furthermore, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual or other harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated. **SER-Niños Charter School System** will take all reasonable steps necessary to prevent and eliminate unlawful harassment.

**Definition of "unlawful harassment."** "Unlawful harassment" is conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, a hostile, or an offensive work environment; has the purpose or effect of substantially and unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities because of the individual's membership in a protected class.

Unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, epithets; slurs; jokes; pranks; innuendo; comments; written or graphic material; stereotyping; or other threatening, hostile, or intimidating acts based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, veteran status, or another characteristic protected by state or federal law.

**Definition of "sexual harassment."** While all forms of harassment are prohibited, special attention should be paid to sexual harassment. "sexual harassment" can include all of the above actions, as well as other unwelcome conduct, and is generally defined under both state and federal law as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature whereby:

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of any individual's employment or as a basis for employment decisions.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, a hostile, or an offensive work environment.

Other sexually oriented conduct, whether intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to workers may also constitute sexual harassment.

All employees should take special note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual or other harassment and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of sexual or other harassment complaints violate **SER-Niños Charter School System's** policy.

**Complaint procedure.** If you believe you have been subject to or have witnessed unlawful discrimination, including sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment, or other inappropriate conduct, you are requested and encouraged to make a complaint. Speak directly with your immediate supervisor or Human Resources Department.

All complaints will be investigated promptly, and confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible. A timely resolution of each complaint should be reached and communicated to the parties involved.

If the investigation confirms conduct that violates this policy has occurred, **SER-Niños Charter School System** will take immediate, appropriate, corrective action, including discipline, up to and including immediate termination.

No reprisal, retaliation, or other adverse action will be taken against an employee for making a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment or for assisting in the investigation of any such complaint or report. Any suspected retaliation or intimidation should be reported immediately to the Human Resources Department.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **Conflicts of Interest**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** expects all employees to conduct themselves and School business in a manner that reflects the highest standards of ethical conduct and in accordance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. This includes avoiding real and potential conflicts of interests.

Exactly what constitutes a conflict of interest or an unethical practice is both a moral and a legal question. **SER-Niños Charter School System** recognizes and respects the individual employee's right to engage in activities outside of employment that are private in nature and do not in any way conflict with or reflect poorly on the School.

It is not possible to define all the circumstances and relationships that might create a conflict of interest. If a situation arises in which there is a potential conflict of interest, the employee should discuss this with their supervisor or the Human Resources Department for advice and guidance on how to proceed. The list below suggests some of the types of activities that indicate improper behavior, unacceptable personal integrity, or unacceptable ethics:

- Simultaneous employment by another firm that is a competitor of or supplier to **SER-Niños Charter School System**;
- Carrying on School business with a firm in which the employee, or a close relative of the employee, has a substantial ownership or interest;
- Accepting substantial gifts or excessive entertainment from an outside organization or agency;
- Participating in civic or professional organization activities in a manner that divulges confidential School information;
- Misusing privileged information or revealing confidential data to outsiders;
- Using one's position in the School or knowledge of its affairs for personal gains; *and*
- Engaging in practices or procedures that violate antitrust laws, commercial bribery laws, copyright laws, discrimination laws, campaign contribution laws, or other laws regulating the conduct of School business.

## **Confidential Information**

The protection of confidential business information is vital to the interests and success of **SER-Niños Charter School System**. Confidential information is any and all information disclosed to or known by you because of employment with the School that is not generally known to people outside the School about its business.

An employee who improperly uses or discloses confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and legal action, even if the employee does not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

All inquiries from the media must be referred to **CHARMAINE CONSTANTINE, SUPERINTENDENT**. This provision is not intended to, and should not be interpreted to, prohibit employees from discussing wages and other terms and conditions of employment if they so choose.

## **EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP**

### **Employee Privacy**

It is **SER-Niños Charter School System's** goal to respect the individual privacy of its employees, and at the same time maintain a safe and secure workplace. When issues of safety and security arise, you may be requested to cooperate with an investigation. The investigation may include the following procedures to safeguard the School and its employees: searches of personal belongings, searches of work areas, searches of private vehicles on School premises, medical examinations, and the like. Failure to cooperate with an investigation is grounds for termination. Providing false information during any investigation may lead to discipline, including termination.

Employees are expected to make use of School facilities only for the business purposes of the School. Accordingly, materials that appear on School hardware or networks are presumed to be for business purposes, and all such materials are subject to review by the School at any time without notice to the employees. Employees do not have to have any expectation of privacy with respect to any material on School property. **SER-Niños Charter School System** regularly monitors its communications systems and networks as allowed by law. Monitored activity may include voice, e-mail communications, as well as Internet search and browsing history. Employees who make excessive use of the communications system for personal matters are subject to discipline. Employees are expected to keep personal communication to a minimum and to emergency situations.

**Video surveillance.** As part of its security measures and to help ensure a safe workplace, **SER-Niños Charter School System** has positioned video cameras to monitor various areas of its facilities. Video cameras will not be used in private areas, such as break rooms, restrooms, etc. Videotapes will not include an audio component.

### **Employment Classification**

In order to determine eligibility for benefits and overtime status and to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, **SER-Niños Charter School System** classifies its employees as shown below. **SER-Niños Charter School System** may review or change employee classifications at any time.

**Exempt.** Exempt employees are typically paid on a salary basis and are not eligible to receive overtime pay.

**Nonexempt.** Nonexempt employees are paid on an hourly or salary basis and are eligible to receive overtime pay for overtime hours worked.

**Regular, full time.** Employees who are not in a temporary status and work 40 hours weekly and maintain continuous employment status. Generally, these employees are eligible for the full-time benefits package and are subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefits program.

**Regular, part time.** Employees who are not in a temporary status and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours weekly but at least 20 hours weekly and who maintain continuous employment status. Part-time employees are not eligible for benefits offered by the School.

### **Workweek and Hours of Work**

The elementary schools office open from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and reporting time for elementary school teachers is from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Fridays. Elementary students report to school from 7:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Fridays.

The middle school office open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and reporting time for elementary school teachers is from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Fridays. Middle school students report to school from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Fridays.

### **Reassignments and Transfers**

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the Superintendent or designee when the Superintendent or designee determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the school system. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment Agreement. Campus reassignments must be approved by the Principal at the receiving campus except when reassignments are due program changes. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time unless an extracurricular or supplemental duty assignment is part of a dual-assignment Agreement. An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee, the employee's Principal and receiving Principal. All transfer requests will be approved or denied by the **SER-Niños** Superintendent.

### **Workload and Work Schedules**

Professional employees and administrators are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 12-month basis, according to the work schedules set by **SER-Niños**. A school calendar is adopted each year showing all school holidays and other time off.

### **Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk**

**SER-Niños** supports the practice of expressing breast milk and makes reasonable accommodations for the needs of employees who express breast milk. A reasonable amount of

break time will be provided when the employee has a need to express milk. Employees should meet with their supervisor to discuss their needs and arrange break times.

### **Outside Employment and Tutoring**

Employees are required to disclose in writing to their immediate supervisor any outside employment that may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest of **SER-Niños**. Outside employment will be considered on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

### **Performance Evaluation**

Evaluation of an employee's job performance is a continuous process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor at least annually. All employees will receive a copy of their written evaluation, participate in a performance conference with their supervisor, and have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

### **Compensation and Benefits**

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The school system's pay plans are reviewed by Superintendent and Board of Directors each year and adjusted as needed. All positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees may be classified as non-exempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. All employees are paid direct deposit on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> day of each month. Employees may contact Payroll or Human Resources Department with questions.

### **Meal and Rest Breaks**

Employees are entitled to a 30-minute unpaid meal break each day.

While many states have labor regulations specifying the timing and duration of meal breaks that must be provided to employees, the Texas government has no such laws. Therefore, meal breaks are scheduled at the discretion of the employer.

While some states have labor regulations requiring that employees be allowed one or more workday rest periods, the Texas government has no such regulations. Therefore, in Texas, any breaks or rest periods are provided to employees at the discretion of the employer.

### **Overtime**

In general, nonexempt employees in the state of Texas are eligible to receive overtime pay, which is 1.5 times their regular rate of pay, for every hour that they work in excess of 40 in a single workweek. Questions should be addressed to Payroll department.

## **ADP Clocking-in/out**

### **PARAPROFESSIONALS, FOOD SERVICE EMPLOYEES & EDUCATIONAL AIDES:**

- Clock-in, in the morning when you get to work at your designated time.
- Clock-out for lunch
- Clock-in from lunch
- Clock-out to go home at your designated time.

### **TEACHERS:**

- Clock- in when you get to work
- Clock-out to go home
- **ADDITIONALLY:** Complete the '**Extra Duty/Time Sheet form**' (Tutorials, Enrichment, & Extra-Duty) and sign and date it

**Clock-out/in if you go out (get lunch, purchase supplies, etc.)**

### **PRINCIPALS, IT & BUSINESS OFFICE:**

- Clock-in when you get to work
- Clock-out to go home

If you forget your password, please contact **ADP Customer Service: 800-416-6131**.

## **Deductions from Pay/Exempt Employees**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** does not make improper deductions from the salaries of exempt employees and complies with the salary basis requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

**Improper deductions.** If an employee classified as exempt believes that an improper deduction has been taken from the employee's pay, the employee should immediately report the deduction to the Payroll department. The report will be promptly investigated, and if it is found that an improper deduction has been made, the School will reimburse the employee for the improper deduction.

## **Pay**

**SER-Niños Charter School System's** pay period for all employees is on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Paychecks are directly deposited into your checking and/or savings accounts.

## **Employment of Relatives and Domestic Partners**

Relatives and domestic partners may be hired by the School if (1) the persons concerned will not work in a direct supervisory relationship, and (2) the employment will not pose difficulties for supervision, security, safety, or morale. For the purposes of this policy, "relatives" are defined as spouses, children, siblings, parents, or grandparents. A "domestic partnership" is generally defined as a committed relationship between two individuals who are sharing a home or living arrangements.

Current employees who marry each other or become involved in a domestic partnership will be permitted to continue employment with the School provided they don't work in a direct supervisory relationship with each other or otherwise pose difficulties as mentioned above. If

employees who marry or live together do work in a direct supervisory relationship with each other, the School will attempt to reassign one of the employees to another position for which the employee is qualified if such a position is available. If no such position is available, the employees will be permitted to determine which one of them will resign from the School.

### **Separation from Employment**

In all cases of voluntary resignation (one initiated by the employee), employees are asked to provide a written notice to their supervisors at least 10 working days in advance of the last day of work. The 10 days must be actual working days. Holidays and PTO will not be counted toward the 10-day notice. Employees who provide the requested amount of notice will be considered to have resigned in good standing and generally will be eligible for rehire.

HR will conduct an exit meeting on or before the last day of employment to collect all School property. If applicable, information regarding benefits continuation through the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) will be discussed at the exit meeting.

## **WORKPLACE SAFETY**

### **Health Safety Training**

All employees are trained every couple of years on CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), the use of an automated external defibrillator AED, and first aid. At that time employees trained get a certificate. All employees must have certification on all three.

### **Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace**

It is the policy of **SER-Niños Charter School System** to maintain a drug- and alcohol-free work environment that is safe and productive for employees and others having business with the School.

The unlawful use, possession, purchase, sale, or distribution of or being under the influence of any illegal drug or controlled substance (including medical marijuana) while on School premises or while performing services for the School is strictly prohibited. **SER-Niños Charter School System** also prohibits reporting to work or performing services under the influence of alcohol or consuming alcohol while on duty or during work hours. In addition, **SER-Niños Charter School System** prohibits off-premises abuse of alcohol and controlled substances (including medical marijuana), as well as the possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs, when these activities adversely affect job performance, job safety, or the school's reputation in the community.

To ensure compliance with this policy, substance abuse screening may be conducted in the following situations:

**For cause:** upon reasonable suspicion that the employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs that could affect or have adversely affected the employee's job performance

**Random:** as authorized or required by federal or state law.

Compliance with this policy is a condition of employment. Employees who test positive or who refuse to submit to substance abuse screening will be subject to termination. Notwithstanding any provision herein, this policy will be enforced at all times in accordance with applicable state and local law.

Any employee violating this policy is subject to discipline, up to and including termination, for the first offense.

## **Smoke-Free Workplace**

Smoking is not allowed in School buildings or work areas at any time. "Smoking" includes the use of any tobacco products (including chewing tobacco), electronic smoking devices, and e-cigarettes.

## **Workplace Violence Prevention**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** is committed to providing a safe, violence-free workplace for our employees. Due to this commitment, we discourage employees from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual or from behaving in a threatening or violent manner. Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any employee will not be tolerated. A threat may include any verbal or physical harassment or abuse; attempts to intimidate others; menacing gestures; stalking; or any other hostile, aggressive, and/or destructive actions taken for the purposes of intimidation. This policy covers any violent or potentially violent behavior that occurs in the workplace or at School-sponsored functions.

All **SER-Niños Charter School System** employees bear the responsibility of keeping our work environment free from violence or potential violence. Any employee who witnesses or is the recipient of violent behavior should promptly inform their supervisor, or HR department. All threats will be promptly investigated. No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline as a result of reporting a threat in good faith under this guideline.

Any individual engaging in violence against the School, its employees, or its property will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. All acts will be investigated, and the appropriate action will be taken. Any such act or threatening behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**SER-Niños Charter School System** prohibits the possession of weapons on its property at all times, including our parking lots. Additionally, while on duty, employees may not carry a weapon of any type. Weapons include, but are not limited to, handguns, rifles, automatic weapons, knives that can be used as weapons (excluding pocketknives, utility knives, and other instruments that are used to open packages or cut string and for other miscellaneous tasks), martial arts paraphernalia, stun guns, and tear gas. Any employee violating this policy is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal for the first offense.

The School reserves the right to inspect all belongings of employees on its premises, including packages, briefcases, purses and handbags, gym bags, and personal vehicles on School property. In addition, **SER-Niños Charter School System** may inspect the contents of lockers, storage areas, file cabinets, desks, and workstations at any time and may remove all School property and other items that are in violation of School rules and policies.

## **Commitment to Safety**

Protecting the safety of our employees and visitors is very important at **SER-Niños Charter School System**.

All employees have the opportunity and responsibility to contribute to a safe work environment by using commonsense rules and safe practices and by notifying management when any health or safety issues are present. All employees are encouraged to partner with management to ensure maximum safety for all.

In the event of an emergency, notify the appropriate emergency personnel by dialing 9 for an outside line, then dialing 911 to activate the medical emergency services.

Any workplace injury, accident, or illness must be reported to the employee's supervisor and H.R. as soon as possible, regardless of the severity of the injury or accident. An 'incident report' must be completed and given to HR.

## **Emergency Closings**

### **Inclement Weather**

On days when other school systems/districts close its schools for students due to inclement weather, **SER-Niños** shall be closed. Employees should watch news on television or listen to radio for school closing reports. **SER-Niños** has a contact policy in place and each employee will receive a call to confirm our school closing.

## **Visitors**

In order to maintain security and safety for our employees, **SER-Niños Charter School System** has the following policy with respect to visitors:

Under current COVID-19 circumstances, visitors are not allowed in any of our buildings. Under normal circumstances, all visitors must check-in with the front desk, must wear a visitor's badge, and must be escorted by an employee.

This policy applies to anyone who is not an active employee, including employees on leave, former employees, vendors, and suppliers. Generally, friends and family members are not permitted to visit employees at the workplace. When employees have any doubt whether a person can visit, they should contact the HR department.

# **WORKPLACE GUIDELINES**

## **Contract and Noncontract Employment**

State law requires the school systems and districts to employ all full-time professional employees in positions requiring a certificate from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) under probationary, term, or continuing employment Agreement. Employees in all other positions are employed at-will or by an employment Agreement that is not subject to the procedures for nonrenewal or termination under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code.

## **Certification and Licenses**

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification or professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification/licensing exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to SER-Niños Human Resource Department in a timely manner. Teachers newly certified must present their Statement of Eligibility (SOE).

A certified employee's Agreement may be voided without due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or license or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certification or permit, emergency

permit, probationary certification, or intern certification, or professional license. An employment Agreement may also be voided if the State of Texas/state licensing entity or SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact the Human Resource Department if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

### **Recertification of Employment Authorization**

At the time of hire all employees must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) and present documents to verify identity and employment authorization.

Employees whose immigration status, employment authorization, or employment authorization documents have expired must present new documents that show current employment authorization. Employees should file the necessary application or petition sufficiently in advance to ensure that they maintain continuous employment authorization or valid employment authorization documents. Contact Human Resources Department if you have any questions.

### **Travel Expense Reimbursement**

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor must give approval. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule established by SER-Niños. Employees must submit receipts and complete a reimbursement form to be reimbursed for allowable expenses other than mileage.

### **Attendance**

All employees are expected to arrive on time, ready to work, every day they are scheduled to work.

If unable to arrive at work on time, or if an employee will be absent for an entire day, the employee must contact the supervisor as soon as possible. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness will result in discipline up to and including termination. Failure to show up or call in for a scheduled work day without prior approval also may result in discipline up to and including termination. If an employee fails to report to work or call in to inform the supervisor of the absence for 3 consecutive days or more, the employee will be considered to have voluntarily resigned employment.

### **Job Performance**

Communication between employees and supervisors or managers is very important. Discussions regarding job performance are ongoing and often informal. Employees should initiate conversations with their supervisors if they feel additional ongoing feedback is needed.

Generally, formal performance reviews are conducted annually. These reviews include a written performance appraisal and discussion between the employee and the supervisor about job performance and expectations for the coming year.

### **Outside Employment**

Employees generally are permitted to work a second job as long as it does not interfere with their job performance or create a conflict of interest with **SER-Niños Charter School System**.

All employees, including part-time employees, must obtain prior approval from the HR department before undertaking any outside employment or other work activity.

Employees with a second job are expected to work their assigned schedules. A second job will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel, or refusal to work overtime or different hours. In addition, employees who have accepted outside employment may not use paid sick time to work on the outside job. However, an employee on a leave of absence may continue to work in the outside job if this employment has been approved by the company under this policy and the employee's reason for leave does not preclude the outside employment.

If outside work activity causes or contributes to job-related problems, it must be discontinued, or the employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Professional Attire**

It is important for all employees to project a professional image while at work by being appropriately attired at all times. The staff may wear school uniform which consists of navy pants with white, yellow or tan shirts. The following **is not permitted**:

- **NO** jeans or any pants similar to it
- **NO** tight pants
- **NO** capris
- **NO** leggings except under a dress or skirt
- **NO** jeggins
- **NO** shorts or skorts
- **NO** t-shirts or shirts with writing in the front or back
- **NO** low cut or see-thru blouses
- **NO** see-thru clothes of any type
- **NO** tight clothes
- **Footwear** must be closed toe and heel

**SER-Niños** employees are expected to be neat, clean and well groomed while on the job. Clothing must be consistent with the standards for a business environment and must be appropriate to the type of work being performed. All employees must be covered from shoulders to knees at all times.

**SER-Niños** is confident that employees will use their best judgment regarding professional attire and appearance. Management reserves the right to determine appropriateness. Any employee who is improperly dressed will be counseled or in severe cases may be sent home to change clothes. Continued disregard of this policy may be cause for disciplinary action, which may result in termination.

### **Social Media Acceptable Use**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** encourages employees to share information with coworkers and with those outside the School for the purposes of gathering information, generating new ideas, and learning from the work of others. Social media provides inexpensive, informal, and timely ways to participate in an exchange of ideas and information. However,

information posted on a website is available to the public, and therefore, the School has established the following guidelines for employee participation in social media.

**Off-duty use of social media.** Employees may maintain personal websites or weblogs on their own time using their own facilities. Employees must ensure that social media activity does not interfere with their work. In general, the School considers social media activities to be personal endeavors, and employees may use them to express their thoughts or promote their ideas. In addition, employees may not post on a personal blog or webpage or participate on a social networking platform for personal purposes during work time or at any time with **SER-Niños Charter School System** equipment or property.

**On-duty use of social media.** The School monitors employee use of School computers and the Internet, including employee blogging and social networking activity.

**Respect.** Demonstrate respect for the dignity of the School, its Superintendent, its Board of Directors, its vendors, and its employees. A social media site is a public place, and employees should avoid inappropriate comments. Employees should not divulge **SER-Niños Charter School System** confidential information restricted from disclosure by law on social media sites. Similarly, employees should not engage in harassing or discriminatory behavior that targets other employees or individuals because of their protected class status or make defamatory comments or engage in other behavior that violates the School's policies.

**Post disclaimers.** Employees who identify themselves as School employees or discuss matters related to the School on a social media site must include a disclaimer on the front page stating that it does not express the views of the School and that the employees are expressing only personal views. Place the disclaimer in a prominent position, and repeat it for each posting expressing an opinion related to the School or the School's business. Employees must keep in mind that if they post information on a social media site that is in violation of School policy and/or federal, state, or local law, the disclaimer will not shield them from disciplinary action.

**Trademarks and copyrights.** Do not use the School's or others' trademarks on a social media site or reproduce the School's or others' material without first obtaining permission.

**Legal.** Employees are expected to comply with all applicable laws, including, but not limited to, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines and copyright, trademark, and harassment laws.

**Discipline.** Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit your rights under any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including your rights under the NLRA to engage in protected concerted activities with other employees to improve or discuss terms and conditions of employment, such as wages, working conditions, and benefits. Employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

### **Bulletin Boards**

All required governmental postings are posted on the boards located in the Teachers' Lounge. These boards may also contain general announcements.

Employees may submit to HR notices of general interest, such as for-sale notices; recreational-type announcements and/or club functions; and notices looking for/offering carpools, tickets, roommates, or pets. Superintendent approves posts, and HR takes down all notices. All notices

posted by employees will be removed after 2 weeks unless otherwise stipulated. The School reserves the right to refuse permission to post or to take down any announcement.

Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit your rights under any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including your rights under the NLRA to engage in protected concerted activities with other employees to improve or discuss terms and conditions of employment, such as wages, working conditions, and benefits. Employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

### **Solicitation**

Employees should be able to work in an environment that is free from unnecessary annoyances and interference with their work. In order to protect our employees and visitors, solicitation by employees is strictly prohibited while either the employee being solicited or the employee doing the soliciting is on "working time." "Working time" is defined as time during which an employee is not at a meal, on break, or on the premises immediately before or after a shift.

Employees are also prohibited from distributing written materials, handbills, or any other type of literature on working time and, at all times, in "working areas," which include all office areas. "Working areas" do not include Teachers' Lounge, parking lots, or common areas shared by employees during nonworking time.

Nonemployees may not trespass or solicit or distribute materials anywhere on School property at any time.

Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit your rights under any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including your rights under the NLRA to engage in protected concerted activities with other employees to improve or discuss terms and conditions of employment, such as wages, working conditions, and benefits. Employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

### **Computers, Internet, E-Mail, and Other Resources**

The school provides a wide variety of communication tools and resources to employees for use in running day-to-day business activities. Whether it is the telephone, voicemail, scanner, Internet, intranet, e-mail, text messaging, portable electronic devices, or any other School-provided technology, use should be reserved for School-related matters during working hours. All communication using these tools should be handled in a professional and respectful manner.

Employees should not have any expectation of privacy in their use of School computer, phone, portable electronic devices, or other communication tools. All communications made using School-provided equipment or services, including e-mail and Internet activity, are subject to inspection by the School. Employees should keep in mind that even if they delete an e-mail, a voicemail, or another communication, a copy may be archived on the School's systems.

Employee use of School-provided communication systems, including personal e-mail and Internet use, that is not job-related has the potential to drain, rather than enhance, productivity and system performance. You should also be aware that information transmitted through e-mail and the Internet is not completely secure or may contain viruses or malware, and information you transmit and receive could damage the School's systems, as well as the reputation of the School. To protect against possible problems, delete any e-mail messages before opening that are received from unknown senders and advertisers. It also is against School policy to turn off antivirus protection software or make unauthorized changes to system

configurations installed on School computers. Violations of this policy may result in termination for a first offense.

The School encourages employees to use e-mail only to communicate with fellow employees, and others regarding School business. Internal and external e-mails are considered business records and may be subject to federal and state recordkeeping requirements, as well as to discovery in the event of litigation. Be aware of this possibility when sending e-mails within and outside the School.

All use of School-provided communications systems, including e-mail and Internet use, should conform to our organization guidelines/policies, including but not limited to the Equal Opportunity, Harassment, Confidential Information, and Conflicts of Interest. Employees should not divulge confidential information or information restricted from disclosure by law on social media sites.

Because e-mail, telephone and voicemail, and Internet communication equipment are provided for School business purposes and are critical to the School's success, your communications may be accessed without further notice by IT department administrators and School management to ensure compliance with this guideline.

The electronic communication systems are not secure and may allow inadvertent disclosure, accidental transmission to third parties, etc. Sensitive information should not be sent via unsecured electronic means.

Employees should pay particular care to the use and security of portable electronic devices when used for business-related purposes, such as laptops, tablets, smartphones, and other data storage media, whether provided by the employer or the employee. Lost or stolen portable electronic devices containing School information may cause breaches of security that result in the loss of School confidential data, the loss of vital research data, the unauthorized disclosure of sensitive employee data, lawsuits against the individual, and lawsuits against the School. Employees should use appropriate password protections for such devices and physically secure them as recommended by management and IT department.

Office telephones are for business purposes. While the School recognizes that some personal calls are necessary, these should be kept as brief as possible and to a minimum. Personal use of the School's long-distance account, or toll-free numbers is strictly prohibited. Abuse of these privileges is subject to corrective action up to and including termination.

The School reserves the right to monitor calls to ensure employees abide by School quality guidelines. Should the subject matter of any telephone conversation become personal while monitoring is taking place, monitoring of the call will immediately be discontinued.

Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit your rights under any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including your rights under the NLRA to engage in protected concerted activities with other employees to improve or discuss terms and conditions of employment, such as wages, working conditions, and benefits. Employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

### **Disciplinary Procedure**

The school expects employees to comply with the standards of behavior and performance and to correct any noncompliance with these standards.

**SER-Niños Charter School System** endorses a policy of progressive discipline in which it attempts to provide employees with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to improve. It does, however, retain the right to administer discipline in any manner it sees fit. This policy does not modify the status of employees as employees at will or in any way restrict the School's right to bypass the disciplinary procedures suggested.

### **Progressive Discipline**

Every employee has the duty and the responsibility to be aware of and abide by existing rules and policies. Employees also have the responsibility to perform his/her duties to the best of his/her ability and to the standards as set forth in his/her job description or as otherwise established.

SER-Niños supports the use of progressive discipline to address issues such as poor work performance or misconduct. Our progressive discipline policy is designed to provide a corrective action process to improve and prevent a recurrence of undesirable behavior and/or performance issues. Our progressive discipline policy has been designed consistent with our organizational values, HR best practices and employment laws.

Outlined below are the steps of our progressive discipline policy and procedure SER-Niños reserves the right to combine or skip steps in this process depending on the facts of each situation and the nature of the offense. The level of disciplinary intervention may also vary.

Some of the factors that will be considered are whether the offense is repeated despite coaching, counseling and/or training; the employee's work record; and the impact the conduct and performance issues have on our School. The following outlines SER-Niños's progressive discipline process:

- **Verbal warning:** The Human Resources department verbally counsels an employee about an issue of concern, and a written record of the discussion is placed in the employee's file for future reference.
- **Written warning** – Up to 3 written warnings in one year: Written warnings are used for behavior or violations that the Human Resources and approved by the superintendent considers serious or in situations when a verbal warning has not helped change unacceptable behavior. Written warnings are placed in an employee's personnel file. Employees should recognize the grave nature of the written warning. **After the third written warning, depending on the severity of the infraction, the employee may be terminated.**
- Failure to improve. Failure to improve performance or behavior after the written warning or suspension can result in termination.
- The progressive disciplinary procedures described above also may be applied to an employee who is experiencing a series of unrelated problems involving job performance or behavior.
- In cases involving serious misconduct, or any time the supervisor determines it is necessary, such as a major breach of policy or violation of law, the procedures contained above may be disregarded. Typically, the supervisor should suspend the employee immediately (with or without pay), and an investigation of the incidents leading up to the suspension should be conducted to determine if any further action, such as termination, should be taken.

SER-Niños reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of discipline for any inappropriate conduct, including oral and written warnings, suspension with or without pay, demotion and discharge.

### **Complaints about Disciplinary Action**

An employee wishing to dispute any form of disciplinary action taken against his/her should write a narrative explaining the basis for the complaint and submit it to Human Resources. He/she is then entitled to meet with Human Resources to discuss the complaint. Human Resources will write a summary of the meeting with his/her opinion as to whether the complaint merits further investigation. Human Resources report plus the employee's original narrative will be submitted to the Superintendent for a final ruling on the matter. The employee will be advised by Human Resources, of the results of the ruling.

## **TIME OFF AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

Holidays will be designated by the School at the start of each calendar year.

Holiday pay shall be at the employee's regular straight-time rate, inclusive of shift premiums, times the employee's regularly scheduled hours (not to exceed 8 hours).

To receive holiday pay, an eligible nonexempt employee must be at work **the day before a holiday and/or the day after a holiday or does not get paid for the holiday**. If an employee is absent on 1 or both of these days because of an illness or injury, the School may require doctor verification of the reason for the absence before approving holiday pay.

**Religious observances.** Employees who need time off to observe religious practices or holidays not already scheduled by the school should speak with their Principal or Superintendent.

### **Vacation – Administration Staff**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** recognizes the importance of time off from work to relax, spend time with family, and enjoy leisure activities. The School provides paid vacation time, usually the last two weeks of July (Superintendent has the right to designate when vacation must be taken), to full-time administration employees for this purpose.

### **Sick Leave**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** provides regular, full-time, and part-time employees with paid sick days.

All full-time regular employees accrue sick leave from the date of hire, **5 days state personal and 5 days local personal leave time per school year**. Each personal day will be accrued at the rate of 1 day (8 hours) per month beginning at the start of the new school year. Accumulated personal leave is carried over from one year to the next.

Therefore, full-time employees receive ten (10) days of personal leave per school year, as described above. When school year begins, these days are NOT available since it has not been accrued yet. If an **employee overuses his/her personal leave**, the **employee will be docked** at the daily rate of pay. ***Part-time hourly employees will receive 3 days local leave. It cannot be accumulated.***

If the need for sick leave is foreseeable, employees are required to give at least 30 days' advance notice (e.g., a planned medical treatment) whenever possible. If the need for sick leave is not foreseeable, employees are asked to notify their supervisor as soon as is practical.

If an employee misses 3 or more consecutive days because of illness, **SER-Niños** will require the employee to provide a physician's written permission to return to work.

## **Family and Medical Leave**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** complies with the federal FMLA, which requires employers to grant unpaid leaves of absence to qualified workers for certain medical and family-related reasons. **SER-Niños** also abides by any state and local leave laws. The more generous of the laws will apply to the employee if the employee is eligible under both federal and state laws.

Please note there are many requirements, qualifications, and exceptions under these laws and each employee's situation is different. Contact the HR department to discuss options for leave.

The FMLA requires private employers with 50 or more employees and all public agencies, including state, local, and federal employers, and local education agencies (schools) to provide eligible employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in any 12-month period for certain family and medical reasons.

**Basic leave entitlement.** The FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons: (1) for incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth; (2) to care for the employee's child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care; (3) to care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition; or (4) for a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to work.

**Military family leaves entitlements.** Eligible employees with a spouse, child, or parent on active duty or called to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include addressing issues that arise from (1) short notice of deployment (limited to up to 7 days of leave); (2) attending certain military events and related activity; (3) arranging child care and school activities; (4) addressing certain financial and legal arrangements; (5) attending certain counseling sessions; (6) spending time with covered military family members on short-term temporary rest and recuperation leave (limited to up to 5 days of leave); (7) attending post deployment reintegration briefings; (8) arranging care for or providing care to a parent who is incapable of self-care; and (9) any additional activities agreed upon by the employer and employee that arise out of the military member's active duty or call to active duty.

The FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the armed forces, including a member of the National Guard or reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform the duties of the service member's office, grade, rank, or rating and for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

**Employee eligibility.** The FMLA defines eligible employees as employees who (1) have worked for the company for at least 12 months; (2) have worked for the company for at least 1,250 hours in the previous 12 months; and (3) work at or report to a worksite that has 50 or more employees or is within 75 miles of company worksites that, taken together, have a total of 50 or more employees.

**Definition of “serious health condition.”** A serious health condition is an illness, an injury, an impairment, or a physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee’s job or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school, work, or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least 2 visits to a healthcare provider or 1 visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of “continuing treatment.”

**Substitution of paid leave for unpaid leave.** Employees may choose or employers may require the use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. Accordingly, the company requires employees to use any accrued paid vacation, personal, and sick days during an unpaid FMLA leave taken because of the employees’ own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member or to care for a seriously ill or injured family member in the military. In addition, employees must use any accrued paid vacation or personal days (but not sick days) during FMLA leave taken to care for a newborn or newly placed child or for a qualifying exigency arising out of a family member’s active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation. In order to use paid leave for FMLA leave, employees must comply with the company’s normal paid leave procedures found in its Vacation and Sick Leave policies.

**Employee responsibilities.** Employees must provide 30 days’ advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days’ notice is not possible, employees must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with the company’s normal call-in procedures. The company may delay leave to employees who do not provide proper advance notice of the foreseeable need for leave, absent unusual circumstances preventing the notice.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the company to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions; the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the company if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also are required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. The company also may require a second and, if necessary, a third opinion (at the company’s expense) and, when the leave is a result of the employee’s own serious health condition, a fitness-for-duty report to return to work. The company also may delay or deny approval of leave for lack of proper medical certification.

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

### **Military Leave**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** supports the military obligations of all employees and grants leaves for uniformed service in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Any employee who needs time off for uniformed service should immediately notify the HR department and the employee's supervisor, who will provide details regarding the leave. If an employee is unable to provide notice before leaving for uniformed service, a family member should notify the supervisor as soon as possible.

Upon return from military leave, employees will be granted the same seniority, pay, and benefits as if they had worked continuously. Failure to report for work within the prescribed time after completion of military service will be considered a voluntary termination.

All employees who enter military service may accumulate a total absence of 5 years and still retain employment rights.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Employees with more than 3 months' service may take up to 3 days of paid bereavement leave upon the death of a member of their immediate family. "Immediate family members" are defined as an employee's spouse, domestic partner, parents, stepparents, siblings, children, stepchildren, grandparent, parent-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, or grandchild. All regular, full-time employees may take up to 1 day off with pay to attend the funeral of an extended family member (aunts, uncles, and cousins).

The School will require verification of the need for bereavement leave.

### **Jury Duty/Court Appearance**

The School supports employees in their civic duty to serve on a jury. Employees must present any summons to jury duty to their supervisor as soon as possible after receiving the notice to allow advance planning for an employee's absence.

If an employee is released from jury duty after 4 hours or less of service, the employee must report to work for the remainder of that workday. Whenever the employee is released document given by the court on time they were there must be presented to Human Resources.

Time for appearance in court for personal business will be the individual employee's responsibility. Normally, personal days or vacation days will be used for this purpose.

### **Time Off for Voting**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** recognizes that voting is a right and privilege of being a citizen of the United States and encourages employees to exercise their right to vote. In almost all cases, you will have sufficient time outside working hours to vote. If for any reason you think this won't be the case, contact your supervisor to discuss scheduling accommodations.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** recognizes the value of benefits to employees and their families. The School supports employees by offering a comprehensive and competitive benefits program. For more information regarding benefit please look at HR website, Portal, Benefits or contact Human Resources Department.

### **Medical, Dental, and Vision Insurance**

Full-time employees working 40 hours or more per week are eligible for insurance. Part-time employees are not eligible for benefits.

### **Supplemental Insurance**

#### **Short-Term Disability**

Short-term disability is offered to full-time employees working a minimum of 40 hours per week. Short-term disability is meant to bridge the 90-day period. If an employee becomes disabled and cannot work for a short period of time, this coverage pays 60 percent of the employee's salary, up to the policy limits. This is a voluntary benefit and is funded solely by the employee.

For information, please contact Supplemental Insurance agent or Human Resources Department.

#### **403(b) Plan**

**SER-Niños Charter School System** recognizes the importance of saving for retirement and offers eligible employees a 403(b) plan.

For information, please contact Supplemental Insurance agent or Human Resources Department.

### **Workers' Compensation**

Workers' compensation is a "no-fault" system that provides compensation for medical expenses and wage losses to employees who are injured or who become ill because of employment.

**SER-Niños Charter School System** pays the entire cost of workers' compensation insurance. The insurance provides coverage for related medical and rehabilitation expenses and a portion of lost wages to employees who sustain an injury on the job.

**SER-Niños Charter School System** abides by all applicable state workers' compensation laws and regulations. If an employee sustains a job-related injury or illness, it is important to notify the supervisor and HR immediately. The employee will complete an 'incident report' with input from the employee and return the form to the HR department. HR will file the claim with the insurance company. In cases of true medical emergencies, report to the nearest emergency room.

### **Employee Assistance Program**

The employee assistance program (EAP) is a free resource designed to provide highly confidential and experienced help for employees in dealing with issues that affect their lives and the quality of their job performance. **SER-Niños Charter School System** wants employees to be able to maintain a healthy balance of work and family that allows them to enjoy life. The EAP is a confidential counseling and referral service that can help employees successfully deal with

life's challenges. Services are provided at no charge to the employee, and dependents are also eligible to use the EAP.

Employees or eligible dependents can access the EAP 24 hours a day, seven days a week. From the moment the first call is made, the services provided are kept confidential. Nobody - not the employee's supervisor, nor his or her co-workers - needs to know the employee's identity or the nature of the problem. **855-268-1006, 24 hours a day**

### **Employment in a Job Not Covered by Social Security**

Your earnings from this job are not covered under Social Security. When you retire, or if you become disabled, you may receive a pension based on earnings from this job. If you do, and you are also entitled to a benefit from Social Security based on either your own work or the work of your husband/wife, or former husband/wife, your pension may affect the amount of the Social Security benefit you receive. Your Medicare benefits, however, will not be affected.

### **Teacher Retirement System (TRS)**

Membership in the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) is required of all employees employed for 20 hours or more a week. Retirement contributions will be automatically deducted from the employee's check. An employee's retirement annuity payments are based on years of service, average salary for the highest three (five for new employees) years, and age at retirement. The informative booklet, "Teacher Retirement System of Texas", is available free of charge, by writing to the following: Web site: [www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us)

# **SER-Niños Charter School System**

## **Employee Handbook Receipt & Acceptance Form**

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby acknowledge that I have access to and that I accept responsibility for reading the **SER-Niños Charter School System** Employee Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

I acknowledge that, if I would like a hard copy of the handbook, I may print a copy. A hardcopy of this handbook is maintained in the office of my campus or department.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in school policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in the handbook. As the school system provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding the changes.

I understand that the handbook does not modify contractual employment relationship nor alter at-will employment relationships.

I understand that I have an obligation to inform Human Resources of any changes in personal information, such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting my supervisor or **SER-Niños Human Resources Department** if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

I agree to surrender or account for all **SER-Niños** property equipment, and/or other required items upon request.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

***Please sign and date this receipt and forward it to Human Resources.***

# **SER-Niños Charter School System**

## **EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT, RECEIPT & ACCEPTANCE OF HARASSMENT POLICY**

I have read and understand the company's Harassment Policy. My signature below confirms my knowledge, acceptance, and agreement to comply with the policy.

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Employee's Name in Print

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Signature of Employee

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Date Signed by Employee

**TO BE PLACED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE**