



# **Employee Handbook**

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## **A. Equal Employment Opportunity**

Life Academy extends equal employment opportunities to all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, sex, age, national origin, veteran status or disability, which if needing accommodation, may be reasonably accommodated as required by law. This applies to all terms and conditions of employment including, but not limited to, recruiting, hiring, selection for training, promotion, demotion, discipline, rates of pay or other compensation, transfer, layoff, termination, recall, use of all facilities, and participation in all School-sponsored activities.

## **B. Compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act**

Life Academy complies with the Immigration Reform and Control Act and hires only individuals who are legally authorized to work in the United States. Upon hire, an employee will be required to submit proof of identity and employment eligibility as well as completed Immigration and Naturalization Service Form I-9. If the employee is authorized to work in this country for a limited period of time, the employee will be required to submit proof of employment authorization at the time the employment authorization expires and update Form I-9. If the employee fails to provide updated information, the employee will be discharged for failure to provide certification of authorization.

## **C. Your Rights Under the National Labor Relations Act**

Nothing contained in this Handbook is intended in any fashion to prohibit, restrict or interfere with conduct protected by the National Labor Relations Act (“NLRA”). This includes, among other things, engaging in “protected concerted activities.” Protected concerted activities allow you, for example, to talk about the terms and conditions of your employment, such as working conditions, pay, and job related problems with others, as long as it is done in a lawful manner. No Handbook can set out all the rights provided to employees by the NLRA. For more information about these rights, you can visit <http://www.nlr.gov/rights-we-protect>. Additionally, if you have any questions, please feel free to talk to the Human Resources Department.

## **D. Employment-At-Will**

We hope that each employee's period of employment at Life Academy will be a rewarding experience. However, we recognize that circumstances change with the passage of time and that some employees may seek opportunities elsewhere or choose to leave the School for other reasons. Other employees may not fulfill the operational needs of the School or changed circumstances may reduce available employment opportunities which may result in involuntary terminations. We sincerely hope that none of these situations occur, but realistically we have to acknowledge that the possibility does exist. Therefore, the right of the employee or the School to terminate the employment relationship at-will is recognized and affirmed as a condition of employment. At-will means that both the employees and Life Academy have the right to terminate employment at any time, with or without advance notice, and with or without cause.

## **E. Policy on Harassment**

Harassment of applicants and employees on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, or disability, including sexual harassment (all is defined and protected by applicable law) is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Life Academy.

Sexual harassment has been defined generally as including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, whenever:

- (1) Submission to the conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment; or
- (2) An employee's reaction to the conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions effecting that employee; or
- (3) The conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

No employee or applicant should be subjected to unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures, nor should any employee or applicant be led to believe that an employment opportunity or benefit will in any way depend upon "cooperation" of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment is not limited to demands for sexual favors. It also may include such actions as:

- (1) sex-oriented verbal "kidding," "teasing," or "jokes;"
- (2) repeated offense of sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions;
- (3) continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- (4) graphic or degrading comments about an individual or his or her appearance;
- (5) display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
- (6) subtle pressure for sexual activity; and/or
- (7) inappropriate physical contact.

Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially accepted nature, or consensual personal and social relationships without a discriminatory employment effect. It refers to behavior that is not welcome and that is personally intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

Harassment on other grounds, including race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, or disability is also prohibited at Life Academy. Such harassment includes jokes, verbal abuse and epithets, degrading comments, the display of offensive objects and pictures, and other conduct that the individual might reasonably find to be offensive.

This policy prohibiting harassment, whether sexual or of another nature, is not limited to relationships between and among employees and prospective employees, but also extends to interaction with clients or customers. No employees shall ever subject a client or prospective client of Life Academy to sexual harassment of any nature, including that conduct described above. Furthermore, no employee will be required to suffer sexual harassment by any client, vendor, or supplier.

Any unwelcome sexual overtures or other forms of sexual harassment advanced by a client, vendor or supplier should be reported immediately to Life Academy's Executive Director or to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

## **F. Workplace Violence Prevention**

Life Academy prohibits any behavior that could be construed as threatening, aggressive, confrontational or violent. Prohibited activity includes any threatening behavior or acts of violence, including but not limited to, conduct that is harassing or intimidating, presents a challenge to fight, and constitutes veiled or direct threats, sabotage, assaults, or attempt to assault, or the use of any obscene, abusive or threatening language or gestures. Immediately warn a supervisor or the Executive Director of any potentially dangerous or suspicious workplace activity, situations or incidents observed, or known that involve other employees, former employees, visitors, volunteers or outsiders who appear threatening. This includes threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, attempted assaults, assaults, challenges to fight, presence or suspected presence of weapons, obsessions with weapons, irrational behavior, fear of physical harm and potential violent incidents or concerns. The Executive Director will conduct a confidential investigation of all reports of violence. Employees who confront or encounter an armed, violent or dangerous person should not attempt to challenge or disarm the individual. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Violations of the policy by employees, former employees, visitors or outsiders may be reported to local law enforcement personnel. Such individuals may be prosecuted to the maximum extent of the law. Employees will not be retaliated against for making good faith reports under this policy.

## **Complaint Procedure**

Any employee or prospective employee who feels that he or she has been the victim of illegal discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy should immediately notify the Life Academy Executive Director or Chair of the Board of Trustees. Life Academy will fully investigate all complaints and will maintain confidentiality to the fullest extent possible given its duty to investigate the complaint. Anyone who is found to have engaged in illegal discrimination or harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action depending upon all of the circumstances, including possible termination of employment. No employee will be retaliated against for making a complaint or with assisting with the investigation of a complaint.

Life Academy prohibits any form of retaliation against any employee for filing a bona fide complaint under this policy or for assisting in a complaint investigation. If after investigating any complaint of harassment or discrimination, the Executive Director determines that the complaint is not bona fide and was not made in good faith, or that any employee has provided false information regarding the complaint, disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, will be taken against the employee who gave the false information. We trust that all employees will act in a responsible and professional manner to establish a pleasant work environment free of

discrimination and harassment.

## **G. Drug and Alcohol Policy**

Life Academy has adopted the following substance abuse policy for the purposes outlined below:

- (1) To establish and maintain a safe, healthy working environment for all of its employees;
- (2) To preserve the reputation of Life Academy and its employees within the community and industry at large;
- (3) To reduce the number of accidental injuries to person or property; and,
- (4) To reduce absenteeism and tardiness and improve productivity.

The following rules represent Life Academy's policy concerning drug and alcohol use and abuse:

- (1) All employees are prohibited from working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- (2) Life Academy strictly prohibits the use, possession, sale, or purchase of any illegal drug or any prescription drug without a valid prescription on agency property, in agency motor vehicles, at company-sponsored functions, or wherever agency work is being performed. Employees who violate this section of the policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination. Management may also refer any evidence obtained to appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- (3) The use, sale, or possession of an illegal drug or controlled substance while on duty is cause for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- (4) Prescription drugs: Only the person for whom a prescription drug is issued can bring that medication on agency premises. Employees must use prescription drugs only in the manner, combination, and quantity prescribed. Employees who must possess and consume drugs prescribed by a doctor for medical purposes where such drug may impair or affect the employee's work performance must inform Life Academy's Executive Director before reporting to work.
- (5) Any employee taking a non-prescription (over the counter) medication that cautions against use under certain circumstances likely to effect the employee's performance while working also must report this information to the Executive Director before reporting to work.
- (6) Any employee who's off duty abuse of alcohol or illegal or prescription drugs results in excessive absenteeism, tardiness, accidents, or performance problems will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- (7) Alcohol in the workplace: Life Academy also prohibits the consumption, possession, sale, or purchase of alcohol on agency property and in agency vehicles.
- (9) Use of alcohol during the workday: The agency prohibits employee use of alcohol immediately before and during the work day, including lunch time and breaks, whether in connection with business or on personal time.
- (10) Definitions: For purposes of this policy, "alcoholic beverages" includes any beverage that legally may be sold and consumed and has an alcoholic content in excess of three percent (3%) by volume. "Drugs" refers to substances other than alcohol capable of altering an individual's mood, perception, pain level, or judgment. "Prescription drugs" are substances prescribed for individual consumption by a licensed medical practitioner. "Illegal drugs" includes any drug or controlled substance the sale or consumption of which is illegal.

## **H. Drug and Alcohol Testing**

Drug and alcohol tests may be administered under the following conditions:

1. when an employee shows signs of impairment on the job;
2. after any accident or occurrence that results in an injury on the job as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration;
3. at hiring time, when new hires may be required to pass a pre-employment drug-screening test as a condition of employment; and/or,
4. when an employee is found to possess alcohol or illegal drugs on agency property in violation of this policy.

Drug and alcohol testing also may take place in these circumstances:

- (1) for certain job groups, departments, or locations where the work subjects employees or others to significant safety risks; and
- (2) for certain job groups, departments, or locations where agency assets may be subject to unusual and significant risks.

Employees who refuse to submit to drug or alcohol tests under this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Candidates for employment who refuse to submit to drug or alcohol tests under this policy will not be employed.

Employees who test or screen positive for the presence of illegal drugs or alcohol in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. In those circumstances where an employee is not terminated after having tested positive, he or she may not return to work until they have been retested with negative results. Additionally, employees who have tested positive for the presence of illegal drugs or alcohol in violation of



this policy may be subject to unscheduled random retesting. Applicants who test or screen positive for the presence of illegal drugs or alcohol will not be hired.

No smoking or vaping of any kind is permitted on Life Academy property or in Life Academy vehicles. Employees found to be smoking or vaping on premises will face disciplinary action. Employees found smoking or vaping in the presence of children or inside the building will be terminated immediately.

## **SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

Many local employers remain open, even when local school systems are closed. As Life Academy is not a part of Roanoke County Schools or any other school system, decisions by any school system about whether to close or stay open will not determine Life Academy's decisions regarding closure of the school. Decisions regarding closure of the school will be made by Management. General, Life Academy will open for business as soon as we can clear the parking lot and get enough teachers into the building to safely open. We will not open for care if the building does not have power. We will make everyone aware of severe weather conditions that affect operating hours as soon as a decision is made and via School Cast and local news stations. Please ensure that your information in School Cast is up to date.

Inclement conditions that prevent employees from reporting to work when Life Academy is open are a situation over which Life Academy has no control. In fairness to all, if Life Academy is open but an employee is unable to make it to work due to weather or other emergency, employees who do not work will not be paid for their time off unless they use a vacation day available.

## **OVERTIME**

Employees may be scheduled to work overtime when operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular working hours. Whenever possible, advance notification will be provided. Management must authorize any overtime work beyond an employee's standard work week. Hourly employees will be paid overtime compensation in accordance with federal and state wage and hour provisions. Overtime pay will only be paid based on actual hours worked. Time off for vacation, medical leave, a School-observed holiday or any leave of absence will not be considered as hours worked when computing overtime.

Any employee who fails to work scheduled overtime or works overtime without prior authorization from Management may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **PAY AT TIME OF SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

Life Academy will determine if the terminating employee has any outstanding debt owed to the School and whether the individual has in his/her possession any uniforms, tools, keys, safety equipment,

manuals or other School property. Upon completion of a full accounting of the employee's and the School's accounts as determined by the School, a final pay check for time worked (less deductions) will be issued to the employee on the next regular pay day in accordance with applicable federal and state law. The School will issue a check designated as the final payment for all services rendered. The final check will not reflect any time not actually worked.

Upon resignation or termination, the employee should contact the Director or Finance Office to address any financial issues. Any employee terminating employment is expected to return any School property in his/her possession.

## **OBSERVED HOLIDAYS**

Life Academy is closed for the following holidays:

New Year's Day  
Good Friday  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Election Day (November)  
Thanksgiving Day  
Day after Thanksgiving Day (unpaid)  
The week of Christmas (Monday-Friday) (Only holiday pay for Christmas Day)

The following provisions apply with regard to holidays observed by the School:

- When a recognized holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, its observance will be at Management's discretion.
- Full-time employees, working at least 35 hours a week, who have completed 90 days of continuous employment, are eligible for holiday pay.
- Full-time employees, working at least 35 hours a week, will be paid their base hours for Holiday Pay.
- Paid holiday time will not be considered as time worked for the purpose of computing Overtime.

## **WORKER'S COMPENSATION**

Employees of Life Academy are covered by Workers' Compensation insurance which is purchased by the School. This insurance provides compensation to an employee for lost wages caused by illness, accidental injury, or death suffered during or as a result of his/her employment with the School in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of

Virginia. If an employee is injured while at work, the employee will be paid for any medical appointments associated with the injury. The employee must clock out for any medical appointments related to the injury, but will be reimbursed by the insurance company for the time away from work.

**Eligibility:** Eligibility for benefits under Workers' Compensation insurance is automatic and is effective on date of hire.

**Reporting:** An employee must report any injury or illness by the end of the employee's shift or within twenty-four (24) hours of the onset of illness or injury, whichever is earlier. All reports of injury or illness should be made to the Director. Failure to report may result in disciplinary action and possible loss of benefits. When reporting an injury, be prepared to answer the following questions:

- a. How did the injury occur?
- b. Were there any witnesses to the injury?
- c. What time and where did the injury occur?

## **DISCOUNTED CHILD CARE**

Life Academy provides discounted childcare at Life Academy to employees.

The current discount for full time employees is \$125/week reduction in weekly tuition charges, not including activity fees, or field trip fees. Part time employees receive \$65/week reduction. There are more details to this policy, so please ask the director if you are interested in enrolling your child.

Payment for child care is automatically withdrawn from employees' paychecks. Please see the Director if you have any questions about this benefit.

## **DRESS CODE:**

In keeping with our Christian testimony (1 Timothy 2:9), dress should always be modest, neat, clean and professional. Both males and females should be clean and well groomed at all times. Male teachers will be held to the same standards. Shirts should be loose fitting and free of any offensive symbols or words. Female teachers should wear loose fitting pants or have an appropriate length top, cardigan or jacket. No short skirts or dresses. Necklines should be modest. No cleavage should be exposed. Shirts should not be worn that are see through. No halter tops are allowed. Shoulder straps on shirts need to be three finger width and must cover bra straps. Under no circumstances should skin in the midriff be visible at any time. Leggings or tights are acceptable if worn with a top that covers the bottom area. No holes in jeans or short shorts will be acceptable. Capris, Bermuda and cargo shorts are appropriate dress. Staff badges should be worn and visible at all times so that teachers are recognizable among the students and parents.

If a Teacher arrives to work and is not dressed according to the dress code listed in the Employee Manual, or the Director/ Assistant Director feels that the teacher's attire is inappropriate, the Teacher will be asked to leave and return back to work dressed according to the guidelines set in the dress code. The Teacher will not be paid until returning back to work.

Jewelry (particularly earrings, necklaces and bracelets) worn during working hours should be selected so that it cannot be grabbed by children or snag in children's clothing. Employees are expected to adhere to the highest standards of personal hygiene. Body piercings should be removed while at work or completely covered by clothing. Tattoos should be completely covered by clothing while at work (when possible). Safety, comfort and appearance should all be considered in dress and grooming. Talk with your Supervisor if you have questions concerning proper dress.

## **TELEPHONE CALLS AND CELL PHONE USAGE:**

**NO CELL PHONES OR SMART WATCHES ABLE TO RECEIVE CALLS OR TEXTS ARE PERMITTED DURING WORKING HOURS.** Cell phones and watches are to be put in the basket before work at the front desk or left in your vehicle. Life Academy will not be held responsible for any damage incurred should you choose to leave your phone or watch in your vehicle. Life Academy offers a safe dry place for you to leave your phone and/or watch during the day while you are at work. There will be no more verbal or written warnings. Failure to comply will result in a one day suspension without pay, any further occurrences could result in termination.

Teachers are asked to give the office phone number to people that may need to reach you in case of an emergency. If you need to make a personal phone call during working hours, please obtain permission from the Director before doing so.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY:**

At Life Academy, 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 employees who work for Life Academy.

### **Guidelines**

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. 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 web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with Life Academy, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

**The same principles and guidelines found in Life Academy policies apply to your activities online. Posting any personal or confidential information about any client or their family online in any format is strictly**

**prohibited.** Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved.

### **Know and follow the rules**

Carefully read these guidelines, the Life Academy Standards of Conduct and Performance, and the Harassment Policy, and ensure your postings are consistent with ALL Life Academy 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 employees, customers, members, suppliers or people who work on behalf of Life Academy. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related issues by speaking directly with your co-workers or obtaining the assistance of Management than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, 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 customers, members, associates or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying.

Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, gender, age, national origin, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or company policy.

### **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 and retrieved. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about Life Academy, fellow employees, customer, parents, and people working on behalf of Life Academy or competitors.

### **Post only appropriate and respectful content**

Maintain the confidentiality of Life Academy trade secrets and private, proprietary or confidential information. Trade secrets may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential communications.

Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to Life Academy's website without identifying yourself as an employee of Life Academy.

Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for Life Academy. If Life Academy is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the Company, fellow employees, members, patrons,

suppliers or people working on behalf of Life Academy. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with Life Academy, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the Company. 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 Life Academy.”

### **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 the Company policy. Do not use Life Academy email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use. Absolutely no images or videos of children in our care should be on your personal devices or social media. Do not use your personal devices to contact parents for matters pertaining to their child’s care. If a student is sick or needs something, that request and information should come from the front office staff.

### **VISITORS:**

Personal visitors need to check in at the front desk. The receptionist will call the teacher to come to the front office. A teacher or staff member will cover your class. Please make every effort to keep your visit brief.

### **CLEANLINESS OF CLASSROOMS:**

Morning teachers are responsible for the cleanliness of their room. Soap and sani bottles need to be used daily and each table, chair and doorknob should be wiped down several times a day to ensure a reduction of germs. Morning teachers should leave classrooms clean and organized for the afternoon teachers.

Afternoon teachers are responsible for keeping their classroom clean as well. Afternoon teachers are responsible for wiping down tables, chairs and doorknobs with soap and sani. At the end of the day, classrooms need to be left clean and orderly. Soap and sani bottles and rags need to be taken down to the laundry room. Please remove dates on the bottles, pour out the remaining liquid and place in the purple basket. Place the rags in the white mesh bag to be laundered the following morning. Please remember that morning teachers should have their classrooms clean, neat and orderly to start their day.

Afternoon Infant Room teachers clean toys with soap and sani, vacuum the classroom daily, take your soap and sani bottles and rags to the laundry room each day before leaving. Remove the date on the bottles and pour out any left over liquid in the sink and put rags in the white mesh bag. Take diaper trash out to the dumpster behind the cafeteria.

Teachers are responsible for cleaning up any area that is used. If the Art Room is used please clean up the paint, paint brushes, paper, etc. Make sure all paper is off the floor and the sink is cleaned and rinsed. If the Gym is used, please put away any toys you pull out of the closet. It is not the responsibility of the next class to come in and clean up what you have left out.

Center Rooms need to be left neat and orderly for the next class as well. NO GLITTER OR CONFETTI

IS ALLOWED in the building.

Failure to maintain a neat and clean facility will result in disciplinary action.

### **CAFETERIA:**

The lunchroom should be left free of any spills and trash, floors are to be swept around your tables and tables sprayed with soap and sani and wiped.

### **MORNING WELLNESS OBSERVATION:**

Each morning you will perform a wellness check as the children come into class. Run your hand over the child's head checking for temperature. Look at the child for any visible signs of possible sickness. Document anything that seems unusual (feeling warm, says stomach hurts, bruises/scrapes/injuries). If the child appears to be well, ensure they have washed their hands and let them join the class. This is a DSS requirement and must be done daily.

### **DRILLS AND PROCEDURES:**

There will be a variety of emergencies Life Academy may face and must be prepared to respond to. Always take your emergency contact sheet book with you and remain calm.

1. Fire Drills will be conducted at various times on a monthly basis.
  2. Follow the evacuation path on the back of your classroom door.
  3. Close windows and doors.
  4. Line-up outside, where your designated safe area is located. Display the green "ALL CLEAR" sign if all are present and counted in attendance; or the red "NOT CLEAR" sign if a child is unaccounted for.
- On site evacuation - Sanctuary of Life Church
  - Off-site evacuation - North Roanoke Baptist Church

### **CODES:**

**CODE RED: LOCK DOWN:** (use for an active shooter)

- Lock your classroom door
- Pull the room darkening shade down
- Do not allow anyone in the halls for any reason.
- Lock down drill will be released by an announcement.

Room darkening shades are only to be used during a Lock Down. **DO NOT** pull shades down during nap time. This is a DSS regulation.

### **TORNADO DRILL PROCEDURES:**

As with fire drills there must be no talking as the entire class proceeds to their assigned interior room. Every person present must enter the room, get as close to a wall as possible and kneel down facing that wall. When instructed by the teacher, every person must bend over their knees with their head as close to the ground as possible, covering the base of their skull where it meets the spine with their hands and stay in this position until danger has passed or they are instructed to sit up.

### **TORNADO DRILL ROOM ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Teachers and Children on the school side of the building will report to the big gym.
- The cafeteria, church side and infant rooms will report to Purdy.

### **STUDENT/EMERGENCY INFORMATION:**

Teachers are provided a notebook with emergency information for each child in their classroom. This notebook should remain with you whenever you leave your room or designated area, during field trips, emergency drills and procedures. Please use this notebook to confirm allergies, any medical needs and contact information. Teachers must use the white location board located in the entrance hallway when moving from place to place. This allows everyone including parents to know where every class is at all times and children can be readily located when necessary. Failure to utilize this board could result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **ACCIDENTS/ACCIDENT INCIDENT REPORTS:**

Accidents involving staff, teachers or children are to be reported to the Director or Assistant Director. Appropriate paperwork must be filled out completely and filed.

Accident Reports **MUST** be filled out **COMPLETELY** for parents when a child gets hurt, even for minor scrapes and bruises. Please remember to complete the bottom section of the accident/incident report. Teacher and parent signatures as well as dates and times must be written on the Accident/Incident Report on all three lines. The parent is to receive the original and a copy goes to the director to review and file. If the injury involves the face or head, a courtesy call will be placed by administrative staff. This form is a requirement of DSS. Major injuries or injuries which require outside medical treatment are required to be reported to the state, and administration will handle making this report.

### **CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES:**

It is the responsibility of every Life Academy employee to protect the children in our care. You are a state-mandated reporter, which means that if there is ever any suspicion or sign that a child is being neglected or



abused, you are expected to report it to Child Protective Services. You can remain anonymous during your report. If you would like assistance with this, please ask administration and we will assist you. If you believe there is evidence of abuse or neglect against a child in our care, please speak confidentially with administration so we may begin a full investigation and will report it to police and CPS.

Find more information for Child Protective Services at: [www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/index.html](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/index.html)

### **FIELD TRIPS:**

Field trips are encouraged and are a great learning experience for children. They are both educational and fun, however, the safety of all children is of paramount importance. **ALWAYS** call each child's name that is in your group as well as count your children at frequent intervals throughout the trip. This procedure should be done before leaving Life Academy, when arriving at your field trip, before leaving your field trip to return to Life Academy and upon arriving at Life Academy. Staff and chaperones must be more than adequate to cover adult/child ratios. When traveling with one or more vehicle, the lead vehicle should know how to get where they are going. The lead vehicle must be cognizant of the vehicles following at all times. The last vehicle should also know where to go in case of separation or other emergency. Cell phones will be carried and used in case of any emergency.

### **USE OF MOVIES/SCREEN TIME FOR CHILDREN:**

Movies/Screen time is to be limited to two (2) twenty minute sessions a day. Only "G" movies are allowed unless otherwise approved by the Director.

### **PERSONAL USE OF LIFE ACADEMY/AFTER SCHOOL FACILITIES:**

The copier, craft supplies, food, cleaning products and office supplies that have been purchased by the school are not to be used for any other purpose than for the daycare, preschool, after school, or summer camp programs, unless permission is given by the Director.

### **PROBLEMS AND COMPLAINTS:**

Please discuss any problems concerning your job with the administration. Under no circumstances should employees discuss problems with each other as this only causes issues to grow and escalate. Any problem or complaint will be addressed and remain confidential.

Employees that speak negatively towards others in the workplace will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal if necessary.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

In most phases of education there is much information that should be regarded as confidential. Keeping conversations between yourself and a parent or coworker as well as information discussed between yourself and the Director is not only a mark of good taste and judgement, but a proof of loyalty to your job and its administration. School business must never be discussed with "outsiders". Do not discuss information on a child with another parent or other employees. All information on children is strictly confidential.

## **UNDESIRABLE BEHAVIOR:**

In the course of our daily relationships there are certain fair and reasonable standards of behavior by which we must all abide for the good of everyone. Such standards have been established to ensure fair and uniform treatment of all our employees. It would be impossible to describe every conceivable situation; however, below are listed types of behavior you will want to avoid:

- Unsatisfactory job performance
- Shouting, tone of voice or screaming at a child under any circumstances is unacceptable
- Jerking a child up by his/her arm is unacceptable
- Lack of constant supervision of class, leaving class out of ratio
- Complaining about your job, co-workers, administration or children
- Spreading rumors, making false statements, gossiping
- Threatening or harassing employees
- Insubordination, including refusal to adhere to supervisors
- Use of profane or abusive language
- Being habitually tardy or absent
- Misuse of company time or property
- Doing work on company time that is not related to one's job without permission
- Sleeping during work hours
- Leaving the facility during working hours without permission
- Damaging property of the school or of a coworker
- Horseplay among employees or with other students
- Use or possession of firearms or explosives
- Contributing to unsanitary or disorderly conditions
- Failure to properly complete and submit required paperwork for your position (including accident reports, lesson plans, and other required documentation)
- Failure to advise administration of known violations of any regulation contained in this manual.

If an employee should violate a licensing related standard, the following disciplinary policy will go into effect.

Licensing related standards include, but are not limited to, failure to maintain sight and sound of children in your room, breaching confidentiality of staff or child information, failure to participate in the required number of professional development hours, etc.

- I. For the first infraction a letter of reprimand will be placed in the employees' file.
- II. For the second infraction, the employee will be placed on probation for 6 months and required to attend training on licensing standards and professional behavior.
- III. For the third infraction, the employee's position with Life Academy will be terminated.

If an employee should violate any of the below licensing standards below, their employment with Life Academy will be terminated at the time of the violation. Those standards include:

1. Physical punishment, striking a child, roughly handling or shaking a child, restricting movement through binding or tying, forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position, or exercise as punishment;
2. Enclosing a child in a small confined space or any space that the child cannot freely exit himself; however, this does not apply to the use of equipment such as cribs, play yards, high chairs, and safety gates when used with children preschool age or younger for their intended purpose;
3. Punishment by another child;
4. Separation from the group so that the child is away from the hearing and vision of a staff member;
5. Withholding or forcing of food or rest;
6. Verbal remarks which are demeaning to the child;
7. Punishment for toileting accidents; and
8. Punishment by applying unpleasant or harmful substances.

PLEASE NOTE that the provision of this disciplinary policy is not a guarantee of its use. Life Academy reserves the right to terminate an employee's employment at any time, with or without reason and with or without notice. Additionally, Life Academy reserves the right to criminally prosecute any employee for any infraction which may also constitute a criminal offense.

### **GUIDELINES FOR WORK:**

- We remember to pray for all children, employees and administration
- We respect one another in ways that foster clear honest and open communication, mutual trust and achievement
- We accept responsibility for our own performance
- We will set a positive example for the children in our class
- We will put forth a special effort to make children feel welcome and loved
- We address problems and concerns with administration and not with coworkers

- We adhere to all policies and procedures and support administrative staff
- We honor and respect the confidentiality and privacy of our staff and parents
- We recognize that school property and equipment are valuable assets and handle them with care
- We use our time and resources effectively
- We remain open to continued growth and learning in our position
- We are focused on the spiritual growth and wellbeing of our children and their families as well as our coworkers

### **DAILY EXPECTATIONS:**

Each day every student should participate in prayer, Bible/devotion time and pledges. It is very important that we take advantage of the opportunity given to us to be a witness to our children and their families. Incorporating daily prayer over each child by their teacher is strongly encouraged by the Pastor of Life Church. Integrating Christ into every aspect of learning as well as maintaining a constant Christian witness with our children is vital to our success as ambassadors of Christ. Take every available opportunity to witness to your children and show them God's unconditional love.

### **HANDLING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS AND CHILDREN:**

Teaching may be a trying and difficult job. Remaining calm in both actions and voice is critical. A child responds better when spoken to in a calm but firm tone. Misbehavior should result in speaking with the child, addressing why their behavior is unacceptable and what steps need to be taken to improve that behavior. Consistency is key in gaining a child's respect. Idle threats accomplish nothing. A verbal warning should be the first step taken to improve behavior. A time out should follow if needed. (Notes/calls home will be on an as needed basis). A Teacher should always have control of his/her class. Bringing a child to the Director or Assistant Director should be a last resort. However, if at any time you feel you are unable to properly handle a situation please ask for assistance from the Director or Assistant Director. Food scheduled on the lunch menu or morning/afternoon snacks may **NOT** be withheld as a form of discipline.

A lack of control of one's class or their own emotions and reactions will result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including dismissal, if necessary.

### **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE:**

Children need structure. Establish a classroom schedule for your class. Engage with children in learning time, free play and structured play. This provides a positive learning environment as well as a more constructive use of time and energy. Life Academy is fortunate to have Center Rooms, Art Room, Library, Gym and two outside Playgrounds. All of these areas provide excellent teacher/child interaction.

It is important for children to listen to instructions. When children refuse to follow instructions, redirect the

child using positive words of encouragement. Redirect to another activity, help the child focus on making good choices. If time out is required, the child should only sit out for the minutes of his/her age. Never leave a child alone when in time out. The Director needs to be informed whenever a child misbehaves beyond minor correction.

When discipline is needed, always remember that you are working with children. Children make mistakes and often have to be told many times not to do something. Be patient. Children are not adults and cannot be treated as such. If a child needs discipline, that child will be treated with gentleness, respect and understanding. Teachers do not spank, hit, grab, shake or use any physical discipline. Abusive verbal discipline such as yelling, hurling insults or threatening will **NOT** be permitted and could result in termination.

The Discipline policy of Life Academy is as follows:

First offense - Warning

Second offense -Time out

Third offense - Send to the office for assistance (follow up with parents upon pick up)

Fourth offense - Send to the office and parents are called.

Severe offenses refer to hitting, smacking, kicking, punching or biting another student or staff person to purposefully inflict injury. It will be the decision of the Director as to whether the child will be permitted to continue the Life Academy program.

### **CLASSROOM ARRANGEMENT AND DECORATION:**

Classrooms are the primary area parents see at Life Academy. Doors should display important notices and parent information. Children's artwork should be displayed on the wall outside the classroom and should be neat, organized and not excessive. Teachers are responsible for keeping their classrooms neat, organized, clean and sanitized throughout the day.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Staff, parents and children rely on you to be here and to be consistent. Coming in on time and being ready to take your class and start your day is essential. Good attendance and promptness are considered when completing employee evaluations. If you find it necessary to be late, absent or leave work early, you must report this to the administration as soon as you know. When you are absent, a doctors note will be needed when you return to work or your absence will be unexcused. Employees with a pattern of unexcused absences will risk termination.

At times, it may be necessary to ask employees to stay on a little longer than their regular shift or even change their hours. It is important to work with the administration and help out. One never knows when you might need someone to cover for you on short notice, so please be willing to step up when necessary.

### **TEMPORARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE:**

Employees requesting leave related to any medical condition concerning the employee or family members will be required to provide a physician's statement verifying the condition, its beginning and expected end dates, the need for the employee to be given or to provide care, and the estimated time required. This means a signed doctor's note must be brought in on the day that the employee returns to work. All temporary medical leave of absence must be approved by the administration.

### **TIME OFF REQUEST/PERSONAL APPOINTMENTS:**

We are unable to accommodate requests to change schedules at the last minute. Employees are required to give us a two week notice when they need to miss work. Any outside appointment, need to be scheduled outside of an employee's normally scheduled work hours. If this is not possible, please allow two weeks notice by submitting a Time Off Request Form so that adequate coverage can be arranged. Any last minute time off requests may not be honored due to the fact that it places a hardship on the operations of this center.

In case of emergency (i.e: sudden severe illness, emergency at school, emergency with your child/family, financial emergency) please come and speak to the Director or Assistant Director and we will do what we can, while prioritizing the needs of the center.

### **CALL OUTS:**

In order to run the center effectively, we all need to be on the same page regarding how to call out and report your absence from work. Make sure you have the Director and Assistant Directors phone numbers in your phone. Call or text the Director at least one hour before the start of your shift if you are unable to come to work. **Your call out will not be accepted until you have received a response.** If you do not receive a response, you should report to work.

Call outs will not be allowed the day before or night before your shift unless:

- You've already been to the doctor and they have excused you from work the next day.
- You have an emergency that you have discussed with the Director which will excuse you from work the next day.

The Director and Assistant director will not respond to texts or call outs between 9:00pm – 6:00am. Please do not call or text between those hours unless it is an emergency.

**Do Not** call the center when you are calling to report that you are unable to come to work. The messages on the Life Academy voicemail are not able to be checked until 7-7:15am in the morning.

Each time you have a call out that does not follow this procedure, you will accrue an occurrence. After three occurrences, you will be subject to termination.

The families and child/children who attend Life Academy are counting on us to be here to take care of their child/children. When multiple people call out and do not give proper notice, we are putting the care of the child/children at risk. In addition, it is unfair to the other staff who have reported to work on-time to constantly have to watch more children while we work to find a substitute.

**BEREAVEMENT POLICY:**

Life Academy does not offer paid bereavement. To accommodate, the following has been put into place to our current sick leave policy.

Teachers may use up to three days of sick leave as bereavement following the death of an immediate family member. This is offered to any employee who has sick time off available. "Immediate family member" will include: Spouse, parent, sibling, child, grandchild, grandparent.

**EMPLOYEE VACATION/SICK POLICY:**

The vacation/sick day benefit is offered to those employees who are considered full-time. To qualify as a full time employee, you **MUST** work a minimum of 35 hours per week. Each employee will be compensated the equivalent of their regularly scheduled work hours when paid for time off. For example, if you work 35 hours per week, you would receive 35 hours of pay for your vacation week or 7 hours a day for your sick day.

Vacation days earned can only be taken from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year and will not be carried over into the next year. Full time employees are given 5 sick days within a calendar year. Unused sick days will not be carried over to the next year.

Sick days are to be used for unplanned illness for yourself, dependents, doctor appointments or medical procedures. If you are absent due to illness for the third consecutive day you will be required to submit a doctor's excuse for the time missed. Repeated absences and tardiness will not be tolerated. Any absence of three consecutive days without a proper doctor's excuse is considered a voluntary resignation.

Days earned are to be consecutively worked to be eligible for these benefits. Any break in employment, such as taking the summer months off, may alter this policy. Please see administration for these types of particular situations as they will be handled on an individual basis. If you are absent before or after a holiday, you will not be eligible for holiday pay. The exception is if a Time Off Request Form has been approved by administration.

<u># OF DAYS/YEARS WORKED</u>	<u>EARNES # OF VACATION DAY</u>	<u>EARNES # OF SICK DAYS</u>
0-90 days	0	0
91 days – end of Calendar year	5	5
1-10 years	10	5
10+ years	15	5

**PLEASE NOTE:** For vacation pay indicate paid or unpaid on your Time Off Request Form. Your time card

needs to indicate vacation/sick pay and if you want your time off to be paid or unpaid in order to be correctly compensated. The Finance Department keeps a record of employee vacation and sick days and it is indicated on the employee's pay stub. If you have any questions regarding the employee vacation and sick day policy please refer to the Finance Department.

#### **STAFF MEETINGS:**

Staff meetings between employees and administration will be scheduled by the administration. Staff meetings will be held at the administrators request at any time. All staff must be in attendance. Failure to attend will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, if necessary.

#### **TRAINING AND EDUCATION:**

Employees with Life Academy must complete 10 hours of pre-service training online at the time of hire. First Aid & CPR training is required upon hiring and every two years thereafter. A total of 16 hours of training must be done on an annual basis. Courses in which teachers wish to participate in may or may not be paid for. Any course taken should not conflict with a teacher's classroom schedule.

#### **CHURCH ATTENDANCE:**

We encourage our employees to be born again Christians and exemplify Christ in their daily life. Our school believes that church attendance and involvement are vital to maintaining a walk with Christ. Regular, consistent attendance at one's home church is expected. The Director may at any time contact the church to verify an employee's attendance.

#### **FLEXIBILITY:**

Each employee will have a job title and description of job expectations. At any time an employee may be called to change their class schedule or alter their schedule to meet the needs of the daycare. Also, any employee may be moved to another class or have additional students placed in their class to assist if the need arises. Flexibility and a positive attitude are required in order to have a professional ministry environment. Failure to be flexible will increase the stress level of management and coworkers and will not be tolerated.

#### **EVALUATIONS:**

Annual evaluations will be conducted on each employee. Non-scheduled evaluations may be given throughout the year at the administration's discretion. Evaluations will consist of an assessment of job performance, compliance with company regulations, general attitude and character of the employee. Classroom observations may be conducted at any time throughout the year and an evaluation given. Results from evaluations will be given to the employee and will be open for discussion if necessary. An employee who has a disagreement with their evaluation should schedule an appointment and bring it to the administration's attention immediately. This should not be discussed with other employees.

#### **COMPENSATION:**

Pay rates will be disclosed to employees and are to remain confidential. Each employee is paid based on



their position, job performance and years of service. Pay scales and rates are determined by the administration. Pay raises will be considered annually but are not guaranteed and includes benefits like tuition discounts.

### **PERSONNEL RECORDS:**

Personnel records will be maintained by administration. There may be times when you will be required to update your employee file. The administration will inform you of what information/ forms will be needed. Records include but are not limited to:

- Application/Resume
- Reference Letters
- 2 forms of ID
- State and Federal W-4's
- I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification
- Criminal Background Check
- VSP Fingerprints
- Annual Staff Health Report
- TB Screening
- Pastor's Letter of Recommendation
- Sworn Disclosure Statement
- Life Academy Employment Letter of Agreement
- Any Evaluations
- Disciplinary Reports
- Completion of 10 Hours of Pre-Service
- Minimum of 16 Hours of Training Per Year

### **LUNCH PERIODS:**

Teachers are expected to eat lunch at the scheduled class lunch periods with their students in order to maintain constant supervision. Teachers may eat a school lunch free of charge. Teachers should ensure that children wash their hands before eating their lunch. This is a good time for teachers to emphasize to their children manners and proper eating habits, how to use their napkins and clean up after themselves. This is also a great time to teach children to pray before eating. When lunch is complete, put all trash in the trash containers, sweep up all the food on the floor and wipe down tables with soap and sani.

If Teachers choose to bring their own lunch from home, they must insure that it does not contain any peanuts, peanut products or any allergens that a child in their classroom is allergic to. Teachers are not allowed to offer their food to a child. Children should only eat the food that is published on the school lunch menu or brought from home by their parent.

### **PAY DAY AND PAY CHECKS:**

Employees are paid bi-weekly. Pay checks will be available on Friday mornings. Paychecks will not be distributed early unless prior approval has been obtained from the Finance Manager. Any discrepancies in your pay must be brought to the Finance Manager's attention before the next payday or will be considered void. Please remember that all issues surrounding pay, pay schedules, pay amounts deductions, etc. are confidential and are not to be discussed with other employees. Discussing these areas is grounds for immediate dismissal.

### **TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT:**

At any point in time, without reason, the administration reserves the right to terminate employment. Employment will be terminated when policies and procedures contained in this manual are violated.

An employee may submit a resignation in writing at any time. Proper notification and ample time will be expected for any resignation notice. Failure to provide a proper notice will result in a poor reference for future employers and a return to employment at Life Academy will not be permitted. At least a two week notice is expected.

### **OUTSIDE FOOD AND DRINK:**

Life Academy is a peanut-free facility, so staff cannot bring any outside food or drink into the center that contains peanuts. Staff may bring a cup from home with a drink in it, but it must be kept up and out of reach of the children. Staff are not allowed to offer their own food or drink to the children for any reason. Children should only consume the food provided by the center and listed on the school menu unless 1) It is a special occasion (holiday/birthday party) or 2) the parent has provided an alternative to be served to their child.

# The Life Academy C.A.R.E. Approach

The Life Academy C.A.R.E. Approach to doing things helps us realize that our relationship with our students' parents is a partnership. They bring their most valued treasure to us daily and expect that we will be good stewards and care for them as if these treasures are our own. In fact, this partnership is a position of great responsibility and one that should not be taken lightly.

Caring for our Life Family Treasures (Students of Life Academy) begins with:

**Capturing their imagination.** You are not just a babysitter; you are here to engage and become a part of these children's lives. Play with them, talk to them, sit with them, and be present while you are here with them. Stay off of your cell phones, keep from sitting and watching only, do not only talk to each other, acknowledge each child as you come in and as you or they leave for the day, and acknowledge and develop a relationship with their parents, our partners. If you are going to capture their imagination you must be more than just physically present, your mind must be focused on the task at hand, being good stewards of what has been entrusted to you.

The second aspect of caring for our Life Family Treasures is:

**Affection.** Our students need to know that everyone at Life loves and values them, also their families need to know this. Showing affection goes beyond the surface, it starts with a warm smile as you work with the children. Affection and love should be heard in the way you speak and the words you use, felt in the way you touch and encounter the children and their families, and seen by everyone when you walk the halls, play with the children, encounter each other, and even in the world outside of Life Academy.

Thirdly, when caring for our Life Family Treasures we must:

**Reassurance.** Our partners in this, the parents of Life Academy, leave their children with us day in and day out. The reason they continue to do so is because we continually reassure them that we care for their treasures. However, reassurance comes in many different ways. Our partners (parents) are reassured when they can see, hear, and feel that we care. This means not showing up and hearing a staff member yelling at children or complaining about their job, not coming in after a long day and seeing their child playing outside without a jacket on a chilly day, and staff answering questions to the best of their ability, even if that answer is I do not know but I will find out. In addition to reassuring our partners (parents) we must also reassure the students that we care for them, love them, and will protect them.

Finally, when we are caring for our Life Family Treasures we should:

**Encouragement.** It is easy to get in the habit of talking down to our students, especially when they are not acting like they should be acting. Even so, these amazing students have an entire life ahead of them and God has made great plans for them. The great part about our job is that we are uniquely positioned in their lives to encourage them in many ways. Spend time looking for the good and giving grace for the bad. Encourage them to be the best they can be and do the best they can do. These students are future teachers, doctors, pastors, nurses, contractors, mechanics, coaches, and so many other things. You get to be a part of the "initial buy in"

of their lives and partner with parents to encourage and uplift them. Look for the good and praise them for it, if you can't see any good today ask God to show you what he sees when he looks at them. This encouragement is also for the parents and each other not just the students.

## **ALLERGIES**

Definition

Difference between an allergy and a food preference

Food

Other

No perfumes, scented lotions, air fresheners

No Lysol, aerosol sunscreen

Peanut-free facility – for staff and children

## **Weekly Meal Count and Attendance Forms**

**Classroom staff will be responsible for the weekly completion of the CACFP Attendance and Meal Count form. Please only use an X in the corresponding space to indicate, attendance and meal served. Black and Blue Ink only to be used on these forms. If you need a child's name added or deleted from your form, please talk to the Director about the changes needed.**

**Meal count sheets should placed, along with weekly sign in/sign out and attendance logs, in Cindy's Box at the end of every week.**

**Milk will be served at Breakfast and Lunch in accordance with the CACFP meal program. There is no fruit juice or other sweetened beverages allowed during meals or snack times. Students should be encouraged and reminded to bring a personal water bottle for use each day. Teachers will devise a system for transporting water bottles when outside so that children have regular access to water.**

**There is to be no outside food given to children, with the exception of requested items in the event of a classroom celebration. No candy should be given to students, unless being used as a treat incentive at the end of the week.**

**Be mindful of food that are a choking hazard (hotdogs, grapes, popcorn, small candy), Children should be given these items in very limited quantities and monitored very carefully when consuming these items.**

I have received, read and understand the **Life Academy Preschool Employee Manual** and agree to willingly follow the rules and spirit of the rules listed in it.

I understand that failure to do so will result in disciplinary action and possible loss of employment.

I understand that Life Academy is a ministry of Life Church and is governed by the authority of the Pastor of Life Church and its Deacon Board.

I have read, understand and agree to comply in full with the guidelines of the Life Academy Preschool Employee Manual.

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Employee Signature

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Employee Name (Clearly Printed)

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Today's Date