

La Vida Charter School



Employee Handbook

2011

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Confirmation of Receipt of La Vida Charter School Employee Handbook

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the La Vida Charter School (“La Vida”) Employee Handbook (“Handbook”) and understand that it sets forth the terms and conditions of my employment as well as the duties, responsibilities, and obligations of employment with La Vida. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read the Handbook and to abide by the rules, policies, and standards set forth in the Handbook.

I also acknowledge that my employment with La Vida is not for a specified period of time and can be terminated at any time, with or without cause or advance notice, by me or by La Vida. I acknowledge that nothing in this Handbook and no oral statements or representations regarding my employment can alter the foregoing. I also acknowledge that this policy of at-will employment may be revised, deleted or superseded only by a written employment agreement signed by the Board of Directors that expressly revises, modifies, deletes, or supersedes the policy of at-will employment.

I also acknowledge that, except for the policy of at-will employment, La Vida reserves the right to revise, delete, and add to the provisions of this Handbook at any time. No oral statements or representations can change the provisions of this Handbook. I also acknowledge that, except for the policy of at-will employment or a written employment agreement providing otherwise, terms and conditions of employment with La Vida may be modified at the sole discretion of La Vida with or without cause or notice at any time. No implied contract concerning any employment-related decision or term and condition of employment can be established by any other statement, conduct, policy, or practice.

I understand that, unless my employment is covered by a written employment agreement providing otherwise, the foregoing agreement concerning my at-will employment status and La Vida's right to determine and modify the terms and conditions of employment is the sole and entire agreement between me and La Vida concerning the duration of my employment, the circumstances under which my employment may be terminated, and the circumstances under which the terms and conditions of my employment may change. I further understand that, with the exception of written employment agreements signed by the Board of Directors, this agreement supersedes all prior agreements, understandings, and representations concerning my employment with La Vida.

Employee’s Name: _____

Employee’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

(Employee to remove this page from the Handbook, sign, date, and return to school office.)

Employment at-will

As a member of the La Vida Charter School team (“La Vida”), you will be expected to contribute your talents and energies to improve the environment and quality of the Charter School. In return, you will be given opportunities to grow and develop professionally.

Continued employment, compensation, advancement and benefits are based on good performance and a good team attitude; however, all employment with the Charter School is ‘at-will’. ‘Employment at-will’ may be terminated with or without cause and with or without advance notice at any time by the employee or the Charter School. Nothing in this handbook or in any document or statement shall limit the right to terminate employment at will.

In cases when an employee resigns, the employee should provide as much advance written notice as possible, but not less than (30) thirty days.

No one will be denied employment opportunities or benefits on the basis of age, sex color, race, creed, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, disability that does not prohibit performance of essential job functions, with or without reasonable accommodation, or any other basis protected by applicable state or federal law.

Section I

Employment Requirements

Each position at La Vida has a specific job description. See your job description for detailed information about the position.

General Expectations

The general expectations and preferences for employees of La Vida are:

- Experience in Waldorf methods or training
- If inexperienced, possess openness to Waldorf methods and training
- Flexibility and openness to evolving a model for alternative education
- Willingness to attend, on-site or off-site, staff meetings, teacher trainings and job-enhancing workshops, school events, including open house

Credentials

La Vida and all teachers/Educational Coordinators (“EC”) must comply with No Child Left Behind requirements, including possession of a valid California State Teaching Credential.

Professional Growth

All teachers/ECs are expected to keep their credentials up-to-date by pursuing continuing education units. La Vida will post professional growth opportunities, such as Waldorf trainings offered at Rudolf Steiner College in the Sacramento area. But it is the teacher/ECs responsibility to seek out the education and training necessary to achieve and maintain a clear credential. Should any change in credential status occur, teachers/ECs must immediately report such change to the Charter School Director.

Evaluation

La Vida participates in the evaluation process in several ways. The administrator will conduct teacher evaluations at least every other year, but reserves the right to conduct evaluations at any time. Self-evaluations are required annually. Establishment of this evaluation process in no way alters the at-will employment relationship.

Compensation

While faculty members are exempt from overtime laws, compensation for core faculty (on-site teachers and ECs) is provided on a salary basis schedule tied to student contact hours and includes a consideration of the following:

- Teaching experience
- Waldorf experience and/or training
- Independent study experience

Specialty teachers and other classified employees are paid on an hourly basis.

Annual pay increases are subject to budget considerations, although every attempt is made to provide an increase each year.

Work Schedule

Business hours are normally 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The regular workday schedule for non-exempt employees is 8 hours; the regular workweek schedule is forty (40) hours. Exempt employees are also generally expected to be present during business hours and to commit whatever additional time is necessary to satisfactorily complete all job requirements.

Meal Periods

Non-exempt employees are provided with at least a 30-minute meal period, to be taken approximately in the middle of the workday. The Director should be aware of and approve your scheduled meal and rest periods.

You are expected to observe your assigned working hours and the time allowed for meal and rest periods. Do not leave the premises during your rest period and do not take more than ten (10) minutes for each rest period. You may leave the premises during the meal period.

Attendance and Tardiness

All employees, whether exempt or non-exempt, are expected to arrive at work consistently and on time. Absenteeism and tardiness negatively affects La Vida's ability to implement its educational program and disrupts consistency in students' learning.

If you find it necessary to be absent or late, you are expected to telephone the Director as soon as possible but no later than one-half hour before the start of the workday. If you are absent from work longer than one day, you are expected to keep the Director sufficiently informed of your situation.

As noted in the section of this Handbook concerning prohibited conduct, excessive or unexcused absences or tardiness may result in disciplinary action up to and

including release from at-will employment with the School. Absence for more than three (3) consecutive days without notifying the Director will be considered a voluntary resignation from employment.

Time Cards/Records

By law, La Vida is obligated to keep accurate records of the time worked by non-exempt employees. Such employees shall keep be required to utilize La Vida's time card system.

Non-exempt employees must accurately clock in and out of their shifts as this is the only way the payroll department knows how many hours each employee has worked and how much each employee is owed. The time card indicates when the employee arrived and when the employee departed. All non-exempt employees must clock in and out for arrival and departure, along with lunch and for absences like doctor or dentist appointments. All employees are required to keep the office advised of their departures from and returns to the school premises during the workday.

Non-exempt employees are solely responsible for ensuring accurate information on their time cards and remembering to record time worked. If an employee forgets to mark their time card or makes an error on the time card, the employee must contact the Director to make the correction and such correction must be initialed by both the employee and the Director.

No one may record hours worked on another's worksheet. Any employee who tampers with his/her own time card, or another employee's time card, may be subjected to disciplinary action, up to and including release from at-will employment with La Vida.

Exempt employees generally receive a salary but may also have supplemental pay based on hours not in their contract. The rules and guidelines listed above hold true for all exempt employees filling out a La Vida time card. In addition, since exempt employees may be working off campus meeting with students or completing paperwork, the employee will fill out a work log, recording the time worked and the functioned performed.

Personal Business

La Vida's facilities for handling mail and telephone calls are designed to accommodate La Vida business. Please have your personal mail directed to your home address and limit personal telephone calls to an absolute minimum. Personal

calls should not be made outside your immediate dialing area. Do not use La Vida material, time or equipment for personal projects.

Conflict of Interest

All employees must avoid situations involving actual or potential conflict of interest. An employee involved in any relationships or situations which may constitute a conflict of interest should immediately and fully disclose the relevant circumstances to the Director, or the Board of Directors, for a determination about whether a potential or actual conflict exists. If an actual or potential conflict is determined, the School may take whatever corrective action appears appropriate according to the circumstances. Failure to disclose facts shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

Health and Safety Policy

La Vida is committed to providing and maintaining a healthy and safe work environment for all employees. You are required to know and comply with the School's General Safety Rules and to follow safe and healthy work practices at all times. You are required to report immediately to the Director any potential health or safety hazards, and all injuries or accidents. In compliance with Proposition 65, the School will inform employees of any known exposure to a chemical known to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity.

Criminal Background Checks

As required by law, all individuals working or volunteering at La Vida will be required to submit to a background criminal investigation. No condition or activity will be permitted that may compromise La Vida's commitment that the safety and the well-being of students takes precedence over all other considerations. Conditions that preclude working at La Vida include conviction of a controlled substance or sex offense, or a serious or violent felony. Additionally, should an employee, during his/her employment with La Vida, be convicted of a controlled substance or sex offense, or serious or violent felony, the employee must immediately report such a conviction to the Director.

Tuberculosis Testing

All employees of La Vida must submit written proof from a physician of an examination for tuberculosis (TB) within the last sixty (60) days showing that they are free of active TB. The examination for tuberculosis consists of an approved TB test, which, if positive, will be followed by an x-ray of the lungs, or in the absence of skin testing, an x-ray of the lungs. All employees will be required to undergo TB examination at least once every four (4) years. All volunteers will be

required to undergo a TB examination at least once every four (4) years. TB examination is a condition of initial employment with SOAR and the cost of the exam will be borne by the applicant.

Food handlers will be required to have annual TB exams. Documentation of employee and volunteer compliance with TB exams will be kept on file in the office. This requirement also includes contract food handlers, substitute teachers, and student teachers serving under the supervision of an educator. Any entity providing student services to La Vida will be contractually required to ensure that all contract workers have had TB testing that shows them to be free of active TB prior to conducting work with La Vida students.

Security Protocols

La Vida has developed guidelines to help maintain a secure workplace. Be aware of unknown persons loitering in parking areas, walkways, entrances and exits and service areas. Report any suspicious persons or activities to the Director. Secure your desk or office at the end of the day. When called away from your work area for an extended length of time, do not leave valuable or personal articles around your work station that may be accessible. The security of facilities as well as the welfare of our employees depends upon the alertness and sensitivity of every individual to potential security risks. You should immediately notify the Director when keys are missing or if security access codes or passes have been breached.

Occupational Safety

La Vida is committed to the safety of its employees, vendors, contractors and the public and to providing a clear safety goal for management.

The prevention of accidents is the responsibility of every La Vida supervisor. It is also the duty of all employees to accept and promote the established safety regulations and procedures. Every effort will be made to provide adequate safety training. If an employee is ever in doubt how to perform a job or task safely, assistance should be requested. Unsafe conditions must be reported immediately.

It is the policy of La Vida that accident prevention shall be considered of primary importance in all phases of operation and administration. La Vida's management is required to provide safe and healthy working conditions for all employees and to establish and require the use of safe practices at all times.

Failure to comply with or enforce La Vida safety and health rules, practices and procedures could result in disciplinary action up to and including possible termination.

Accident/Incident Reporting

It is the duty of every employee to immediately or as soon as is practical report any accident or injury occurring during work or on La Vida premises so that arrangements can be made for medical or first aid treatment, as well as for investigation and follow-up purposes.

Reporting Fires and Emergencies

It is the duty of every employee to know how to report fires and other emergencies quickly and accurately. Employees should report any such emergency by calling management. In addition, all employees should know the local emergency numbers such as 911.

Personnel Files and Record Keeping Protocols

At the time of your employment, a personnel file is established for you. Please keep the Director advised of changes that should be reflected in your personnel file. Such changes include: change in address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents and person(s) to notify in case of emergency. Prompt notification of these changes is essential and will enable the School to contact you should the change affect your other records.

You have the right to inspect certain documents in your personnel file, as provided by law, in the presence of a La Vida representative, at a mutually convenient time. You may add your comments to any disputed item in the file. La Vida will restrict disclosure of your personnel file to authorized individuals within La Vida. A request for information contained in the personnel file must be directed to the Director. Only the Director or designee is authorized to release information about current or former employees. Disclosure of information to outside sources will be limited. However, La Vida will cooperate with requests from authorized law enforcement or local, state or federal agencies conducting official investigations or as otherwise legally required.

Correspondence

When addressing a group as an agent of the school whether in email or a written hard copy, the employee will carbon copy or give a facsimile copy to the Director at the time of the message release. Whenever the employee uses the school's

letterhead for correspondence, a copy goes to the Director at the time of the release. In certain situations in individual correspondence, if there are questions, conflicts, or larger agreements it may be prudent and therefore encouraged to send a carbon copy or blind carbon copy to the Director.

Employees may not create their own digital versions of La Vida forms. Unless there has been approval to create a digital form, an employee could be subject to disciplinary action for creating digital versions of La Vida documents.

Employees must conduct themselves professionally and be conscious of their status as an agent of the school in social networks and chat rooms. If an employee is found to have conducted themselves inappropriately in a manner that reflects upon or compromises the school, disciplinary action may be taken. If an employee becomes aware of a situation in which they feel uncomfortable about because it compromises the school or their position as a school agent, the employee should bring the situation to the attention of the Director in a timely manner.

Section II

Student Enrollment

EC Responsibilities-Introductory

Orientation

The Educational Coordinator (“EC”) is the primary resource professional for the parent(s). Upon admission to La Vida, the EC meets with each student and parent(s) to complete the following steps in preparation for the school year:

- Discuss program/curriculum options
- Explain La Vida philosophies
- Discuss attendance policies and documentation
- Obtain parent and student signatures on Master Agreement
- Oversee student completion of 20 hours of independent study assignments designed to aid subject and grade level placement
- Develop Weekly/Monthly Learning Records

EC Responsibilities-Ongoing

Program Management

The EC functions as the program manager for the student, ensures that all California State requirements for Independent Study are met, and is primarily responsible for:

- Educational goal-setting in collaboration with the parent(s) and student
- Assessment of student progress
- Collation of Learning Records, student work samples, and other documentation of student progress to satisfy California State requirements

The EC is also responsible for suggesting alternative educational opportunities when needed/desired such as tutoring, workshops, community, and vocational experiences.

EC Responsibilities-Graduation Requirements

High School 4 Year Plan

The EC is responsible for tracking the 4-year plan for high school graduation. La Vida offers two tracks for high school diplomas and a single track for a work

readiness certificate. The diploma tracks are: a University Prep diploma (235 units) or a General Studies diploma (225 units). In addition to unit requirements for a diploma, all students must pass the California High School Exit Exam in Math and English offered in the spring and sometimes at other times during the school year.

Flexible Learning

The High School program at La Vida combines individual learning with community-based learning experiences. The flexibility of Independent Study encourages student creativity and promotes involvement in a variety of educational settings beyond the classroom. Whether the student opts for site-based learning on campus or structures a curriculum within the larger community, the basis for learning is collaborative creation of a learning plan and educational opportunities with community members, organizations, and institutions.

All students must complete 90 hours of community service over the course of four years. All students are required to complete a Senior Project.

Please refer to the High School Handbook for detailed information about La Vida's program.

Parent Responsibilities-Ongoing

Parent as Primary Teacher

In enrolling the student at La Vida, the parent(s) agree to be the primary teacher, providing at-home education and guidance.

Parent Attendance at Progress Meetings

Parent(s) and student attend scheduled progress meetings with the EC every 20 school days for Kindergarten through 8th grade. 9th-12th grade students attend scheduled progress meetings every 10 days, although high school parents need to maintain contact with the ECs regarding student progress.

Parent Assistance with Weekly/Monthly Learning Records

Parent(s) assist the ECs and students to develop, implement and follow through with Learning Records.

Parent Assistance with Attendance

The parent(s) assists student in documenting both the content and time spent on schoolwork at home, as well as all other coursework and educational activities.

Independent study students must complete at least 20 hours of work per week.

High school students must complete at least 30 hours per week to be successful. Less than 20 hours of documented work per week will result in placement of student on probation. Documentation of work done at home is critical to the Charter School's attendance records as well as its funding. The EC provides recording forms known as **Learning Records which the parent(s) and student need to complete and submit to the EC at regularly scheduled progress meetings.**

Other Parent Involvement

To guarantee enrollment the following school year, families are asked to volunteer 40 hours per school year. They also may benefit from Parent Education Seminars and parent class meetings held throughout the school year.

Entry/Exit Procedures and Behavior Management

Recruitment

La Vida will actively recruit a diverse student population from Mendocino County and surrounding areas in order to strive to maintain a racial and ethnic balance reflective of the general population. Prior to admission, the parent(s) and student will be advised of the Charter School's philosophies, including Waldorf methods, its program, and the required level of parent involvement for the Independent Study program to succeed.

Transfer to La Vida

The Registrar request records from former school(s) and it is the EC's responsibility to confirm with the Registrar that the records have been received. In the case of a high school student, the EC must review transcripts, a critical step in drafting the student's 4-year plan. Prior expulsions may be a basis for denial of admittance of a pupil to La Vida.

Transfer to Another School

All La Vida students who wish to transfer may choose to attend another school within their district of residence and pursue such transfer according to the existing enrollment and transfer policies of that district.

Exit Procedure

The EC participates in these four steps of the student exit process:

- Submits attendance records
- Submits grades

- Secures return of books and materials
- With office staff, completes exit procedure form

Disenrollment/Truancy

Disenrollment is a result of student failure to meet the agreements in the Independent Study Contract. Formal disenrollment is predicated upon three documented incidences of failure to complete assigned or agreed-upon work, including attendance at required progress meetings with EC. The EC must inform the Administrator of each incidence and provide documentation of missed work. See the Master Agreement for further details.

Truancy applies to students in site-based classes. Students who choose to attend these classes are making a commitment to be at classes on time and on a regular basis.

Suspension and Expulsion

Students can be suspended or expelled from La Vida in accordance with the Charter School's Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedure. The Charter School shall provide due process to all students prior to acting to suspend or expel in accordance with the policy.

Section III

Independent Study

Advising Families on Selection of Curriculum Package

The EC needs to be familiar with the two curriculum packages that La Vida offers: Oak Meadow and Live Education. The EC is expected to assist the family with curriculum choice. Alternative curriculum is available to Special Education students.

As a public school, La Vida receives funds from the State based on student attendance. The cost of curriculum packages, covered by the La Vida, ranges from \$400-600.

Coordinating Purchase of Materials and Supplies

Check in the current Family Handbook for updated information about the La Vida year's materials and supplies allotment.

The EC must coordinate purchase between the family and office personnel through an authorized purchase order. All instructional materials must be purchased from approved vendors through La Vida office personnel. *Note that under no circumstances can La Vida reimburse families for materials purchased independently.*

Care of Non-Consumable Materials

All non-consumable materials purchased by La Vida belong to the school and must be returned to La Vida at the end of the year or period of use. The EC must make sure families understand that this material will be recycled and that they care for books and other resources as they would books on loan from the library.

Choosing an Independent Curriculum

Families have a right to use an alternative curriculum but La Vida is not obligated to fund it. La Vida cannot use state funds to pay for curriculum of a sectarian nature. Attendance cannot be granted for the daily engagement of a student utilizing sectarian curriculum, regardless of whether the parent pays out of pocket for such materials.

Required Independent Study Documentation

Independent study students must complete at least 20 hours of work per week. High school students must complete at least 30 hours per week to be successful. Less than the required hours of documented work per week will result in placement of student on probation. Documentation of work done at home is critical to the Charter School's attendance records as well as its funding.

4 Core Documentation Responsibilities of EC

The EC is responsible for developing and maintaining four key documents of Independent Study:

- Master Agreement
- Semester Goals
- Weekly/Monthly Learning Records/Personal Education Plan
- Evaluation/Grades

Master Agreement

Admission to La Vida requires a written contract among the EC, parent(s), and student, agreeing to the goals, objectives, and mission of the Charter School as stated in the charter and family handbook. This contract, known as the Master Agreement, is the critical document for management of the student's independent study program. **It is the ECs responsibility to ensure that all signatures and dates be recorded on the Master Agreement BEFORE the student begins schoolwork. Negligence in this area jeopardizes the Charter School's funding and may affect the ECs employment at La Vida.**

Semester Goals

In collaboration with the student and parent(s), the EC records semester goals. For elementary level students, this is a handwritten document signed by the student. For high school students, this is a formal list of courses that **must include required units.**

Weekly/Monthly Learning Record

Be aware that the state of California's Independent Study documentation requirements may vary from year to year.

Each student's educational objectives are outlined in a written Weekly/Monthly Learning Record developed jointly among the student, parent(s), and educational coordinator. The Record is tailored to the student's individual needs within a Waldorf methods curriculum. All three parties sign this document.

The EC distributes Learning Record forms to the parent(s) and student at each weekly/monthly meeting. The Weekly/Monthly form is the key record documenting student independent study work, covering all learning areas, from academic work to participation in the arts and field trips. It is the responsibility of the EC to collect this completed form from the student and parent(s) at each scheduled EC meeting. The completed Learning Record documents student attendance, student progress toward identified goals and objectives, and learning achievements.

Evaluation/Grades

Student assessment and measurable student outcomes are based on a variety of data accumulated by the EC:

- EC shall regularly collect samples of student work, including five original student documents from major subject areas
- EC shall document discussions at monthly meetings
- EC shall note reported observations by Parent-Teacher Charter-Teacher, Specialty and Mentor Teacher of student skills and knowledge demonstrated in classes, community service, performances and/or projects
- EC shall cooperate in formal and/or alternative assessments, tests, and other programs set forth by the administrator. These include administration of State Standardized testing annually in the spring with results reported to parent(s). ECs shall also participate in implementation of alternative assessments to be developed over time, including portfolios
- EC shall record Semester grades for High School students
- EC shall provide written evaluations for elementary students

Section IV

Materials & Services

Financial Information

Curriculum and Materials & Supplies

As La Vida is a free public school, no tuition is charged. Each student, by his or her daily attendance, generates funds from the State of California that are appropriated for educational purposes. A portion of these funds is allocated to each student to be used for educational expenses.

Curriculum: Everyone gets curriculum, Oak Meadow and Live Education are the two curriculum choices. Alternate curriculum may be given to Special Education Students as required or as appropriate. For Math the school uses Saxon Homeschool Math and Sadler Oxford Progress in. The school also offers supplemental standards based curriculum published by Options such as Buckle Down. The school may explore other curriculum to assess if it is something the school wants to offer.

Student taking on site classes: Get curriculum only. There are no reimbursements.

Home school only students: Get curriculum plus \$75 supply money each semester.

Home school only students who opt not to take curriculum then receive a curriculum and supply allotment of \$150 the first semester and \$100 the second semester.

Note: First semester budget for all students **must be spent by November 25** and the second semester budget is to be **spent by March 30**.

Under no circumstances may a parent be reimbursed for materials purchased independently. All instructional materials must be purchased from an approved vendor by authorized purchase order through your educational coordinator the office ordering personnel. All non-consumable materials purchased by La Vida by law belong to the school and must be returned at the end of the school year, or when they are no longer being used by the family in the education of an enrolled

student. You will be expected to treat the non-consumable materials as you would library books on loan.

You will be expected to replace lost or negligently damaged items.

Curriculum is expensive. La Vida pays on average between \$400 and \$600 per student for a curriculum package. Book covers will preserve the life of the book and make it convenient to write their name clearly on the outside. The school encourages students to cover their books right away as part of your independent study program.

La Vida tote bags are provided to help keep your curriculum together and in good condition.

Materials Restrictions

Nature of Materials: Charter Schools and Religious Instruction

There has been great confusion regarding the use of religious materials in independent study programs. A recent study of this issue resulted in guidelines that reflect the rights and opportunities of parents and students in a charter school. This study included intensive discussions with legislative representatives, legal counsel, parents and religious groups, and the California Department of Education. By applying the following guidelines of charter school instructional programs, the schools will operate lawfully, and, of equal importance, with maximum respect for individual rights.

1. The parent/guardian acting as a co-facilitator, or in any other manner assisting in the instruction of their child, is NOT considered an agent of the State of California and, therefore, is not bound by those laws that guide the teachers who are paid by the school. The parent/guardian, as provided by the Constitution of the United States, is provided the right to freedom of expression of religion and may at any time use religious content in the instruction, guidance, and care of their child. However, attendance cannot be granted for the daily engagement of a student utilizing religious curriculum, regardless of whether the parent pays out of pocket for such materials. ECs must assign and coordinate the work used to generate attendance credit and ECs may not assign sectarian materials.

2. The State of California and subsequently its agent, La Vida, is not permitted to purchase or otherwise provide materials containing religious content for students or for any other purpose.
3. A charter school may not require or maintain any student achievement records, including transcripts, report cards, portfolios, or any other documentation regarding the student that contains religious content.
4. The EC/Teacher of a State of California charter school may not, during the course of instruction, use materials or expressions deemed to contain religious content.
5. Small Group Instructors, who are paid by the State of California through a charter school, are considered an agent of the State during their course of instruction and, therefore, may not teach using materials or expressions deemed to contain religious content.

SECTION V

HUMAN RESOURCES

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EMPLOYMENT

Equal Opportunity Employment

The Charter School provides equal employment opportunity for all regardless of age, sex, color, race, creed, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, disability or any other basis protected by applicable state or federal law.

The policy applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, hiring, training and development, promotion, termination, compensation, and benefits in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws.

Equal employment opportunity notices are posted on appropriate employee bulletin boards at charter school offices as required by law.

Disabilities and Reasonable Accommodations

The Charter School will provide reasonable accommodations to employees consistent with legal requirements.

Complaint Policy

A complaint is an allegation by an employee concerning an existing rule, policy or practice, or that the employee has been treated unfairly or inequitably.

Before any formal process is begun, if appropriate, the employee is encouraged to talk with the person/s involved in the incident, to determine if the misunderstanding or unfair treatment can be resolved. If there is no resolution possible between the parties, any individuals wishing to file a written complaint with an administrator may do so as soon as possible after the event(s) that give rise to the work-related concerns. The written complaint should set forth in detail the basis for the complaint. A complaint form may be provided to the complainant to assist in the filing of a complaint.

The administrator/supervisor receiving the complaint will date and log all written complaints and inform the complainant that the complaint is under review. Complaints shall be investigated in a timely manner and as thorough as required under the circumstances.

The administrator or his/her designee investigates the complaint, meeting separately with the complainant and the employee and any others who either are named in the complaint or who may have knowledge of the facts set forth in the complaint. La Vida will attempt to treat all internal complaints in its investigation in as confidential a manner as possible, recognizing, however, in the course of investigating or resolving internal complaints some dissemination of information to others may be appropriate.

Complainants or witnesses participating in the complaint process will be advised that retaliation by any person as a result of participation in the complaint process will not be tolerated. Employees have the right to make good-faith complaints without retaliation.

Upon completion of the investigation, the administrator may orally or in writing, report findings and conclusions to the employee.

COMPENSATION

Pay Plan

Regular wages will be paid on the last day of each month and overtime, as applicable, will be paid on the (10) tenth day of the following month for each month of the Academic Year. Certificated employees are paid using a calculation of one-tenth of yearly salary basis to be paid each month from September through June unless otherwise stipulated in the employment agreement. Classified employees are paid on a monthly basis or as otherwise stipulated in the employment agreement.

Mandatory Deductions

The regular payroll deductions for federal withholding tax, state withholding tax, Medicare, social security, and state disability insurance will be deducted from each employee's paycheck based on the current rates and information given by the employee. Additional deductions for contributions to retirement accounts in lieu of social security may also be deducted. Employees will have pay deducted at their regular rate for any full-day time the employee is absent or tardy during their regularly scheduled hours and the absence is not covered by their sick leave. Employees may also have deductions taken from accrued leave time for partial-day absences exceeding four hours. Any other mandatory deductions to be made from your paycheck, such as court-ordered garnishments, tax liens, or wage assignments, will be explained whenever La Vida is ordered to make such deductions.

OTHER DEDUCTIONS

Garnishments, Tax Liens & Assignment of Wages

All wage garnishments can be accomplished through the payroll system with or without the employees' foreknowledge. Details of the deduction will be printed on the pay check stub.

Error in Pay

Every effort is made to avoid errors in your paycheck. If you believe any error has been made, please report the error to the Business Manager immediately. The necessary steps will be taken to research the problem and to assure that any necessary correction is made properly and promptly.

BENEFITS

Your Benefits Package

Any employee who regularly works 20 hours per week or more is entitled to receive Medical Expense Benefits. La Vida Charter School will pay for the Benefit in its entirety. The Benefit shall be equal to 8% of the employee's wages.

The Benefit can be used to pay or reimburse any:

- medical, dental or vision expense
- health insurance premiums
- alternative health practitioners
- chiropractic charges
- prescription drug costs
- co-pays for any of the above
- equipment and wellness support accessories and related expenses
- or any expense defined & allowed by the IRS as a medical care expense

The Employee may determine beneficiaries of the medical expense benefit: such as, but not limited to: a spouse, partner, dependents such as children biological, adopted or foster of any age; or a dependent parent. Employees should declare dependent beneficiaries in writing every year. It is the Employee's right to determine who the beneficiaries are, not the right of the potential beneficiary to claim.

An employee need not use all of their Medical Benefits within each school year. However, funds not used within two years will be returned to the General Fund. In other words, unused funds may be “rolled over” for one year. Additionally, funds can only be used while the employee is still currently employed by La Vida Charter School.

Workers Compensation Insurance

In the event of on-the-job injury, the employee must immediately report the injury to his/her supervisor and fill out a worker’s compensation insurance claim form. The Charter School will be responsible for contacting your worker’s compensation insurance carrier to process the claim. Information about our carrier is posted at the employee information area in the office.

California State Disability Insurance

In the event of disability, employees are covered by State of California Disability Insurance. Contact the Employment Development Department for further information.

Retirement Plan

Certificated employees can participate in the State Teacher’s Retirement System (STRS) in lieu of FICA through a combination of employee and employer contributions. Any cost above the rate normally paid to FICA will be paid by the Charter School. Classified employees will participate in the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) in lieu of FICA.

TIME OFF

Sick Time

Salaried employees working 20 hours per week or more are entitled to (1) pro rated day of paid sick leave per month, up to an annual total of ten (10) days of sick leave each school year. In accordance with law, sick days may be used for personal illness or to care for a sick child. Sick leave may be carried forward from one school year to the next school year, and may be applied to STRS/PERS benefits. Accrued sick days are not paid out after release from employment.

Vacation Time

All employees are expected to take their vacation time on days when classes are not in session and regular vacation breaks and holidays occur. All salaried

employees are paid allowing for holidays and vacation breaks as part of their regular earning schedule. Vacation breaks and holidays are specified on the school calendar each year.

Personal Leave of Absence

All leaves of absence must be requested in writing through the Administrator or Board representative. This request must be made as much in advance as possible. The request will be reviewed for approval. A personal leave of absence may be granted for up to thirty (30) days. Leaves of absence are unpaid. When an employee is granted a leave of absence, the employee's position will be held for the period of the approved leave. Benefits do not accrue during the leave of absence. Health insurance must be paid for by the employee.

Family Medical Leave/Pregnancy Disability Leave

La Vida's policies regarding Family and Medical and Pregnancy Disability Leave are adopted for the purpose of complying with federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 as amended, the California Family Right Act as amended, and the Pregnancy Disability Leave Act. The policies will be interpreted to conform with the requirements of the federal and state acts. All requests for leave under this policy must be submitted in writing to the Director or Board Representative along with a written certification from a licensed physician stating any and all information relevant to the leave.

Involuntary Leave of Absence

La Vida reserves the right to place an employee on an involuntary leave of absence status if it is determined that this would be in the best interest of either the employee or La Vida.

Bereavement Leave

A salaried employee is allowed up to five (5) consecutive days for bereavement leave at the time of death of a member of the immediate family. Immediate family includes spouse of named partner, mother, father, step parent, child, step child, grandparent, step grandparent, and sibling. Bereavement leave for members other than immediate family will be at the discretion of the Board of directors.

Jury Duty and Witness Duty

If an employee is called for jury duty, s/he will be allowed the necessary time off. La Vida will not make deductions from an exempt employee's wages for absences due to serving on a jury or as a witness if the employee has performed any work during the workweek. Non-exempt La Vida employees shall be granted this time off without pay. La Vida should be notified as soon as possible of the scheduled date of the employee's jury service.

If an employee is called upon to be a witness on behalf of La Vida, s/he will be paid for this time. If an employee is required to appear in court as a witness for other reasons, s/he may take unpaid leave for this purpose provided that La Vida is given at least one day's advance notice.

Military Leave

La Vida shall grant a military leave of absence to any employee who must be absent from work due to service in the uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act of 1994 ("USERRA"). All employees requesting military leave must provide advance written notice of the need for such leave, unless prevented from doing so by military necessity or if providing notice would be impossible or unreasonable.

If military leave is for thirty (30) or fewer days, La Vida shall continue the employee's health benefits. For service of more than thirty (30) days, employee shall be permitted to continue their health benefits at their option through COBRA. Employees are entitled to use accrued vacation or paid time off as wage replacement during time served, provided such vacation/paid time off accrued prior to the leave.

La Vida will reinstate those employees returning from military leave to their same position or one of comparable seniority, status, and pay if they have a certificate of satisfactory completion of service and apply within ninety (90) days after release from active duty or within such extended period, if any, as required by law. Exceptions to this policy will occur wherever necessary to comply with applicable laws.

California Military Spousal Leave

La Vida shall grant up to ten (10) days of unpaid leave to employees who work more than twenty (20) hours per week and who are spouses of deployed military servicemen and servicewomen. The leave may be taken when the military spouse is on leave from deployment during a time of military conflict. To be eligible for

leave, an employee must provide La Vida with (1) notice of intention to take military spousal leave within two (2) business days of receiving official notice that the employee's military spouse will be on leave from deployment, and (2) documentation certifying that the employee's military spouse will be on leave from deployment during the time that the employee requests leave.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

Non-Harassment Policy

Policy

The La Vida Board of Directors is committed to a harassment-free work and academic environment and has developed a policy designed to prevent harassment and to secure an appropriate early resolution to any incidents between students, and between employees and students. This policy also applies of harassment. La Vida has zero tolerance for harassment, between employees, to other agents of the school such as volunteers, program mentors or guests, either on-campus or elsewhere in accordance with official school activities. The La Vida Board of Directors has established a written policy against harassment in all forms.

Harassment

Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that has the intent or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's or group's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. The basis for harassment includes but is not limited to age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is "unwelcome sexual conduct including advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature". Any unwelcome sexual conduct that interferes with an employee's work performance or a student's academic performance or creates an offensive or intimidating work or academic environment is against school policy and should be reported immediately. Unwelcome sexual conduct need not be intended to harass. Harassment is determined on the basis of how the conduct is received.

Reporting

Any employee who believes s/he has been harassed by another employee, student, or agent of the school should report the facts of the incident(s) to the administrator or personnel committee/board member. The administrator or designated board

member will compile a written report of the alleged incident and the individual will be given a copy of the written policy if he/she isn't in possession of one. The employee may bring an advocate to support him/her in meeting with the administrator or designated board member. The aggrieved employee is encouraged to inform the person that his/her conduct is unwanted and must stop, but he/she is not obliged to do so.

An aggrieved party may file a complaint with other appropriate agencies including the U.S. Office for Civil Rights, the State Fair Employment and Housing Commission.

Confidentiality

The administrator or designated board member will inform the employee making the report that the allegation and investigation will be kept confidential to the extent reasonably possible. Witnesses and the alleged harasser also will be informed about the confidentiality of the process. Anyone violating this confidentiality shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Retaliation

Filing a report of sexual harassment will not adversely affect employee's work status in any way. The administrator or designated board member will inform all parties that retaliation is illegal and shall be subject to separate investigation and disciplinary action.

Time Frame

Allegations of sexual harassment shall be reported as soon as reasonably possible after the incident occurs.

Procedure

Any investigation of a sexual harassment complaint shall be handled promptly, sensitively, and confidentially to the greatest extent possible. The administrator or designated investigator shall immediately verbally inform the individual accused of sexual harassment, provide a copy of the school policy, and inform all parties of the policies of confidentiality and against retaliation. The alleged harasser is given an opportunity to respond. The complainant's written report will not be released to the alleged harasser.

The investigation process involves determining if there is merit to the allegation of sexual harassment. When a determination of harassment is made, the administrator or designated board member shall determine what course of action is appropriate.

Disciplinary/Remedial Action

An employee found to have engaged in sexual harassment or inappropriate conduct may be subject to discipline including dismissal in accordance with board policy and state law.

Disciplinary action for sexual harassment, violation of confidentiality, or retaliation may include verbal and written warnings, mandatory training, counseling, suspension, demotion or termination. The nature of the action remains confidential unless the person being disciplined authorizes its disclosure to the complainant. Limited follow-up counseling for the harassed individual is available.

Dress Code

La Vida's employees must be neatly and appropriately dressed, well-groomed, and clean. Their clothing must be neat, clean, and in good repair. Staff appearance will reflect the school's philosophy regarding care of the person and preparation of the teacher. La Vida is committed to maintaining professional standards, and personal appearance is important to the overall impression we make on students, parents, visitor, and other staff. Employees are asked to refrain from wearing clothing with logos, cartoon characters, slogans, quotes or other images that may be distracting.

Drugs, Alcohol, Weapons, & Smoking

In accordance with Federal laws and regulations, and to ensure a safe working environment, La Vida does not allow the presence and the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, weapons, and cigarettes on the school premises at any time. Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while working will not be permitted. Possession or sale of drugs is also illegal and will result in termination of employment. Although La Vida has no desire to intrude into its employee's personal lives, employees are expected to maintain professional conduct both on and off campus.

Non Renewal of Contract.

An employee contract may not be renewed without cause or advance notice depending upon the sole discretion of the La Vida Board of Directors.

Exit Interview

A terminated employee will have an exit interview with the Director or a La Vida Board of Directors member whenever possible.