



# **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK 2023/2024**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to The Country School (“TCS” or the “School”). We believe that each member of our faculty and staff contributes directly to The Country School’s growth and success. We hope that your experience here will be enjoyable, challenging, and rewarding.

### About the Employee Handbook and Other School Policies

The Country School Employee Handbook is published and made available to all employees online with the intent to provide a brief overview of the School’s employment policies and procedures, as well as the terms and conditions of employment.

Additional information regarding policies, procedures, benefits, job training and other important employment related information will also, from time to time, be provided to employees. All employees must read, review, understand, and remember the content in this Employee Handbook and comply with the provisions, rules and guidelines set forth. Employees are required to communicate any questions they have regarding such materials with their supervisor so they can be clarified.

With the exception of the at-will nature of the employment relationship, neither this handbook, nor any other School policy or procedure communicated orally or in writing by any employee (including those in administration/management), creates or is intended to create an expressed or implied contract with regard to the length of employment, the terms and conditions of employment, a promise or representation of continued employment or a guarantee of a particular title, responsibility, or a particular level of guaranteed compensation or any other matter. Only an agreement set forth in writing and signed by the Head of School, can change the at-will nature of employment at the School. Likewise, except for the at-will nature of employment, TCS may, at its option, change, delete, suspend, or discontinue any part or parts of the provisions of this Handbook, any other established policy or guidelines issued by the School or any terms and conditions of an individual’s employment, at any time without prior notice.

The Handbook replaces and supersedes all previously issued Employee Handbooks published before the revision date of this Handbook, including any previously written or oral policies, procedures, practices, benefits, or terms and conditions of employment that are inconsistent with those contained in the Handbook or related materials. Nothing in this Handbook is intended to change or supersede the specific provisions of any written and properly authorized employment agreements, which some employees will sign or have signed. Employees with authorized agreements should note that all provisions in this Handbook that are not consistent with the specific terms of the employee’s employment agreement remain in effect and are applicable to these employees. All changes to the School policies will be communicated in writing to employees via updates to the Employee Handbook, updates to manuals or training materials or via e-mails, memos or internal postings.

An employee's continued employment with the School signifies that he/she agrees to comply with all provisions of this Handbook, and any part of any new Handbook or additional current or future policy related content that is distributed during the course of the individual's employment.

## **SCHOOL HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION STATEMENT**

### **School History**

Our School was established in 1948, by Rafe and Laura Ellis. It was one of the first preschools of its kind, emphasizing the unique individuality of each child.

In 1972, as a result of parental encouragement, The Country School began as an Elementary School and then in 2006 expanded to include a Middle School, both consistent with the tradition of the preschool. Our philosophy evolved from the developmental principles of Jean Piaget and the educational philosophy of John Dewey. We seek to provide a learning environment where students can develop to their maximum level of academic achievement, with a high priority on the building and enhancing of our students' self-esteem.

The quality of our employees has always been and will continue to be the key to our success. Your appointment to a position and continued employment at The Country School means that you have been selected as a result of your enthusiasm, experience, motivation, creativity, and commitment.

### **Statement of Philosophy**

What do we believe at the Country School?

We believe in you. We believe that every human being comes into the world as a whole person, and that the whole person deserves the chance to thrive. As a Country School student, you will have your own plan, one crafted to give you all the tools you need to be your best self. In preschool, you will have an emergent curriculum, which means your teachers will pay close attention to your interests and tailor instruction to suit them. We will help you discover the world, learn about yourself, and make friends that last a lifetime.

We believe in you. In kindergarten through fourth grade, you will have exciting, busy school days full of opportunities for hands-on, immersive learning on your own and with your friends. You will learn what it means to be at a progressive school. You will have textbooks and tests, but the way you learn will be through all your senses, getting your hands dirty and asking lots of questions. You will learn to work independently and as part of a team. You will learn about empathy and why it's so important in your relationships. And best of all, your afternoons will be homework free, so you can run and play and explore.

We believe in you. In fifth grade, you will begin the transition to middle school by incorporating homework in the second half of the year, but don't worry, we will pay close attention to your assignments, giving you only the work you need to enhance your studies. As you move through middle school, your homework assignments will grow gradually, so that you are fully prepared for high school. We will challenge you, giving you the room you need to struggle and make mistakes, but we will be here to catch you and help you find your next success.

We believe in you. As a parent of a Country School child, you are a partner and a collaborator. Our doors, our ears and our minds are always open, ready for your participation and ideas. We believe you are an integral part of the fabric of our community, and that your relationship with your child is enhanced by your engagement on campus. We understand that you are the first experts on your child and that your input is vital in crafting the right plan.

We believe in children and parents. We believe in exploration and innovation. We believe in communication and ideas. We believe in taking risks and making mistakes. We believe in friendship and community. We believe in education as the foundation of growing global citizens who face the world with kindness, creativity, compassion and enthusiasm.

We believe in you.

### Mission Statement



**AT THE COUNTRY SCHOOL, WE ARE DEDICATED TO DOING RIGHT BY KIDS IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE, SO THAT EVERY CHILD IS FREE TO:**

- BE.** We respect children as the individuals they are—delights, challenges and all.
- LEARN.** We balance innovative educational techniques with tradition, and never rely upon convention.
- PLAY.** We believe school time is for school, and after-school time is for family, friends and the pursuit of personal interests.
- DISCOVER.** We get our hands dirty. We make mistakes, find solutions, and explore.
- GROW.** Our diverse community fosters personal growth and social awareness. By cultivating emotional intelligence, we encourage true collaboration and understanding others.
- COOPERATE.** We work together, building teams, sharing perspectives, and getting things done as a community.
- HAVE A PLAN.** We map a unique educational strategy for each child's strengths and challenges.

We are dedicated to progressive learning that is rewarding, empowering, revelatory, and fun. TCS graduates are comfortable and confident in their own skins and prepared academically, socially, and emotionally for the exciting journey through high school, as well as the complex challenges of the future.



## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

At The Country School, we are proud of the foundation of diversity and inclusion that was laid during the inception of our School, and passionate about our ongoing commitment to equity and anti-racism. In order to continue to live into this commitment, each member of our School is expected to be willing to join together to learn and grow as a community.

This year, as an employee of The Country School, our staff and faculty will:

1. Engage in quality professional development focused on race, racism, and oppression
2. Analyze and update our educational curriculum, at all levels, to ensure equitable representation and to offer a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives
3. Deepen the existing dialogue with our families through our parent and community education series
4. Prioritize racial justice in leadership development for our Middle School Diversity Club, with a focus on how students can be change agents in our school and in their own communities
5. Examine the School policies and practices, including the Parent-Student and Employee handbooks, to ensure equitable outcomes for students, families, and staff

## **EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP**

### **At-will Employment**

While the Administration and Board of Directors of TCS hope that the employment relationship between TCS and each employee will prove mutually satisfactory, it is important for all employees to understand that continued employment cannot be guaranteed for any employee. Employment with TCS is considered to be “at-will” employment, with no guaranteed time of employment duration. Employees may be terminated at any time, with or without reason and with or without previous notice. Correspondingly, employees may quit at any time, with or without reason, and with or without previous notice.

Other than the Head of School, no one at TCS has the authority to change this policy of at-will employment or, on behalf of the School, enter into an employment agreement with an individual that specifies a specific length or term of employment. Further, any such change in the at-will nature of the employment, or any other employment agreement that specifies a specific length or term of employment, must be in writing, and signed by the employee and the Head of School. Unless a fixed term of employment has been set forth in a written agreement signed by the Head of School, this policy sets forth the sole and entire understanding between

the employees and the School as to the nature and duration of the employee's employment relationship with the School.

### **Equal Employment Opportunity**

It is the School's policy to provide equal employment opportunity for all qualified individuals, regardless of race, color, religion, including religious dress and grooming, sex (which includes pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and related medical conditions, gender, gender identity, gender expression, and transgender), national origin, ancestry, age, physical disability, citizenship, mental disability, medical condition, genetic characteristics, genetic information, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation (including heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality), or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws. The School will afford equal employment opportunity to all qualified applicants, employees, volunteers, and interns as to all terms and conditions of employment, including, without limitation, compensation, hiring, training, promotion, transfer, discipline, and termination.

### **Reasonable Accommodations**

The School provides employment-related reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities within the meaning of the California Fair Employment and Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, unless undue hardship to the School would result. The following is the policy for requesting accommodations:

Request for Accommodation: Any applicant or employee who requires an accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of the job should contact Human Resources and request such an accommodation. The request must identify: a) the job-related functions at issue; and b) the desired accommodation(s).

Reasonable Documentation of Disability: Following receipt of the request, the School may require additional information, such as reasonable documentation of the existence of a disability.

Fitness for Duty Examination: The School may require an employee to undergo a fitness for duty examination at the School's expense to determine whether the employee can perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. The School may also require that a school-approved physician conduct the examination.

Interactive Process Discussion: After receipt of a request for accommodation and, to the extent applicable, reasonable documentation of disability and/or a fitness for duty report, the School will arrange for a discussion, or, if necessary, more than one discussion, in person or via telephone conference call, with the employee. The purpose of the discussion is to work in good faith to fully discuss all feasible potential reasonable accommodations.

Case-by-Case Determination: The School determines, in its sole discretion, whether reasonable accommodation(s) can be made, and the type of accommodation(s) to provide. The School will not provide accommodation(s) that would pose an undue hardship upon school finances or operations, or that would endanger the health or safety of the employee or others. The School will inform the employee of its decision as to reasonable accommodation(s) in writing. Please direct any questions concerning this policy to the Director of Human Resources.

## **PROHIBITION AGAINST HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION**

Harassment, discrimination, or retaliation against an applicant, employee, officer, student, contractor, unpaid intern, or volunteer, by an employee, officer, student, or an individual with whom the School has a business, contractual, or professional relationship, such as parents, legal guardians, unpaid interns, volunteers, independent contractors, or vendors, on the basis of any protected classification, as defined in this Policy, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. A single act can violate this Policy and provide grounds for discipline or other appropriate sanctions. Conduct need not be or rise to the level of a violation of law in order to violate this Policy. Similarly, a violation of this Policy does not necessarily qualify as a violation of law and there are circumstances in which a violation of this Policy would not also constitute a violation of law. If you are in doubt as to whether or not any particular conduct may violate this Policy, do not engage in the conduct, and seek guidance from the Human Resources or Head of School.

### **Definitions**

Protected Classifications: This Policy prohibits harassment or discrimination because of an individual's protected classification(s). A "protected classification" includes race, color, religion (including religious beliefs, observance or practice, including religious dress or grooming practices), sex (including gender, gender identity, gender expression, transgender, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), sexual orientation (including heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality), national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, military and veteran status, marital status, age, medical condition, genetic characteristics or information, and physical or mental disability.

Policy Coverage: This Policy prohibits employees, students, or individuals with whom the School has a business, contractual, or professional relationship, such as parents, legal guardians, unpaid interns, volunteers, independent contractors, or vendors, from harassing or discriminating against applicants, employees, students, contractors, unpaid interns, or volunteers, because of (1) an individual's protected classification; (2) the perception of an individual's protected classification; or (3) the protected classification or perceived protected classification of a person with whom the individual associates. This Policy also prohibits retaliation as defined below.

Discrimination: Discrimination means treating individuals differently from other similarly situated individuals at the School, by taking an adverse action against or denying a benefit to



that individual, because of the individual's actual or perceived protected classification, or the protected classification or perceived protected classification of a person with whom the individual associates.

Harassment: Harassment means words or conduct undertaken because of an individual's actual or perceived protected classification, or association with an individual who has an actual or perceived protected classification which are both objectively and subjectively offensive to another person.

Harassment is not limited to conduct by TCS employees. Under certain circumstances, harassment can also include conduct by students, or individuals with whom the School has a business, contractual, or professional relationship, such as parents, legal guardians, unpaid interns, volunteers, independent contractors, or vendors. Harassment may include, but is not limited to, the following types of behavior engaged in because of a person's protected classification:

- a. **Speech:** This includes epithets (nicknames and slang terms), derogatory or suggestive comments, propositioning, jokes or slurs, including graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, or that identify a person on the basis of their protected classification. This might include comments on appearance including dress or physical features, or dress consistent with gender identification, or race-oriented stories and jokes.
- b. **Visual acts:** This includes derogatory posters, notices, bulletins, cartoons, drawings, sexually suggestive objects, or e-mails on the basis of a protected classification.
- c. **Physical acts:** This includes assault, offensive touching, impeding or blocking movement, grabbing, patting, leering, making express or implied job related threats or promises in return for submission to physical acts.
- d. **Sexual harassment:** This is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other conduct of a sexual nature where submission is made a term or condition of employment, where submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions, or where the conduct is intended to or actually does unreasonably interfere with an individual's work performance or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. This may include conduct between members of the opposite or same gender, and may also include conduct not motivated by sexual desire.

## **Guidelines for Identifying Harassment**

To help clarify what constitutes harassment in violation of this Policy, use the following guidelines:

- Harassment includes any conduct which would be “unwelcome” to an individual of the recipient’s same protected classification and which is taken because of the recipient’s protected classification.
- It is no defense that the recipient appears to have voluntarily “consented” to the conduct. A recipient may not protest for many legitimate reasons, including not wishing to be or appear insubordinate or to avoid being ostracized.
- Simply because no one has complained about a joke, gesture, picture, physical contact, or comment does not mean the conduct is welcome. Harassment can evolve over time. The fact no one is complaining now does not preclude anyone from complaining if the conduct is repeated in the future.
- Even visual, verbal, or physical conduct between two employees who appear to welcome the conduct can, depending on the circumstances, constitute harassment of another employee or individual who observes the conduct or learns about the conduct later, even if it is not explicitly or specifically directed at that individual.
- Conduct can constitute harassment in violation of this Policy even if the individual engaging in the conduct has no intention to harass. Even well-intentioned conduct can violate this Policy if the conduct is directed at, or implicates a protected classification, and if an individual of the recipient’s same protected classification would find it offensive (e.g., gifts, excessive attention, endearing nicknames).

The determination of what constitutes harassment will depend on specific facts and the context in which the conduct occurs.

## **Retaliation**

Retaliation means an adverse action taken because an applicant, employee, student, contractor, unpaid intern, or volunteer has reported harassment or discrimination, or has participated in the complaint and investigation process described herein.

## **Process for Reporting Harassment, Discrimination, or Retaliation**

An applicant, employee, student, contractor, unpaid intern, or volunteer who experiences or witnesses conduct that is prohibited under this policy should be reported immediately as outlined below, so the complaint can be addressed in a timely manner:

1. Oral Report – If a person who believes this Policy has been violated does not want to confront the offending person, the person should report the conduct to the Human Resource Specialist or the Head of School. Any supervisor, director or other management employee who receives such a report must in turn direct it to the Head of School. In the event that the complaint is against the Head of School, the report must be directed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

2. Written Process – An individual who believes this policy has been violated may provide a written complaint to the Human Resource Specialist or Head of School. Any supervisor, director or other management employee who receives such a report must in turn direct it to the Head of School. In the event that the complaint is against the Head of School, the report must be directed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

3. Option to Report to Outside Administrative Agencies – applicants, employees, contractors, unpaid interns, or volunteers have the option to report harassment, discrimination, or retaliation to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH). The EEOC can be reached at 1-800-669-4000 or at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov). The DFEH can be reached at 1-800-884-1684 or at [www.dfeh.ca.gov](http://www.dfeh.ca.gov).

### **School's Response to Complaint of Harassment, Discrimination or Retaliation**

After receiving an oral report or written complaint, or the School otherwise learns of an alleged potential violation of this Policy, the Head of School or her designee may request clarification and/or conduct an initial inquiry, to determine whether the oral report or written complaint alleges a potential violation of this Policy. In the event the oral report or written complaint or other information the School otherwise learns of is against the Head of School, the Chair of the Board of Trustees or his or her designee may request the clarification and/or conduct an initial inquiry. To request clarification and/or conduct an initial inquiry, the Head of School, Chair of the Board of Trustees, or their respective designees may meet with the individual(s) who made the oral report or written complaint and/or that was reportedly subjected to conduct that violates this Policy.

### **Investigation Procedure**

If an oral report or written complaint alleges a potential violation of this Policy, or the School otherwise learns of an alleged potential violation of this Policy, the School will initiate an investigation. The investigation will be conducted by qualified personnel or a qualified outside investigator as determined in the sole discretion of the School.

During the pendency of the investigation, the Head of School, other appropriate administrator, or Chair of the Board of Trustees, may take interim action as appropriate, such as placing the person alleged to have violated this Policy (the "Respondent") on paid administrative leave or temporarily transferring the Respondent. Generally, no interim action should be taken to

change the working conditions of the individual(s) who made the oral report or written complaint and/or that was reportedly subjected to conduct that violates this Policy, unless that individual voluntarily consents to the temporary change.

The investigation will be conducted in a fair, timely, and thorough manner. The School will document and track the investigation for reasonable progress and timely closures. The investigation will normally include interviews with the individual(s) who made the oral report or written complaint and/or that was reportedly subjected to conduct that violates this Policy, the Respondent, and other persons believed to have relevant knowledge concerning the allegations. Witnesses will be advised that retaliation against those who report alleged harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, or who participate in the investigation is prohibited. The Respondent will be notified that a complaint has been made alleging that they have violated this Policy. Whenever possible, the investigation will commence with an interview of the complaining party. Before the investigation is concluded, the Respondent will be informed of the allegations made against them, and be provided with an opportunity to respond to the allegations. Once the information gathering process is completed, the investigator will prepare an investigative report containing the investigator's findings of fact which will be reasonable conclusions based on the evidence collected. The investigator will make findings based on a "preponderance of the evidence" standard. The report will be shared with the Head of School and other school administrators who have a need to know the outcome.

### **Remedial and Disciplinary Action**

Once the investigation is complete, the School will determine if the conduct violates TCS Policy and if so, the appropriate corrective action. Any employee or student determined to have violated this Policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination or expulsion. Disciplinary action may also be taken against any supervisor, director or other management employee who condones or ignores potential violations of this Policy, or who otherwise fails to take appropriate action to enforce this Policy. Because individuals with whom the School has a business, contractual, or professional relationship, such as parents, legal guardians, unpaid interns, volunteers, independent contractors, or vendors are not employees of the School, the School may not be able to take corrective action in the same way or to the same extent that it can with respect to School employees or students. However, the School will make appropriate efforts to take corrective action for violations of this Policy, or if appropriate, to cause others to take corrective action.

An employee who engages in unlawful harassment is personally liable for the harassment, regardless of whether the School knew or should have known of the conduct and/or failed to take appropriate corrective action. The School does not consider conduct in violation of this Policy to be within the course and scope of employment or the direct consequence of the discharge of one's duties at School. Accordingly, to the extent permitted by law, the School reserves the right to refuse to provide a defense or pay legal fees and costs or to pay damages assessed against any employee based on conduct in violation of this Policy.

## **Closure**

The investigation will be closed in a timely manner. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Head of School or her designee, will notify the individual who was reportedly subjected to conduct prohibited by this Policy in general terms of the outcome of the investigation.

## **Confidentiality**

The School cannot keep reports or complaints made under this Policy completely confidential due to the need to investigate potential violations of this Policy and take effective remedial action, or to comply with other legal requirements. However, the School will keep reports or complaints made under this Policy confidential to the extent possible. The School will not disclose a completed investigation report except as it deems necessary to support a disciplinary action, report internally on an as-needed basis, take remedial action, defend the School in administrative or legal proceedings, or to comply with the law or a court order.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES, AND SUPERVISORY EMPLOYEES**

### **Employees**

In order to establish and maintain a professional working environment, while at the same time preventing harassment, discrimination, and retaliation, employees are expected to:

- Set an example of acceptable conduct by not participating in or provoking behavior that violates this Policy. Try not to be angry or insulted if an individual tells you that your behavior is offensive. People have different ethical values and standards and may be offended by behavior you think is proper. Tell the individual you did not realize your behavior was offensive, and immediately cease the conduct.
- Report harassment, discrimination or retaliation as quickly as possible, whether the employee is the target of the conduct or a witness.
- If an employee witnesses harassment, they should tell the individual being harassed that the School has a policy prohibiting such behavior, and that they can demand that the harasser cease the behavior. If an employee who witnesses harassment is comfortable doing so, they should tell the harasser to cease the behavior.
- Fully cooperate with the School's investigation of complaints made or other alleged violations under this Policy.

### **Supervisory Employees**

In addition to the responsibilities listed above, supervisors, directors, or any other supervisory or management employees, are responsible for the following:

- Implementing this Policy by taking all complaints seriously and modeling behavior that is consistent with this Policy. Direct all complaints to the Human Resource Specialist or the Head of School.
- Taking positive steps to eliminate any form of harassment, discrimination or retaliation observed or brought to their attention.
- Taking positive steps to protect against retaliation through any action of intimidation, restraint, coercion or discrimination, by any supervisor, director, or any other supervisory, management, or other employee.
- Monitoring the work environment and taking appropriate action to stop potential Policy violations.
- Following up with those who have complained or were reportedly subjected to conduct that violates this Policy, to confirm the conduct complained of has stopped.
- Reporting potential violations of this Policy of which they become aware of, regardless of whether a report has been made or a complaint has been formally submitted.

### **Mandatory Training**

The School requires that all of its employees receive at least one hour of training on this Policy, and that all of its supervisory employees receive at least two (2) hours of training on this Policy. Employees will receive training on this Policy within six (6) months of being hired, and then at least once every two years. Starting January 1, 2020, temporary and seasonal employees hired to work for less than six (6) months will receive training on this Policy within thirty (30) calendar days after the hire date or within one hundred (100) hours worked, whichever occurs first. The School will schedule training sessions and attendance at the training will be documented.

### **Dissemination of Policy**

All employees will receive a copy of this Policy when they are hired. The Policy may be updated from time to time and redistributed with a form for the employee to sign and return acknowledging that the employee has received, read, and understands this Policy.

### **Policy On Mandated Reporting**

The Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (“CANRA” or the “Act”) (Pen. Code §§ 11164 – 11174.3) requires certain professionals who have a special working relationship with children to report reasonably suspected abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. All employees at the

School must sign an acknowledgment that they have read and understood Penal Code section 11166 regarding the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect.

## Definitions

“Designated Agencies” means any police department or sheriff’s department (not including a school district police or security department), the county probation department (if designated by the county to receive mandated reports), or the county welfare department. (Pen. Code §11165.9.)

“Mandated reporters” include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A teacher.
- An instructional aide.
- A teacher's aide or teacher's assistant employed by a public or private school.
- An administrative officer or supervisor of child welfare and attendance, or a certificated pupil personnel employee of a public or private school.
- An administrator of a public or private day camp.
- An administrator or employee of a public or private youth center, youth recreation program, or youth organization.
- An administrator or employee of a public or private organization whose duties require direct contact and supervision of children.
- A clergy member, as specified in subdivision (d) of Section 11166. As used in this article, “clergy member” means a priest, minister, rabbi, religious practitioner, or similar functionary of a church, temple, or recognized denomination or organization.
- A licensee, an administrator, or an employee of a licensed community care or child day care facility.
- An athletic coach, athletic administrator, or athletic director employed by any public or private school that provides any combination of instruction for kindergarten, or grades 1 to 12, inclusive.
- A person who is an administrator or presenter of, or a counselor in, a child abuse prevention program in a public or private school.

“Reasonable Suspicion” means a suspicion of child abuse or neglect where “it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain such a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect.” (Penal Code §11166(a)(1)). Reasonable suspicion does not require certainty. In other words, if an employee reasonably suspects child abuse or neglect, he or she must report.

Child abuse or neglect includes any of the following:

- Physical injury or death – inflicted by other than accidental means on a child (Pen. Code §11165.6).

- Sexual abuse – sexual assault and sexual exploitation, including child pornography and child prostitution (Pen. Code §11165.1).
- Severe or general neglect – must be reported if the perpetrator is a person responsible for the child’s welfare. It includes acts or omissions harming or threatening to harm the child’s health or welfare (Pen. Code §11165.2).
- Unlawful corporal punishment or injury – means willfully inflicting any cruel or inhuman corporal punishment or injury resulting in a traumatic condition. (Pen. Code §11165.4).
- Willful harming or injuring of a child, or the endangering of the person or health of a child – which includes willfully causing or permitting any child to suffer, or inflict thereon, unjustifiable physical pain or mental suffering, or willfully causing or permitting the person or health of the child to be endangered. (Pen. Code §11165.3).

Examples of sexual abuse and sexual activity, which must be reported, include but are not limited to:

- Rape,
- Statutory rape where one party is under the age of 16 and the other is over age 21,
- Group rape,
- Incest,
- Sodomy,
- Lewd act on a child,
- Penetration by a foreign object,
- Oral copulation,
- Child molestation.

Examples of sexual exploitation which must be reported include but are not limited to:

- Preparing, selling or distribution matter depicting a minor engaged in obscene acts, including via the internet or electronic device,
- Coercing a child to engage in prostitution or coercing parental consent for a child to engage in prostitution,
- Depicting a child in or creating, developing or trading photos of minors engaged in obscene sexual conduct.

Examples of neglect, which must be reported, include, but are not limited to, malnutrition, lack of physical hygiene, inadequate clothing, or lack of medical care under circumstances indicating harm or threatened harm to the child’s health or welfare.

### **Responsibility for Reporting Child Abuse**

Child abuse or neglect must be reported whenever a mandated reporter, in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment, has knowledge of or observes a child whom the mandated reporter knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect. (Pen. Code §11166(a)). Abuse and neglect do not only occur



outside school. Any abuse by a School employee, independent contractor, volunteer, or student must be reported as well.

The mandated reporter has individual responsibility to report when he/she receives reliable information or has the initial contact with the child when a concern arises. If the individual confers with a superior and a decision is made that the superior file the report, one report is sufficient. However if the superior disagrees, the individual with the original suspicion must report. If the mandated reporter “suspects” child abuse, he/she must make a report without delay.

A mandated reporter who has knowledge of or who reasonably suspects that a child is suffering serious emotional damage or is at a substantial risk of suffering serious emotional damage, evidenced by states of being or behavior, including, but not limited to severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or untoward aggressive behavior toward self or others, may make a report to a designated agency. (Pen. Code § 11166.05.)

If a child reports acts of abuse to a School employee, it is not the employee’s responsibility to determine whether the claim is true. It must be reported as instructed in this policy and as required by law.

## **Procedure**

The mandated reporter reporting the abuse is responsible for filing the necessary reports.

A mandated reporter must make an initial report by telephone to a designated agency immediately (or as soon as practically possible). The mandated reporter may call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-540-4000 to report the incident. Be ready to provide the following information:

- What type of abuse has occurred,
- Who or what caused the abuse,
- Whether the child is still in danger or is in need of medical care.

Within 36 hours of receiving the information regarding the incident, the mandated reporter must prepare a written report on a Suspected Child Abuse Report, Department of Justice form SS 8572 and sent by fax or electronic transmission.

If there is a child endangerment situation, the mandated reporter should consider and under appropriate circumstances call the local police.

Mandated reporters are not legally required to notify the parent or guardian of a suspected victim that they are making a report, and in some cases should not do so. Because reporters are not investigators, they lack the information to determine the potential involvement of the parent/guardian in the suspected abuse or neglect.

Mandated reporters are required to give their names to the reporting agency. Non-mandated reporters may report anonymously. Child protective agencies are required to keep the mandated reporter's name confidential, unless the mandated reporter consents to disclosure or a court orders the information be disclosed.

Mandated reporters have civil and criminal immunity when making a report. (Pen. Code §11172). No mandated reporter will be disciplined, dismissed, retaliated against, discriminated against or harassed for making an authorized mandated report of reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect.

Mandated reporters may consult the School counselor or an administrator if they question that the conditions they are observing constitute abuse, but the reporting obligation belongs to the individual who discovers the abuse or suspects abuse. Abuse must still be reported by telephone as quickly as possible.

Mental or emotional abuse that does not rise to the level of unjustifiable mental suffering may, rather than must, be reported.

As a matter of School policy, the School also requires you to inform your supervisor or another member of the Administration if you are aware of abuse by any employee or independent contractor, volunteer, or student of the School. You do not need to inform your supervisor or the member of the Administration that you have made a mandated report about the abuse.

## **COMMENCING EMPLOYMENT**

### **TB Risk Assessment and Other Immunization Requirements**

All faculty and staff working at the School are required to have a regular TB Risk Assessment completed by a medical professional. The Assessment must be done every four years and evidence of the test results must be submitted to the Business Manager. Preschool teachers are also required to present evidence of other immunizations. The Business Manager and Preschool Director will communicate these details to all staff members.

### **Fingerprinting**

All faculty and staff are required to obtain fingerprinting during the hiring process as a prerequisite to working at TCS. See Human Resource Specialist for details.

### **Proof of Right to Work and New Hire Reporting**

Under Federal law, all new hires must produce original documentation establishing their identity and work authorization. Furthermore, employees must complete the Form I-9 (or a similar document as revised) certifying that they have the right to work in the United States. All

offers of employment are conditional upon the receipt of satisfactory evidence of an employee's identity and legal authority to work in the United States. TCS also reports certain information regarding new hires to the Federal and State agencies. Such information may include the employee's name, social security number and home address, as required by law.

## **COMMITMENT TO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Country School is committed to furthering the training and development of its teachers and staff. Opportunities will be made available for employees to attend meetings and seminars, some of which may be required. Additionally, employees are encouraged to seek training and development opportunities that will enhance their professional knowledge and skills. Requests to attend training seminars and conferences during work hours must be formally submitted in advance to the Head of School using the designated form for approval.

## **JOB DUTIES**

### **Teaching Assignments and Partnerships**

The Country School provides staffing in all classrooms that is commensurate with the enrollment and needs of the individual classroom. Preschool classrooms are staffed according to state-mandated teacher/student ratios and in most cases will provide either two teachers or a teacher and a teacher assistant in each classroom. Staffing for the Elementary classrooms will be based upon a number of factors including, but not limited to, class size, class make-up and student needs. Therefore, classrooms will be staffed with any one of the following: one teacher, two teachers, one teacher and a teacher assistant, or one teacher and a shared teacher who will spend time in two different classrooms. In the Middle School, there is one teacher per classroom with the possible support of a "floating" teacher assistant depending upon enrollment levels. TCS structures its classrooms so that our students receive more individualized attention, with respect to academics as well as social and emotional support and development. Many of our classrooms will have teacher partners. This means that the team members plan all lessons together and collaborate in evaluating student progress. The purpose for team teaching at TCS is so that students have the benefit of two full-time educators actively engaged with them throughout the day. Parents expect that each teacher is able to discuss accurately and clearly all aspects of their child's progress. It is the expectation that the division of work for all teaching teams be equitable with respect to the planning of lessons and balance in the structure of classroom activities. Whenever the students are in the classroom, both teachers should be actively involved with students. When children are doing follow-up work, both teachers are expected to be working with individuals or a small group. Teaching partnerships are not permanent and are subject to change.

Clerical tasks (e.g. correcting papers or using the copy machine) must be done before/after school or during planning/prep time when students are with specialist teachers.

In addition to sharing the responsibility for the classroom, being a teaching partner requires open and honest communication, respect for each other's strengths, understanding for each other's weaknesses, and willingness to seek consensus. Each teacher relies on the professionalism of the other to enhance not only the learning experience for students, but also to enrich the personal experience of teaching.

The Head of School, Principal, and Preschool Director will review teacher assignments each year. Teacher placements for an upcoming school year will be communicated and confirmed over the summer once the school has the best sense of specific class needs and enrollment numbers.

## **COMMUNICATION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

All TCS staff and faculty are expected to check their mailbox (when on campus), voicemail, and email first thing in the morning, once either before or after lunch, and before they leave in the afternoon. They also must check their telephone during the day for voicemail messages that can be returned during breaks or planning periods. Return all communications within 24 hours from Monday through Friday. Furthermore, it is suggested that faculty check email periodically during weekends to ensure that there are no "surprises" upon the return to school. All teachers must have access to FACTS for emergency contact information.

## **COMPENSATION POLICIES**

### **General Information**

The Country School attempts to pay all employees accurately at all times. Employees should routinely check their pay, deductions and other vital compensation information on their pay stubs. If the employee feels there are errors to his/her pay or benefits, the employee should immediately bring this to the attention of the Business Manager.

### **Payment of Wages**

Paydays are on the 15th and the last day of the month. If the 15th or the last day of the month falls on a Saturday or a Sunday, you will be paid on the preceding Friday.

### **Automatic Direct Deposit**

Automatic direct deposit can be arranged for employee paychecks to be deposited directly into a checking account. Please see the Business Manager for details.

### **Meals, Breaks and Rest Periods**

Non-exempt employees who work at least three and a half (3-1/2) hours per day are entitled to a paid rest break of ten (10) minutes for every four (4) hours of work or “major fraction” thereof. A “major fraction” is a time period over two (2) hours. Accordingly, employees are entitled to: a single ten (10) minute rest break for workdays from three and a half (3-1/2) to six (6) hours in length; a second (10) minute rest break for workdays of more than six (6) hours up to 10 hours; a third ten (10) minute rest break for workdays of more than ten (10) hours up to 14 hours; and so on. Rest breaks are to be scheduled as close to the middle of each four (4) hour period (or major fraction thereof) as possible. The timing of these rest breaks may be monitored, but are counted as hours worked and are paid. Employees should not deduct any time on their timesheets for rest breaks.

Employees who work more than five (5) hours in a workday are entitled to take an uninterrupted duty-free meal period of 30 minutes, commencing prior to the completion of the fifth hour of work (i.e., commencing no later than 4.9 hours into the shift). Employees who work more than ten (10) hours in a workday are entitled to take a second uninterrupted duty-free meal period of 30 minutes, commencing prior to the completion of the tenth hour of work. Meal periods are not counted as hours worked and are unpaid. Employees must record the start and stop times for meal periods on their timesheets.

Break and meal periods are intended to provide employees the opportunity for rest and relaxation. Accordingly, employees are not permitted to perform any work-related duties during such periods. Note also that meal periods and rest breaks may not be combined or aggregated.

The School requires that all non-exempt employees take their rest breaks and meal periods in accordance with this policy. There may be work days during which you feel that work demands prevent you from taking a rest break or meal period. If this happens, you should contact your immediate supervisor in advance, unless an emergency requires otherwise. You will receive one (1) hour of additional compensation at your regular rate of pay for any workday in which you report that you believe that you did not receive a reasonable opportunity to take the rest break(s) and meal period(s) you are entitled to under this policy. Generally speaking, such reports will result in payment without question. (The maximum payment you may receive per workday is one (1) hour for missed rest breaks and one hour for missed meal periods.) Multiple reports of an inability to take rest breaks or meal periods, however, may be investigated to understand whether a reasonable opportunity is being provided and -- if not -- what changes may be made.

Failure to strictly comply with this policy will result in discipline, up to and including termination. If you feel that you do not have an opportunity to take your meal periods and rest breaks in accordance with this policy – because of work pressure or any other reason – you

must alert your immediate supervisor. If you are not comfortable discussing the issue with your immediate supervisor or if you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the Business Manager.

## **Overtime**

### Exempt

Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime compensation and are paid on a salary basis that is intended to fully compensate them for all hours worked each pay period. Additional stipends for special projects are at the discretion of the Head of School.

### Non-exempt

Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime pay and are subject to the California Industrial Welfare Commission (IWC) Wage Order sections pertaining to meal and rest periods.

Non-exempt employees may be required to work overtime as necessary. Only actual hours worked in a given workday or workweek can apply in calculating overtime. All overtime work must be previously authorized by a supervisor. The School provides compensation for all overtime hours worked by non-exempt employees in accordance with federal and state law as follows:

All hours worked in excess of eight hours in one workday, in excess of 40 hours in one workweek, or the first eight (8) hours of the seventh consecutive work day will be treated as overtime. A workday begins at 12:00 a.m. and ends at midnight 24 hours later. Workweeks begin each Sunday at 12:00 a.m.

Compensation for hours in excess of 40 for the workweek, or in excess of 8 and not more than 12 for the workday, and for the first 8 hours on the seventh consecutive day of work in one workweek, shall be paid at a rate one-and-one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay.

Compensation for hours in excess of 12 in one workday and in excess of 8 on the seventh consecutive workday in a single workweek shall be paid at double the regular rate of pay.

Non-exempt employees must accurately report all hours worked, including all overtime hours. Supervisor approval of hours is due by 12 p.m. on the Monday after the end of the pay period. **Off-the-clock work that has not been pre-approved by a supervisor is absolutely prohibited.** Failure to comply with these requirements may result in discipline up to and including termination.

## **Additional Compensation Information**

The School reserves the right to decrease an employee's compensation if an employee is transferred to a job position/classification at a lower pay rate or as the climate of the business necessitates.

Any increase to compensation or bonuses may be awarded at the sole discretion of the Head of School and does not constitute any implied agreement for future changes to compensation.

### **Payroll Deductions**

The School complies with Federal and State laws regarding required deductions from employees' paychecks. These deductions include, but are not limited to, Federal and State Income Tax Withholding, Social Security, Medicare, State Disability Insurance (SDI) and other deductions as mandated by law. Other School authorized deductions may be made from an employee's paycheck with the employee's written authorization.

### **Reimbursement**

Supplies for the classrooms and the office should be ordered through the specified ordering procedure, which is done several times during the year. From time to time an employee may incur costs for an item or items that need to be purchased outside of the normal supply ordering cycle. Such purchases must be approved by the Head of School in advance in writing. Requests for reimbursement should be submitted on the designated reimbursement form, listing accurate prices/costs with receipts attached. Approved forms should be submitted to the Business office via the school's online request/authorization form. This same procedure should be followed for pre-approved expenses incurred while attending conferences.

## **WORK SCHEDULING**

### **Reporting for Work and Timekeeping**

All employees must sign in upon entering campus, and sign out upon leaving campus. The Country School requires all employees to record the hours and/or dates that they work. For non-exempt employees, time records are used for payroll purposes. For exempt employees, time records are used to measure attendance, sick and vacation time, and other related information. Work time data is recorded by the usage of sign in sheets and time cards (for non-exempt employees). The sign in sheet also acts as a record of when each employee is on campus so that in the event of an emergency, there is a quick reference for an accurate headcount. It is the employee's responsibility to accurately record all hours/days worked, as required. No employee may sign in/out or punch in/out for another employee. Non-exempt employees record their hours of work by "punching in or out" on a timekeeping system. For clarity, "punching" means recording the time the employee begins work ("Punch In"), the time the employee stops work to take a meal break, if applicable ("Punch Out"). The time the employee resumes work after the conclusion of the meal break ("Punch In"), and the time the employee ceases work for the day (Punch Out).

It is the employee's responsibility to notify The Business Manager immediately if he/she suspects that the work time punch is inaccurate or equipment errors have occurred. Employees must punch themselves "in" and "out" and may not ask others to do so for them. Punching in prior to scheduled work time without proper authorization is prohibited. Likewise, it is not permitted for employees to punch in and not immediately commence legitimate work, or for employees to conclude work duties and not immediately punch out. Only the Head of School may alter an employee's personal time punch record to correct erroneous timekeeping.

### **Punctuality and Attendance**

As an employee of The Country School, you are expected to be punctual, report to work as scheduled and be prepared to start work. Teachers are expected to arrive before or at the start time stated on their contract, and work until the time stated in their contract. Employees also are expected to remain at work for their entire work schedule. Late arrival, early departure or other absences from scheduled hours for appointments and other personal matters are disruptive to the class and should be avoided. Any tardiness or absence is an inconvenience at best, and can potentially cause problems for your fellow employees and for the students. In your absence, your workload must be performed by others, just as sometimes you must assume the workload of others who are absent. Please keep this in mind when you decide to be absent, so that you are not taking advantage of the good will of your fellow employees.

If you are unable to report for work on any particular day or will be late, you must call the designated person(s) (Preschool Director, Principal) and leave a message with the school office as soon as possible.

If an emergency or personal business necessitates your leaving during school hours, the administration must be notified as soon as possible.

### **Employment Hours**

TCS is normally open for business between 7:45 a.m and 4:00 p.m.

For full-time employees, Elementary School and Middle School working hours are 7:45 a.m. to 4:00 pm. Preschool working hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

All teachers are expected to be on campus as stated in an individual employment contract.

Teachers who provide tutorial services after school should not begin working with students prior to 4:00 p.m. Notification of Absence/Tardiness

Whenever possible, please attempt to notify your supervisor at least 12 hours in advance of sick days. Preschool teachers should call their teaching partner and notify the Preschool Director by e-mail the evening before if they expect to be out sick the following day. Elementary teachers should notify their teaching partner as well as the Principal and Head of School the evening before whenever possible. If you are sick the morning of any given school day or if you will be



unable to report to work at your scheduled time, you should notify your teaching partner, supervisor and Business Office no later than 6:30 a.m. the day of the absence/tardy.

### **Lactation Accommodation**

The School will provide a reasonable break time and a location other than a bathroom to accommodate employees who wish to express breast milk at work for their infants. If possible, the break time should coincide with the employee's regular paid rest period. However, any additional time needed beyond the employee's regular paid rest period will be provided, but will be unpaid. Should you have a need for this accommodation, please discuss this with your direct supervisor.

### **Housekeeping**

An employee is responsible for keeping their work area (i.e. office, classroom, lab, storage, etc.) tidy. Employees are expected to clean up after themselves and to pitch in to keep the campus clean and free of trash. In order to maintain a neat and orderly Faculty Kitchen, all employees are responsible for washing any dishes used, placing them in the dishwasher, and taking turns emptying the dishwasher when needed. Dishes should never be left in the sink. Employees are also expected to be responsible for their food. All unclaimed food will be disposed of each Friday. Employees are strongly encouraged to bring food in reusable containers.

### **Phone Policy**

Employees, during breaks, should keep telephone conversations brief. Telephones are for business purposes; however, the school recognizes the need for its employees to make occasional personal calls, during breaks, when students are not present. These calls should be infrequent and as short as possible and not during work time (class time, playground supervision, planning or prep time). Telephones in the classrooms are for the purpose of returning parents' calls, scheduling field trips, or taking care of other school-related business during breaks or planning periods (when students are not in the room). Employees may not use or look at their personal cell phones during work time.

### **Morning Drop-off, Pick-up and Playground Supervision**

Morning recess and lunchtime playground supervision is assigned and the responsibility of those on duty. Teachers are expected to report to the play yard on time and to actively supervise the area for which they are responsible. During this time, conversations with others should be kept to a minimum. Extended conversations with parents or colleagues during yard supervision interfere with a teacher's ability to be alert. A supervision schedule will be provided to the elementary and middle school faculty prior to the first day of school.

Teachers responsible for supervising the children while on the play yard should do so as participants/observers. Teachers should be actively engaged with the children, observing their peer interactions, play styles, choices and preferences. Playground supervision/observation is a

vital part of students' portfolios during their school years. The following activities interfere with adequate supervision:

- Be punctual when arriving at your assigned supervisory station and observant when performing all supervisory duties.
- Staff on duty must be standing up and visible to students during supervision time.
- Carry keys and a whistle (elementary and middle school) during all supervisory duties.
- No cell phone use is permitted by Faculty or staff when supervising recess and lunch or while off duty in outside areas.
- When speaking to one child, face the majority of students in order to keep an eye on the activities in progress.
- Avoid talking to other teachers and staff (do not stand together). Limit distractions while on duty.
- Encourage good sportsmanship and sharing in accordance with our core values.
- Through your own behavior and expectations, encourage children to take pride in keeping school grounds orderly and free of trash and clutter.
- Be sure that students are eating in their designated, supervised lunch areas.
- Do not leave your supervisory duty area without notifying another staff member or teacher.
- Report any injuries to the Front Office.
- In the case of an injury, the reporting teacher or staff member must walk the student to the Front Office and then complete an Accident Report form immediately.
- Students are not allowed in classrooms at any time without a teacher present. Classrooms should be locked when a teacher or staff member is not present.
- Be sure that all equipment has been returned to its proper storage location at the end of recess.
- Any personal items left by students should be placed in the lost and found shed.
- Checking messages, social media or talking on cell phones is not permitted while at work unless on a designated break and in a private room or office.
- After dismissal, elementary teachers must stay with remaining students and notify the front office so parents can be contacted. Middle school supervisor managing car pick-up

will remain with students until the end of dismissal at 3:45, at which time he or she will notify the front office so parents can be contacted.

### **Mandatory Meetings and Seminars**

Mandatory weekly meetings will be scheduled for all teachers and administrative staff. All teachers are expected to attend their respective meetings unless supervising children. In addition, a weekly meeting will be held for the Administration. Meetings will be scheduled at the discretion of the Head of School.

Teachers and administrative staff may be required from time to time to attend a number of different functions, which include but are not limited to individual meetings with parents, teachers, or the Head of School, attendance at admissions fairs or other school promotional events; and training sessions or seminars.

### **TIME OFF REQUESTS**

Employees may request a particular day off by submitting a request through the staff portal. Once approved, employees must also notify their supervisor and teaching partner(if applicable) and help make arrangements for coverage. Employees should understand that there may not be a guarantee the schedule request will be honored.

Employees should check to be sure the request has been granted prior to making personal plans. Emergency situations may result in an employee being asked to work on a day the employee was originally scheduled to have off. Likewise, fluctuations in schedules or the number of students who may require supervision may cause occasional increases or decreases in the hours an employee normally works each week.

Requests for time off should be made as far in advance as possible, keeping in mind the needs and requirements of the classroom and/or job responsibilities and commitments.

### **GENERAL PERSONNEL POLICIES**

TCS employees are members of an educational, social, and collaborative community, so it is difficult to describe all of their duties. The policies and procedures that follow are intended to provide guidelines and to lay out operating procedures, which will permit every member of the school community to do their job successfully. In the most general terms, TCS teachers and staff are to uphold the standards and philosophy of the School. In this regard, they are expected to assist all students to make the most of their education. This means setting an example in conduct and taking an interest in everything that happens at the School. Members of the faculty understand the need to assume responsibility for the conduct of all students, not just those in their immediate classrooms. This includes supervision during assemblies, performances, while walking around the campus, or on field trips. Faculty members give full support in all matters relating to the school's philosophy and student discipline. They support the regulations and operations of the school with parents and students. Teachers act as a positive force within the

community of the school by adopting a constructive attitude toward students, parents, and colleagues. As professionals, faculty members fulfill classroom and extracurricular functions. They take responsibility for supervisory duties.

## **OPEN COMMUNICATION**

An open communication policy provides a means for employees to communicate what is happening in the classroom or that which is related to one's individual job, including successes, keeping administration, staff and other teachers apprised of what is happening, as well as to raise and address job-related concerns or problems. At some time, you may have a complaint or concern regarding your job, your working conditions or the treatment you are receiving. Your good faith complaints or concerns are always important to TCS, and it is our goal to help you resolve them in as fair and appropriate a fashion as is required by the specific situation. The Country School values your input, and you should feel free to raise issues of concern in good faith without fear of retaliation. Open communication is of the utmost importance for a good working environment.

When you do have a complaint or concern, it is important to go directly to the source, rather than discussing it with others. If you feel you need advice first on how to approach the situation, please consult the Head of School, Principal, or the Preschool Director. If, after attempting to work out the situation, you remain dissatisfied, please take your concerns to the Head of School.

As is customary with all CAIS schools, the Head of School will make the final determination regarding a resolution of the issue(s) raised. This procedure, which we believe is important for both you and the School, may not result in every problem being resolved to your satisfaction. In addition, you should be aware that when an issue is raised, all sides of the issue will be discussed and considered openly.

## **ATTENDANCE AT STUDENT PARTIES AND OTHER EVENTS**

There may be times when an employee finds themselves in the position of being invited to parties for individual students. Accepting an invitation to the party for an individual student can be problematic for a number of reasons. It can put the employee in the awkward position of having to pick and choose which invitations to accept or feeling like there is a need to accept any and all invitations. This can potentially be considered an infringement of an employee's personal time. In addition, if an employee is put in the position of choosing which party to attend, this can create an appearance of favoritism with a particular student or family. Employees are strongly encouraged to consider the impact of their attendance and act in accordance with the TCS mission and philosophy.

From time to time, teachers and staff may also be invited to attend other student events, such as school sports games, dance recitals and performances. While the same principles apply as stated above, attendance at such events are left up to the discretion of the employee. It is important to remember that for attendance at any event where TCS students and parents are

present, it is the responsibility of the employee to act in a manner that is professional and represents both the employee and the School in an appropriate and positive way.

## TUTORING

The Country School can assist families with identifying a short-term tutor for students struggling with a specific curricular concept. A Country School teacher, with consultation of the Principal, may suggest tutoring to a parent or legal guardian. It is expected that classroom strategies and interventions have been employed prior to suggesting outside support.

The Country School has taken the position that it is not a conflict of interest for a Country School teacher to tutor a TCS student whom he or she is not currently teaching or grading. Such tutoring is allowed for short-term remediation of academic needs, and such tutoring for enrichment is not acceptable. Failure to request pre-approval could result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS AT SCHOOL

Birthday parties, in any form for elementary students, middle school students, and teachers, will not be permitted to take place at school, during any part of the school day. Employees will be responsible for reminding parents about our gifting and party policies at TCS as follows:

*Birthday parties for elementary and middle school students or teachers will not be permitted to take place at school, as this takes away from valuable instructional time. If parents wish to provide a class treat for their child's birthday in the elementary school, it may be dropped off at the beginning of the school day and left with their child's classroom teacher. Any other items, including gifts, games, decorations, etc., are not permitted. Teachers will serve their child's birthday treat **during the last ten minutes of the school day**. Parents should consult with their child's teachers ahead of time for approval.*

## STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The Country School's expectation for its employees is that they will conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Whether at school, attending a school-related function or posting on social media, the words, actions and behavior of any employee represent not only an individual in a personal way, but also reflects upon the employee as a member of the School's faculty or staff. It is important to remember when dealing with families and children at school, as well as outside of school that personal integrity and discretion is key. Communication by teachers with parents should be made from a The Country School email or telephone and not a personal email account or cell phone. The following conduct is not appropriate and will not be tolerated by The Country School. This list of inappropriate conduct is illustrative only and is not meant to be exhaustive; other types of conduct injurious to students' security, personal safety, employee welfare and The Country School's operations may also be prohibited. Violation of the Standards of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

1. Engaging in behavior that causes discord.
2. Falsification of employment records, employment information or other school records.
3. Theft, deliberate damage of any The Country School property or the property of any employee, student or parent. Employees are not permitted to use or take school property for personal use. This includes but is not limited to the use of the School's printers, copiers, postage machine, and supplies.
4. Removing or borrowing The Country School equipment or property without prior authorization.
5. Provoking an argument or fight or arguing or fighting during working hours.
6. Carrying firearms or any other dangerous weapons on The Country School premises at any time.
7. Engaging in criminal conduct whether or not related to job performance.
8. Causing, creating or participating in a disruption of any kind during working hours at The Country School.
9. Insubordination, including but not limited to failure or refusal to obey the lawful orders, directives or instructions of an administrator, or the use of abusive or threatening language toward the employer, fellow employee, student, or parent.
10. Using aggressive, profane or abusive language in front of children/parents.
11. Failure to report or notify The Country School when unable to report to work.
12. Failure to obtain permission to leave work for any reason during normal working hours.
13. Failure to provide a physician's certificate when requested or required to do so.
14. Wearing unprofessional or inappropriate styles of dress while working.
15. Violation of The Country School policies or procedures, including those pertaining to safety, health, and security.
16. Committing a fraudulent act or a breach of trust.
17. Violation of TCS policy regarding Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation.
18. Conducting oneself in an unprofessional manner when at school, attending a school sponsored event or any other event where The Country School families or students are present or representing the School to the community. This includes comments, conversations and pictures posted to social media.

19. Discussion characterized by gossip, violations of confidentiality and/or engaging in perpetuating rumors.
20. Discussing student performance, characteristics, issues, progress, situations or plans with another parent or outside party. Conversations regarding any student should only take place with that child's parents, in private, without others in the room apart from other school staff as necessary.
21. The use of cell phones for calls, texting, email or social media during work while not on a designated break and in private.
22. The use of alcohol and illegal drugs while on school property or reporting to work under the influence of the same. (See Drug and Alcohol Policy for full details.)

With specific regard to social networking, all employees must:

1. Not "friend" or "follow" current students, alumni under the age of 18, or parents, due to the inherent conflicts of interest.
2. Not post anything that is disparaging of any student (current or former).
3. Not post anything that would be an invasion of student or employee privacy, or constitute as sexual or other harassment.
4. Not post or electronically disseminate any photographs and/or recordings of students or parents without the proper permissions.
5. Not post pictures or text which identifies any applicant or applicant family on your personal social media.

### **DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY**

The Country School is concerned about the use of alcohol, illegal drugs or controlled substances as it affects the workplace. Use of these substances can adversely affect an employee's work performance, efficiency, safety and health, and therefore, seriously impair the employee's value to The Country School. In addition, the use or possession of these substances on the job constitutes a potential danger to the welfare and safety of the children and other employees, and exposes The Country School to the risks of property loss or injury to other persons, as well as yourself.

The following rules and standards of conduct apply to all employees either on The Country School property, or during the workday or at off-campus school events. The Country School strictly prohibits the following:

1. Possession or use of drugs or alcohol on campus and/or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while on the job.
2. Driving a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
3. Distribution, sale or purchase of an illegal or controlled substance.

Please note that under this Policy, “drugs” and “controlled substances” includes recreational and medicinal marijuana. Violation of the above rules and standards of conduct will not be tolerated. The Country School may also bring the matter to the attention of appropriate law enforcement authorities.

An employee’s conviction on a charge of illegal sale or possession of any controlled substance while off the Country School property will be considered reason for immediate termination of employment, because such conduct even though off duty, reflects adversely on The Country School. In addition, The Country School must keep people who sell or possess controlled substances off The Country School’s premises in order to keep the controlled substances themselves off the premises. Our children must be considered first.

The Country School will encourage and assist employees with chemical dependencies (alcohol or drug) to seek treatment and/or rehabilitation leave. The Country School is not obligated, however, to continue to employ any person whose job performance is impaired because of drug or alcohol use, nor is The Country School obligated to re employ any person who has participated in treatment and/or rehabilitation. If that person’s job performance remains impaired as a result of treatment and/or rehabilitation, or they have not successfully overcome their dependency or problem, they will not be given a second opportunity to seek treatment or rehabilitation. This policy on treatment and rehabilitation is not intended to affect The Country School’s treatment of employees who violate the regulations described above. Rather, rehabilitation is an option for an employee who acknowledges a chemical dependency problem and voluntarily seeks treatment to end that dependency.

An employee may be asked to submit to a breath and/or urinalysis or other test for any of the following reasons:

If the School has reason to suspect that the employee may be using illegal drugs, controlled substances or alcohol, or may be under the influence of or impaired by alcohol or drugs while at work or when reporting for work;

If the School reasonably suspects that the employee’s impairment from drugs or alcohol may have been a factor in their involvement of an injury or accident at work or while operating School equipment or vehicles.

Such examination and/or tests, when requested, will be on School time, are considered a condition of continued employment, and will be at the sole expense of the School. Should an



employee refuse to submit to the requested examination or test, or tamper with any test or result, the employee will be subject to termination for insubordination.

“Reasonable suspicion” will be based on a reasonable belief that an employee is using, has used, or is under the influence of drugs or alcohol in violation of the School’s policy. This belief may be based upon, but not limited to, the following factors:

- Observable phenomena while at work such as slurred speech, red eyes, the smell of alcohol or marijuana on the employee’s breath, direct observation of substance abuse or of the physical symptoms or appearance of being impaired due to substance abuse;
- Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior while at work or a decline in work performance including attendance and tardiness problems;
- A report of substance abuse provided by a reliable and credible source; or
- Evidence that an individual has tampered with any substance abuse test during their employment with the School.

### **SMOKING POLICY**

Smoking is not allowed on campus at any time, including the use of e-cigarettes or vaping devices. This also includes the outside areas of the school and the parking lots on Weddington and Laurel Canyon.

## **CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Employee Records**

California law requires an employer to permit an employee to inspect documents in his or her personnel file, upon request, at reasonable times and intervals. Documents subject to inspection include those that are or have been used to determine an employee’s qualifications for employment, promotions, raises, termination or other disciplinary action. Employees are not entitled to inspect documents relating to investigations of criminal offenses or letters of reference. Employers are permitted to place certain restrictions on employee access, such as requiring the inspections to take place in the presence of the Head of School. However, an employee is entitled to have copies of any documents that the employee has previously signed.

Any request for information from personnel files must be directed to the Head of School. Only the Head of School is authorized to release information about current or former employees. Disclosure of personnel information to outside sources will be limited as required by law. However, The Country School will cooperate with requests from authorized law enforcement or local, state or federal agencies conducting official investigations.

## **Student Records**

Any calls or requests for any information regarding students, their classroom performance, records or any other personal or family-related information must be referred to the Head of School or Preschool Director. No teacher or staff member is permitted to release information or written documents regarding a student or family.

## **Right to Privacy and Confidential Information**

As part of their job duties, employees may have access to confidential information regarding the School, its students, or fellow employees. Each employee is responsible for safeguarding the confidential information obtained during employment, and this obligation to safeguard such confidential information extends after the employment relationship has ended. Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor or in exercise of a protected right, employees have a responsibility to prevent revealing or divulging any such information unless it is necessary for an employee to do so in the performance of their duties. Access to confidential information should be on a “need to know” basis and must be authorized by a supervisor.

Confidential information under this policy includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- Student educational information and discipline records;
- Employee assignments or projects that have been deemed confidential and have not been publicly disclosed by the School, including but not limited to, proprietary information of the School. This does not include an employee’s day-to-day assignments and job duties;
- Non-public personal information, concerning employees, alumni, and students and student families including, but not limited to, Social Security numbers, banking or financial information, medical and health information, disability status or special needs;
- The School information which has not been publicly published or released with the School authorization and is not otherwise protected by State and Federal law, including but not limited to and financial information; and
- Personal information about donors, and other affiliates or friends of the School.

If an employee has any questions about Confidential Information, including what constitutes Confidential Information, the employee should consult the Head of School. Employees are required to report any unauthorized access to any Confidential Information, regardless of its media format, as soon as the employee becomes aware of it. Employees may not remove any Confidential Information, or records containing Confidential Information from the School, unless authorized to do so by the employee’s supervisor, and must return such records to the School upon request by their supervisor. Any breach of this policy will not be tolerated and legal action may be taken by the School.

Employees will not be held criminally or civilly liable under any federal or state trade secret law for the disclosure of Confidential Information set forth above that—(A) is made—(i) in confidence to a federal, state, or local government official, either directly or indirectly, or to an attorney; and (ii) solely for the purpose of reporting or investigating a suspected violation of law; or (B) is made in a complaint or other document filed in a lawsuit or other proceeding, if such filing is made under seal. Also, if an employee files a lawsuit for retaliation by the School for reporting a suspected violation of law, that employee may disclose the trade secret to employee’s attorney and use the Confidential Information in the court proceeding, but only if the employee files any document containing the Confidential Information under seal and does not disclose the Confidential Information, except pursuant to court order.

Nothing in this policy is intended to infringe upon an employee’s right to discuss wages, terms and conditions of employment.

When you are at school or out socially, please remember that discussing parents or students, at The Country School, is unprofessional and will not be tolerated. It is never appropriate under any circumstance for an employee of the School to discuss anything having to do with a student’s behavior or performance with anyone but that child’s parent or school staff as necessary. Discussing a student’s behavior, conduct or classroom performance with another student’s parent is unprofessional and can cause adverse effects and irreproachable damage to that child or family.

### **TCS EMAIL, INTERNET, AND VOICEMAIL**

All faculty and administrative staff are expected to check their emails and voicemails daily and respond to parent email/voicemail questions within 24 hours. In order to facilitate ease and thorough communication, it is required that all employees of the School check their School email accounts at least once in the morning before the start of the school day and once at the end of the school day before going home when School is in session (Monday through Friday).

#### **Network Acceptable Use Policy**

The School email system, voice and phone system, computer networks, and Internet connections are the property of the School. All electronic information/data remains the property of the School when an employee leaves the School. Access to and use of these systems and all resources on the School network is a privilege, not a right, afforded to employees of the School, and is neither promised nor guaranteed to anyone. Use of this privilege is subject to the direction of the employee’s supervisor or the administration, and may be revoked without notice at any time.

Although employees may have individual access codes to voice-mail, e-mail, learning management systems, computer systems, etc., administration may monitor, search, inspect and/or delete internal, incoming and outgoing messages, electronic data, and Internet/electronic traffic at any time, with or without notice, at its discretion. The School

reserves the right to use monitoring tools to detect abuse or inappropriate conduct. Employees must comply with all password procedures established by the School. Employees should have no expectation of privacy in messages or data on the School's network, electronic information systems or digital tools.

Every employee is responsible for protecting School property entrusted to them, for using that property and information as authorized by the administration, and for helping protect all of the School's assets and data in general. Employees entrusted with the use of the provided network connection, licensed software, copyrighted material, or any other restricted resource should restrict use to their own professional use only, and agree not to distribute these resources to others.

The School allows the use of personal devices to access the school network and resources, but by utilizing these personal devices, the security and responsible-use expectations on such equipment are the same as if that employee was using school-issued equipment, including appropriate password protection and security. The School is also not responsible for any loss of personal data or device damage resulting from the use of the School's network and resources.

Employee use of the School's electronic information systems or tools (including, but not limited to, the Internet, voicemail, telephone, e-mail, portable devices, databases, student information system(s), learning management systems(s) and computers) for personal business should be limited and under no circumstances should such personal use interfere with the employee's duties -- which will be determined in the School's sole judgment. Employees should not have any expectation of privacy in personal messages sent over any of the School's electronic information systems. The School's electronic information systems and tools should not be used to solicit or recruit others for commercial or similar purposes.

Users are expected to be responsible in their use of the network and provided data connection. They should avoid actions that cause interference to the network or to the work of others on the network.

Employees are not permitted to use network resources and facilities for any purpose which may violate any applicable laws or regulations or School policies. For example, the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages or cartoons, or any communication or transmission that contains ethnic slurs, racial epithets, or anything that may be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based on their race, color, religion, including religious dress and grooming, sex, which includes pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and related medical conditions, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, age, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, including genetic characteristics, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation or any other protected classification under federal, state, or local laws, is not permitted before, during or after school hours. No employee may use network resources to participate in discussions, websites, newsgroups, email or other communications that would be considered illegal, discriminatory, pornographic or that would otherwise violate the School's policies.

The unauthorized use, installation, copying, or distribution of copyrighted, trademarked, or patented material on the Internet is expressly prohibited. Employees are prohibited from using School resources to engage in software piracy (the selling and distributing of illegal copies of software) or plagiarism (using the writings or ideas of another as your own), publicly defaming persons, or hacking into computer systems. As a general rule, if an employee did not create material, does not own the rights to it, or has not obtained authorization for its use, it should not be put on the Internet. Employees are also responsible for ensuring that the person providing them with any material over the Internet has the appropriate distribution rights. These lists are for illustrative purposes only and not a complete list of the conditions of use.

Ultimate responsibility for content or use that does or does not conform to this policy is with the individual employee who originates and/or facilitates that content or use in the School.

Employees should notify their immediate supervisor or the Head of School upon learning of violations of this policy. Violations of the School acceptable use policy will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Employees in violation of the policy are subject to disciplinary action by the School up to and including termination of employment. Employees may also be held personally liable for any violations of this policy.

### **Email and Internet Use**

Email and Internet use are subject to the general policies listed above.

The School's policies, including the School's zero tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment or retaliation in the workplace, apply to use of the School's e-mail and Internet systems.

All e-mails with students should be addressed to the student's School-provided email address. This includes all responses to student emails initiated by students using their personal email. Any email messages sent from School email should be written with the same care and respect as if they were going out on School letterhead. Complete sentences with proper punctuation and spelling are expected.

Make sure you know to whom you are sending information. It is important to verify the addresses of people with whom you communicate -- especially when you are communicating confidential information. Credit card numbers and financial information should never be transmitted by email.

Employees should not access another employee's email without express permission from the individual or the Head of School.

Internal or external email messages and all Internet data that is composed, transmitted, or received via School information systems are considered business records and may be subject to discovery in the event of litigation. Be aware of this possibility when sending email both within and outside of the School. Formulate your messages accordingly and ensure they are accurate, appropriate, ethical, and lawful.

Never forget that email is not the same as spoken conversation. It is recorded and can be duplicated at will.

Nothing in this policy is designed to interfere with, restrain or prevent employee communications regarding wages, hours or other terms and conditions of employment.

### **File Transfer**

Downloading any freeware, shareware, or commercial programs to be used on the local network without prior approval by the School is strictly prohibited. These programs can cause incompatibilities with existing School-related software and may present licensing problems as well.

Internet users should take the necessary anti-virus precautions before downloading or copying any approved files from the Internet.

### **Social Networks**

This policy applies to all employees in their use of social media, regardless of whether the use is through devices and resources of the School or by any other means.

The School understands that employees use social media sites to share events in their lives, to communicate, and to discuss their opinions with others, including family, friends, and co-workers. Social media and networking websites, including without limitation, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, LinkedIn, personal blogs, and all similar or related social media websites (“Social networking sites”), may be accessible by the School’s students, parents, prospective parents, other schools, other employees, supervisors, and the general public. The following particular rules apply to employees:

To the extent employees’ internet, social media, and electronic communications use affects School employees, students, or school families, or their participation in the School community through work, education, or otherwise, employees are required to follow the School’s policies and regulations, including but not limited to those that protect individual privacy rights, the harassment, discrimination, and retaliation prevention policy, workplace bullying policy, and the workplace violence policy. If an employee’s use of the internet, social media, and electronic communications adversely affects their job performance, the performance of co-workers, or members of the public served by the School, such as students and school families, the School may take disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees cannot post statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as harassment, discrimination or retaliation in violation of the School’s policy or in violation of the law. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation or any other

status protected by law. Examples of threatening conduct include posting material that would make a reasonable person afraid for their safety or the safety of their family.

Employees should never post any information or rumors that are false about co-workers, students, or school families. Employees must strive for accuracy in any communication, be it a blog entry, post, or comment. Employees can include a link to sources of information. If a mistake is made, an employee should correct the information, or retract it promptly.

Social networking sites should never be used for communication with students and parents regarding confidential, school-related or professional information unless approved by the School. Employees should not “friend” and/or accept “friend” requests from current students of any age or alumni under the age of 18. Employees should not “like” or post anything on a social site of a current student or alumni under the age of 18. Employees should use caution and exercise good judgment when “friending” parents and alumni aged 18 and over. The School expects employees to maintain a professional relationship with parents and alumni. Recognize that alumni have on-line connections with current students, and that information shared between employees and alumni is likely to be seen by current students.

Employees should immediately “unfriend” any student and former students under 18, currently on their social networking lists. Feel free to use the School’s policy as reason for such action.

If an employee publishes a blog entry or posts on-line content related to the work that the employee does or subjects associated with the School, employees must make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the School. It is best to include a disclaimer such as “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the School.” Employees should respect the intellectual property rights of the School, and should not make improper use of the School’s logo, trademarks, official photographs, or any other of the School’s proprietary materials.

Employees should monitor all postings to their networks. Remind other members in your network of your position as an educator whose profile may be accessed by current or former students, and to monitor their posts to your network accordingly. Conversely, be judicious in your posting to all friends’ sites and act immediately to remove any material that may be inappropriate from your site whether posted by you or someone else. Activity on personal social media that affects the School community or impacts the employee’s ability to do the employee’s job may lead to discipline.

Employees should exercise care with privacy settings and profile content. Keep privacy settings at appropriate levels to protect yourself. Content should be periodically reviewed. In addition, know that there is no such thing as complete privacy in a social networking site.

Unless otherwise authorized by law, the School will not require or request that an employee or applicant: (a) disclose a username or password for purposes of accessing personal social media; (b) access personal social media in the School’s presence; or (c) divulge any personal social media. The School may request an employee to divulge personal social media in connection

with an investigation of employee misconduct or employee violation of applicable laws and regulations. The School can also require an employee to disclose a username, password, or other method of accessing an electronic device issued to the employee by the School. To the extent required by law, the School will not discharge, discipline, threaten discharge or discipline or otherwise retaliate for refusal to comply with such requests.

Employees should not be on a social networking site for personal use during work hours. Limit this activity to off duty hours.

Nothing in this policy is intended to infringe upon an employee's right to discuss wages, terms and conditions of employment.

### **EMPLOYEE REFERENCES AND VERIFICATIONS**

All requests for references must be directed to the Head of School. No other manager, supervisor or employee is authorized to release references for current or former employees. The Country School's policy as to references for employees who have left The Country School is to disclose only the dates of employment and the title of the last position held. If you authorize disclosure in writing, The Country School will also provide a prospective employer with the information on the amount of salary or wage you last earned.

#### **Authorization of Employment Agreements**

No employee of The Country School has the authority to enter into any agreement or promise of employment for a specified period of time or to make any agreement for future employment without the written authority of the Head of School.

#### **Performance Evaluations**

Performance evaluations have both informal and formal components. In the course of their daily work, the Head of School, Principal, and Preschool Director are often in and out of classrooms, during which time, informal observations are taking place.

Teachers will meet on an individual basis with the Head of School, Principal, or the Preschool Director generally every one to two years. The formal procedure includes teacher reflection on the quality of their teaching experience for the current school year and the opportunity to identify professional goals for the future.

Performance evaluations of teachers will be based on factors including but not limited to: teaching techniques, classroom management, knowledge of subject matter, meeting the individual needs of their students, initiative, attitude, willingness and ability to work cooperatively with their teaching partner and other colleagues, communication with parents



and students, understanding and implementation of multicultural curriculum, and staying current on new developments in education, such as technology and developmentally appropriate practice.

The Head of School will evaluate administrative and administrative support staff periodically.

Employees who have recurring job-related problems may be disciplined and/or terminated. Positive performance evaluations do not guarantee increases in salary. Salary increases are a decision of the Head of School and at her discretion.

### **EMPLOYMENT FOR TCS FAMILIES**

Employees are not permitted to accept employment from TCS families, the only exception being tutorial services for students other than those enrolled in the employees' classroom. A violation of this policy could result in the immediate termination of employment from The Country School. All parent requests of an employee for tutoring must be brought to the attention of the Head of School for approval.

### **EMPLOYEE DRESS AND STANDARDS**

Although we do not expect our staff and faculty to be dressed in business suits and dresses, we do expect that all employees will use good judgment in their attire. The school seeks a model of dress that allows employees to work comfortably while still projecting a professional image. Each employee is a representative of The Country School in the eyes of the public. This information should give employees an idea of what is and what is not appropriate in our school atmosphere. It is important that each employee report to work properly groomed and wearing appropriate clothing for the nature of the work to be performed. Clothing must be neat, clean and modest. Within a framework of good taste, there is still leeway for everybody to express their individuality. Because of insurance requirements, flip-flops and any shoes without backs are not allowed at The Country School.

Exposed cleavage, chest, stomach or undergarments (including bra straps and exposed underwear waistbands) are not allowed. Low cut or revealing tee shirts and blouses, tank or halter tops, boxer shorts, short-shorts, mini skirts, undershirts, and workout clothes, including spandex are not appropriate dress. All clothing should be clean and without rips, tears or holes.

Additionally, clothing that portrays potentially offensive images or controversial wording is not appropriate. Workout wear is acceptable only during classroom set up and pack up, pupil free days and field days.

School administrators have the right to review and evaluate employee dress and may choose to ask that employees not wear a specific outfit to school.

## **FACILITIES**

### **Safety**

It is the goal of the School to provide a work environment that is as safe and hazard-free as possible. Every employee is responsible and will be held accountable for immediately notifying the Head of School or Facilities Manager of any hazardous or potentially hazardous situations, whether or not an injury results.

### **Parking**

Employee vehicles may be parked in any TCS parking lot as space permits. Street parking on Laurel Canyon is available.

### **Security**

The security of facilities, as well as the welfare of our students and employees, requires that every individual be constantly aware of potential security risks. You should immediately notify an administrator when unknown persons are acting in a suspicious manner, in or around the facilities.

The following security considerations are offered to help maintain a secure workplace:

- Be aware of persons loitering for no apparent reason e.g., in parking areas, entrances/exits.
- Secure (Lock) your room at the end of the day, or when called away from your work area for an extended length of time.
- Do not leave valuable and/or personal articles in or around your room, especially overnight. Be sure that laptops are locked in a secure location.

Office personnel will be vigilant in enforcing security procedures with regard to the front gate. No one without an appointment, or who is not recognized on the monitor will be allowed entrance. If you are expecting a visitor, you must inform the front office in order to assure entrance.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND LEAVES**

### **Sick Days, Professional Days and Personal Days**

The Country School provides paid sick leave under the following terms and conditions set forth below. This policy is in compliance with California's Paid Sick Leave Law, and the Los Angeles Paid Sick Leave Law.

#### **Sick Leave Accrual:**

- All full time employees will be provided with seven (7) sick days (or 56 hours) at the beginning of each school year.
- All other employees: All other employees, including part-time, temporary and seasonal employees, will, commencing on the first day of employment, accrue sick leave at the rate of one hour of sick leave for every thirty hours worked.
- Unused sick leave may be accumulated to a maximum of 9 days (or 72 hours). When an employee has accumulated 72 hours of sick leave that employee will not accrue more sick leave until the employee's sick leave bank is below 72 hours.

#### **Sick Leave Eligibility:**

- An employee is not eligible to begin using any accrued paid sick leave until the 90th day of employment with the school.
- In accordance with state and local requirements, an employee may use sick leave for any of the following reasons:
  - o For the employee's own diagnosis, care, or treatment of an existing health condition or preventative care.
  - o For the diagnosis, care, or treatment of an existing health condition or preventative care for an employee's family member, including:
    - Child (including a biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child to whom the employee stands in loco parentis.)
    - Spouse or Registered Domestic Partner.
    - Parent (including biological, adoptive, or foster parent, stepparent, or legal guardian of an employee or the employee's spouse or registered domestic partner, or a person who stood in loco parentis when the employee was a minor child.)

- Grandparent.
  - Grandchild.
  - Sibling.
  - Any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.
- o To obtain any relief or services related to being a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking including the following with appropriate certification of the need for such services:
- A temporary restraining order or restraining order.
  - Other injunctive relief to help ensure the health, safety or welfare of themselves or their children.
  - To seek medical attention for injuries caused by domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
  - To obtain services from a domestic violence shelter, program, or rape crisis center as a result of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
  - To obtain psychological counseling related to an experience of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
  - To participate in safety planning and take other actions to increase safety from future domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including temporary or permanent relocation.

#### **Notice and Use of Sick Leave**

- An employee shall provide reasonable advance notification of his/her need to use accrued sick leave to his or her supervisor if the need for sick leave use is foreseeable (e.g., doctor's appointment scheduled in advance). If the need for sick leave use is unforeseeable, the employee shall provide notice of the need for the leave to his/her supervisor as soon as is practicable.
- An employee who uses paid sick leave must do so with a minimum increment of two hours of sick leave.
- Sick days may not be substituted for personal days. Sick leave is intended to be used for the purposes stated above. To the extent that an employee wishes to use sick leave for a reason other than provided under this policy, the employee must obtain prior approval from the Head of School before such use.

- A doctor's written excuse may be required as permitted by law when an employee has used 5 or more sick days during a one year period.
- The School will not tolerate abuse or misuse of an employee's sick leave.

### **Sick Leave Not Hours Worked**

Sick Leave will not be considered hours worked for purposes of overtime calculation. An employee will not receive compensation for unused accrued sick leave upon termination, resignation, retirement or other separation from employment from the School. No employee will receive pay in lieu of sick leave.

### **Reinstatement of Sick Leave Upon Rehire by School**

If an employee separates from employment with the School and is re-hired by the School within one year of the date of separation, previously accrued and unused sick leave hours shall be reinstated to the extent required by law.

### **Personal Leave**

The Country School provides three (3) days of personal leave to all full-time employees at the beginning of each school year. Unused personal leave carries over year to year up to a cap of five (5) days; at no time will an employee have more than five (5) days of personal leave in his or her leave bank.

Absent an emergency, use of personal leave must be requested in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance to the Head of School. The School will attempt to accommodate employees' requests and preferences for use of personal leave; however, approvals will be subject to the School's operational needs. Upon separation of employment, employees are paid for all unused personal leave in an employee's personal leave bank.

Employees are required to use personal leave before taking unpaid leave, with the following exceptions:

- Employees are not required to use paid leave during leave pursuant to a disability plan that pays a portion of the employee's salary while on leave (such as SDI and workers compensation benefits);
- Employees are not required to use personal leave before taking an unpaid Pregnancy Disability leave; and
- Employees are not required to use personal leave before taking unpaid leave pursuant to the New Parent Leave Act.

## **Holidays/Days Off**

All school observed holidays have been figured into your yearly or contracted salary. Legal and school holidays generally include: Yom Kippur or Rosh Hashanah, Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, Presidents' Day, Spring Break, Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Summer Break. Certain employees may be required to work during Winter and/or Spring Break.

In addition to the above, there are several pupil free days where students are off and faculty and staff are expected to be working on campus.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

These benefits are subject to various eligibility and participation requirements. Details may be found in the Summary Plan Description of each plan available from the school. In the event of a conflict between the language contained in this handbook and that contained in the actual plan document, the actual plan document will prevail. Benefits are subject to change at the sole discretion of the School.

### **Workers' Compensation Benefits**

The Country School furnishes workers' compensation insurance coverage at its expense. Workers' compensation insurance is intended to provide medical care and pay for lost time resulting from injuries on the job and those illnesses caused by your work. Wage benefits, such as hospitalization, are in effect following a waiting period. If you are injured on the job, you must report the injury to The Country School immediately in order for the proper reports to be filled out.

### **State Disability Insurance**

As an additional benefit, you are covered under the state disability insurance plan. This insurance provides low cost disability protection if illness or injury (not work-related), prevents you from working. All employees are eligible and pay for this program as mandated by law

### **Medical and Dental Insurance**

TCS provides medical and dental insurance plans for eligible employees only. To be eligible, employees must work an average of 30 hours or more per week.

The school pays full medical premium for Kaiser Gold HMO B plan for employees only. Employees are responsible for the balance of their coverage if choosing a different plan. Employee is paying full premium for dependents. Coverage becomes effective on the 1st of the month following one full month of employment

The school pays full dental premium for employee only. Employee is paying full premium for dependents. Coverage becomes effective on the first of the month following 3 full months of employment.

Employee should notify the business office immediately if a change in family status occurs, including the birth or adoption of a child, marriage, divorce or other events that may trigger a qualifying event or COBRA eligibility.

The Country School offers all full-time employees a selection of medical and dental insurance options from which to choose. For new employees, elected benefits become effective the first of the month following 90 days of employment. For existing employees, there is an opportunity to make changes to benefits once a year during open enrollment. The only time an employee may make changes to benefits outside of the open enrollment period is if there is a change in family status. Such changes include the following:

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Birth of a child
- Adoption of a child
- Loss of benefit coverage from a spouse or eligible domestic partner's benefit plan

Employees are responsible for immediately notifying the Business Manager of such a change so that the appropriate forms and processes can be completed. Changes must be completed within 30 days of the status change in order to enroll. Additionally, employees will be required to submit proof of the status changes (for example birth certificate, adoption papers, marriage license etc.)

An employee will not have their salary increased if they do not choose medical benefits.

### **Deferred Tax Retirement Savings Plan**

The Country School offers all full time employees the opportunity to participate in a 403b tax deferred annuity program. All participants will benefit from having pretax dollars invested by AXA Equitable. For additional information, please consult our Business Manager.

### **Jury Duty**

The Country School encourages employees to serve on jury duty when called. However, TCS prefers its employees serve on jury duty in the summer to lessen the impact on the School. Please see the Head of School or Preschool Director if you have been assigned jury duty during the school year. Non-exempt employees will not receive pay during jury leave, but may choose to use accrued personal days. Exempt employees will not be paid for any week that the

employee is absent for a full week and performs no work. An employee may be requested to provide written verification from the court clerk of performance of jury service. If work time remains after any day of jury selection or jury duty, the employee will be expected to return to work for the remainder of the work day. The employee may retain any mileage allowance or other fee paid by the court for jury services.

### **Court Appearances/Witness Leave**

The School provides employees a leave of absence to attend judicial proceedings unrelated to work as non party witnesses pursuant to a court subpoena. This leave will be considered an unpaid leave of absence unless the employee chooses to use accrued personal leave for the absence. The School will not deduct an exempt employee's pay due to court appearances by a subpoena, unless the employee is absent for a full week and performs no work. Employees should notify their supervisor of the need for time off for witness duty as soon as a notice or summons from the court is received and provide a copy of the notice or summons to their supervisor. If work time remains after any day of witness duty, employees will be expected to return to work for the remainder of their work schedule, unless an employee has used vacation or personal time. If the subpoena is related to the employee's work duties, then the employee will be paid for the time they missed at their normal rate of compensation.

### **Leave of Absence**

Forms for requesting a leave of absence may be obtained in the Main Office.

### **Parenting Leave**

In compliance with California New Parent Leave Act ("NPLA"), TCS provides eligible employees up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave to bond with a new child within one (1) year of the child's birth, adoption, or foster care placement.

An employee is eligible for leave if the employee has been employed full or part-time for at least twelve (12) months and has been employed for at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave.

If both parents of a child, adoptee, or foster child are employed by TCS and are entitled to leave pursuant to this policy, the aggregate number of workweeks of leave to which both may be entitled may be limited to twelve (12) workweeks during any 12-month period. Leave under this policy is unpaid, but an employee may use earned or accrued paid leave including sick leave, vacation, and personal leave for all or part of any unpaid NPLA leave.

If possible, employees must provide at least thirty (30) days' advance notice for foreseeable events, such as the expected birth or placement of a child. For events that are unforeseeable, employees must notify the Head of School at least verbally, as soon as they learn of the need for the leave. Failure to comply with these notice rules is grounds for, and may result in, deferral of the requested leave.



The basic minimum duration of NPLA leave pursuant to this policy is two weeks, and employees must conclude the bonding leave within one (1) year of the birth of a child or placement for adoption or foster care. However, an employee is entitled to bonding leave for at least one (1) day, but less than two (2) weeks duration on any two occasions.

While on NPLA leave, employees will continue to be covered by TCS's group health insurance to the same extent that coverage is provided while the employee is on the job. In the event an employee is disabled by pregnancy and also uses leave pursuant to this policy, TCS will maintain the employee's health benefits while the employee is disabled by pregnancy (up to four (4) months or 17 1/3 weeks) and during the employee's bonding leave (up to twelve weeks). Employees on unpaid status that are eligible to continue health coverage will be liable to continue paying the premiums for that coverage that had been previously deducted from the employee's paycheck. If an employee fails to return to work after his or her leave entitlement has been exhausted or expires, TCS will have the right to recover its share of health plan premiums for the entire 12-week bonding leave, unless the employee does not return because of the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition of the employee or other circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

Upon expiration of NPLA leave, an employee is entitled to be reinstated to the same or comparable position of employment held when the leave commenced. Employees have no greater rights to reinstatement, benefits and other conditions of employment than if the employee had been continuously employed during the NPLA leave period.

### **Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL)**

An employee who is disabled because of pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition is entitled to an unpaid pregnancy disability leave for up to four months. Such time may be taken all at once or intermittently. Additionally, an employee disabled because of pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition may request reasonable accommodations pursuant to the procedure set forth in this Handbook.

#### **1. Notice and Certification Requirements**

If an employee needs to take pregnancy disability leave, the Head of School should be notified as soon as possible. Employees will need to provide written notice making sure that the start date and duration of the leave is included. The request must be supported by a written certification from the attending physician stating that the employee is disabled from working by pregnancy, childbirth or a related medical condition. The certification must state the expected duration of the disability and the expected date of return to work. If the leave is foreseeable, pregnancy disability leave must be requested at least thirty (30) days in advance before the leave will begin and employees must consult with their supervisor regarding the scheduling of any planned medical treatment or supervision so as to minimize disruption. Any such scheduling is subject to the approval of an employee's health care provider. If an employee is

unable to give thirty (30) days' notice of the need for leave, an employee must let the Head of School know as soon as possible.

All leaves must be confirmed in writing, have an agreed-upon specific date of return, and be submitted to the Head of School prior to being taken. Requests for an extension of leave must be submitted in writing to the Head of School prior to the agreed date of return and must be supported by a written certification of the attending physician that the employee continues to be disabled by pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition. The maximum pregnancy disability leave is four (4) months. However, at the end of the employee's period(s) of pregnancy disability, or at the end of four (4) months of pregnancy disability leave, whichever occurs first, an employee may be eligible for further leave under the NPLA per the terms of the NPLA policy.

## 2. Compensation

Pregnancy disability leaves are without pay. An employee on pregnancy disability leave is required to use any accrued sick leave during the leave, but is not required to use accrued personal leave. An employee who elects at her option to use accrued personal leave while on pregnancy disability leave must first exhaust any accrued sick leave before doing so.

Any payments will be integrated with any state disability or other wage reimbursement benefits that employees may receive. At no time may an employee receive a greater total payment than her regular compensation. The use of paid time off will not extend the length of pregnancy disability leave.

## 3. Benefits During Leave

An employee on pregnancy disability leave will continue to be covered by TCS's group health insurance to the same extent that coverage is provided while the employee is on the job. TCS may recover premiums it paid to maintain health coverage, if an employee does not return to work following pregnancy disability leave (unless the employee remains out of work on an additional approved NPLA leave, but if she does not return from the additional NPLA leave, then the employee may be required to repay TCS for premiums it paid to maintain health coverage, as set forth in the NPLA policy).

Paid leave, such as sick leave, and vacation (if applicable) does not accrue while an employee is on unpaid pregnancy disability leave.

## 4. Restatement after Pregnancy Leave

Upon the expiration of pregnancy disability leave and TCS's receipt of a written statement from the health care provider that the employee is fit to return to duty, the employee will be reinstated to her original or an equivalent position, so long as it was not eliminated for a legitimate business reason during the leave.

An employee who fails to return to work after the termination of her leave loses her reinstatement rights, unless such rights are guaranteed by any other law, such as the NPLA.

### **Military Leave**

Military leave shall be granted in accordance with the provisions of state and federal law. An employee requesting leave for this purpose shall provide his or her supervisor, whenever possible, with a copy of the military orders specifying the dates, site and purpose of the activity or mission. Within the limits of such orders, the School may determine when the leave is to be taken and may modify the employee's work schedule to accommodate the request for leave.

### **Military Family Leave**

Any employee whose spouse or registered domestic partner is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, including the National Guard or Reserves, will be provided an unpaid leave of up to ten (10) days while his or her spouse or registered domestic partner is on leave from deployment during a time of military conflict, provided the following conditions exist:

1. The employee works an average of twenty (20) or more hours per week;
2. The military spouse or registered domestic partner has been deployed during a period of military conflict to an area designated as a combat theater or combat zone;
3. The employee provides notice of the request for leave within two (2) business days of receiving official notice that his or her spouse will be on leave from deployment; and
4. The employee submits written documentation that his or her spouse will be on leave from deployment during the period for which the employee is requesting leave.

Employees may use accrued personal leave during a Military Family Leave. Employees may use accrued sick leave during a Military Family Leave if the leave otherwise qualifies for use of sick leave pursuant to the terms of the School's sick leave policy.

### **Civil Air Patrol Leave**

An employee who has been employed for at least ninety (90) days who is a volunteer member of the California Wing of the civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force, commonly known as the Civil Air Patrol, may take unpaid leave of a total of ten (10) days per calendar year to respond as duly authorized and directed to emergency operational missions of the Civil Air Patrol. Leave for a single emergency operational mission shall not exceed three (3) days, unless an extension is authorized by the governmental entity in charge of the emergency operational mission and the extension of the leave is approved by the School.

Employees are required to give as much notice as possible of the intended dates upon which the Civil Air Patrol leave will begin and end and provide certification from the proper Civil Air Patrol authority to verify their eligibility for the leave.

An employee taking Civil Air Patrol leave is required to exhaust all accrued vacation, sick leave, and any other leave that may be available as part of the Civil Air Patrol leave.

The School will not discriminate against any member of the Civil Air Patrol because of such membership and will not hinder or prevent a member from performing service as part of the California Wing of the Civil Air Patrol during an emergency operational mission. Upon expiration of a Civil Air Patrol leave, the employee will be restored to the position held when the leave began or to a substantially similar position unless conditions unrelated to the leave would have resulted in termination or other alteration of employment terms.

### **Emergency Service Training Leave**

An employee may request to take a leave up to an aggregate of 14 days per calendar year for volunteer firefighter training, training as a reserve peace officer, or emergency rescue personnel to engage in training activities. Employees are required to give as much notice as possible of the intended dates upon which the training will begin and end. An employee may request approval for emergency service training leave from their supervisor. The leave is unpaid, however, employees may use accrued personal leave.

### **Organ and Bone Marrow Donor Leave**

Employees who have been employed by TCS for at least ninety (90) days immediately preceding the commencement of leave are eligible for a paid leave of absence, of up to thirty (30) business days in a one-year period measured from the date the employee's leave begins, for the purpose of donating an organ to another person and up to five (5) days in a one-year period for a bone marrow donation. The leave for donating either an organ or bone marrow need not be taken all at once and may be taken in one or more periods. Employees are required to use up to two (2) weeks of accrued personal leave for time off related to an organ transplant and up to five (5) days of accrued personal leave for time off related to a bone marrow transplant. During an organ or bone marrow donor leave, an eligible employee will continue to accrue those benefits to which he or she was entitled before the leave began. Additionally, during the approved leave, TCS will continue to make those benefit contributions, if any, that it was making on the employee's behalf before the leave began.

### **Time Off for Voting**

TCS encourages employees to vote. If an employee is unable to vote in a statewide election during non-work hours, employees may, with advance notice and supervisor approval, be granted up to two hours off from work with pay to vote. A supervisor may require that time off for voting be the beginning or end of an employee's regularly scheduled work day to allow the time needed for voting without unduly disrupting your work or that of TCS. If an employee knows or has reason to believe that time off will be necessary to be able to vote on election day, that employee must give his or her supervisor at least two (2) working days' notice that time off for voting is desired.

## **Victim of Crime Leave**

Any employee who is a victim of a crime listed in Labor Code section 230.5(a)(2)(A) (which includes serious or violent felonies, or a felony involving theft or embezzlement), may take leave from work to appear in court to be heard at any proceeding in which the right of the victim is at issue, if the employee provides TCS with reasonable advance notice. If advance notice is not feasible, the employee must provide the School, within a reasonable time after the leave is taken, certification from a police report, a district attorney or court, or from a health care provider or victim advocate, that the employee was a victim of any of the crimes listed in Labor Code section 230.5(a)(2)(A). An employee who is an immediate family member of such a crime victim, including: a registered domestic partner, the child of the registered domestic partner, spouse, child, stepchild, brother, stepbrother, sister, stepsister, mother, stepmother, father, or stepfather of the crime victim is also entitled to leave from work to attend judicial proceedings relating to that crime. The leave is unpaid unless the employee elects to use accrued personal leave.

## **Victim of Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Leave**

TCS will provide time off to an employee who has been the victim of domestic violence or sexual assault to seek any relief, including, but not limited to, a temporary restraining order, restraining order, or other injunctive relief, to help ensure the health, safety, or welfare of the victim or his or her child. This includes time off for court proceedings, services from a domestic violence shelter, program or rape crisis center, counseling, medical attention, and participation in safety planning programs. TCS requires reasonable advance notice of the leave when feasible. If time off is taken due to an emergency, the employee must, within fifteen (15) days of the absence, provide the School with certification of the need for the leave such as a police report, court order, documentation from a healthcare provider, victims advocate, or counselor. This time off is unpaid, however, an employee may substitute available sick leave or personal leave for time taken off under this section. TCS will, to the extent allowed by law, maintain the confidentiality of an employee requesting leave under this provision.

## **Suspension of Child**

If an employee who is the parent or guardian of a child facing suspension from school is summoned to the school to discuss the matter, the employee should alert his or her supervisor as soon as possible before leaving work. Consistent with California Labor Code Section 230.7, no discriminatory action will be taken against an employee who takes time off for this purpose. This leave will be unpaid, but employees must use accrued personal leave time for this purpose.

## **School Activities Leave**

An employee who is the parent, guardian, or grandparent with custody of a child in kindergarten or grades 1 through 12, or who is the parent, guardian or grandparent with

custody of a child in a licensed child day care facility, is eligible for up to forty (40) unpaid hours off per year for the purpose of finding, enrolling or re-enrolling their children in a school or with a licensed childcare provider, participating in activities of the school or licensed child day care facility, and/or addressing a child care or school emergency. The time off for school activity participation cannot exceed eight hours in any calendar month, or a total of forty (40) hours each year.

Employees must give as much reasonable advance notice to the employee's supervisor of the planned absence as possible. If both parents are employed by the School, the first employee to request such leave will receive the time off. The other parent will receive the time off only if the leave is approved by his or her supervisor.

Leave under this policy is unpaid, but the employee must utilize accrued personal leave, if available, for this purpose. Employees must provide their supervisor with documentation from the school or child day care facility verifying that the employee participated in a school activity on the day of the absence for that purpose.

### **Tuition Remission**

Full-time employees receive 50% tuition remission for their children attending TCS. The School may reduce or discontinue its tuition remission policy at any time in the School's sole and absolute discretion.

A dependent child must live with the employee at least fifty percent (50%) of the time and the employee must be the parent, step-parent or legal guardian of the child to qualify for tuition remission. A qualified child must meet admission standards and be accepted by the Admission Committee for an opening in the appropriate grade level for the child. As for any applicant to the School, admission or re-enrollment cannot be guaranteed.

The 50% remission applies to tuition only. The remaining tuition balance and all other expenses are the responsibility of the employee. If the employment status of the employee should change during the academic year, the School reserves the right to adjust the benefit amount.

## **SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

### **Types of Separation**

#### **Voluntary Termination**

An employee who voluntarily resigns his/her employment should do so in writing. Failing to report to work for 3 consecutively scheduled workdays without notice to or approval by the

Head of School will voluntarily terminate employment with The Country School. All Country School owned property must be returned immediately upon termination of employment.

### **Involuntary Termination**

While the decision to enter into an employment relationship is a mutual one between the employee and the School, certain factors or business necessities may require the School to decide to terminate the employment relationship with an employee. As an at-will employer, The Country School reserves the right to end the employment relationship with an employee at any time with or without notice and with or without cause.

### **Reduction/Restructuring in Workforce**

While it is always our preference to maintain our current staffing levels, under some circumstances, The Country School may need to restructure or reduce its workforce. If it becomes necessary to restructure our operations or reduce the number of employees, The Country School will attempt to provide advance notice to minimize the impact on those affected. In determining which employees will be subject to layoff, The Country School will take into account, among other things, past and present performance of those involved, attitude, teamwork, and appropriateness for alternate positions available. The Country School reserves the right to make such decisions solely on the determination of what is appropriate for any particular position and what is in the best interest of the school.

## **RELATED SEPARATION INFORMATION**

### **Continuation of Health Insurance Benefits (COBRA)**

Pursuant to the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 ("COBRA"), if your employment is terminated, subject to certain conditions, or your working hours are reduced, you are entitled to elect to continue your group medical insurance benefits at your expense. Please consult our Business Manager for information and forms.

## **EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION**

### **Arbitration of Disputes**

Alternative dispute resolution methods provide benefits to both the School and employees by way of a generally speedy and economic process in a relatively informal setting, by an impartial person with expertise in the field. Accordingly, it is the policy of the School that any and all claims, disputes or controversies between employees and the School shall be resolved by binding arbitration pursuant to the separate arbitration agreement signed by Employee.

**TCS COVID-19 ADDENDUM: PROTOCOLS & PROCEDURES RELATED TO COVID-19**

The TCS COVID-19 Protocols and Guidelines change based on current numbers, the present situation in our county, and recommendations made by the Department of Public Health. School procedures will continue to be revised and updated on the TCS website.

Please note that COVID-19 vaccination is required as a term of employment.



**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

***PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN***

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of The 2023/2024 Country School Employee Handbook, including the Policy Against Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation and COVID-19 Addendum. I understand that it contains important information about the School's policies and about my privileges and obligations as an employee at the time of publication. All previously issued handbooks and any inconsistent policy statements or memoranda are superseded.

I further understand and acknowledge that I am expected to read, understand, familiarize myself with, and comply with the policies contained in this Handbook.

I also understand that the School may change, rescind or add to any of the policies, benefits or workplace practices described in the Handbook. I also understand that the School will endeavor to advise employees in a timely manner of material changes to the policies, benefits or practices described in the Handbook. No oral statements or representations can in any way alter the provisions of this Handbook.

Nothing in this Employee Handbook or in any other personnel document, including benefit plan descriptions, creates or is intended to create a promise or representation of continued employment for any employee. I understand, acknowledge and agree that the Handbook issued by the School is not a contract of employment and that employment with the School will only continue so long as it is mutually agreeable. This "at-will" policy may only be changed by a letter signed by me and the Head of School.

I have read the 2023/2024 Handbook and am aware of and will comply with the School's policies contained herein.

Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

(Print) Last \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_

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