



Employee Handbook SY 2022-2023

Creative Minds International Public Charter School

September 2022

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At-Will Protections and Revisions to Handbook

At-Will Employment Policy Statement

While we hope to have a long and mutually beneficial relationship with you, your employment with CMI is voluntarily on an “at-will” basis. This at-will employment relationship means that as an employee, you are free to terminate your employment at any time, with or without cause. Similarly, your employment is not for any specific period of time and CMI may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice. Neither this handbook nor any other CMI document confers any contractual right, either express or implied, to remain in the school's employment; nor does it guarantee any fixed terms and conditions of your employment. No supervisor or other representative of the school (except the Executive Director or Chief Operating Officer, when done in writing) has the authority to enter into any contractual agreement for employment for any specified period. None of the information provided in our policies signifies a contractual agreement or should be interpreted to conflict with, eliminate, or modify in any way your employment-at-will status with the school.

Revisions to Handbook

This employee handbook is intended to keep you informed of the terms and conditions of your employment, including CMI policies and procedures. In the preceding sections, we introduced you to CMI values, culture, and goals. The remainder of the handbook will familiarize you with the privileges, benefits, and responsibilities of being an employee at CMI. CMI reserves the right to revise, add, or delete from this handbook as it determines to be in its best interest. The policies can change at any time, for any reason, with or without warning. Nothing in this handbook is a contract or promise.

Hiring

Equal Employment Opportunity

CMI is committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity and complies with all applicable laws that prohibit discrimination and harassment in the workplace. CMI is an equal opportunity employer and makes all employment-related decisions without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, political affiliation or belief, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, personal appearance, family responsibilities, matriculation, veteran or military status, credit history, or any other category protected by applicable law. We believe that everyone employed by us has the right to be free from discrimination and harassment in the terms and conditions of employment. No form of discrimination or harassment toward any employee, student, contractor, or other person in our workplace or at our work sites will be tolerated. This policy applies to recruitment, selection, training, utilization, promotion, benefits, termination, disciplinary actions, and all other personnel actions, terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. CMI adheres to a standard of selecting the best-qualified person for each position in the organization. CMI relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in this information or data may result in CMI's exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination from employment.

Employment Authorization Verification

All new hires and current employees are required by federal law to verify their identity and eligibility to work in the United States. You will be required to complete federal Form I-9. If this form and verification of employment eligibility is not completed during the first three days of employment, we are required by law to terminate your employment. If you are currently employed and have not complied with this requirement or if your status has changed, please inform your supervisor.

Tuberculosis Tests (TB)

New staff must provide proof of a ‘negative’ result on a TB test or other equivalent examination (i.e., chest exam). Staff can obtain a TB test from a range of sources such as a personal medical doctor or any walk-in facility. CMI does not require a specific facility to conduct the TB test. State regulations require periodic TB screening.

This policy must be considered when hiring, assigning, or promoting an employee. If a circumstance arises that results in a direct supervisory relationship between immediate family or close personal relatives including marriage, reduction in force, reorganization, or priority placement, one of the relatives may be reassigned to an appropriate vacancy. During the period that a direct supervisory relationship exists between immediate family members or close personal relatives, the supervisory relative will not be involved in any personnel action involving his or her relative. Typical first-level supervisory responsibilities will be referred to the next higher level in the supervisory chain.

For purposes of this policy, your immediate family includes your mother, father, husband, wife, registered domestic partner, son, daughter, sister, brother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepchild, stepparent, grandchild, or grandparent. This policy also applies to close personal relatives such as uncles, aunts, first cousins, nephews, nieces, or half-siblings as well as any person with whom the employee shares or has shared, within the last year, a mutual residence and with whom the employee maintains a committed relationship. Questions should be directed to Human Resources.

Discrimination and Harassment

Sexual Harassment and Other Unlawful Harassment

Consistent with its workplace policy of equal employment opportunity, CMI prohibits and will not condone any form of unlawful discrimination or harassment based upon a person's protected characteristic(s), including sex, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, national origin, disability, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, veteran or military status, credit history, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decision affecting the individual, or (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for the employee.

Examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment may include:

sexual-oriented verbal kidding, teasing, or jokes; (2) unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; (3) verbal abuse of a sexual nature; (4) graphic or verbal commentaries about an individual's body or appearance; (5) display or distribution of sexually suggestive material; (6) subtle pressure for sexual activity; and (7) inappropriate physical conduct or contact.

Other Unlawful Harassment

Harassment is generally defined as unwelcome verbal or nonverbal conduct based on a person's protected characteristic including but not limited to sex, race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, disability, veteran or military status, credit history, or other characteristic protected by law that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward the person because of the protected characteristic and which affects the person's working environment, employment opportunities, or benefits, has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the person's employment opportunities or benefits, or has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Harassing conduct may include, for example, epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; verbal abuse; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; display or distribution of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group.

Scope of the Policy

This policy prohibiting harassment, whether sexual or of another nature, is not limited to relationships between and among employees and prospective employees but also extends to interaction with vendors and students. No employee should suffer sexual, or any other harassment based on a protected characteristic by any vendor, volunteer, visitor, or other third party. The school cannot always control the conduct of non-employees but will attempt to remedy any such situations that arise. It is also the responsibility of every employee to respect the rights of students, other employees, applicants, volunteers, vendors, and visitors to CMI as required under CMI's code of conduct.

Any unwelcome sexual overtures or other forms of harassment by an employee, vendor, volunteer, visitor, or other third party should be reported immediately to Human Resources or any other member of the administration with whom you feel comfortable. All managers and supervisors are required to report immediately any perceived occurrences of harassment and complaints of harassment which they receive from employees to Human Resources.

Mandated Reporter Training

Mandatory Reporting Responsibilities in Response to Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect It is the policy of Washington Latin to ensure the safety and well-being of every student. When a concern of possible abuse/neglect arises, the expectation is that we as a school will act swiftly and in an organized manner to respond. In accordance with DC regulations, all new staff members and personnel are to participate in Mandated Reporter training during their first year, and returning staff are to participate every two years. Attendance will be tracked to ensure full participation.

Complaint Procedures

CMI requires reporting of all incidents of sexual or other harassment, regardless of the identity of the offender. Complaints of harassment or discrimination in violation of this policy must immediately be reported to Human Resources or any other member of the administration with whom the employee feels comfortable. The school will conduct a thorough and prompt investigation of all complaints and fully maintain the investigation as confidential feasible.

Complaints under this policy against the Executive Director will be investigated with the oversight of the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Upon completion of the investigation, CMI will take appropriate action up to and including termination, if necessary.

Retaliation

The school will not tolerate any form of retaliation against any employee for in good faith making a complaint or assisting in a complaint investigation. An employee who believes that he or she is being retaliated against in violation of this policy should make a report immediately to Human Resources or any other member of the administration with whom they feel comfortable. Any employee found to have retaliated against any other employee for making a complaint or for assisting in an investigation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Knowingly making false and malicious complaints of harassment or discrimination, as opposed to complaints that even if erroneous are made in good faith, may also lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Reasonable Accommodation Request

CMI complies with all federal and District of Columbia laws concerning the employment of persons with disabilities and acts in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the District of Columbia Commission on Human Rights. If you have a disability and require an accommodation, please advise Human Resources that you have a physical and/or mental impairment and please suggest to Human Resources ways in which the school can accommodate your disability so that you may perform the essential functions of your job. It is the school's policy to work with you, through an interactive process, to try to find a reasonable accommodation for your disability that enables you to perform the essential functions of your job, unless it would impose an undue hardship on the school.

Criminal Activity/Arrests

Involvement in criminal activity, whether on or off the school's property, during employment may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or termination of employment. Disciplinary action depends upon a review of all factors involved, including whether or not the employee's action was work-related, the nature of the act, or circumstances which adversely affect attendance or performance. Any disciplinary action is not dependent upon the disposition of any case in court. Employees are expected to be on the job and ready to work when scheduled. Inability to report to work as scheduled as a result of an arrest may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, for violation of an attendance policy or job abandonment. Any disciplinary action taken will be based on information reasonably available. This information may come from, witnesses, police, or any other source if management has reason to view the source as credible.

Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Free Workplace

Employees who work while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol present a safety hazard to themselves, their co-workers, and students. Moreover, the presence of drugs, alcohol, e-cigarettes, and tobacco in the workplace limits our ability to perform at the highest levels and provide the best possible service. Accordingly, CMI is committed to maintaining a drug, alcohol, e-cigarette, and tobacco free environment. The following conduct is prohibited on school property, including but not limited to school buildings, grounds, parking lots, and fields, along with off-site activities with staff or students, and may result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination:

- Possession, transfer, sale, distribution, use, or solicitation of illegal drugs on CMI property (including the parking lot and adjacent areas) or during working hours.
- Use of alcohol on CMI property (including adjacent areas) or during working hours, unless specifically authorized by the school management.
- Use of e-cigarettes or tobacco products on CMI property at any time.
- Reporting to work or being present at work while being intoxicated or impaired by alcohol and/or drugs. This does not include the authorized use of alcohol at CMI sponsored functions or activities.
- Reporting to work, or being present at work, with a detectable amount of any illegal drug or its metabolites in the employee's body.
- Abuse of prescribed drugs.
 - Prescribed drugs will be allowed only when taken in accordance with a physician's prescription, and where such use will not adversely affect the ability of an individual to perform his other duties properly and safely. Any employee who is taking prescription drugs that may affect the employee's ability to perform the job properly and safely should inform Human Resources before or immediately upon reporting to work. Abuse of prescribed drugs will not be tolerated and will be treated in the same fashion as use of illegal drugs.

Consistent with its fair employment policy, CMI maintains a policy of non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation with respect to recovering addicts and alcoholics, and those having a medical history reflecting treatment for substance abuse conditions. We encourage employees to seek assistance before their drug and alcohol use renders them unable to perform their essential job functions or jeopardizes the health and safety of themselves or others. CMI will attempt to assist its employees through appropriate leaves of absence and other measures, consistent with CMI's policies and applicable federal, state, or local laws. However, any employee who appears at work during working hours in an intoxicated state may be subject to disciplinary action. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

General Safety Policy

It is the responsibility of every employee of the school to maintain a healthy and safe work environment. Please report all safety hazards and occupational illnesses or injuries to your supervisor immediately and complete an occupational illness or injury form as needed. Failure to follow the school's health and safety rules can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Severe Weather Policy

CMI generally follows the District of Columbia's Public School (DCPS) system regarding school delays and closings. If the school is not going to open for the day, you may receive notification one or several ways including email, robo call, or text message. If there are any changes or modifications, CMI will notify you. When potentially dangerous weather develops during the day and a decision is made by the school to close or dismiss early, you will be compensated as if you had worked all of your regularly scheduled hours for that day. If the school is closed, you will be compensated for your entire workday.

Emergency Action Plan

CMI recognizes that our employees drive our school. As our most critical resource, employees are safeguarded through training, provision of appropriate work surroundings, and procedures that foster protection of health and safety. No duty, nonmatter what its perceived result, is more important than employees' and students' health and safety.

General Guidelines in an Emergency

Stay calm and think through your actions. Know important emergency numbers, such as:

Fire/Police/Ambulance 911
Fire/Police/Ambulance 311
Poison Control Center 800-222-1222
Director of Operations Ext. 112
Chief Operating Officer Ext. 117
Executive Director Ext. 111

Be aware of your surroundings:

Know where stairwell exits are located — there are 2 stairwell exits on each floor

In the event of an emergency, use only stairs—do not take elevators

Do not hesitate to call or alert others if you believe that an emergency is occurring.

Fire or Other Emergency Evacuation:

Employees and students are notified of a fire by either the fire alarm system or a school-wide paged announcement. Upon hearing the alarm, staff will immediately find their students and evacuate the building using the assigned stairwell exit as per our school emergency response plan. This is shared with staff at the beginning of the school year and practiced monthly as per PCSB guidelines—staff and students will not use the elevators or delay evacuation to gather personal belongings, finish a phone call, or wait for friends. Upon exiting the building everyone will report to the designated safe area (grassy area next to AFRH Chapel and across the street from the Main Hall doors) for a headcount confirmation by classroom teachers. If there is a need to evacuate the school building and shelter indoors, our designated indoor shelter is the lower floor of the Scott Building. If an employee or known guest or visitor is missing, report this immediately to a member of the response team who will in turn report it to the proper school and civil authorities. All employees who are not members of a response team will stay together in the designated location so periodic updates on the situation can be communicated. When parents have been informed of the evacuation, they will be directed to Lot #5 and meet a member of the CMI response team, who will arrange for their child to be walked from the AFRH Chapel to the car park for pick up.

If You Discover a Fire:

Alert other persons in the immediate hazard area and activate the nearest fire alarm, call 911, and call the receptionist to page an emergency announcement, if possible.

To use a fire extinguisher, follow these instructions:

Pull the safety pin

Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire

Squeeze the operating lever

Sweep side-to-side, covering the base of the fire

When using a fire extinguisher, always stay between the fire and an exit—never feel that using a fire extinguisher is required, and if the fire is too hot, too smoky, or you are frightened, evacuate immediately.

Medical Emergency:

Upon discovering a medical emergency, call 911

Call the receptionist to page an emergency announcement, if possible

Stay with the ill or injured person, being careful not to come into contact with any body fluids unless properly trained and protected. If a school nurse is available, accompany the injured person to the nurse's office.

Send one person to alert Human Resources so they can notify family members of the ill or injured person.

Employees in the immediate vicinity of the emergency, but not involved in the emergency effort should leave the area.

Severe Weather:

In the event severe weather conditions occur at a time when you have not yet reported to work, you should report to work as usual unless otherwise notified, but only if you are able to do so safely. Employees should immediately guide students to seek shelter in the main hallways or exit stairways away from all windows. When the severe weather warning is cancelled, we will send Emergency Floor Leaders to each floor to advise that it is safe to return to classrooms and work areas, and then will make a general announcement over the paging system.

Workplace Violence:

Any employee who feels that he or she has been threatened should immediately report the incident to their supervisor. If their supervisor is not available, the incident should be reported to Human Resources. Any employee who feels that a child's physical or emotional well-being has been threatened (by a member of the school community or anyone else) should immediately report the incident to their supervisor and Human Resources. If you observe anyone exhibiting threatening behavior or making threatening statements, warn others in the area and immediately notify Human Resources—stay away from the person exhibiting the threatening behavior. Depending upon the level of concern, 911 may be called immediately. Never attempt to confront any person exhibiting threatening behavior. If you have reason to believe that events in your personal life could result in acts of violence occurring at work, you are strongly urged to confidentially discuss the issue with Human Resources so that a prevention plan can be developed. A detailed health and safety plan that outlines policies procedures and steps to take in the event of emergency or possible emergency situations will be provided to all staff as an addendum to this handbook. All staff are expected to be familiar with the contents of the CMI safety plan and keep the plan readily available to reference in case of emergency.

Facility Access & Visitors

CMI cares about the safety and security of its students and employees. To maintain the maximum safety and security possible at a minimum inconvenience to you, we have guidelines in place regarding facility access and visitors. All entry doors to the school are to remain locked all day except for the main entry door to the school during designated drop-off and pick-up hours. The main entryway to the school is open Monday through Friday between 7:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. All visitors must sign in at the front desk and will wear a visitor badge. Please do not allow visitors to roam the premises unattended or without a proper badge on display. Visitors are not to be left alone with, or in charge of, students without a school employee who has undergone a background check. Any suspicious adults on campus should be politely approached (e.g., "How can I help you?") and directed to the front desk.

Complaint Procedures/ Improvement Policy

CMI is committed to providing a safe and productive work environment, free of threats to the health, safety, and well-being of our employees. These threats include, but are not limited to, harassment, discrimination, violations of health and safety rules, and violence. Any employee who witnesses or is subject to inappropriate conduct in the workplace may complain to Human Resources or any other member of the CMI Administration with whom the employee feels comfortable. Any manager who receives the complaint, hears of, witnesses, or is subject to inappropriate conduct is required to immediately notify Human Resources. Inappropriate conduct includes any conduct prohibited by our policies about harassment, discrimination, discipline, workplace violence, health or safety, wages or hours, and drug or alcohol use. In addition, we encourage employees to come forward with any workplace complaint even if the subject of complaint is not explicitly covered by our written policies. CMI will fully conduct a thorough and prompt investigation of all complaints and maintain the investigation as confidential feasible.

We expect all employees to cooperate fully in the school's investigations by, for example, answering questions completely and honestly and giving the investigator all documents and other material that might be relevant. All complaints will be handled as confidentially as possible. When the investigation is complete, CMI will take corrective action as needed. We will not engage in or allow retaliation against any employee who makes a good faith complaint or participates in an investigation. If you believe that you are being subjected to any kind of negative treatment because you made or were questioned about a complaint, report the conduct immediately to the Chief Operating Officer or Executive Director. Complaints will be recorded and analyzed to ensure that our complaint management processes comply with this policy. Trends will be identified, and feedback will be provided to the relevant employees to improve responses to complaints if necessary. Complaints under this policy against the Executive Director will be investigated with the oversight of the Chair of the Board. If the complaint is against the Executive Director, the complaint should be made to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Please consult Human Resources for additional details.

Retaliation

The school will not tolerate any form of retaliation against any employee for making a complaint in good faith or assisting in a complaint investigation. An employee who believes that he or she is being retaliated against in violation of this policy should make a report immediately to the Human Resources Manager or any other member of the administration with whom he/she feels comfortable. Any employee found to have retaliated against any other employee for making a complaint or for assisting in an investigation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Knowingly making false and malicious complaints of harassment or discrimination, as opposed to complaints that even if erroneous are made in good faith, may also lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Our Doors Are Open (Whistleblower)

We want to maintain a positive and pleasant environment for all our employees. To help us meet this goal, our school has an open-door policy, by which employees are encouraged to report work-related concerns. If something about your job is bothering you, or if you have a question, concern, idea, or problem related to your work, please discuss it with your immediate supervisor as soon as possible. If you don't feel comfortable bringing the matter to your supervisor, please feel free to raise the issue with any manager at the school. We encourage you to come forward and make your concerns known to the school's management. We can't solve the problem if we don't know about it.

General Policies

Personnel and Medical Records

The school maintains a personnel and medical file for every employee. Medical records will be kept in a separate folder. Every effort will be made to keep your personnel and medical records confidential. Access is on a "need-to-know" basis only. This includes, but is not limited to, supervisors and others in management reviewing your personnel file for possible promotion, transfer, or layoff. If an employee wishes to review his or her personnel or medical file, he or she may do so after giving the school reasonable notice. Inspection must occur in the presence of a school representative. All requests by an outside party for information contained in your personnel file will be directed to the Human Resources department, which is the only department authorized to give out such information.