

## **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

**Revised January 2019**

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## SPLC Overview and Mission

This Employee Procedure Manual is specific to Southwest Preparatory Learning Center (SPLC).

The vision of SPLC is to sustain a high-performing learning community focused on the students' potential for success in any attended High School.

The mission of Southwest Preparatory Learning Center is to sustain a high-performing learning community utilizing blended learning, traditional and community-based instruction.

The Southwest Preparatory Learning Center encompasses grades 4 through 8 in a traditional learning environment with some exposure to technology. SPLC incorporates the overall mission stated above; however, it is traditionally based in its education strategy. SPLC utilizes a unique blended learning environment with accelerated academic curriculum.

Through a long-term commitment to this mission, we are known as a school that can offer quality alternative learning opportunities for all students. Students, parents, and the community view the school as offering challenging and creative learning environments for students.

## General School Administration

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### Southwest Preparatory Learning Center Organization

Governing Council

Head Administrator

Registrar

Information  
Technology

Administrative  
Support Staff

Maintenance

Instructional  
Staff

Business  
Manager

## **SPLC AUTHORIZER**

SPLC is a State Charter school and is “authorized” as a State Charter school by the Public Education Commission (PEC) and managed by the Public Education Department (PED) of New Mexico. From the authorizer, SPLC has a Contract and a Performance Review Framework which contains specific objectives and goals that must be achieved yearly.

## **Personnel Policies, Procedures, and Additional Employee Processes**

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This section of the Employee Handbook aligns with Section G of the SPLC Governing Body Policy Manual. This section specifies the specific policies governed by the Governing Body followed by the Procedure used to carry out the Policy through actual actions and activities to be demonstrated. This section also includes additional employee processes as appropriate.

### ***1. Equal Employment***

The SPLC is an equal opportunity employer. The School prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin or ancestry, religion, age, veteran status and/or any other protected status as defined by law, in all facets of employment, compensation, promotion, transfer, demotion, layoff, termination or selection for School-sponsored training programs. Discriminatory behavior violates state and federal laws and regulations.

### ***2. Employee Relations***

Nothing in this employee handbook shall be construed to limit or affect the right of any employee to express a view or opinion on any matter related to the condition or terms of employment, so long as the same does not interfere with the full, faithful, and proper performance of the employee's duties or interrupt the educational process for the students.

### ***3. Position Description***

The school maintains an adequate job description for each Certified and Non-Certified employee. The job description is based on the duties and tasks that the employee performs at the school.

### ***4. Compensation and Wages***

Southwest Preparatory Learning Center has job specific, NMPED approved salary schedules for each job position. The scales are competitive with surrounding school districts and are based on years of experience and level of education.

### ***5. Employee Conflict of Interest***

Employees must not engage in any activities, transactions, or relationships that are incompatible with the impartial, objective, and effective performance of their duties. Public employment is a public trust. Employees must maintain integrity and high ethical standards and may not use their position to advance personal or private interest. All employees must disclose real or potential conflicts of interest, as well as any activities that might be perceived as a conflict of interest, as directed by the Government Conduct Act., NMSA 1978, § 10-16-3.

### ***6. Nepotism***

The school complies with all applicable state and federal statutes regarding nepotism. The Governing Body and the Head Administrator must not engage in nepotism in any of its operations or hiring practices. The school must not initially employ or approve initial employment in any capacity a person who is a family member of the Governing Body or the Head Administrator. The Governing Body may waive this policy for family members of stakeholders and this must be disclosed annually.

### ***7. Employee Standards of Conduct***

Employees of the school maintain the highest standards of conduct and act in a mature and responsible manner at all times. Employees must not engage in a) verbal or physical conduct, which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or which creates an

intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment or b) activities which violate federal, state or local laws or which, in any way, reflect adversely on the school.

### **8. Staff Conduct with Students**

The School strongly believes that a part of the schools' mission is to promote moral and ethical behavior by our students. These values are best promoted by "leading by example". The employees of the school are expected to be positive role models for students. In addition, the standards of ethical behavior and professional conduct are set forth in New Mexico Public Education Department regulation 6.60.9 NMAC – Code of Ethical Responsibility. Violation of this code of conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge by the school or up to licensure revocation by the Public Education Department.

### **9. Sexual Harassment**

While all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment are prohibited, it is the policy of the school to emphasize that sexual harassment is specifically prohibited. The school is committed to providing a workplace that is free of sexual or other prohibited harassment. The school has zero tolerance for sexual harassment. Verbal or physical contact by an employee, including sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other conduct that harasses, disrupts or interferes with another employee's work performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile work environment will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge by the school or up to licensure revocation by the Public Education Department.

Every employee has the responsibility to maintain the workplace free of any form of prohibited harassment, sexual or otherwise. No individual is to threaten or insinuate, either explicit or implicitly that submission to sexual advances is a term or condition of an individual's employment, or that refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the employee's employment, evaluation, compensation, advancement, assigned duties, shifts or any other term or condition of employment or career development. No individual is to favor in any way an applicant or employee because that applicant or employee has performed or shown a willingness to perform sexual favors for the individual. Sexual harassment also includes conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment are:

- Sexual flirtations, touching, advances or propositions;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- Sexually graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body;
- Sexually degrading words to describe an individual;
- The display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures in the workplace, including nude photographs;
- Derogatory gender-based, gender identity or expression-based humor;
- Unwelcome touching, patting, pinching or leering; and
- Derogatory or sexually explicit statements about an actual or supposed sexual relationship.

Any employee who believes that the actions or words of a supervisor, fellow employee or non-employee constitute sexual harassment or other prohibited harassment has a responsibility to report or complain about such conduct promptly to his/her supervisor.

All complaints of sexual or other prohibited harassment shall be investigated promptly, impartially and in as confidential a manner as possible by the supervisor/Administrator. If an employee is not satisfied with the handling of a complaint or the action taken by the investigator, then the employee should bring the complaint to the attention of the Head Administrator. In all cases, the complaining employee will be advised of the relevant findings and conclusions.

Any complaint involving a supervisor should be reported to the Head Administrator. Any complaint about the Head Administrator should be reported to the School Board President.

No employee will be discharged or retaliated against in any manner because the employee complained about sexual or prohibited harassment, or cooperated with an investigation of a complaint of prohibited harassment. However, if the complaint or the information provided in the investigation is found to be false and made in bad faith, the employee may be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

Any employee who is found after appropriate investigation to have engaged in sexual or other prohibited harassment of another employee as well as any employee who retaliates against an employee in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

#### ***10. Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Free Workplace***

The school forbids any employee from possessing, using, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, and from possessing, using, selling, or distributing drug paraphernalia. Use of tobacco and E-Cigarettes by any persons on school grounds is prohibited.

#### ***11. Health and Safety***

The school is to take all reasonable steps to safeguard employees, students, and the public from accidents and to provide a safe, healthy work and educational environment. The school will maintain and implement the NMPED School Safety Procedures and the school has the plan located in the Administrative office.

#### ***12. Employee Insurance***

Pursuant to NMSA 1978, § 22-8B-9(B)(16), The School will participate in the public school insurance authority (NMPISA) to provide employee health and benefit coverages, other risk-related coverages, as well as Worker's Compensation and other fringe benefits.

#### ***13. Duty Day***

The school requires scheduling authority and responsibility for all employees to be administered by the Head Administrator. The normal duty day shall not exceed 8 hours inclusive of lunch. In accordance with the school having several sessions per day employees will be afforded a FLEX schedule when necessary as long as instructional employees complete a 35 hour work week and non-instructional employees complete a 40 hour work week. The Duty Day is based on hours that are performed at the employee's assigned physical work place.

#### ***14. Leave, Professional Leave, Annual Leave, and Holidays***

The school does not differentiate between annual leave and sick leave. All Leave is termed "Straight Leave". It is the school process to allow each classification of employee the allotted days to be used at the employee's discretion, with the pre-approval of the Head Administrator, or their designee. The Governing Body with school administration annually identifies the recognized paid holidays. The school provides its employees annual leave and holidays based upon the terms of their individual employment contracts. Further, the administration will consider long-term and short-term leave for its employees. The Head Administrator or their designee shall approve all leave on an individual basis.

All leave is subject to the approval of the School. Authorized leave from duty is as follows:

- Professional Leave
- Straight Leave
- Extended Illness
- Jury Duty
- Extended Leave
- Bereavement Leave
- Military Leave Sick Leave Donation



## Notification

Employees should request leave three (3) days in advance in order to obtain prior approval from their immediate supervisor and the Head **Administrator or Administrator. The Head Administrator or Administrator may not be the only signature on their own leave slip, but may get the Business Manager to approve.**

**Extended Leave:** Requests for extended leaves of absence should be requested and approved from the board and will only be granted once the employee has exhausted all of their leave and FMLA Leave.

Full Year employees will be granted 25 days of straight leave per year. Instructional Year employees will receive 10 days total of straight leave per calendar year, and Non-Instructional Employees will receive 15 days total of straight leave per year. Employees will only be able to carry over a total of 20 days of "straight leave" total per year. (See approved Instructional and Non-Instructional Calendars)

**Attendance Reimbursement Account (ARA)** - The school will "pay out" five days (5) of unused straight leave at the end of the employee's yearly contract if so requested by the employee. Administrators will create an ARA list of employees from their schools who will receive an ARA payment for that school year no later than May 10th of that year that will be submitted after the last day of school to be paid in a separate check based on the employee's rate-of-pay. The employee can elect to not receive an ARA Payment and have their leave balance carried over into the next year.

## Paid Leave Balances:

Employees must exhaust all paid leave before going to an unpaid status. When on leave provided underneath FMLA (Family & Medical Leave Act), paid leave will count towards the 12 week total.

## Benefits during Leave

During paid leave, all other benefits will remain in force, and straight leave and annual leave will continue to accrue as normal. During unpaid leave the employee is responsible for maintaining health insurance coverage through the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority Eligibility Administrator (NMPSIA). Leave will not accrue during the unpaid leave period.

The school will comply with all FMLA (Family & Medical Leave Act) Regulations.

## Military Leave

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act states: A military leave of absence will be granted if an employee is absent in order to serve in Uniformed Services of the United States for a period of up to five years (not including certain involuntary extensions of service). An employee who performs and returns from service in the Armed Forces, the Military Reserves, the National Guard, or certain public health service positions will retain certain rights with respect to reinstatement, seniority, lay-offs, compensation, length of service promotions and length of service pay increases, as required by applicable federal or state law. Other benefits, such as health insurance, do not continue while out on active service.

An employee participating in annual encampment or training in the US military Reserves or the National Guard will be eligible to receive the difference between what the employee earns from the government for military service and what he/she would have earned from normal straight-time pay on the job.

## Bereavement Leave

Up to four (4) days absence total per year may be granted when there is a death in an employee's immediate family in town and six (6) days absence total per year may be granted for year for a death out of town. Immediate family for this purpose includes spouse, children, parent, grandparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother, sister, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law.

#### Jury Duty

Employees are encouraged to serve as jurors when summoned to do so but should advise the Head Administrator of the date of such service immediately upon receipt of notice. Employees will receive their normal compensation and shall be permitted to retain any travel reimbursement received from the court and any per diem received for services rendered the court before or after the employee's regular workday. Any additional compensation will be signed over to the School.

#### No Leave All Staff Professional Development Days:

Employees will not be granted leave from an All Staff Professional Development Days except in the case of an Emergency and approved by the Head Administrator.

#### Sick Leave Donation

House Bill 403 now requires that employees within the organization have the ability to donate Leave to other individual employees who have severe medical conditions and are unable to work starting July 1, 2015.

#### Guidelines:

1. Employees can only donate *straight leave or annual leave* that they have accrued over 5 days of straight/ and or Annual Leave and can only donate their days to another employee with the hours they have accrued over those 5 days.
2. The employee receiving the leave must have exhausted all of their straight and annual leave before requesting donated sick leave.
3. The recipient of the donated leave must provide certified medical documentation from a physician that describes the nature, severity, and anticipated duration of the medical emergency condition. This also includes documentation that the recipient is unable to work all or a portion of the recipient's work hours.
4. If the recipient has filed a Worker's Compensation claim then the recipient must also provide the above documentation from a Worker's Compensation physician assigned by Worker's Compensation.
5. The school will do a *straight across* leave between all employees regardless of each employee's ***rate-of-pay***.

### **15. Family and Medical Leave Act**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is designed to provide employees temporary job security when faced with certain health-related care responsibilities that preclude them from working. The FMLA compels employers who employ 50 or more employees to grant qualifying employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for:

- Birth and care of the employee's child, or placement for adoption or foster care of a child with the employee;
- Care of an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) who has a serious health condition; or care of the employee's own serious health condition.
- For an employee to be eligible for FMLA, they must (1) have worked at least 12 months (which do not have to be consecutive) for the employer and (2) have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months immediately before the date FMLA leave begins.

The school procedure is to comply fully with the requirements and directives of the Family and

Medical Leave Act.

## **16. Personnel Evaluations**

SPLC will maintain a system of evaluation for all personnel in compliance with the laws of New Mexico and the standards and procedures adopted by the New Mexico Public Education Department, which system will also reflect and support the mission, goals, and objectives of the school. Each employee will undergo a yearly evaluation based on their performance within the scope of that description by the Administrator or Supervisor. The employee will receive an overall evaluation rating each year of

- Ineffective,
- Minimally Effective
- Effective
- Highly Effective
- Exemplary

The school subscribes by law, just as any other public school in New Mexico, to the NM Teach Evaluation System. Each teacher will receive an evaluation each year conducted by the Administrators and Non-Instructional Personnel will also have a yearly evaluation based on their performance.

## **17. Staff Development**

The school will provide its employees quality opportunities for continual professional growth and development. Such opportunities shall reflect the mission, goals and educational plan of the school and provide for growth and development based upon an employee's goals and performance. The school will also pay close attention to implementing training that addresses the Performance Contract areas of Academics, Finance, and Organization.

## ***Tuition, Books, and Course Fees Reimbursement Policy***

SPLC encourages and promotes university course work and training, especially coursework that is necessary to obtain or maintain New Mexico state licensure or supports an employee's job position. This includes costs related to National Board Certification.

SPLC will reimburse SPLC employees up to 100% only for tuition, book expenses, and any associated lab or course fees at an accredited university or college that have been pre-approved upon the successful completion of the courses with passing grades in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

- To be eligible for reimbursement a course (s) must be pre-approved by the Head Administrator. Courses must be related to the employee's current job, job description, and vocation within the school or possible advancement within the school.
- SPLC will only reimburse up to 100% at the University of New Mexico rate of tuition at an accredited out-of-state university or college. This would also include correspondence and/ or internet courses.
- SPLC will not reimburse audit classes, classes taken on a pass/fail basis, or those classes in which a grade of "B" or better is "NOT" earned. SPLC will not reimburse any university or college tuition, book expenses, or lab/course fees if an employee resigns or is terminated from SPLC before the end of the course(s) or fails to successfully complete and earn credit in the course(s).

- The Governing Board will designate an allotted amount of professional development money each year for tuition, books, and course fees reimbursement. That amount will be split into the fall and spring semesters and divided equally among the individuals who apply and are approved for tuition reimbursement for that given semester. If funds are still available staff can apply for reimbursement funds for the summer semester

Staff must submit proof of enrollment in the university, registration in the course, course titles and descriptions and the Reimbursement Application one month prior to the first day of the course in order to be considered for approval to receive reimbursement funds.

### **18. Transfer of Employees**

The school requires the Head Administrator to administer the authority and responsibility for transferring employees within Southwest Preparatory Learning Center based on programmatic, budgetary, or school need and/or the best interests of the students.

### **19. Personnel Reduction-In-Force**

The purpose of the school Reduction-In-Force policy is to establish an orderly, non-discriminatory and equitable procedure to reduce the number of employees in the event that the school experiences insufficient or reduced revenues, and to preserve a sound balanced educational program that is consistent with the function and responsibilities of the school's charter. The Head Administrator shall be the final decision-maker on the content and scope of the Reduction-In-Force plan after giving due consideration to the recommendations of the Governing Body.

### **20. Conflict Resolution Policy**

#### **Reference from the Governing Body Policy Manual:**

##### ***G.07 Grievance Adjustment Procedures (Employees)***

The school will strive to resolve conflict to ensure that all employees may bring to levels of authority legitimate grievances in order to secure equitable solutions.

#### **PROCEDURE STATEMENT**

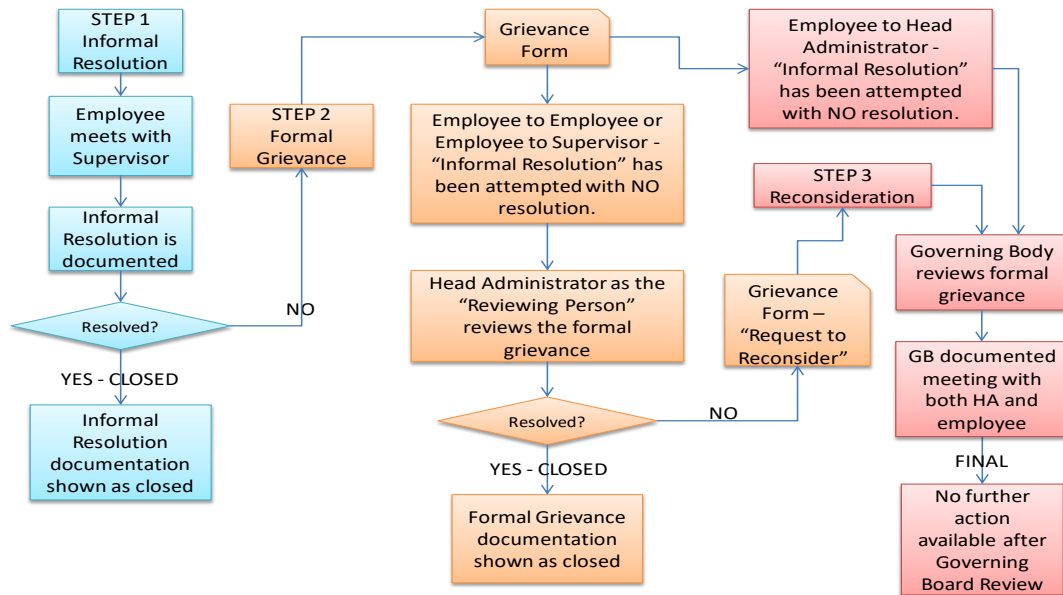
Per our Governing Body Policy (G.07), we encourage full and open communication to resolve and secure equitable solutions to conflicts which may occur in the work environment. This procedure outlines the approach used to ensure that all employees bring legitimate grievances to the appropriate level of authority. As an employee of Southwest Preparatory Learning Center ("SPLC") and an important member of our team, we are concerned that your on-the-job problems are brought to the attention of the appropriate level of authority within SPLC. Many problems tend to arise out of misunderstanding or lack of complete information. If problems are kept hidden, they tend to fester and to grow out of proportion to their seriousness. If you feel that anything has occurred that is in any way unfair to you, or if you have any complaints, requests, or constructive criticism, the best way to eliminate the problem is to talk it over.

SPLC has adopted this Employee Dispute Resolution and Grievance Procedure to quickly and simply resolve on-the-job problems. You will be asked if you have taken advantage of this process before complaints raised for the first time at a higher level will be heard or considered. Complaints must be initiated at the lowest level before being presented to a higher level.

SPLC urges you to bring all complaints or grievances to the attention of the appropriate level of administration since only in this manner can any action be taken to resolve the issue.

# EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE/DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

**Employee Grievance/Dispute Resolution Procedure Flow Chart**



## **Employee Grievance/Dispute Resolution Procedure Flow Chart**

- STEP 1 Informal Resolution – Employee meets with supervisor – resolved? Informal Resolution documentation shown as closed.
- STEP 2 Formal Grievance – Grievance Form Employee to Head Administrator - “Informal Resolution” has been attempted with no resolution. Governing Body reviews formal grievance Employee to Employee or Employee to Supervisor - “Informal Resolution” has been attempted with no resolution. Resolved? Grievance Form – “Request to Reconsider” Head Administrator as the “Reviewing Person” reviews the formal grievance. No further action available after Governing Board Reviews Formal Grievance documentation shown as closed.
- STEP 3 Reconsideration: GB documented meeting with both HA and employee.

### **STEP 1: INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

Because your supervisor is responsible for seeing that you receive fair treatment ensuring compliance with all rules and regulations, all complaints or grievances should be taken to your supervisor first and discussed. If your direct supervisor is the Administrator, then you should begin this process directly with the Administrator. If your direct supervisor is the Head Administrator, then you should begin this process directly with the Head Administrator.

Be prepared before initiating this process to participate in good faith to ensure the best possible outcome. Being able to communicate the problem is the most important step in this procedure.

Before you approach your supervisor:

- Be able to clearly articulate the concern or issue including what, how, where, when, and identification of anyone else present.
- Identify attempts you have made to resolve the issue; and
- Have proposed recommendations for a satisfactory resolution.

To ensure prompt resolution of problems, it is recommended required that a Step 1 meeting occurs no later than 10 (ten) work days as soon as possible from the date the concern or issue arose. It is suggested that this Step 1 meeting occur within 10 (ten) work days.

To ensure the appropriate level of consideration of your concerns, the supervisor will typically schedule a meeting time and place. During this meeting, you will have an opportunity to explain your complaint or grievance. It is not necessary to produce documentation or witnesses at this Step 1 level; however the supervisor and employee should document the meeting/s and any applicable actions.

The supervisor may reach a decision or solution during the meeting, or require additional time to investigate concerns you have raised. If additional time is required, and agreed to, both you and the supervisor will be notified in writing by no meet at a later than five (5) school days of your supervisor’s decision regarding an agreed date to discuss the resolution to your concern or complaint.

If, after talking to your supervisor, you have received a satisfactory explanation or decision, and the matter has been resolved, you must notify your supervisor that this specific grievance is resolved and must be documented as closed. Such documentation should be signed by you and by your supervisor.

If, after talking to your supervisor, you have not received a satisfactory explanation or decision, or the matter has not been resolved, you must notify your supervisor that you wish to proceed to Step 2

and to present the problem to the Head Administrator, or, if the grievance is against the Head Administrator, to the SPLC Governing Body.

If at any time during this process, you believe that the Head Administrator is the source of your concerns, you may contact the SPLC Governing Council President to begin the formal grievance procedure; however you will be expected to first discuss the issue with the Head Administrator utilizing the Informal Resolution Step 1 approach.

## **STEP 2. FORMAL GRIEVANCE**

To initiate Step 2, complete a Statement of Employee Grievance Form ("Form"). This Form can be accessed from the Employee Policy Handbook or by contacting SPLC's Administrative Assistant.

The Form must be submitted within five (5) working days after you receive your supervisor's decision in the Informal Resolution process (Step 1).the informal meeting provided for in Step 1, or if additional time is agreed to, within five (5) working days after the expiration of such additional time. Your grievance will be deemed satisfactorily resolved if you do not submit the Form within this time frame, unless an extension is agreed to in writing by the person(s) against whom you have a grievance, or by the Reviewing Person.

If the grievance is with another employee or supervisor (not the Head Administrator), the HA, acting as the "Reviewing Person" will review the grievance. The Reviewing Person will investigate the allegations of your grievance, which may include reviewing documentation submitted, interviewing you and identified witnesses/parties and taking such other actions he/she deems necessary to reach a resolution of your grievance.

Within ten (10) working days from receipt of the completed Form, the Reviewing Person will meet with you and the individual with which whom you have the formal grievance, and discuss his or her decision in writing ("Written Decision").

The time for meeting may be extended by agreement in writing between you, the individual with whom you have the formal grievance, and the Reviewing person.

If you feel you did receive a satisfactory explanation or decision, you must specify to the Reviewing Person that the grievance has been satisfied and that it is to be documented as closed. Such documentation should be signed by you and by your supervisor.

If you feel you did not receive a satisfactory explanation or decision, or if the meeting has not taken place within the prescribed period, including any agreed extension, you must notify the Reviewing Person that you wish to present the problem to the full Governing Body for reconsideration of your grievance if desired.

If the Head Administrator is your direct supervisor or the individual against whom you have a grievance, you must submit your grievance to the SPLC's Governing Body. The SPLC Governing Body, (the "Reviewing Person") shall review the grievance during the next regularly scheduled Governing Body meeting. The Reviewing Person will investigate the allegations of your grievance, which may include reviewing documentation submitted, interviewing you and identified witnesses/parties and taking such other actions he/she deems necessary to reach a resolution of your grievance.

During the next regularly scheduled Governing Body meeting, the full Governing Council may review the grievance during a closed session. Since this is a closed session, no minutes will be taken.

Within ten (10) working days from receipt of the Grievance, a member/s from the Governing Body will meet with you and the Head Administrator to discuss and notify both parties in writing of the final decision. NO FURTHER REVIEW IS AVAILABLE.



### **STEP 3. RECONSIDERATION**

To initiate Step 3, you must return the Request to Reconsider (bottom portion of Written Decision form) to the Reviewing Person. Your grievance will be deemed satisfactorily resolved if you do not submit the Request for Reconsideration within five (5) days from the date you receive the Written Decision, unless this time frame is extended by agreement, in writing, from the person(s) against whom you have a grievance or the Governing Body President or his/her designee reviewing the Formal Grievance.

During the next regularly scheduled Governing Body meeting, the full Governing Council during a closed session will review the Written Decision, review your Statement of Grievance and all documents supporting your grievance, investigate further if it deems necessary; which may, but is not required to include, meeting with you and/or the administration, interviewing witnesses, or considering any other information it deems necessary to render its decision. Since this is a closed session, no minutes will be taken.

Within ten (10) working days after the Governing Body meeting, a member/s from the Governing Council will meet with you and the Head Administrator to discuss and notify both parties in writing of the final decision. NO FURTHER REVIEW IS AVAILABLE.

### **RULES APPLICABLE TO COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS**

- 1. CONFIDENTIALITY.** Confidentiality is essential to the objectivity and efficacy of this grievance process. All SPLC employees and Governing Council members shall maintain confidentiality to the fullest extent possible/practicable. The duty to maintain confidentiality means that all participants in the process must exercise sound judgment about the appropriateness of the recipient, context, nature, substance, and intention when disclosing details about the grievance or the grievance process. Confidentiality requires restraint at all times from discussing the grievance with students, or in any public or community forum, or in a manner to promote divisiveness.
- 2. COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE.** A complaint or grievance is an allegation by an employee that the treatment he or she received is a violation of a school policy, rule, procedure or practice that directly and adversely affects the employee. This procedure is applicable to complaints or grievances which meet this definition.
- 3. EMPLOYEE CONCERNS.** This procedure is not applicable to general employee concerns. Your supervisor is always ready and willing to answer your questions about your work or your progress. If you have any ideas for doing things a better way or encounter a problem about practices discussed herein or if any problems arise in the course of your work, talk to your supervisor. In most instances, the problem can be immediately resolved after this first step is taken. General concerns by employees or other stakeholders may also be brought directly to the Governing Body during "Public Comments".
- 4. TOPICS FOR GRIEVANCES.** The following topics are examples of issues that MAY be grieved using this policy/procedure:
  - ✓ Disciplinary actions, except termination or discharge from employment Violations of school policy
  - ✓ Peer to peer disagreements
  - ✓ Pay, leave or benefit issues
  - ✓ Unfair treatment, including discrimination (unless covered by a separate anti-discrimination complaint procedure)
  - ✓ Safety or working environment concerns

- ✓ Any other problem encountered on-the-job that concerns you, and which is not otherwise excluded below.

The following topics MAY NOT be grieved using this policy unless there is indication of retaliation:

- ✓ Employee evaluations
- ✓ Discharge or termination decisions
- ✓ Issues pending at the time of discharge or termination
- ✓ Former employee grievances, or grievances occurring prior to the effective date of this procedure

**5. RECORDS.** A separate and sealed confidential personnel file shall be maintained by the school for grievances. The file includes all documents produced during the grievance process including closed grievances. This file shall not become part of the employee's personnel file and shall not be included when authorized individuals seek legitimate access to the employee's personnel file, unless requested pursuant to a valid court order.

**6. RETALIATION.** No one shall suffer adverse employment action, solely as a result of submitting or participating in the investigation of an employee grievance. Retaliation against an employee for invoking the Grievance Procedure is strictly prohibited and will lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge from employment. If at any time an employee is subject to retaliation, the employee may at that time file a formal grievance which is reviewed by the Governing Body for resolution.

***Reference from the Governing Body Policy Manual:***

**B.16 Complaint Procedure (Parents and Students)**

Any complaint or issue from regulatory, legal, administrative or other stakeholders must be provided to the SPLC Governing Body in a timely fashion. The SPLC Governing Body is not accountable for issues or complaints that are not brought directly to the Governing Body in writing.

SPLC staff and faculty shall treat parental concerns with respect and demonstrate a genuine interest in developing solutions. Any student or parent who believes they have been aggrieved by a member of the school's staff or community should address their concerns with the administration. The Head Administrator or designee shall investigate the student's or parent's concerns and take appropriate action. If the parent or student is not satisfied with the Head Administrator's action, he or she may file a written complaint with the Governing Body seeking review of the Head Administrator's action.

Written complaints shall be addressed to the Governing Body President. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Governing Body President shall investigate the alleged incident. The Governing Body President may choose to conduct a closed hearing at the next regularly scheduled Governing Body meeting. At this hearing, the parent shall have the opportunity to present his/her case and the school shall present its' rationale for the decision. The Governing Body, in closed session, shall then rule to either uphold the administration's decision or remand the decision back to the administration for reconsideration. All decisions of the Governing Body are final and may only be appealed to the local court having jurisdiction.

## **Parent-to-Teacher or School Employee Grievance Procedure**

### **SOUTHWEST PREPARATORY PARENT-TO-TEACHER GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

**Per our Governing Body Policy, B.16, the school SPLC staff and faculty shall treat parental concerns with respect and demonstrate a genuine interest in developing solutions. Any student or parent who believes they have been aggrieved by a member of the school's staff or community should address their concerns directly with the faculty, administration, or Head Administrator to reach a satisfactory resolution.**

#### **Level I**

##### **Teacher-Parent**

A grievance will be initiated by the parent/guardian, when needed, against the school as an organization. A parent/ guardian should make every effort to resolve the issue with the classroom teacher. The parent must inform the teacher that they have a conflict or grievance and that a meeting is desired.

Timeline: The teacher will meet and offer a meeting date with the parent that normally is within 3 working days of notification that there is a conflict or grievance.

The parent will meet with the teacher to resolve the conflict. Both the parent and teacher will document the meeting to detail the conflict including what happened, how, where, when, and identification of anyone else present. The documentation will also detail appropriate actions being taken to resolve the conflict.

If the parent is satisfied with the resolution, the documentation between the parent and teacher must specify that the issue is resolved or closed. Such documentation should be signed by the parent/guardian and teacher.

If the parent is not satisfied with resolution or actions from past parent-teacher meetings, they must specify this in the documentation and inform the teacher that the parent intends to refer the issue to the Administrator.

#### **Level II**

##### **Administrator-Teacher-Parent Meeting**

The parent must write a letter to the Administrator describing the conflict or grievance and what has been attempted while working with the teacher. The Administrator will schedule a meeting with the Teacher and Parent involved. Both the letter to the Administrator and the parent-teacher meeting documentation will be available at this meeting. The goal of this meeting is to resolve the conflict or grievance to the satisfaction of both the parent and teacher.

Timeline: The Administrator will meet to offer a meeting date with the parent and teacher that is normally within 5 working days of notification that there is a conflict or grievance.

If the parent is satisfied with the resolution, the documentation between the parent, teacher and Administrator must specify that the issue is resolved or closed. Such documentation should be signed by the parent/guardian, teacher and Administrator.

If the parent is not satisfied with resolution or actions from past parent-teacher-Administrator meetings they must specify this in the documentation and inform the teacher and Administrator that the parent intends to refer the issue to the Head Administrator.

#### **Level III**

##### **Head Administrator-Administrator-Teacher-Parent Meeting**

The parent must provide the original letter to the Head Administrator with updates as to what has been attempted while working with the teacher and Administrator. The Head Administrator will schedule a meeting with the Administrator, Teacher, and Parent involved. Both the letter to the Head Administrator and the parent-teacher-Administrator meeting documentation will be available at this

meeting. The goal of this meeting is to resolve the conflict or grievance to the satisfaction of both the parent and teacher with agreement by the Administrator.

Timeline: The Head Administrator will meet to offer a meeting date with the parent, teacher, and Administrator that is normally within 5 working days of notification that there is a conflict or grievance.

If the parent is satisfied with the resolution, the documentation between the Head Administrator, parent, teacher and Administrator must specify that the issue is resolved or closed. Such documentation should be signed by the parent/guardian, teacher, Administrator, and Head Administrator.

If the parent is not satisfied with resolution or actions from previous Head Administrator, parent-teacher-Administrator meetings, they must specify this in the documentation and inform the teacher, Administrator, and Head Administrator that the parent intends to refer the issue to the Governing Body.

#### **Level IV**

##### **Head Administrator-Board-Parent**

If the parent or student is not satisfied with the Head Administrator's action, he or she may file a written complaint with the Governing Body seeking review of the Head Administrator's action. The parent must send the original letter along with what has been attempted while working with the teacher, Administrator, and Head Administrator to the Governing Body., including all documentation of Levels II and III. The conflict or grievance is then discussed in a closed session of the next regularly scheduled Governing Body meeting. Both the parent and Head Administrator provide the documentation and potential resolution to the Governing Body. Because this is a closed meeting, no minutes will be taken.

The Governing Body will review and provide its actions or resolution to both the parent and Head Administrator at this Governing Body meeting. If additional time to consider the resolution is needed, the Governing Body will schedule a follow-up meeting within ten (10) working days. A member/s from the Governing Body will notify both parties in writing of the final decision.

NO FURTHER REVIEW IS AVAILABLE. The determination of the Governing Body is final.

#### ***Definitions:***

- 1. Grievance** - A grievance will be defined as a dispute between a parent/guardian and any Southwest School. The school's conflict resolution (i.e. grievance) procedure is designed to ensure a parent/ guardian and the school a fair hearing of legitimate grievances. The parent must always begin with Level I – Parent and Teacher meeting.
- 2. Record** - A written record of each meeting will be made and kept as part of the conflict or grievance file. These are kept by the teacher, Administrator, or Head Administrator.

Approved by SPLC Governing Council

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

By: \_\_\_\_\_, its President

## **21. Staff Participation in Political Activities**

The school prohibits employees seeking political office or participating in a political campaign from conducting campaign activities on school premises during regular working hours, disallows employees from using students in any campaign activity during school hours and bans employees from using school equipment or materials to produce campaign literature.

## **22. Background Investigations/Assurances**

The school recognizes that all applicants for employment with the school are subject to work history, education history, reference checks and criminal background investigations including, but not limited to, applicants for substitute and temporary positions, non-paid volunteers, mentors, and contractors or contractor's employee(s) with unsupervised access to students. Newly hired employees are responsible for the cost of any needed certifications and background checks. The school administration will make a final determination and the action taken if an employee background investigation reveals that an employee has participated in criminal activity that could potentially jeopardize the safety of students.

The school prohibits any individual who is a school employee, contractor, or agent from assisting a school employee, contractor, or agent in obtaining a new job, apart from the routine transmission of administrative and personnel files, if the individual or agency knows, or has probable cause to believe, that such a school employee, contractor, or agent engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law, NMSA 22-10-5 and under ESEA Section 8546 (20 U.S.C 7926).

## **23. Records and Certification**

The employee shall furnish the Head Administrator with the following: (a) a valid license for the position to be held; (b) appropriate endorsement(s) for the position to be held; (c) an official transcript showing the education record and training of the Instructor, (d) suitable evidence of date of birth; (e) such health certificates as may be required by law; and (f) any other documents as may be required by law. Failure to furnish any of the foregoing items at the required time may result in cancellation of the employee's contract by the 40 day of the current school year in accordance with the New Mexico statutes and any applicable rules and regulations of NMPED.

The school will maintain a complete and current official personnel file for each school employee. Employees may review their own files by making a written request to administration. Confidential information obtained prior to an employee's employment, such as recommendations, will not be available for review by the employee.

Employees will be permitted to review and comment on, all information to be placed in their respective personnel files with a business official present. The employee may prepare a written reply to such information, and such reply, if any, will be appended to the information in the file.

All licensed employees are required to supply the school business office with current and complete official transcripts of all college credits as well as verification of previous employment. It is the duty and responsibility of each licensed employee to keep such license current.

All documents within a personnel file are confidential unless considered public information under law, and the school may create such sub-files within a personnel file as are appropriate to ensure confidentiality and efficient use of the file. Access to personnel files will be limited to authorized school business officials and approved personnel as deemed by the Head Administrator. Those who access the files must sign a log when accessing a file on which file they are accessing and for what purpose. Files will returned to the file cabinet at the end of business each day and kept locked at all times in a fireproof cabinet in the school with which they are associated.

Copies of the personnel files also may be stored within a secure digital security system and accessed only by school business officials and administration. Hard copies of personnel files of employees who are no longer under employment with the school will be kept for five years after their departure at which time the file will then only be kept digitally.

Specific information contained in the personnel files may be considered public information under the law and will be released with Head Administrator approval in accordance with the Inspection of Public Records Act, Confidential Materials Act, the Board Policy Manual and relative to the disclosure of the school's public records.

Teaching & Experience (T&E) will be computed off the following records: Official Transcript, License, Verified Work Experience.

Verified Work Experience includes:

- a. If an employee has worked 90+ days for instructional positions and 115+ days for non-instructional positions, it will be considered 1 year of experience.
- b. College level teaching will not be accepted as work experience.
- c. Verification of Years of Applicable Experience in another state is acceptable.
- d. All positions including non-instructional positions will need to provide evidence verifying the number of years worked full time or part time in the same/similar position being hired for with a previous employer.

#### ***24. Fraud Awareness, Misconduct, and Whistle Blower***

The school is committed to protecting the school from fraud, misuse, misappropriation, misconduct or other irregularities. All employees are encouraged to report any suspicious, irregular, unethical or illegal behavior involving employees, stakeholders, consultants, vendors, contractors or other persons or entities with regard to Fraud. Any activity of suspicious activity should be reported to the Head Administrator and if the Head Administrator is the object of the suspicious activity then it should be reported to the School Board President. The school will not retaliate against employees who in good faith express their reasonable concerns about unlawful use or misuse of, or about other misconduct or irregularities, when reported to the appropriate school authority.

#### ***25. E-mail and Internet Use Policy:***

The school has adopted the following Acceptable Use Procedure (AUP) and the terms and conditions outlined within the AUP.

This procedure is to establish what the acceptable uses are for employees of Southwest Preparatory Learning Center. It is written to cover the most common circumstances and provide guidelines for what is and what is not acceptable.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "computer" refers to any desktop, laptop, or other mobile computing device owned or issued by Southwest Preparatory Learning Center. The term "e-mail"

refers to e-mail accounts that are created and maintained by the IT department at Southwest Preparatory Learning Center for school business. The term “computer services” refers to software and Internet connections used to conduct school business.

This procedure covers the use of computers and e-mail both at the school and when accessing school systems from off-site.

Staff will be assigned computers and e-mail accounts as determined by administration.

### **Acceptable Use**

Southwest Preparatory Learning Center’s computers and computer services are provided for educational purposes, research, and school business that are consistent with the school’s educational mission, curriculum and instructional goals.

The accounts provided by the SW Learning Center should be used only for educational purposes. If a staff member is uncertain about whether a particular use of the computer network or the Internet is appropriate, he or she should consult an administrator. E-mail is for school business and is not to be considered private.

Use of personal computer equipment on school premises is subject to the approval of the administration and IT department.

Anytime a staff member suspects that they may have contracted a computer virus and/or malware, they need to report it to the IT department so the system may be inspected and any contamination cleaned.

### **Unacceptable uses**

Unacceptable uses of computers, email and computer services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Accessing or communicating inappropriate materials**

This includes material that is defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, or bullying.

- **Illegal activities**

Computers, computer services, and e-mail may not be used for any illegal activity or in violation of any Board policy / procedure or school rules.

- **Violating copyrights or software licenses**

Computers and computer services are provided for school business. Any additional software needed requires approval from the administration and IT department. Unauthorized copying of software is illegal.

- **Using computers for non-school purposes other than incidental use**

Using computers, computer services, and email for any personal reasons is permissible so long as those uses do not constitute a violation of the acceptable uses, are incidental, and are not interfering with the educational purposes of the devices or consume vital school resources.

- **Misuse of passwords / unauthorized access**

Staff may not share other staff members’ usernames and passwords or attempt to circumvent the network security systems or computer services. Passwords to bypass the content filter are to be protected and not accessible to students. Staff members need to report to the IT department any time they suspect that a password has been compromised.



- **Malicious use / vandalism**

Staff may not engage in any malicious use, disruption, or harm to computers and computer services, including but not limited to hacking activities, “jail breaking”, and creation or uploading of computer viruses.

### **Violations**

If the administration suspects that there has been a violation of the acceptable use policy then at least two administrators will work with the IT department to inspect computers and e-mails to determine if there has been a violation. The administration will instruct the IT department either in writing or in an e-mail on the scope of the inspection and the procedures to follow if there is a violation or questionable activity.

## **26. Transportation**

Transportation to and from school is the sole responsibility of the parents, guardians, or their designees. The Governing Body directs the Head Administrator to contract with state approved transportation providers on an as-needed basis for school related activities.

## **27. Business Processes and Central Purchasing**

### *Travel and Reimbursement*

It is the policy of the SPLC Governing Body to reimburse actual, reasonable travel expenses incurred by employees as a result of travel to conferences, meetings, trainings, or other gatherings away from the school building that were pre-approved by the Head Administrator. The school shall not pay for alcohol. The employee must present receipts and complete a travel reimbursement voucher upon return. Mileage shall be reimbursed at the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service as amended annually. The Governing Body grants the Head Administrator the right to make determinations on the reasonableness of individual requests.

In accordance with IRS tax code and NM statute, notwithstanding any other regulation issued by the state of New Mexico and as provided by this policy, the standard mileage and per diem travel rates for The Southwest Preparatory Learning Center are as follows:

A. With prior written approval\* every school officer or employee shall receive 80% of the Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rate set January 1 of the current year for each mile traveled in a privately owned vehicle if the travel is necessary to the discharge of the officer's or employee's official duties and if the private conveyance is not a common carrier; provided, however, that only one person shall receive mileage for each mile traveled in a single privately owned vehicle, except in the case of common carriers, in which case the person shall receive the cost of the ticket in lieu of the mileage allowance. Nonetheless the school Administrator or Governing Council may approve a maximum reimbursement amount due to budgetary constraints.

B. With prior written approval\* of the Administrator or Governing council, a non-salaried school officer or a salaried employee of The Southwest Preparatory Learning Center is entitled to either per diem expenses and shall receive the set rate in accordance with NMAC 2.42.2 or, upon written request and approval of the Administrator or Governing council, the reimbursement of actual expenses in accordance with NMAC 2.42.2 in cases where overnight travel is required. Upon written request accompanied by a travel voucher, a non-salaried school officer or a salaried employee of The Southwest Preparatory Learning Center is allowed to request and receive 80% of the total anticipated costs to be incurred during the course of prior approved travel in accordance with required procurement

processes. Upon the employee's return, all appropriate documentation must be submitted and approved by the school's Administrator before the remaining reimbursement amount will be paid. Nonetheless, the school Administrator or Governing council may approve a maximum reimbursement amount due to budgetary constraints.

*\*Each employee or public officer must document the dates of travel, beginning mileage, beginning location, travel departure time, ending mileage, ending location, travel return time, and purpose of the trip.*

#### *a. Central Purchasing*

The Chief Financial Officer is the head of the central purchasing office and as its chief procurement officer.

The Chief Financial Officer will purchase, rent, lease, or otherwise acquire on behalf of the school all items of tangible personal property, services, or construction. All purchases will be strictly in accordance with the laws of the State of New Mexico and federal law in addition to applicable policies and procedures of the Governing Body and the State Public Education Department. The Chief Financial Officer shall establish and maintain a manual of purchasing policies and procedures which shall be reviewed and approved by the Governing Body as part of the school's financial policies and procedures.

### **28. Documents Accepted as Policy**

SPLC has adopted the following documents: the Curriculum and Standards Alignment, Educational Plan for Student Success; the Parent and Community Plan; the Safe School Plan; the Wellness Plan; the Student Behavior Handbook, Acceptable Use Policy, Student Code of Conduct; Accounting Policies and Procedures; the Mentorship Plan; the Educational Technology Plan; the Special Education Manual and the Student Assistance Team Manual (SAT); and the Employee Handbook.

### **29. Staff/Student Professional Boundaries Policy**

All staff are required to maintain appropriate professional, moral, and ethical relationships in their conduct with students and shall serve as positive role models for students at all times, whether on or off Southwest Preparatory Learning Center property, both during and outside of school hours. The Southwest Preparatory Learning Center encourages healthy relationships between students and staff members that promote student achievement and success. At the same time, clear and reasonable boundaries for interactions between students and staff members are necessary to protect students from sexual misconduct and abuse and to protect staff members from misunderstandings and false accusations. In particular, a teacher is in a position of trust and power. A teacher's actions must always be guided by the principle of what is in the best interests of the students.

All staff have a responsibility to provide and support an atmosphere conducive to learning through consistent and fairly applied discipline and the maintenance of professional physical and emotional boundaries with students. These boundaries shall be maintained regardless of the student's age, the perceived consensual nature of the relationship or activity, the location of the activity, or whether the staff member directly supervises the student. For staff members whose children are students in the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center, this Policy is not intended to violate or otherwise intrude upon the usual parent/child or other family relationship. However, the existence of a parent/child or other family relationship does not supersede the staff member's duty to attend to his or her professional responsibility to serve the interests of the School District, its student population and the local community. Should the staff member believe that these duties are in conflict, he or she shall discuss it with his or her supervisor to resolve the issue.

Personal contact between students and staff must always be professional, non-sexual, appropriate to the circumstances, and unambiguous in meaning. A boundary invasion is an act, omission, or pattern of behavior by a staff member that does not have an educational purpose and either abuses or compromises the staff/student professional relationship or has the potential to abuse or compromise the staff/student professional relationship.

Staff members shall establish and maintain appropriate personal boundaries with students and not engage in any behavior that is prohibited by law, regulation, or this Policy or that creates the appearance of prohibited behavior. All staff shall be required to maintain professional and ethical relationships with Southwest Preparatory Learning Center students that are conducive to an effective, safe learning environment. This Policy addresses a range of behaviors that include not only obviously unlawful or improper interactions with students, but also precursor grooming and other boundary -blurring behaviors that have the intention or effect of leading to more egregious misconduct.

It is the responsibility of the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center's staff to maintain a professional relationship with students and their families, and staff members have a responsibility to report to the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center's principal, human resources, or to any other appropriate administrator when they suspect, recognize or observe the development of, or suspicion of the development of non-professional or potentially inappropriate personal relationships with students and/or their families.

## **DEFINITIONS**

***Duty of Care*** – A common law concept that refers to the responsibility of staff to provide children and young people with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is usually expressed as a duty to take reasonable care to protect children and young people from all reasonably foreseeable risk or injury.

***Electronic Communications*** – A communication transmitted by means of an electronic device including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, emails, texts, instant messages, and communications made by means of an Internet website, including social media and other networking websites.

***Hazing*** - Any action intentionally or recklessly taken or situation intentionally or recklessly created through which individuals are forced to perform, participate in or endure actions which endanger the mental, physical, or academic health or safety of a student. This may include, but not be limited to such actions which result in physical injury, assault or battery, kidnapping or imprisonment, intentionally placing a student at risk of mental or emotional harm, degradation, humiliation, intimidation or coercion, the compromising of moral or religious values, forced consumption of any liquid or solid, placing an individual in physical danger or at risk, or impairment of or interference with physical liberties or academic endeavors.

***Inappropriate Boundary Invasion*** – An act, omission, or pattern of such behavior by a school employee or other adult that invades or is designed to result in an invasion of a student's physical or emotional boundaries, *does not have a legitimate educational purpose*, and results in abuse of

the staff/student professional relationship.

***Legitimate Educational Purpose or Reason*** – Matters or communications related to teaching, counseling, athletics, extracurricular activities, treatment of a student’s physical injury or other medical needs, school administration, or other purposes within the scope of the staff member’s job duties, including performing a task specified in his or her position description or contract agreement, a task related to a student’s education or to discipline of a student, providing a service or benefit related to the student or student’s family, or maintaining the safety and security of the school community.

***Professional Boundaries*** – appropriate professional, moral, and ethical relationships with students that have a legitimate educational purpose or reason on or off Southwest Preparatory Learning Center property, both during and outside of school hours.

***Staff*** – For purposes of this Policy, the term “staff” is defined to include all Southwest Preparatory Learning Center employees, including but not limited to all administrators, counselors, teachers, nurses, librarians, student support specialists, support staff, non-instructional staff, coaches, employees of virtual school programs, to include but not be limited to distance learning, online programs, and vendors and/or independent contractors providing instructional services to, or who may have direct, unsupervised contact with students, as well as all student teachers, interns, practicum students, volunteers, volunteer coaches, and community members.

This Policy applies to Southwest Preparatory Learning Center employees, volunteers, student teachers, and independent contractors and their employees who interact with students, are present on school grounds and who may have unsupervised access to students.

Independent contractors doing business with the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center will ensure that their employees who have direct interaction with, or unsupervised access to students, or are present on school grounds, are informed of the provisions of this Policy and complete a criminal background check process which complies with NMSA 1978 Section 22-10A-5.

This Policy is not intended to interfere with appropriate personal or family relationships between staff and students and their families that exist independently of the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center, nor to interfere with participation in civic, religious or other outside organizations that include Southwest Preparatory Learning Center students.

The interactions and relationships between staff and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust, an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between staff and students in and outside of the educational setting, and consistency with the educational mission of the schools.

Staff will not intrude on a student’s physical and emotional boundaries, unless the intrusion is necessary to serve an educational, physical, mental, and/or emotional health purpose or to prevent an immediate risk of injury or harm to the student.

Staff shall use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the school setting and shall avoid excessive informal and social involvements with individual students. Any appearance of impropriety should be avoided. Intimate relationships between staff and students are prohibited. In addition to regular classroom instruction and extracurricular activities, appropriate occasions when staff may interact with students beyond the

school day include before and after care, tutoring to improve students' academic skills, mentoring that provides students with positive role models, and hosting school-sanctioned or school-sponsored activities and events that reinforce positive behaviors.

One-on-one tutoring and mentoring offered during school or non-school hours must take place at the school or at an off-site location approved by the principal or appropriate administrator. When one-on-one tutoring and mentoring takes place away from the school, written permission from the parent/guardian must be obtained. Volunteers on Southwest Preparatory Learning Center property must be under the supervision of a Southwest Preparatory Learning Center staff member at all times.

During school-related or instructional-related events during non-school hours, staff must maintain the ethical standards applicable to their professions.

## **MANAGING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES**

***Working in local communities*** - Staff working in local communities face additional challenges in managing professional boundaries. They are more likely to have social relationships with the parents/guardians of the children and young people with whom they work and are, therefore, more likely to share social and sporting events or membership at various community clubs or associations.

This means they will have legitimate reasons, on occasion, to attend social events with the children and young people with whom they work, and/or to visit their homes or to be visited by them in the company of their parents/guardians. These social engagements are an important part of community life and a positive contribution to the wellbeing of staff working in local communities.

Following the advice below will assist staff to enjoy these social engagements without compromising their professional responsibilities. The guiding principles in managing these situations are that:

- Social contact should be generated via the relationship the staff member has with the parents/guardians of children and young people or by an event, such as a sporting event.
- Staff should avoid being alone or in unsupervised settings with children and young people in these situations.
- Staff should conduct themselves in a way that will not give others reason to question their suitability to work with children and young people, and that will not create fear, discomfort, humiliation or intimidation for children and young people in their professional relationships with them.
- Consuming alcohol in these situations may lessen a staff member's capacity to judge when a professional boundary is at risk.
- Staff should politely refuse to discuss matters relating to the workplace and should not discuss children and young people's learning or social progress, other than at times specifically set aside for that purpose.

Any concern a staff member has about whether or not a situation may be compromising or breaching a professional boundary should be reported to the principal, human resources or any other appropriate administrator and an approved plan of action developed, implemented and monitored.

## **REPORTING VIOLATIONS, INAPPROPRIATE OR SUSPICIOUS CONDUCT**

Staff members are required to immediately notify the principal, human resources or any other appropriate administrator if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of the law or this Policy. This obligation is in addition to the statutory responsibility to report suspected abuse and neglect under the law as implemented by Policy JLF, "Child Abuse Neglect and Reporting," or its equivalent.

Students and their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the principal, human resources or any other appropriate administrator if they believe a staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates the appropriate boundaries as specified in this Policy, puts a student at risk or which may violate the law.

Anonymous complaints involving inappropriate boundary invasions by staff members with students will be investigated as if a student, parent, or staff member reported the violation.

## **INVESTIGATION**

Allegations of inappropriate conduct shall be promptly investigated in accordance with the procedures utilized for complaints of harassment.

It is understood that some reports made pursuant to this Policy will be based on rumors or misunderstandings; the mere fact that the reported staff member is cleared of any wrongdoing shall not result in disciplinary action against the reporter or any witnesses. If as the result of an investigation any individual, including the reported staff member, the reporter, or a witness is found to have intentionally provided false information in making the report or during the investigation or hearings related to the report, or if any individual intentionally obstructs the investigation or hearings, this may be addressed as a violation of this Policy and other applicable laws, regulations and Southwest Preparatory Learning Center policies. Obstruction includes but is not limited to violation of "no contact" orders given to the reported staff member, attempting to alter or influence witness testimony by threat or intimidation, and destruction of or hiding evidence. Intimidation of a witness is a violation of the NM Criminal Code and is required to be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities immediately upon discovery.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

A violation of this Policy by a staff member may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge or termination of employment. In the case of termination of employment for sexual misconduct or abuse, the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center will notify the New Mexico Public Education Department. Consistent with the Public Education Department guidelines, the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center shall disclose to districts or schools seeking references any formal reprimands or dismissals for violating this Policy, even if the staff member resigned prior to the conclusion of the investigation.

## **RETALIATION**

Retaliation against students or staff members who report an improper staff/student relationship or participate in any related proceedings is prohibited. Appropriate action will be taken against students or staff members who retaliate against any student or staff member who reports alleged harassment or participates in related proceedings.

## **INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR INITIATED BY A STUDENT**

In the event that a student initiates inappropriate behavior toward a staff member, the staff member must immediately document the incident and report it to the principal, human resources or any other appropriate administrator. If applicable, the appropriate administrator will intervene and speak with the student and the student's parent/guardian about the alleged inappropriate behavior, and implement necessary follow-up discipline or guidance.

## **TRAINING**

The Southwest Preparatory Learning Center shall provide annual training with respect to the provisions of this Policy to current and new Southwest Preparatory Learning Center staff and school board members who interact with students or routinely work on school grounds as part of their work for Southwest Preparatory Learning Center.

The Southwest Preparatory Learning Center, at its sole discretion, may require independent contractors and their employees who interact with students or are present on school grounds to receive training on this Policy and related procedures, including providing them with this Policy. Contracts with virtual school programs and other vendors providing instructional services to students will include a requirement that those staff members will comply with this Policy.

## **DISSEMINATION OF POLICY**

This Policy will be included on the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center's website and in all employee, student, parent, and volunteer handbooks.

## **EXCEPTIONS**

An emergency situation or a legitimate educational reason may justify deviation from professional boundaries set out in this Policy. The staff member shall be prepared to articulate the reason for any deviation from the requirements of this Policy and must demonstrate that s/he has maintained an appropriate relationship with the student.

Under no circumstance will an educational or other reason justify deviation from the "Romantic and Sexual Relationships" section of this Policy.

Nothing in this Policy statement shall set aside, void, or offend any existing state laws and school policies relating to the topics covered herein. Rather this Policy statement shall serve as a supplement to such existing authority.

## WORK RULES / REGULATIONS

**Working one-on-one with children and young people** - The following summary of expectations applies to all situations where staff are providing one-on-one learning assistance or feedback, behavior assistance/monitoring, counseling, testing and/or assessment.

<b>Make it Public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The more visible and/or public the location the better.</li><li>• Use the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center's authorized IT systems.</li><li>• Do not use personal email, electronic communication, websites, and/or social media platforms to communicate with students.</li></ul>
<b>Make it Authorized</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents/guardians should be informed and give consent.</li><li>• Activity must be authorized by an appropriate administrator.</li></ul>
<b>Make it Timely</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide support during normal work hours.</li><li>• Do not conduct excessively long sessions.</li></ul>

**Managing privacy expectations** - Southwest Preparatory Learning Center staff rely in different ways on being able to provide a degree of privacy for students. This may be to protect the student's dignity, to provide an environment conducive to the service/assessment being provided or to respect the student's desire for confidentiality.

Children and young people will often assume a high level of confidentiality when disclosing serious issues of a personal nature or reporting harassment or bullying. For these reasons, staff needs to find a careful balance between respecting the sensitive and private nature of counselling or service provided and the professional's duty of care obligations for the safety and wellbeing of the student. Good practice in managing these circumstances is the following:

- Health/physical care should be provided with respect for the student's dignity and in a manner approved by the student and his/her parents/guardians.
- Counselling should be provided in unlocked rooms with part-glass doors, where possible, that are located near staff traffic areas.
- Avoid out of hours contact.
- While parental consent is often not applicable in many counselling situations, the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center will provide all parents/guardians with written information about the school's counselling services which outlines confidentiality and privacy issues.
- Ensure student appointments and counselling notes are documented properly, while preserving appropriate levels of confidentiality.

**Conducting home visits** - Staff must ensure they follow the specific home visiting protocols that apply to the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center. The key principle is that a home visit should place no one at unreasonable risk and that identified minor risks are consciously managed. A summary of general expectations is provided below.



<b>Inform</b>	Home visits must be authorized and documented by the administration and the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center must have information about when and where visits are being undertaken and the expected departure and return times.
<b>Prepare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All available information about the safety of the proposed visit must be considered and risks managed.</li> <li>• Mobile phones must be taken and Southwest Preparatory Learning Center ID should be visible.</li> <li>• Parents/guardians are to be notified in advance of the intended visit.</li> </ul>
<b>Protect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not enter the house if parents/guardians are not at home.</li> <li>• Speak with the student where the parent/guardian is present or clearly visible.</li> <li>• Do not interview or interact with students in bedrooms or other locations not conducive to the purpose of the visit.</li> <li>• Have a colleague accompany if problems are anticipated.</li> <li>• Document the visit.</li> </ul>

## **UNACCEPTABLE AND PROHIBITED CONDUCT**

***Examples of boundary invasions by staff members include but are not limited to the following:***

- Any type of inappropriate physical contact with a student or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the law or Southwest Preparatory Learning Center Policies addressing the prohibition against Harassment and Retaliation.
- Condoning hazing, initiations or other rituals that causes embarrassment, harassment or ridicule and risks emotional and/or physical harm to students, regardless of the student's willingness to participate.
- Showing inappropriate images to a student, including, but not limited to violent, disturbing or sexually explicit or pornographic subject matter.
- Dating a student, or discussing or planning a future romantic or sexual relationship with a student.
- Making sexual advances toward a student, including but not limited to personalized comments about a student's body, appearance, physical features, attributes or attractiveness, off color jokes, or sexual innuendoes.
- A flirtatious, romantic, or sexual relationship with a student.
- Unnecessarily invading a student's personal space or privacy.
- Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the professional staff/student relationship.
- Socializing where students are consuming alcohol, drugs, or tobacco.
- Providing or offering to provide alcohol, drugs, or tobacco to students.
- For non-guidance/non-counseling staff, excessively encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members are expected to use their professional judgment and refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff.
- Sending students on personal errands unrelated to any educational, athletic, non-curricular or extracurricular purpose.
- Banter, allusions, jokes, or innuendoes of a sexual nature with students.
- Asking a student to keep a secret.
- Disclosing inappropriate personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other

- inappropriate private matters to one or more students.
- Addressing students with personalized terms of endearment or pet names that would suggest the staff member feels love or affection for the student. As a staff member, permitting students to address you by your first name, nickname, with personalized terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner.
- Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by telephone, text message, email, Instant Messenger, Internet chat rooms, social networking websites or letters beyond homework or other legitimate school business.
- Exchanging gifts cards or letters that are personal or extravagant in nature with a student beyond customary student-staff gifts.
- Socializing or spending time with students outside of school related or school sponsored curricular or extracurricular activities or organized community activities, including but not limited to activities such as going out for beverages, meals or movies, shopping, traveling and recreational activities.
- Giving a student a ride alone in a vehicle in a non-emergency situation or a situation that can be avoided. If a staff member must give a student a ride, the student shall ride in the back seat of the vehicle when possible and staff member must attempt to gain prior permission from the parent for the transportation arrangement. A site administrator shall be informed of such an instance either before it occurs or immediately after providing such a ride.

***Romantic or Sexual Relationships, including but are not limited to the following:***

Staff members shall be prohibited from dating, courting, or entering into or attempting to form a romantic or sexual relationship with any student enrolled in the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center or any other public or private school, regardless of the student's age. Students of any age are not legally capable of consenting to romantic or sexual interactions with staff members.

Prohibited romantic or sexual interaction involving students includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual physical contact.
- Romantic flirtation, propositions, or sexual remarks.
- Sexual slurs, leering, epithets, sexual or derogatory comments.
- Personal comments about a student's body, appearance, attractiveness or physical attributes.
- Sexual jokes, notes, stories, drawings, gestures or pictures.
- Spreading sexual or romantic rumors.
- Touching a student's body or clothes in a sexual or intimate way.
- Accepting massages, or offering or giving massages other than in the course of injury care administered by an athletic trainer, coach, or health care provider.
- Restricting a student's freedom of movement in a sexually intimidating or provocative manner.
- Displaying or transmitting sexual objects, pictures, or depictions.

***Social Interactions including but are not limited to the following:***

In order to maintain professional boundaries, staff shall ensure that their interactions with students are appropriate. Examples of prohibited conduct that violates professional boundaries include, but are not limited to:

- Touching students without a legitimate educational reason. Reasons could include, but are not limited to, the need for assistance when injured, restraint or intervention to prevent or separate students who are fighting, threatening to fight or posing a risk of violence or harm to

others, a kindergartner having a toileting accident and requiring assistance, appropriate coaching instruction, or appropriate music instruction.

- Taking a student out of class without a legitimate educational reason.
- Being alone with a student behind closed doors without a legitimate educational reason.
- Initiating or extending contact with a student beyond the school day or outside of class times without a legitimate educational reason.
- Inviting a student to the staff member's home.
- Taking a student on outings without prior notification to and approval from both the parent/guardian and the building principal.
- Engaging in harassing, bullying, discriminatory, or other conduct prohibited by other Southwest Preparatory Learning Center policies or by state or federal law and regulations.

### **APPEARANCES OF IMPROPRIETY**

The following activities are boundary invasions and can create an actual impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Whenever possible, staff should avoid these situations. If unavoidable, these activities must be pre-approved by the appropriate administrator. If not pre-approved, the staff member must immediately report the occurrence to the principal, human resources or any other appropriate administrator.

- Conducting ongoing, private conversations with individual students that do not have an educational purpose, are unrelated to school activities or the well-being of the student, and that take place in locations inaccessible to or not observable by others.
- Being alone with an individual student out of the view of others or in an inaccessible location, except in the context of school counselors providing professional counseling support services, teachers working with students in an afterschool setting or during testing, or a school nurse providing medical services to a student.
- Inviting students for social contact off school grounds without the prior knowledge and express permission of the parent/guardian and an appropriate administrator.
- Social networking with students for non-educational purposes.

Staff members are expected to be aware of the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students. Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with the appropriate administrator whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of this Policy.

### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

The Southwest Preparatory Learning Center supports the use of technology to communicate for educational purposes. However, Southwest Preparatory Learning Center employees acting in their Southwest Preparatory Learning Center capacity are prohibited from inappropriate online socializing, phone calls, texting, skyping, instant messaging, or use of any other telecommunications device, or from engaging in any conduct that violates the law, Southwest Preparatory Learning Center policies or other generally recognized professional standards. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. Nothing in this Policy prohibits employees, faculty, staff or students from the use of approved educational websites if such sites are used solely for educational purposes.

Electronic and online communications between staff members and students must be transparent, contemporaneously accessible to administrators and parents/guardians, and professional in content and tone. Such communication must be professional, non-sexual, appropriate to the

circumstances, and unambiguous in meaning. Staff members must restrict one-on-one electronic communications with individual students to accounts, systems, and platforms that are provided by and accessible to the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center or with the prior express permission of the appropriate administrator and the parent/guardian.

As with in-person communications, staff members shall avoid appearances of impropriety and refrain from inappropriate electronic communications with students. Factors that may be considered in determining whether an electronic communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

- The subject, content, purpose, authorization, timing, and frequency of the communication;
- Whether there was an attempt to conceal, shield, or misrepresent the nature of the communication from administrators and/or parents/guardians;
- Whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship; and/or
- Whether the communication contained sexual innuendo, such as for purposes of grooming the student for victimization.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to have access to their children's social networking and digital communication devices and to supervise their children's use of these methods of communication in order to discover improper contacts which may violate this policy. Parents and guardians are encouraged to report any suspected violations of this policy by a staff member to the principal, human resources or any other appropriate administrator for investigation and necessary intervention.

<b>EXHIBIT</b>
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**REPORTING BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS AND SUSPECTED BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS**

Name (optional):

Email:

Phone:

School or district location with boundary violation or suspected boundary violation occurred:

Describe what happened/what is happening:

When did it happen?

Date:

Time:

Where did it happen?

- ☐ At school
- ☐ At school event
- ☐ In a school parking lot
- ☐ On a school playground
- ☐ On the school bus
- ☐ Other

Location details:

Who was committing the boundary violation?

Who was the victim of the boundary violation?

Did anyone else witness the boundary violation?

Where you or others physically or emotionally hurt?

Have you or the victim missed any school or made changes to your daily routine as a result of the boundary violation?

Have you told anyone about the boundary violation?

Has this happened before?

# SPLC Instruction

## **1. Instructional Program**

Instruction in the school will aim to provide maximum opportunity for learning for all students. Learning activities shall be appropriate to the individual needs and developmental levels of the students. Programs of study, aligned to the National Common Core Standards (Edgenuity, Smart Lab, Moby Max, Renaissance Accelerated Reader and Accelerated Math, and others as deemed necessary by the Head Administrator) made available to the students will be consistent with the policies of the Secretary of Education and the Public Education Department. The Head Administrator will make recommendations, in collaboration with the staff and Administration, for improvement in the educational program, including revising, dropping, or adding courses or subjects of instruction.

## **2. School Year and Work Year/ School Calendar**

Annually, as part of the budget approval process, the Governing Body will adopt an official calendar outlining the instructional school year. The Governing Body reserves the right and authority to change the calendar as circumstances warrant. The school will convene a Calendar committee to review and approve the School Calendar before taking the proposed calendar to the Board for approval.

## **3. Treatment of Religious Issues**

The Governing Body adopts a neutral stance in matters involving religion. Students and parents who object to a specific assignment on religious grounds shall make their concerns known to the teacher and the administration within 24 hours after the lesson. The teacher and administration shall design a lesson of equal difficulty and educational relevance to substitute for the original lesson. No student's grade shall be penalized for objecting to a specific lesson on religious grounds.

## **4. Instructional Materials**

The Governing Body directs the Head Administrator to secure and purchase instructional materials and textbooks that support the instructional program. These purchases will be based on projections for the upcoming year. Instructional material and textbook adoption will be completed in a manner to accomplish timely implementation for optimum student learning and financial efficiency. Each student will have access to instructional materials and textbooks for school and home use that conform to curriculum requirements and state standards.

## **5. School Volunteers**

Volunteer services augment resources and effect stronger linkages among the school, parents, and other Members of the community. The SPLC Governing Body recognizes the need to identify and utilize volunteers. The SPLC Governing Body directs the administration to conduct background checks on all persons wishing to serve as a regular volunteer at the school.

Employees will pay close attention to volunteers and at no time leave students alone with a volunteer without a background check unsupervised. It is imperative that in order for a volunteer to be left alone with students they must have had a background check. If volunteers have had a cleared background check, volunteers can be left alone with students. Staff will be given a list of every adult who has cleared a background check on a monthly basis. Volunteers that will be volunteering over 4 (four) events at the school in a school year are considered "Regular volunteers" and required to do a Background Check with the New Mexico Department of Public Safety. The parent must complete a background check on a two year basis. An identification badge is generated with a successful background check and must be used when volunteering.

## **6. Field Trip and Community-Based Activity Policy**

Southwest Preparatory Learning Center provides curriculum based off-site activities as part of the SPLC Charter. Parent/Guardian permission must be obtained for all trips and students are under the auspices of all school rules during all off campus school related activities.

- **Educational Day Trips:** The Southwest Preparatory Learning recognizes that field trips are natural extensions of the curricular and extra-curricular programs, including activities. The

school board encourages appropriate, carefully planned field trips that lead to new learning or reinforce what has been already learned at school.

Each student shall have an equal opportunity to participate in field trips that are taken by the student group. The availability of field trip opportunities for students is commensurate with the funds that can be allocated or raised to support such activities. The school will strive to offer field trip experiences with a minimum of expense to the individual students.

- **Extracurricular Day Trips:** Any trip, which is not directly related to the instructional program but is related to a school-sponsored or connected activity, is considered an extracurricular trip. Participation and competition in extra-curricular activities, including athletics, provides an opportunity to teach in a student-centered environment. Extra-curricular activities enhance the classroom experience by promoting sportsmanship, cooperation, commitment, and respect.

The school recognizes that there may be the potential for conflict between academic commitments and co-curricular activities. All efforts should be made to have as little disruption to the student academic day/year as possible. Students will remain responsible for all academic activities as assigned by their classroom teacher.

**Justification:** In planning for a field trip sponsor teachers must provide core curriculum justification for the field trip that connects to Math, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies, Fine Arts, or Physical Education. Field Trips must be requested by the appropriate core curriculum teacher who is teaching the content that is being studied on that particular field trip.

The justification will be reviewed and approved by Administration for educational viability with the appropriate:

- Date of Field Trip
- Subject Area
- Activity Description
- Activity Connection to the Subject Area
- Transportation
- Assessment for Learning the content of the Field Trip

### ***7. Reports to Parents on Student Progress***

A periodic system of grading and reporting student progress to parents will be maintained by the school. Teachers are encouraged to experiment in an effort to discover more satisfactory methods for communicating student progress.

The school shall operate on a semester basis. A minimum of two (2) official reports shall be made available to parents each year.

### ***8. Teaching Controversial/Sensitive issues***

The Governing Body encourages the objective study of controversial issues. The school will provide instruction about the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and related issues in the required health education curriculum. Provisions will be made for review of student or parent objections to presentations or to print or multi-media instructional materials. The Opt-Out Policy shall include, but is not limited to the process for parents to request an exemption from the parts of the health education curriculum that address the sexuality performance standards. Parents objecting to a sensitive or controversial issue may request an alternative assignment and will assume responsibility for meeting the sexuality performance standards for their child.

### ***9. Student Internet and E-Mail Policy (Acceptable Use)***

Southwest Preparatory Learning Center is deeply committed to technology as a vital tool for its students. As a user of technology, I understand that it is my responsibility to honor the Acceptable Use Policy and uphold the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center Technology Values at school. I understand that my actions can affect others and that I will be accountable for my behavior.

Values and Responsibilities:

We value communication; therefore, I will:

- Use language that is pertinent and
- Appropriate when submitting academic work, participating in online forums and working collaboratively.
- Use thoughtful and appropriate language for social postings.
- Be mindful of how my words are interpreted by others.

We value privacy; therefore, I will:

- Be aware of the privacy settings on any website to which I subscribe.
- Understand that anything I do online or electronically is not private and can be monitored.
- Not share personal information about myself, family, friends or faculty.

We value honesty and safety; therefore, I will:

- Not engage in behavior that puts myself or others at risk.
- Represent myself honestly.
- Seek help if I feel unsafe, bullied or witness unkind behavior.
- Communicate only with people I know.
- Follow safety guidelines posted by sites to which I subscribe.

#### ***10. Pledge of Allegiance***

It is the policy of the SPLC for all students to stand and recite the pledge of allegiance daily. Students may be excused from reciting the pledge for religious reasons by providing a note from a parent/guardian in advance of the school year requesting the excusal. The letter from the parent shall be retained in the student's file and made part of the official school record.

#### ***11. Distance Learning Policy***

The SPLC Governing Body strives to provide a high quality education for all students that use and develop 21st Century teaching and learning skills. The Head Administrator is authorized to establish distance learning, a process used to provide instruction for credit when the student and instructor are not necessarily physically present at the same time and/or place. The SPLC will assure that students enrolled in a distance learning program have the necessary access to technology for all courses.



# SPLC School Relations

## ***1. Community Involvement***

The school recognizes that constructive study, discussion, and active participation by citizens are necessary to promote the best program of education in the community.

Parents are encouraged to visit the school throughout the school year. Conferences between such visitors and employees should not interfere with the employee's assigned duties. Visitors should verify their identity and the purpose of their visit.

At the discretion of the school's administration, the school may create Parent-Teacher Organizations, Booster Clubs, Parent Advisory Committees, Parent Budget Committees, or other committees deemed necessary for receiving parental input on particular issues.

## ***2. Use of Community Resources***

The SPLC Governing Body approves of and encourages the use of community resources to assist in making learning experiences more realistic.

## ***3. Community Use of Buildings, Grounds, and Equipment***

The Governing Body assigns to the Head Administrator the authority to allow or disallow community groups the use of the school's facilities. The use of a school facility does not constitute an endorsement of any project, service, or organization by the SPLC Governing Body.

## ***4. Advertising in School***

The SPLC Governing Body supports advertising initiatives that enhance the school's goals and objectives. The Head Administrator shall approve agreements on behalf of the school. Advertising requests that promote alcohol, tobacco, gaming, firearms, controversial products or services shall not be permitted. The school will maintain compliance with all federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations.

## ***5. Political Solicitations in School***

The school's Preparatory mission is to properly educate its' young people; all else must be Preparatory. For this reason, appearances of candidates or their representatives will be limited to time outside of the standard school hours except in those instances where teachers invite candidates to visit classes as part of the educational program.

School facilities may be used by any candidates provided expenses incurred as a result of the candidates use are reimbursed to the school and that the candidate does not interfere with the educational process.

## ***6. Relations with Community Organizations***

The Head Administrator may cooperate in furthering the work of non-profit, community-wide service, civic, or governmental agencies or organizations that support the mission, goals, and policies of the school.

## ***7. Custodian of Public Records***

The official custodian of public records for the school will be the Head Administrator. As required in the Inspection of Public Records Act, this office will be responsible for (1) receiving and responding to requests to inspect public records; (2) providing proper and reasonable opportunities to inspect the records; and (3) providing reasonable facilities to make or furnish copies of the public records during usual business hours – any costs associated with the providing of public records shall be borne by the individual making the request.

- It is the policy of the SPLC Governing Body to make available personnel to photocopy record requests at the rate of \$1.00 per page. This rate covers the cost of supplies and materials and employee time. This fee may be waived by the Head Administrator if deemed appropriate