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EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



Athlos Academy
JEFFERSON PARISH

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Introduction

This handbook is for use by employees of Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish (AAJP). It will familiarize employee with policies and certain operating procedures. Its contents summarize the programs and personnel policies in effect at the time of publication and are intended only as guidelines. Nothing in this employee handbook, or any personnel policy or document, including benefit plan descriptions, creates, or is intended to create, a promise or representation of continued employment for any employee.

AAJP abides by all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations regarding employment and education. The provisions set forth in this handbook indicate the current policies of AAJP with respect to general employee matters. This handbook applies to all employees of AAJP. Contact the Executive Director with any questions

AAJP reserves the right to modify or eliminate policies, procedures, and benefits at any time, for any reason with reasonable notice of material changes. All approved policies can be found on the school's website.

Mission

Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish empowers students to live fulfilling, responsible, and successful lives by building on the three foundational pillars of Prepared Mind, Healthy Body, and Performance Character.

Vision

AAJP produces students who are well-prepared to face the challenges of life through development of critical thinking skills and a broad knowledge base, healthy lifestyle habits, and cultivation of Performance Character. The daily educational experience includes promoting a rich and engaging academic curriculum, a healthy lifestyle, and strong Performance Character.

These traits include:

- **Grit:** Rising-up to meet challenges and persevering in spite of failure
- **Leadership:** Making responsible decisions and motivating others to action
- **Social Intelligence:** Navigating relationships and interactions with respect and confidence

- **Focus / Self-Control:** Focusing our minds and bodies by resisting distractions and actively concentrating
- **Optimism:** Believing that effort today improves tomorrow
- **Curiosity:** Finding wonder and passion in the experience of learning
- **Energy / Zest:** Engaging in life with enthusiasm and excitement each day
- **Courage:** Taking risks and standing up for what is right
- **Initiative:** Taking action to help ourselves and others without being asked
- **Humility:** Allowing accomplishments to speak for themselves
- **Integrity:** Striving to do the right thing all the time
- **Creativity:** Thinking “outside the box” and solving problems with innovation

We will be committed to supporting each child’s development of these traits. It is our ultimate goal that Athlos students become engaged citizens who understand that learning, wellness, and strong Performance Character are inextricably connected. As a result, our extended vision for our students is that each and every one of them mature into courageous, persevering, humble leaders who contribute to a better society and daily inspire others in their careers and communities to live fulfilling, responsible, successful lives. AAJP’s Performance Character Pillar is to be exemplified by all school personnel.

Employee Rights and Standards

Nature of Employment

Employment with AAJP is on an at-will basis. This means that the employment relationship may be terminated by either the employee or AAJP at any time, with or without notice, for any reason not expressly prohibited by law. At-will employees are free to terminate their employment with AAJP at any time, with or without reason, with or without cause or advance notice. Likewise, AAJP has the right to reassign, alter compensation, or terminate employment at any time, with or without reason, and with or without cause or advance notice.

Equal Employment Opportunity (See Personnel Policy 4018)

It is the policy of AAJP that employment is based on merit, qualifications, and competence. It is our policy to abide by all laws pertaining to fair hiring and employment practices and to not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, age, sex, religion, creed, color, national origin, disability, marital status, pregnancy-related condition, sexual orientation, gender identification, citizenship status, family leave status, veteran status, status with regard to public assistance, or any other protected status under federal or state law.

Reasonable Accommodation for Disabled Employees (See Personnel Policy 4018)

AAJP will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities with regard to any aspect of their employment. AAJP recognizes that some individuals with disabilities can perform the essential functions of a position with reasonable accommodations made at work.

Eligibility to Work

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, all newly hired employees must complete the employment eligibility verification Form I-9 before starting work and provide documentation establishing proof of identity and eligibility to work in the United States within three (3) business days from the date of hire.

Conflict of Interest (See Board Policy 2005)

Employees of the school must avoid any interest, influence, or relationship which might conflict, or appear to conflict, with the best interests of AAJP, or which might affect their judgment or loyalty. Employees must avoid any situation in which their loyalty may be divided, and promptly disclose any situation where an actual or potential conflict may exist. Anyone with a conflict must disclose the conflicting interest to the Executive Director or Director of School Operations. Failure to disclose will constitute grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. All employees are subject to *Board Policy 2005 – Conflict of Interest Policy* and must sign an acknowledgement that they have received and agree to follow the policy.

Employment of Relatives (See Personnel Policy 4016 and Board Policy 2005)

Members of an employee's immediate family will be considered for employment based solely on their qualifications. With respect to the employment of relatives, AAJP reserves the right to:

- Refuse to place one family member under the direct supervision of the other family member
- Refuse to place both family members in the same department, division, program, or facility

If two employees marry, become related, or cohabit and a conflict arises, a disclosure must be made to the Executive Director who will aim to resolve the conflict as outlined in board policy.

Immediate family members of the Executive Director or members of the Governing Board will only be considered for employment as allowed under LA. R.S. 42:1119 and board policy.

Ethical Conduct

The highest standard of ethical conduct and fair dealing is expected of each administrator, teacher, employee, volunteer, and all others associated with AAJP. Our reputation is our most valuable asset, and we must continually earn the trust, confidence, and respect of our school personnel, students, families, volunteers, and our communities. We must all depend on integrity and good judgment and remain sensitive to the way others see us and may interpret our actions. Teachers are expected to follow ethical guidelines outlined in the *Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching*. All employees are expected to abide by the *Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics* and to complete all required Ethics training.

Prohibiting Discrimination (See Personnel Policy 4022)

AAJP will not advocate or permit workplace discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, gender identity, pregnancy-related condition, veteran status, disability, or any other protected status under federal or state law, among its employees and its students. Discrimination against an individual because of his/her association with another individual for the abovementioned criteria is likewise prohibited.

Employee Harassment Policy (See Personnel Policy 4012)

AAJP's position is that harassment undermines the integrity of the employment relationship. All employees have the right to work in a safe environment free from all forms of discrimination and conduct which can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Anyone engaging in harassing conduct will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Harassment

Harassment is defined as unwelcome verbal, visual, written, or physical conduct, which creates an intimidating or hostile work environment. Some examples include but are not limited to the following: derogatory comments or jokes regarding a person's race, color, age, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, citizenship status, disability, physical appearance, or any other legally protected characteristic or activity; and includes the distribution or display of written or graphic materials which have the same effect. Co-workers, supervisors, subordinates, and non-employees can all initiate and be the target of unwelcome harassment.

Sexual Harassment

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), sexual harassment is defined as unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of employment;

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment can be initiated by a female or male and can be directed to a female or male.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcomed sexual flirtations, touching, advances, jokes, or propositions;
- Coercive demands for sexual favors;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- Graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body;
- Sexually degrading names or words to describe an individual;
- Sexually suggestive or insulting sounds or gestures, including whistling;
- Creating, transmitting, viewing, storing, or displaying in the workplace any sexually suggestive objects, pictures, electronic images, or words; or
- Suggestive or obscene letters, emails, texts, or notes.

Reporting Procedures for Harassment

In handling harassment, or sexual harassment, if it is safe to do so, employees are encouraged to first politely, but firmly, confront whoever is engaging in the inappropriate conduct, and request that the person cease the unwanted behavior immediately. If the person refuses to cooperate, report the incident immediately to the Executive Director or designee in accordance with the reporting procedures.

- Complete a written complaint using the *Employee Harassment Reporting Form*, accessible from Human Resources, to the Executive Director;
 - Concerns regarding the Executive Director will be made to the Governing Board Chair.
- Complaints under this policy will be investigated by Human Resources and/or the Executive Director, in as confidential a manner as possible.
- In the event a complaint of harassment is found to be either maliciously raised or is without basis, appropriate disciplinary measures may be taken against the employee who brought the complaint.

Whistleblower Protection Policy (See Personnel Policy 4030)

We require our employees and volunteers to practice the highest levels of business and personal ethics when conducting their duties and responsibilities. This means that school personnel must practice honesty and integrity in their job duties and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. The objectives of this Whistleblower Policy are to establish policies and procedures for:

- The submission of concerns regarding occupational safety or health, school financial matters, or any other potentially unlawful or unethical act by employees on a confidential and anonymous basis;
- The receipt, retention, and treatment of complaints received by AAJP; and
- The protection of reporters from retaliatory actions.

Reporting Procedures for Whistleblowers

- A written report will be made directly to the Executive Director or designee.
 - Concerns regarding the Executive Director will be made to the Governing Board Chair.

Confidentiality

- Reports of concerns and investigations will be kept confidential to the extent possible;
- However, the reporter's identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law and to assure accused individuals their legal rights to defend.

Retaliation Policy

- No employee or volunteer who, in good faith, reports a concern will be subject to a threat of or actual retaliation or adverse employment action.
- If retaliation is found, the person will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Retaliation Policy (See Personnel Policy 4030)

No employee or volunteer who, in good faith, reports a concern will be subject to retaliation or adverse employment action. Any person who so retaliates will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Likewise, an individual who reports a concern who is not acting in good faith, does not have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicated an improper act, or who makes unsubstantial allegations that prove to have been made maliciously, recklessly, or with the foreknowledge that the allegations are false, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Grievance Process (See Student Policy 5501)

Under normal working conditions, employees who have a job-related problem, question or complaint should first discuss it with the appropriate person or school employee. At this level, employees usually reach the simplest, quickest, and most satisfactory solution. If this does not solve the problem, or if mediation is required, the employee may talk with the Executive Director who will work to resolve the situation. The Executive Director will keep the Human Resources Coordinator and the School Board informed of any final written warnings or possible legal issues and concerns.

Grievance Process for an employee with a job-related problem or complaint:

- Discuss problem or complaint with appropriate staff member
- If the matter cannot be resolved, discuss the problem with the Executive Director, who may use mediation, and who can be an arbiter in making a decision
- If the resolution reached by the Executive Director is not satisfactory, the staff member with the complaint should go to the School Board, who will be the final arbiter in the grievance process. If the Executive Director is the subject of the grievance, the individual should take the complaint to the Human Resources Coordinator.

Mediation Procedures

If warranted, school administration will bring together parties to engage in the mediation process, conducted on the basis of the following points:

- Identifying both parties' needs and interests;
- Generating alternatives and solutions;
- Choosing a solution that provides maximum joint benefit; and
- Enforcing non-retaliation.

The mediator will be an individual mutually agreed upon by both parties. Examples of individuals who may act as a mediator include: the Assistant Director, the Executive Director, and Human Resources designee. This list of acceptable mediators is not exhaustive.

If the complaint reaches the stage of requiring mediation, the Executive Director will notify the Governing Board of the situation.

In cases where mediation fails, or a resolution cannot be reached a mediator, the matter will be addressed with the Governing Board. In serious cases, state or federal agencies may become involved as well.

Hiring & Dismissal

Licensing Requirements for Teachers (See Personnel Policy 4028)

AAJP requires its teachers to be certified or enrolled in an alternative certification program and to maintain a current license issued by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Background Checks (See Personnel Policy 4002)

Anyone at AAJP with significant access to students, or unsupervised time spent with students, is required to submit to a background check, including fingerprints, prior to engaging with students; including all employees, volunteers, substitutes, or emergency replacements.

The Executive Director is responsible for supervising students to ensure their safety, and will provide heightened supervision of substitutes, emergency replacements, volunteers, and/or guest speakers.

Background Checks Procedure

- Unless a new employee has completed a background check through the State Office of Education within 12 months of the date of hire, the employee must complete a background check in compliance with established procedures (check with Human Resources).
- If a person is denied employment or dismissed based on information in a background check, the employee will receive notice of the reason and will be given the opportunity to respond.

The cost of the background check may be the responsibility of the applicant. Background checks will be conducted on an on-going basis as outlined in *Personnel Policy 4023 – Required Reporting of Employee Arrests*.

Resignation

AAJP would like employees resigning from their employment to provide the resignation in writing (hard copy or via email is acceptable) to the Executive Director or Director of School Operations as soon as possible once they know they will be leaving the school.

Job Abandonment

If an employee does not show up to work for three (3) consecutive scheduled work days, without notice or a prior request for time off approved by their supervisor, the school will consider the employee has voluntarily resigned from their employment with AAJP. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the Executive Director or Director of School Operations if they will be away from work.

Return of Property

Terminated employees must return all AAJP equipment, keys, etc. to the executive director or Director of School Operations. The cost of Items not returned will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

Processing the Final Paycheck

Terminated employees must provide the final timesheet and, if applicable, any outstanding expense reports in order for Human Resources to process the final check. An employee may be held responsible for un-returned or damaged materials or equipment. However, wages may not be deducted for broken equipment or lost money etc., unless after the loss occurs, the employee gives voluntary written authorization for wages to be deducted or the employee is found liable by a court.

Should an employee be involuntarily discharged, they will receive their final paycheck on the next regularly scheduled pay date or within 15 days from discharge; whichever is earlier.

Employee Confidentiality

The only personal information about employees that AAJP collects is that which relates to their employment. Access to this information is limited to people with a need to know and any release of the information to others must be authorized in advance by the Executive Director. Personal information is released outside AAJP only with employee approval, except to satisfy legitimate investigatory or legal requirements.

If an employee has access to any of AAJP's confidential information, including private student and/or employee information, they are responsible for acting with integrity. Unauthorized disclosure or inappropriate use of confidential information will not be tolerated.

Confidentiality of Employee Records (See Personnel Policy 4004)

AAJP enforces relevant laws designed to govern access to and control of government records, effectively protecting the dissemination of confidential employee records. The following private personnel records include, but are not limited to:

- Employment records that would disclose that individual's Social Security number, insurance coverage, marital status, or payroll deductions;
- Medical records containing data on individuals describing medical history, diagnosis, condition, treatment, evaluation, or similar medical data;
- Information obtained through a criminal background check; and
- Other records containing data on individuals, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy under state or federal law.

Employees' home telephone numbers and home addresses are, by default, a matter of public record under Louisiana law. Employees have the option to request in writing that their home telephone number and/or home address be kept confidential, pursuant to LA. R.S. 44:11. Request forms are available for this purpose upon request.

Updating Employee Information

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify the Human Resources Coordinator of any changes in personnel data such as: mailing address, telephone numbers, marital status, name and number of dependents, and, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency.

An employee's personnel data should be accurate and current at all times. It is the responsibility of each employee to maintain and update the license/certification required for their position.

Please utilize the *Employee Change Form* to update information. Failure to update address changes may result in delayed or lost payroll checks.

Employee Leave

Requesting Leave

All leaves of absence must be requested and approved at least two weeks in advance by the employee's supervisor through the designated absence request software. In the case of emergency or last-minute notice, the employee must make contact with their supervisor or Human Resources by phone or email.

The Executive Director and Human Resources will work together in determining the appropriate number of days, and whether the leave is eligible for financial compensation.

Employee Leave (See Personnel Policy 4038)

Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish makes an effort to provide competitive leave policies that are compliant with state requirements. Leave is approved by the Executive Director or designee on a first come first serve basis. Leave should not be taken on PD days, blackout days, or within the last two weeks of employment unless approved by the Executive Director.

Visit the policies section on the school website for most up to date leave policies.

Paid Time Off (PTO)

PTO shall be accrued each pay period. Each employee receives leave information specific to their position upon employment. **COVID PTO:** In the event an employee has COVID, the employee will need to utilize their PTO. If the employee does not have accrued PTO, they will be allowed to enter a PTO deficit.

Holidays

Employees are provided a calendar of dates they are expected to work with the employment offer. Holidays will be designated on this calendar.

Bereavement Leave

Eligible employees are granted up to three work days of leave with pay in the event of a death of a member of the immediate family. Immediate family is a spouse, parent and grandparent, children and

grandchildren, brother and sister, mother in law and father in law, brother in law and sister in law, daughter in law and son in law. Adopted, half, and step members are also included in immediate family.

- Eligible employees are full-time or those working more than half-time but less than full time.
- PTO may be used to cover non-eligible funerals.

Family Medical Leave Act (See Personnel Policy 4019)

AAJP fully complies with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) which requires the school to grant eligible employees leaves of absence for specified purposes. FMLA Leave is up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave. Employee will be required to exhaust unused personal or sick leave before going into an unpaid leave status and employees may be required to continue to make any premium payments to maintain health insurance.

Eligibility

Full-time employees are eligible for FMLA Leave, including Military Caregiver Leave, if they have been employed by AAJP for at least one year, worked at least 1250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding commencement of the leave, and are employed at a worksite where AAJP employs at least 50 employees within a 75-mile radius.

Part-time employees may be eligible for FMLA Leave based on the hours they work.

An eligible employee's leave entitlement under the FMLA is limited to a total of 12 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for any one or combination of the events for which FMLA Leave is available.

An eligible employee who takes Military Caregiver Leave is entitled to a combined total of 26 work weeks of FMLA Leave during a single 12-month period for Military.

Requesting FMLA

An employee should request FMLA Leave or Military Caregiver Leave by completing a Request Form and submitting it to Human Resources. Employees requesting FMLA or Military Caregiver Leave should provide not less than 30 days' notice, or such shorter notice as is practicable. When possible, employees must make a reasonable effort to schedule foreseeable planned medical treatments so as not to unduly disrupt AAJP's operations. Retaliation against employees for taking leave protected by the FMLA is prohibited by law.

FMLA Leave may be taken for any of the following reasons:

- Birth of a child;
- Adoption of a child;
- Placement of a foster child;
- A serious health condition of the employee;
- Care of a spouse, child, or parent with a serious medical condition; and/or
- A military qualifying exigency arising as a result of a spouse, child, or parent being on active duty or having been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the Armed Forces.

For the duration of FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's benefits, including health coverage under any "group health plan," as described above. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. Contact Human Resources for inquiries regarding job reinstatement and pay.

Military Caregiver Leave Provision

Along with the criteria for FMLA Leave, Military Caregiver Leave may be taken to care for the employee's child, parent, spouse, or next of kin who is a current member of the Armed Forces, or a member of the Armed Forces, the National Guard, or Reserves who is on the temporary disability retired list, and has a serious injury or illness that was incurred in the line of duty for which they are undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

Other Time Away from Work

Jury Duty

Employees are allowed time off to serve on an inquest jury, trial jury, or to appear in court as a witness as required by law. Once an employee receives a summons, they are required to notify the Executive Director or Director of School Operations. It is expected that the employee will report to work if released from duty on any given day. An employee may receive up to one day of paid leave for reporting to jury duty. Any time after will be considered unpaid.

Other Leave

An employee may require a request for a leave of absence for other reasons. Requests will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Director, in conjunction with Human Resources, if necessary.

Employee Conduct and Disciplinary Actions

Standards of Conduct

Standards of conduct have been developed for all school personnel to maintain day-to-day relations with fellow employees. Employees are expected to be professional at all times. Employees should not engage in behavior detrimental to Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish's reputation or in violation of school policies and may result in an evaluation of the employee's job performance.

The following violations are considered misconduct and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Since it is impossible to enumerate every act or omission that would justify the imposition of disciplinary action, the following list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

- Unexcused absence and/or lack of punctuality;
- Release of confidential information without authorization (*See Personnel Policy 4004 and Student Policy 5105*);
- Possession of or reporting to work while under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substances (*See Personnel Policy 4026*);
- Use of tobacco or tobacco-related devices, or electronic cigarettes on school grounds, in school vehicles, or at school events (*See Personnel Policy 4035*);
- Any willful act that endangers the safety, health, or well-being of another individual;
- Possession of firearms on school grounds on school grounds, in school vehicles, or at school events;
- Failure to follow any established policy or procedure of AAJP;
- Violations of federal or state laws affecting the school or status of employment with Athlos; and
- Failure to report a violation (*See Personnel Policy 4023*).

Employee Disciplinary Process

The following process will be used to address employee disciplinary concerns.

- Verbal warning
- Written warning and plan of corrective action
- Unpaid Leave
- Professional Improvement Plan

- Termination

Dress Code Policy (See Personnel Policy 4010)

It is expected that all employees present a professional manner in both actions and appearance while performing work duties.

All employees are expected to maintain appropriate standards of neat and professional dress and grooming. The key consideration in determining what is appropriate work attire is the use of common sense and good judgment, applying the dress standards as outlined below. Clothing should be appropriate for activities such as field trips, conferences, and other AAJP-related off-site activities.

Employees will adhere to the following dress standards:

- Work attire should be “business casual”, unless special circumstances require otherwise (i.e. athletic wear or best dress).
- Clothing should fit appropriately – not too tight or too loose.
- Clothing should be clean, neat, and modest.
- Footwear should not interfere with safety.
- Athletic clothes are allowed when appropriate for the situation.
- Clothing that advertises companies or organizations are only allowed if they are associated with AAJP.
- In addition, maintaining a professional appearance includes minimal piercings, no visible tattoos, and no hair dyed unnatural colors.

Electronic Communications (See Personnel Policy 4009)

AAJP provides selected employees with a work computer and an email address as tools to conduct business on behalf of AAJP. A network password will be issued to each employee.

Employees are expected to utilize the electronic systems (email, computers, internet access, etc.) in a manner that is consistent with the same professional expectations in other areas of conducting business.

The electronic systems should be used only for AAJP's business. The email address assigned to employees should not be used for personal business. Employees must not use their personal email accounts to conduct AAJP business.

The electronic systems belong to AAJP therefore:

- All messages and attachments sent, received, or stored on the email system are, and remain the property of, AAJP.
- Employees should be aware that the Executive Director or Director of School Operations maintains the right to access the emails and documents stored in the email system.
- Employees who use the electronic systems should have no expectation that such use will be private.
- AAJP is a public entity; therefore, all emails and other correspondence must be archived, rather than deleted, for a period of time governed by the Louisiana Public Records Act.
- For security purposes, no employee should attempt to access another employee's email, nor should an employee share their user name and password with any other person.
- The email system should not be used to create or distribute any offensive or disruptive messages.
 - Among those messages that are considered offensive are messages that contain sexually explicit or implicit wording or images, racial or ethnic slurs, or other comments that offensively address someone's age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, ancestry, or disability.
- The email system should not be used to commit any crime consistent with all state, federal, and local laws and regulations.

Written Communications

Official correspondence written on behalf of AAJP that will be either on the school's letterhead or sent via a school email address that speaks to policy, procedures, programs, etc. must be approved by the Executive Director or designee.

Personal Cell Phone & Text Messaging

Employees are expected to use their personal phones for urgent needs only, and to not allow messages to interfere with their duties. Text messaging is not to take place during instructional time. The usage of earbuds, headphones and any other hands free devices will be prohibited. Phones and earbuds should remain out of sight of the students, not in the hallways, cafeteria, or playground areas, phones should be set on silent, and only used for emergency purposes. Employees are subject to corrective action up to and including termination for violation of this policy. Cell phone use must be approved by supervisor or an administrator.

Telephone and Voicemail Usage

The telephones and voicemail are property of AAJP and should be utilized only for school-related business. Personal calls and cell phone use should be made only in exceptional circumstances when there is a serious need. Personal calls and phone use is not to take place during instructional time.

Directing Inquiries

All employees are encouraged to refer calls or emails from a media source to the Executive Director or Director of School Operations. Inquiries regarding personnel-related information should be referred to Human Resources, including verifications of employment.

Personal Use of Social Media (See Personnel Policy 4014)

AAJP recognizes that many of its employees use social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc. However, employees' use of social media could become a problem if it, for example:

- Interferes with the employee's work;
- Is used to harass or discriminate against co-workers;
- Creates a hostile work environment;
- Divulges confidential information about the school, students, and/or personnel;
- Violates AAJP's policies; and/or
- Harms the goodwill and reputation of our schools.

Employees who maintain personal social networking sites shall not allow students to access their personal sites. Employees are expected to maintain a professional boundary with students on social media (AAJP employees are prohibited from connecting with or communicating with students on social media).

Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Inappropriate use of social media may involve the use of law enforcement.

School-Related Use of Social Media (See Personnel Policy 4014)

If there are any doubts regarding the appropriateness of a social media post regarding pictures of students or school-related data/news, check in advance with the Executive Director or Director of School Operations. Otherwise, we encourage employees to use social media for the promotion of AAJP within the following established guidelines:

- Employees should restrict the use of personal technology and social media for personal purposes to non-work times or hours.
- Do not post any comment or picture involving an employee of AAJP unless permission is given.
- Do not post any photographs or identifying information of students. (on personal social media accounts. i.e. Instagram, Facebook, twitter, etc.
- All postings on social media specifically pertaining to the school should comply with AAJP policies, including policies on confidentiality, electronic communications, ethical conduct, equal employment opportunity, and a harassment-free workplace.
- Employee will not videotape students and employees for punitive purposes.
- The employee is responsible for what is accessed, written, or presented on their social media sites.
- If any conflicting situations arise, employees are encouraged to contact the Executive Director for consultation on a case-by-case base.

Any use of pornography during school time or on school devices is strictly prohibited and will lead to immediate termination.

Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Medical Recommendations Regarding Students (See Student Policy 5302)

This policy establishes the type of medical information school personnel of Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish may and may not communicate to the guardian(s) of their students.

A teacher may not:

- Recommend that a student be administered a psychotropic drug;
- Specify or identify any specific mental health diagnosis for a student; or
- Use a parent's or guardian's refusal to consent to the administration of a psychotropic drug to a student or to a psychiatric evaluation, screening, or examination of a student as grounds for prohibiting the student from attending any class or participating in any school-related activity or as the sole basis of accusations of child abuse or neglect against the parent or guardian.

A teacher may:

- Suggest a student be assessed or evaluated by a qualified employee of the school who performs such functions;
- Assess or evaluate a student's academic readiness, performance, or achievement; and
- Discuss any aspect of a student's behavior or academic progress with the student's parent or guardian or other employees of the school as necessary.

Violation of this policy by school personnel is cause for disciplinary action.

Outside School Employment (See Personnel Policy 4007)

AAJP recognizes that public school educators have knowledge and training in various subjects and skills and should have the opportunity to enrich the community with their expertise while still honoring their duties as an AAJP employee. This policy provides parameters for employees who provide private educational services outside of their employment at AAJP and wish to advertise those services appropriately.

An employee that provides a private educational service, even one related to AAJP specifically (such as tutoring), must keep the service separate and distinct from the employee's employment at AAJP.

The employee may **not**, in promoting the service or activity, contact students at the school regarding other services; use school time to discuss or prepare for the private service or activity; or use education records or information obtained through his public employment unless the records or information are readily available to the general public.

The employee may, in promoting the service or activity, offer educational services, programs, or activities to students provided that they are not advertised or promoted by the employee during school

time; discuss the private educational activity with students or parents outside of the classroom; use student directories or online resources which are available to the general public; and use student or school publications in which commercial advertising is allowed, to advertise and promote the activity.

Employee Duties

Specific duties may vary from employee to employee based on expertise and job title. All employees are responsible to become familiar with, and perform their duties in compliance with, school calendars, organizational charts, policy addendums and other annual information pertaining to each school site. There may be additional policies for each role not found in this handbook, which can be found on the school's website.

Employee Evaluations (See Personnel Policies 4011, 4017, and 4029)

The Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish Governing Board requires at least one annual evaluation of all employees. This evaluation will take place during a mid-year review.

Teachers participate in an interactive evaluation process and 2 observations conducted by the Executive Director or designee. All teaching personnel are assigned an Instructional Coach. Coaches will work with teachers on goal setting, observations, feedback, and opportunities to pursue targeted learning.

In addition, teachers will have the opportunity to participate in peer observations, student data analysis, and be observed by school administration. Please see Instructional Coach for more information.

All teachers will be evaluated based on the Five Domains of Effective Teaching using the COMPASS Evaluation Rubric.

- **Domain 1:** Planning - The teacher plans effectively for instruction.
- **Domain 2:** Management - The teacher maintains an environment conducive to learning; The teacher maximizes amount of time available for instruction; and the teacher manages learner behavior to provide productive learning opportunities.
- **Domain 3:** Instruction - The teacher delivers instruction effectively; The teacher presents appropriate content; The teacher provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process; and the teacher demonstrates ability to assess and facilitate student academic growth.
- **Domain 4:** Professional Development - The experienced teacher plans for professional self-development; and the new teacher plans for professional development.
- **Domain 5:** School Improvement - The teacher takes an active role in building-level decision making; and the teacher creates partnerships with guardians and colleagues.

Administrators are evaluated annual using the Leader Rubric.

Evaluation Process (See Personnel Policies 4011)

See assigned Instructional Coach or the Executive Director for details on the evaluation process and for tools and sample rubrics used throughout the evaluation process.

Required Training

In addition to any role-based required training, all employees will receive annual training in professional practices, confidentiality of student records, and serving special populations.

Confidentiality of Student Records (See Student Policy 5105)

The student education records contained in AAJP's electronic and physical data sources are subject to the provisions in the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

FERPA prohibits schools from disclosing personally identifiable information contained in student education records without prior written guardian consent unless otherwise defined in FERPA. Violation of FERPA could subject AAJP to severe penalties including the termination of eligibility to receive funding under any applicable federal program.

Personnel may not disclose any of the personally identifiable information they acquire in the course of their duties to other parties who are not school officials unless they have obtained prior written parental consent in accordance with FERPA guidelines for the disclosure.

Personally identifiable information includes, but is not limited to:

- Student names;
- Names of students' guardian(s) or other family members;
- Student or student families' addresses;
- Personal identifiers, such as student social security numbers or school-assigned student numbers;
- Lists of personal characteristics that would make student identity easily traceable; and/or
- Other information that would make a student's identity easily traceable.

Teachers are expected to maintain a relationship of trust and respect with each student, and in doing so, will not reveal student grades, scores, or other performance data to individuals other than the respective student and the student's guardian(s) or to other school officials with a legitimate educational interest.

Confidentiality Policy Regarding Juvenile Offenders (See Personnel Policy 4005)

School personnel receiving confidential information concerning a juvenile offender may only disclose the information to other employees of the school, law enforcement officials, and/or social service professionals having both a right and a current need to know. A dispute regarding the dissemination of information will be decided in favor of a student's rights to privacy, except in the event of apparent imminent danger to persons or property.

Approval of Field Trips (See Personnel Policy 4001)

The purpose of this policy is to establish the considerations that must be observed prior to granting approval for a field trip. All proposed field trips must be pre-approved by the school administration primarily to limit any potential risks. Administrative consideration for approvals include:

- The trip's alignment to academic standards;
- The trip's intent to supplement, not supplant, curriculum;
- Any competing risk or liability issues associated with travel, destination, or activity; and
- The trip's cost.

Guidelines regarding chaperone ratios, transportation, communication with parents, and substitute activities for students unable to attend can be found in *Personnel Policy 4001*, *Student Policy 5604*, and *Business Operations Policy 7201*.

Use the *Field Trip Request Form* and procedures to request a field trip.

Safe Workplace

The cooperation of every employee in enforcing the following policies and procedures is necessary to foster a safe learning environment for AAJP personnel and students.

General Safety Expectations (See Personnel Policy 4024)

Common sense and personal interest in safety are the greatest guarantees of creating a safe work environment. Help others by reporting unsafe conditions or hazards immediately to the Executive Director or designee. In offices, be diligent in ensuring it is free of any potential hazards.

To ensure safety, please observe and obey the following rules and guidelines:

- Pile materials, bins, boxes, or other equipment so as **not** to block exits;
- Keep work area clean;
- Keep stairways and aisles clear;
- Place objects so as to not impeded mobility in the work area;
- Promptly clean up spills;
- Store items in the classroom in such a way as to not pose a threat to student's safety in any instance, especially in the event of a natural disaster; and
- Do not engage in such other practices as may be inconsistent with ordinary and reasonable safety rules.

Seat Belts

All employees must use seat belts and shoulder restraints (if available) whenever they operate a vehicle on school business. The driver is responsible for seeing that all passengers in front and rear seats are buckled up.

Phone Calls

Employees should refrain from using cell phones while driving on AAJP business. When driving on AAJP business, the **only** acceptable manner in which to use a cell phone is using a hands-free device.

However, it is recommended that employees do not operate cell phones at any time while driving on school business.

Employee Keys (See Personnel Policy 4013)

Certain employees are issued keys to AAJP offices and facilities. These keys are never to be loaned out or given to anyone except management. The Executive Director or designee will manage the distribution and return of keys. For each AAJP classroom, office or facility, the designated personnel will be the one to open and close the area. Closing an AAJP classroom or office includes turning off the lights and electronic equipment and locking windows and doors.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting (See Personnel Policy 4003)

The daily contact of school personnel with children places employees in a unique position to identify and refer suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to child protective services or law enforcement.

Child abuse is broadly defined as a physical injury that is inflicted by other than accidental means on a child by another person. AAJP employees are required to report real or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect when the employee has a “reasonable suspicion” that child abuse or neglect has occurred. Reasonable suspicion arises when the facts surrounding the incident or suspicion could cause another person in the same situation to suspect child abuse or neglect.

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

- All employees of public institutions are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect and are obligated to take immediate action by reporting to the Executive Director or School Counselor.
- The Executive Director or School Counselor will then contact child protective services or law enforcement with the reporter.
- Reporting to the Executive Director or School Counselor does not fulfill an employee’s duty to report.
- The oral report is to be followed by a written report within 36 hours.
- In cases where the suspected abuser is the child’s guardian, the guardian may not be contacted.
 - If a child is released to a law enforcement officer or a child protective services agent, school administration and the child protective services will not notify the guardian.

The Louisiana Children's Code and LA. R.S. 14:403 provide substantial penalties for mandatory reporters who fail to report facts which would support a reasonable belief that child abuse/neglect has occurred. Additionally, personnel who fail to report suspected child abuse/neglect may be subject to disciplinary and/or dismissal for neglect of duty.

All new employees at AAJP, at the time of hire, will be required to sign an acknowledgement of their duty to report any and all instances of known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect. Please see Human Resources for details.

Prohibiting Corporal Punishment (See Student Policy 5505)

AAJP prohibits corporal punishment as a disciplinary method. Teachers are not allowed, under any circumstances, to physically harm or handle a student as a disciplinary measure. This policy does not prevent the use of reasonable physical restraint or force in cases where student or teacher safety is at risk.

In lieu of physical discipline, teachers will follow the school's *Discipline Policy 5502* to appropriately redirect or reprimand a student's unwanted behavior.

School personnel who violate the provisions of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, as appropriate.

Substance Abuse and Drug Free Workplace (See Personnel Policy 4026)

In accordance with federal and state laws, AAJP prohibits the manufacture, use, possession, concealment, or distribution of drugs, alcohol, or any drug paraphernalia by employees on school grounds, in school or school-approved vehicles, or at any school-related event. Arriving to school or a school-related event impaired from the use of alcohol or a drug is likewise prohibited. Drugs include, but are not limited to, anabolic steroids, dangerous controlled substances, or substances that could be considered a "look-a-like" controlled substance.

Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all school personnel. Any violators of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with due process up to and including termination of employment. AAJP will discipline to the fullest extent permitted by state and federal law.

Drug and Alcohol Testing

All employees of AAJP will undergo a drug screening test when reasonable suspicion exists to believe that they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Reasonable suspicion primarily arises from observable symptoms of the use or of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs including:

- Presence of drug or alcohol paraphernalia;
- Any involvement (even indirectly) in an accident or near-miss that resulted or may have resulted in an employee injury or property damage or loss;
- Reports of drug or alcohol possession use and/or distribution;
- Unexplained or suspicious absenteeism or tardiness;
- Unexplained significant deterioration in employee performance or behavior;
- Criminal citations, arrests, or convictions;
- Any behavior or statements that would suggest that drugs or alcohol are present in the body; or
- Any work-related injury in compliance with Workers Compensation.

The Executive Director or designee, in accordance with school policy, can authorize a *Reasonable Suspicion Drug Test Authorization Form*. The employee suspected of drug or alcohol use will be directed to provide a sample for testing immediately. Failure to acquiesce to a drug test will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Pending the results of such a test, the employee will be removed from duty.

Reporting Suspected Violations Involving Drug and Alcohol

If any employee has reason to believe that another employee is engaged in substance abuse in violation of this policy, they are required to report this fact to the Executive Director or designee. Failure to report may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Legal Compliance

AAJP will take necessary steps to ensure compliance with such federal and state record keeping and notice requirements as apply to employee drug and alcohol testing programs. Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish may not request or require an employee or job applicant to undergo drug and/or alcohol testing on an arbitrary and capricious basis.

Search and Seizure Policy (See Student Policy 5506)

Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish strives to maintain a safe environment for students by prohibiting the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, toxic substances, controlled substances without a physician's prescription, and weapons.

It is a violation of this policy for any employee to use or possess any type of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapon, or drug paraphernalia at Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish, and any reasonable suspicion merits grounds for a search and seizure according to the school's *Search and Seizure Policy 5506*.

This policy extends to all school facilities and school property including lockers, cubbies, desks, personal possessions, and all off-campus school events. Students, guardians, and school employees will be notified in writing at the beginning of each school year of the Governing Board's authority to conduct unannounced searches of students, lockers, automobiles, school employees, and any other person or object on school property and at school sponsored events. *Search and Seizure Policy 5506* for details on the qualifications and protocols for search and seizure.

Any employee found to be in possession of disallowed substances or weapons will be disciplined accordingly. Law enforcement may become involved if an employee is in possession of illegal substances or a weapon or if school administration otherwise deems it necessary.

Required Reporting of Employee Arrests (See Personnel Policy 4023)

All employees, licensed and non-licensed, who are arrested, cited, or charged with the following alleged offenses will report the arrest, citation, or charge within 24 hours, or prior to next appearing for work should the arrest occur on a weekend day or school holiday, to the Executive Director or designee:

- Any matters involving an alleged sex offense including those described in LA. R.S. 14:42-43.5 and LA. R.S. 14:80-81.5;
- Any matters involving an alleged drug or alcohol-related offense;
- Any matters involving alleged bodily harm against oneself, or violence towards another person;
- Any matters involving an alleged crime of domestic violence; and
- Any matters involving an alleged crime under federal law.

All school personnel will report for work following the arrest and notice to the employer unless directed not to report for work by the Executive Director or designee.

Action resulting from the notification of an arrest or offense may include:

- Immediate suspension from student supervision and/or student transportation duties for alleged sex offenses, offenses involving alcohol or drugs, or other alleged offenses which may endanger students during the investigation period;
- Adequate due process for the accused employee; and
- A process to review arrest information and make employment decisions that protect both the safety of students and the confidentiality and due process rights of employees.

Accident Reporting (See Personnel Policy 4008)

Any injury at work, regardless of severity, **must** be reported immediately to the Executive Director and receive first aid attention. AAJP has a Workers' Compensation insurance policy. In order to be compliant with Workers' Compensation regulations, employees **must** report injuries immediately to the Executive Director. Executive Director or designee will provide an incident report to complete and report the incident to Human Resources to ensure proper processing.

Emergency and Crisis Management

Employee Emergency Contact

AAJP requires each employee to complete an Emergency Contact Card that contains emergency numbers and contact person(s) in case of an emergency. The Emergency Contact Cards are turned in to the front office. Please contact Human Resources to update Emergency Card with address, telephone, or emergency contact changes.

Crisis Management

AAJP has adopted a federally compliant crisis management plan. All employees are required to read and sign an acknowledgement of their duties in a crisis. All employees will participate in annual training regarding crisis management. Employees should regard the crisis management plan as highly confidential for the purposes of student safety. Electronic and hard copies should be stored securely and communication about plan details should only be discussed with other employees or administrators. The current *School Safety Plan and Quick Reference Guide* are available in the front office.

Teachers should expect monthly announced emergency drills as well as several unannounced drills throughout the year.

Training and Instruction

Each August, all employees are required to complete training in general safety practices, accident and incident management, basic first aid, building security, and crisis management.

Employee Acknowledgment Form

By signing below, I understand this Employee Handbook describes important information about Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish and I should consult the Executive Director regarding any questions I may have.

I understand, the Governing Board is free to change any provision at any time within its sole discretion.

Since the information, policies, and benefits described here are subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to policies referenced in the handbook may occur. I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies and it is my responsibility to stay informed and read future revisions.

I understand, nothing in this handbook creates or is intended to create a promise or representation of continued employment or guaranteed terms and conditions of employment for any employee.

I have received the handbook and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with all policies and any subsequent revisions provided to me.

Employee Name

Employee Signature

Date

Please return a signed copy of this form to human resources.