

Employee Manual
for
Technical Academies of
Minnesota
2023-2024



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SECTION 1

Section 1.1 - WELCOME

We welcome you as an employee of Technical Academies of Minnesota, (“TAM”) or (“School”). Your contribution of time and talent in cooperation with the staff, students, parents, community, and School Board will provide the best possible education to the students at TAM.

You have been given the unique opportunity to work in an innovative school environment. TAM is an employer that encourages creativity and innovativeness while demanding more than teaching responsibilities. As a staff-led school model, all employees share in the business operations including but not limited to governance, finances, payroll/personnel, facility/equipment, and property maintenance, as well as participation on various business operation committees.

Technical Academies of Minnesota Facilities

The first Technical Academies of Minnesota school, DREAM Technical Academy, opened in the fall of 2014. DREAM is located at 1705 16th Street NE in Willmar, MN. The second academy, CHOICE Technical Academy, opened in the fall of 2015. CHOICE is located at 315 South Grove Avenue in Owatonna, MN.

Technical Academies of Minnesota Mission

The mission of the Technical Academies of Minnesota is to provide a student-directed learning environment that is challenging, democratic, reflective, joyful, and hopeful. Students’ unique developmental needs and capacities are appreciated, and every student is valued as a whole human being — heart, mind, body, and soul.

Technical Academies of Minnesota Vision

Technical Academies of Minnesota is where every student learns, discovers, creates, and inspires to make the world a better place.

Technical Academies of Minnesota Core Values

We believe our most important task is improving the quality of education for students through creative school reform efforts including:

1. Student-Directed

- Students take responsibility and personalize their learning by developing a Personal Learning Plan and demonstrating mastery, which increases student engagement and the effectiveness of students’ learning experiences in general.
- Students engage in authentic, meaningful learning opportunities.

- Through Project-Based Learning, students acquire a deeper knowledge by actively exploring real-world challenges and problems as they design projects that meet the state standards.
- Students understand their role as patrons in a global society and strive to contribute to the betterment of their world.
- Employing an individualized approach, students explore their passions and are critically engaged with the content for the purpose of transforming their lives and the lives of those with whom they live, work, and play.

2. 21st Century Skills

- Students develop meaningful learning, literacy, and life skills. Honing these essential skills complements students' academic achievements and can increase opportunities for success in a rapidly changing, digital world where learning never stops.
- Students will have opportunities to develop the attitudes, skills, and knowledge to understand and participate in a globally connected world.
- Students will understand what it takes to be a good citizen — one who can be civically engaged, critically-thinking, digitally literate, globally aware, and an effective communicator.
- “Being life ready means students leave high school with the grit and perseverance to tackle and achieve their goals by demonstrating personal actualization skills of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills.
- Students who are life ready possess the growth mindset that empowers them to approach their future with confidence, to dream big and to achieve big.” — American Association of School Administrators

3. Authentic Assessment

- Authentic assessment engages students to demonstrate skills and concepts acquired, investigated, and employed.
- Authentic assessment focuses on analytical skills, synthesizing information, integrating learning, working collaboratively, and using critical thinking skills.
- Authentic assessment provides the depth and breadth of engagement that frequently is missing with traditional forms of assessment.

4. Equity

- Social justice and equity begin with ourselves, our families, and our communities. In addition to creating a safe space on school grounds, we advocate for greater social justice movements in our neighborhoods, cities, state, country, and world.
- At the forefront is a strong, democratic learning community, where students are accepted for who they are as individuals, and for their passions, interests, and talents.
- Restorative justice is a solution-based rather than problem-based process which gives voice to people and focuses on healing and reconciliation. Inspired by indigenous traditions, we bring together people in a safe and respectful space, promoting dialogue, accountability, and a stronger sense of community.

5. Healing-Centered

- All students, parents, caregivers, staff, and community members feel valued, welcomed, and physically, psychologically, and emotionally safe.
- A proactive, supportive, and strengths-based approach is employed to assist students in cultivating social and emotional skills and effective coping strategies.
- Students' resilience assists them in overcoming any adversity and creating a hopeful future.
- Building healthy and purposeful relationships is paramount to creating a safe, supportive, and nurturing community.
- A culture of healing can reverse the effects of trauma, boost academic engagement, and promote social-emotional well-being. Social-emotional well-being is a necessary ingredient for learning.

6. Staff-Led Structure

- Creating equitable, high-quality, culturally affirming, student-directed learning environments is done with, and for the benefit of, students.
- Serving the unique needs of our students and community is never done in isolation and relies on the deep partnership with students, families, and community members.
- By participating in various school committees, staff feels invested in the community and connects with peers in ways to help move the school forward. Committees provide a clear and equitable avenue for staff to have collective autonomy in decision-making which influences the success of the school.
- Every staff voice is honored and uplifted to guide our work. We operate under a flat hierarchy and expect each member to hold themselves accountable.

TAM encourages the development of Teacher Professional Partnerships.

TAM upholds the highest professional standards in education.

This Employee Handbook or Manual is designed to acquaint you with TAM and provide you with information about working conditions, benefits, and policies affecting your employment.

The contents of this Manual do not constitute, are not intended to constitute nor should they be construed as a promise of employment or as a contract between Technical Academies of Minnesota and any of its employees. The Manual is a summary of TAM's policies, which are presented here only as a matter of information. An employee's only method of entering into an employment agreement with TAM is through a board approved written agreement for employment.

Technical Academies of Minnesota operates as a Staff-Powered School. TAM does not have any administrators. The Staff-Powered Schools model gives the TAM staff members secured autonomy to design and run schools. The TAM staff make the decisions relating to school success in areas such as curriculum, budget, personnel, and more. Each TAM site has

committees that cover the following responsibilities; Personnel, Finance, Marketing, Curriculum, School Climate, and Operations. Throughout this Manual, the School Personnel Committee is referenced frequently. The Personnel Committee at each school site is responsible for promoting and maintaining a professional academic learning environment through oversight of TAM's employee relations/human resources function.

As an employee of TAM, you are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the provisions of this manual. TAM's objective is to provide you with a work environment that is constructive to both personal and professional growth.

1.2 CHANGES IN POLICY

This manual supersedes all previous employee manuals and memos that may have been issued from time to time on subjects covered in this manual.

However, since our business and our organization are subject to change, TAM reserves the right to interpret, change, suspend, cancel, or dispute with or without notice all or any part of our policies, procedures, and benefits at any time. TAM will attempt to notify all employees of any changes to this manual, or any interpretations thereof, prior to the changes occurring but may make changes or revisions without prior notice. Changes will be effective on the dates determined by TAM, and after those dates all superseded policies will be null and void.

No individual staff member has the authority to change policies at any time. If you are uncertain about any policy or procedure, speak with your School Personnel Committee.

1.3 EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS

TAM relies upon the accuracy of the information contained in the employment application and the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and an individual's employment with TAM. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in the exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

1.4 AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT

Your employment relationship with TAM is one of at-will employment. What this means is that you, as an employee, enter into employment with TAM voluntarily and you are free to resign at any time for any reason or no reason. Similarly, TAM is free to conclude its relationship with any employee at any time for any reason or no reason. TAM employees are required to follow TAM's Employment Termination Policy (See Section 3.14).

SECTION 2

DEFINITIONS OF EMPLOYEES STATUS

2.1 “EMPLOYEES” DEFINED

An “employee” of TAM is a person who regularly works for TAM on a wage or salary basis. “Employees” may include exempt, non-exempt, full-time, part-time, and temporary persons, and others employed with TAM who are subject to the control and direction of TAM in the performance of their duties.

SALARIED EXEMPT

Employees whose positions meet specific criteria established by the provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) making them exempt from overtime pay requirements.

HOURLY NON-EXEMPT

Employees whose positions do not meet FLSA criteria as an exempt employee and who are paid at an hourly rate. They will be paid one and one-half their regular rate of pay for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week.

FULL-TIME

Full-time employees are those who are regularly scheduled to work 32 or more hours per week. Generally, they are eligible for TAM’s benefits package after 30 days of employment, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

PART-TIME

Part-time employees are those who are scheduled to work 31 hours or less per week or on an intermittent basis. Part-time employees are not eligible for benefits provided by TAM.

TEMPORARY (FULL-TIME or PART-TIME)

Those whose performance is being evaluated to determine whether further employment in a specific position or with TAM is appropriate or individuals who are hired as interim replacements to assist in the completion of a specific project, work period or for vacation relief. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status or modify the at-will employment relationship. Temporary employees retain that status until they are notified of a change. They are not eligible for any of TAM’s benefit programs.

SECTION 3

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

3.1 NON-DISCRIMINATION

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at TAM will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. TAM

and/or the School Personnel Committee does not and will not discriminate in employment opportunities, decisions or practices because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, hairstyle, familial status, military status, disability or any other protected classification defined by state, federal or local law.

TAM will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so will result in an undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including, but not limited to, selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their School Personnel Committee. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

3.2 NON-PUBLIC DATA/CONFLICT OF INTEREST

School Data

The collection, maintenance and disclosure of School data, including, but not limited to education (student) data, personnel data, board data and financial data is governed by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. Chap 13 and, in the case of education data, the federal Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. Examples of data that are governed by the provisions of the Data Practices Act and/or FERPA, include, but are not limited to:

- Employee compensation data),
- TAM financial information,
- TAM Marketing strategies,
- TAM pending projects and proposals,
- Student data
- Personnel/Payroll records, and
- TAM communication, including communication between the TAM Board and/or its employees.

The above list of data is an example only of TAM data subject to state and federal law and, may or may not be public or non-public/private data. Before any employee discloses any data about TAM, its employees or students, the employee must consult with the Personnel Committee to ensure that disclosure is allowed by law or TAM policies. Employees who improperly use, disclose, or access non-public/private data about TAM, its employees or its students will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment and legal action, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

Conflicts of Interest

Technical Academies of Minnesota are concerned with conflicts of interest that create actual or potential job-related concerns, especially in the areas of confidentiality, student and families relations, safety, security, and morale. If there is any actual or potential conflict of interest between you and a competitor, supplier, distributor, or contractor to TAM, you must disclose it to your School Personnel Committee. If an actual or potential conflict of interest is determined to exist, the School will take such steps as it deems necessary to reduce or eliminate this conflict.

3.3 NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

Orientation is a welcoming process that is designed to make the new employee feel comfortable, informed about TAM and the School, and prepared for their position. New employee orientation is conducted by the School Personnel Committee and includes an overview of TAM and the school history, an explanation of the TAM's core values, vision, and mission; and TAM's goals and objectives. In addition, the new employee will be given an overview of benefits, tax, and legal issues, and complete any necessary paperwork.

During orientation, employees are presented with all codes, keys, and procedures needed to navigate within the workplace. A member of the Personnel Committee will introduce the new employee to staff at TAM, review their job description and scope of position, explain TAM's evaluation procedures, and help the new employee get started on specific functions.

3.4 SCHOOL HOURS

Technical Academies of Minnesota is open from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday when school is in session (see school calendar). TAM salaried staff are expected to work 8 hours per school day and to arrive at school not later than 7:30 a.m. unless other arrangements have been made with the School Personnel Committee. Staff is required to attend weekly staff meetings and to join one of the school committees.

Staff may come in earlier or leave later as long as it does not conflict with scheduled meetings. Additional hours may be required to fulfill job duties. There are times throughout the school year when staff are required to work outside of normal school hours. Specifically Graduation (all), Senior Project night/s (salary staff members and hourly members on the Curriculum Committee), Showcase night (salary staff members and hourly members on the Curriculum Committee), and Registration Night in the fall (all).

The standard workweek is 40 hours of work (see Section 5.3, Overtime). In the computation of various employee benefits, the employee workweek is considered to begin on Sunday (starting at 12:01 a.m.) through Saturday (ending at 12:00 a.m.), unless the School Personnel Committee makes prior other arrangements with the employee.

3.5 LUNCH PERIODS

TAM staff is expected to help supervise areas of the school during the lunch period which typically runs from 12-12:30 pm. A sign-up sheet for lunchtime supervision will be posted during staff development days before the start of the school year.

3.6 BREAK PERIODS

TAM Staff is allowed short breaks as needed throughout the school day. Breaks are paid and therefore employees may not leave the premises unless they notify the School Personnel/Finance Committee and the departure from school is approved. If employees have unexpected personal business to take care of, they must notify the School Personnel Committee to discuss time away from work and make arrangements as necessary. Personal business should be conducted on the employee's own time. Employees who do not adhere to the break policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

3.7 PERSONNEL FILES

Employees may make a written request to review their personnel file once every six months. the School may deny such request if it is determined that the request was not made in good faith. Upon separation from employment, a former employee may make such a written request once each year after separation for as long as the personnel record is maintained.

Upon receipt of a proper, written request from an employee or former employee to review his or her personnel file, the School will comply no later than seven working days if the record is located in this state, or no later than 14 working days if the record is located outside the state. Arrangements will be made for current employees to inspect their personnel record during normal business hours, either on site or at another reasonable nearby location. An accurate copy of the personnel file may be used or simply provided. A copy will be mailed to any former employee at an address disclosed in a written request and on-site inspections will not be allowed for former employees.

If an employee disputes any of the specific information contained in their personnel file, they request that their Employer revise or remove the disputed information, and if the School does not agree to do so, the employee may submit a written statement specifically identifying the disputed information and explaining his or her position on the information in question. This position statement may be no longer than five written pages and will be included with the employee's personnel file along with the disputed information as long as the disputed information is contained in the record. No claim for libel, slander or defamation may be based on any information contained in a personnel file if these guidelines are observed.

If information that should be properly included in an employee's personnel file is omitted from the School response to a proper, written request for review, that information may be excluded from use in a subsequent administrative, judicial or quasi-judicial proceeding, unless

it is determined that the information was not intentionally omitted, and the subject employee is first given a reasonable opportunity to review the information.

In addition to other remedies provided by law, if any, an employee may bring a civil action in an attempt to compel compliance with these provisions regarding their right to inspect his or her personnel file and potentially seek the following relief:

- Actual damages only, plus costs, under Minn. Stats. §181.960 to §181.963; or
- Actual damages, back pay and reinstatement or other make-whole equitable relief, plus reasonable attorney's fees, under Minn. Stat. §181.964.

Any employee who in good faith exercises his or her rights and remedies regarding review of the personnel record under these provisions may not be retaliated against.

3.8 PERSONNEL DATA CHANGES

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify their designated Payroll/Personnel Committee member of any changes in personnel data such as:

- Mailing address,
- Telephone numbers,
- 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.

3.9 INCLEMENT WEATHER/EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, or power failures can disrupt School operations. The decision to close the school will be made by the designated staff. When the decision is made to close, employees will receive an official notification via the TAM phone tree or some other appropriate method of communication. Staff will need to be available to students from 7:55 AM until 2:45 PM.

DREAM Technical Academy's school closings due to weather will be communicated via Operation Snow Desk, email, facebook, and any other avenues available to ensure notification in a timely manner. School closings due to weather may be considered an E-Learning Days (up to five E-learning days per academic year), in which students would do school work from home for the day. Staff will need to be available to students from 7:55 AM until 2:45 PM.

CHOICE Technical Academy's school closings due to weather are dependent upon the Owatonna Public School District.

- Listen to Radio channels: KOWZ, KRFO
- Look at the OPS Website

- Follow the CHOICE Facebook Page

Time off from scheduled work due to emergency closings will be unpaid for all *salary* employees. However, if employees would like to be paid, they are permitted to use paid-time-off, if it is available to them.

3.10 EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND PLANNING SESSIONS

The School Personnel Committee will meet at least twice a year to conduct performance reviews and/or planning sessions with all full-time and part-time employees.

Performance reviews and planning sessions are designed for the peers and the employee to discuss their current job tasks, encourage and recognize attributes, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting work-related goals. Together, employees and peers discuss ways in which the employee can accomplish goals or learn new skills. The planning sessions are designed for the employee and his/her school staff to make and agree on new goals, skills, and areas for improvement.

3.11 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employees may hold outside jobs as long as the employee meets the performance standards of their job with TAM as set forth in the employee's job description. Unless the School Personnel Committee has approved an alternative work schedule, employees will continue to be subject to the School's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work assignments. TAM's office space, equipment, and materials must not be used for outside employment.

3.12 CORRECTIVE ACTION

Technical Academies of Minnesota will hold each of its employees to certain work rules and standards of conduct (see Section 4). When an employee deviates from these rules and standards, TAM expects the employee's School Personnel Committee to take corrective action that it believes is appropriate based upon the circumstances.

TAM will attempt to use progressive corrective action. That is, the action taken in response to a rule infraction or violation of standards *typically* follows a pattern increasing in seriousness until the infraction or violation is corrected.

The *usual* sequence of corrective actions includes coaching (oral warning), a written warning, mentorship, probation, suspension, and/or termination of employment. In deciding which initial corrective action would be appropriate, the School Personnel Committee will consider the seriousness of the infraction, the circumstances surrounding the matter, and the employee's previous record.

While TAM will attempt to follow a progressive approach to corrective action, TAM considers some rule infractions and violations of standards as grounds for more significant discipline, which may include immediate termination of employment. In such situations where more significant discipline will be imposed, TAM reserves the right to impose whatever discipline it believes is appropriate based upon the severity of conduct as determined within the discretion of TAM. Examples of conduct that may result in more significant discipline or corrective actions includes, but is not limited to: theft in any form, insubordinate behavior, vandalism or destruction of School property, the use of School equipment and/or School vehicles without prior authorization, untruthfulness about work history, skills, or training, divulging School or TAM's non-public or private business practices, and misrepresentations of Technical Academies of Minnesota to a student, parent, a prospective student/parent, the general public, and/or an employee.

Job Abandonment

Employees who fail to show up for work or call in without an acceptable reason for the absence for a period of three (3) consecutive work days, will be considered to have abandoned their job and voluntarily resigned from their employment with Technical Academies of Minnesota.

3.13 EMPLOYMENT TERMINATION

Termination of employment is an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization, and many of the reasons for termination are routine. Below are a few examples of some of the most common circumstances under which employment is terminated:

- **Resignation** – voluntary employment termination initiated by an employee.
- **Termination** – involuntary employment termination initiated by the School's Personnel Committee.
- **Layoff** – involuntary employment termination initiated by TAM or the School's Personnel Committee for non-disciplinary reasons.
- **Retirement** - voluntary retirement initiated by an employee when said employee reaches the appropriate retirement age.

When a non-exempt employee intends to resign from their employment with TAM, they must give their School Personnel Committee at least two (2) weeks' written notice. Exempt employees must give at least four (4) weeks' written notice of intent to resign.

Since employment with TAM is at-will, both the employee and TAM have the right to terminate the employment relationship, with or without cause.

The payroll check date should be considered for all terminations. Should the employee not work after a specific date during the pay period and receive a check for the full pay

period, the employee will be required to return to the School the amount overpaid for the time not worked.

Any employee who terminates employment with Technical Academies of Minnesota must return all files, employment manual, records, keys, and any other equipment or materials that are property of TAM. Any employee who has been overpaid and/or fails to return TAM property must repay TAM for the overpayment or must pay to replace the property not returned. Failure to repay or reimburse TAM will result in TAM taking necessary action to recover the indebtedness.

An employee's benefits may be affected by employment termination. Some benefits may be continued at the employee's expense (See Section 5, Benefits) if the employee elects to do so. The employee will be notified of their COBRA benefits that may be continued and of the terms, conditions, and limitations.

3.14 SAFETY

Technical Academies of Minnesota provides information to the schools/employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication such as:

- Training sessions
- Team meetings
- Bulletin board postings
- Memorandums
- Other written communications

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and exercise caution and common sense in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe conditions to their School Personnel Committee. Employees who violate safety standards, cause hazardous or dangerous situations or fail to report, or where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

In the case of an accident that results in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees must notify the School Personnel Committee and prepare and submit a First Report of Injury form.

3.15 HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES/PERSONAL DEVICES/SOCIAL MEDIA

Employees, who become aware of any health-related issue, including pregnancy, must give notice to their School Personnel Committee of health conditions and/or restrictions.

A written "permission to work" from the employee's doctor may be required at the time or shortly after notice has been given, and in some cases, may be required before returning to

work if the absence is more than three (3) days. The doctor's note should specify whether the employee is able to perform regular duties as outlined in their job description.

A leave of absence may be granted on a case-by-case basis. If the need arises for a leave of absence, employees should notify their School Personnel Committee.

Personal Cell Phone/Mobile Device Use

While Technical Academies of Minnesota permits employees to bring personal cell phones and other mobile devices (i.e. smartphones, PDAs, tablets, laptops) into the workplace, such devices and their use, must not interfere with the performance of an employee's job duties or impact workplace safety and health.

Use of personal cell phones and mobile devices at work can be distracting and disruptive and cause a loss of productivity. Thus, employees must use such personal devices primarily during nonworking time, such as breaks and meal periods. During this time, devices must be used in a manner that is courteous to those around you. Outside of nonworking time, the use of such devices should be minimal and limited to emergency use only. Employees are expected to comply with School policies regarding the protection of non-public and private information when using personal devices.

While operating a vehicle on work time, the School requires that the driver's personal cell phone/mobile device be turned off. If you need to make or receive a phone call while driving, pull off the road to a safe location unless you have the correct hands-free equipment for the device that is in compliance with applicable state laws.

You may have the opportunity to use your personal devices for work purposes.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent employees from engaging in protected concerted activity under the National Labor Relations Act or the Minnesota Public Employees Labor Relations Act (PELRA).

Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Social Media Policy

Technical Academies of Minnesota recognizes that the Internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and sharing information using a wide variety of social media. However, the use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To minimize risks to the School, you are expected to follow our guidelines for the appropriate use of social media.

This policy applies to all employees who work for the School.

Guidelines

For purposes of this policy, **social media** includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's weblog or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether associated or affiliated with the School, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

School principles, guidelines, and policies apply to online activities just as they apply to other areas of work. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you communicate in social media. You may be personally responsible for any litigation that may arise should you make unlawful defamatory, slanderous, or libelous statements against any students and families, school board members, or employees of the School.

Know and Follow the Expectations

Ensure your postings are consistent with these guidelines. Postings that include unlawful discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or other unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Be Respectful

The School cannot force or mandate respectful and courteous activity by employees on social media during non-working time. If you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as unlawful, slanderous, threatening, or that might constitute unlawful harassment. Examples of such conduct might include defamatory or slanderous posts meant to harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, age, national origin, religion, veteran status, or any other status or class protected by law or School policy. Your personal posts and social media activity should not reflect upon or refer to the School.

Maintain Accuracy and Confidentiality

When posting information, respect copyright, trademark, third-party rights, and similar laws and use such protected information in compliance with applicable legal standards.

Using Social Media at Work

Do not use social media while on your work time, unless it is work-related or consistent with policies that cover equipment owned by the School.

Media Contacts

If you are not authorized to speak on behalf of the school, do not speak to the media on behalf of the School. Direct all media inquiries for official School responses to the School spokesperson.

Retaliation and Your Rights

Retaliation or any other negative action is prohibited against anyone who, based on a reasonable belief, reports a possible deviation from this policy or cooperates in an investigation. Those who retaliate against others for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Nothing in this policy is designed to interfere with, restrain, or prevent employees from communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment, or to restrain employees in exercising any other right protected by law. All employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

3.16 BUILDING SECURITY

All employees who are issued keys to the schools are responsible for their safekeeping. The last employee, or a designated employee, who leaves the school at the end of the business day assumes the responsibility to ensure that all doors are securely locked and all appliances and lights are turned off with the exception of the lights normally left on for security purposes.

3.17 INSURANCE ON PERSONAL EFFECTS

All employees should be sure that their own personal insurance policies cover the loss of anything occasionally left at or missing from the School or school property. Technical Academies of Minnesota assume no risk for any loss or damage to personal property.

3.18 PARKING

Employees must park their cars in areas designated and provided by the School.

3.19 VISITORS IN THE WORKPLACE

To provide for the safety and security of employees, visitors, and the facilities, only authorized visitors are allowed in the school/workplace and such visitors will be required to sign in. Restricting unauthorized visitors helps ensure security, decreases insurance liability, protects from the disclosure of non-public information, safeguards employee welfare, and avoids potential distractions and disturbances.

All visitors must enter through the main reception area and sign in at the front desk. Authorized visitors will be escorted to their destination and must be accompanied by an employee at all times. Non-public information should not be in the viewing area of the visitor. All staff are responsible to take notice and acknowledge the presence of a visitor.

3.20 IMMIGRATION LAW/RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION/NURSING MOTHERS

TAM employs only United States citizens and those non-U.S. citizens authorized to work in the United States in compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

Each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form.

Religious Accommodation

Technical Academies of Minnesota is dedicated to treating its employees equally and with respect and recognizes the diversity of their religious beliefs. All employees may request an accommodation when their religious beliefs cause a deviation from the School dress code or the individual's schedule, basic job duties, or other aspects of employment. The School will consider the request but reserves the right to offer its own accommodation to the extent permitted by law. Some, but not all, of the factors that will be considered are the cost, the effect that the accommodation will have on current established policies, and the burden on operations — including other employees — when determining a reasonable accommodation. At no time will the School question the validity of a person's belief. Requests for Religious accommodations may be submitted to the School Personnel Committee.

Accommodations for Nursing Mothers

Technical Academies of Minnesota will provide nursing mothers reasonable paid break time to express milk for their child(ren).

To ensure privacy, you will be provided a private room, other than a restroom, to express milk. The room will be clearly designated and either have a lock or a sign on the door to indicate when the room is in use and will have access to an electrical outlet.

Expressed milk can be stored in School refrigerators, refrigerators provided in the lactation room or other location, or in a personal cooler. Sufficiently mark or label your milk to avoid confusion for other employees who may share the refrigerator.

You are encouraged to discuss the length and frequency of these breaks with the School Personnel Committee.

Discharge, retaliation, penalizing, interfering with, restraining, or coercing against employees who take breaks under this policy is strictly prohibited.

3.21 CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

A criminal background check in conformance with Minnesota Law will be conducted on all school employees and independent contractors working on the premises. Volunteers may also be required to complete a background check depending on frequency, student contact and/or duties.

3.22 SUPPLIES; EXPENDITURES; OBLIGATING TAM

Only authorized persons may purchase supplies in the name of Technical Academies of Minnesota. Authorized individuals must follow the TAM Accountability Staff Guidelines. Employees whose regular duties do not include purchasing shall not incur any expense on behalf of Technical Academies of Minnesota by any promise or representation without written approval.

3.23 EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Business related expenses incurred by an employee while providing services on behalf of TAM must have prior written approval. An example of such an expense may include mileage. The reimbursement request will be processed like an invoice. All completed reimbursement request forms must be turned in to the Finance Committee pursuant to the TAM Financial Accountability Staff Guidelines.

3.24 WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee of TAM who reports an activity that they considers to be illegal or dishonest to one or more of the parties specified in this Policy. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures. Instead, designated staff, as appointed by the TAM School Board, are charged with these responsibilities.

Examples of illegal or dishonest activities are violations of federal, state, or local laws; billing for services not performed or for goods not delivered; and other fraudulent financial reporting.

If an employee has knowledge of or a concern of illegal or dishonest fraudulent activity, the employee must contact the School Personnel Committee at their site or TAM's Board Chair if the complaint is not resolved. The employee must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas -- confidentiality and retaliation. Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law, and provide an accused individuals their legal rights of defense. TAM will not

retaliate against a whistleblower. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, or poor work assignments, and threats of physical harm. Any whistleblower who believes they are being retaliated against must contact the School Personnel Committee or the Technical Academies of Minnesota Board Chair immediately. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.

All reports of illegal and dishonest activities will be promptly submitted to the School Personnel Committee or TAM's Board Chair who is responsible for investigating and coordinating corrective action.

Employees with any questions regarding this policy should contact the School Personnel Committee.

3.25 SCHOOL PROPERTY

Employees are responsible for all TAM property, materials, or written information issued to them or in their possession or control.

Employees must return all TAM property immediately upon request or upon termination of employment or on the last day of the year if an employee is not returning for a subsequent school year. Where permitted by applicable laws, TAM may withhold from the employee's check or final paycheck the cost of any items that are not returned. TAM may also take all action deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property.

SECTION 4

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

4.1 WORK RULES AND STANDARDS

The work rules and standards of conduct for Technical Academies of Minnesota are important and must be taken seriously and adhered to. All employees are urged to become familiar with these rules and standards. In addition, employees are expected to follow the rules and standards faithfully in doing their own jobs and conducting the School's business. Please note that any employee who deviates from these rules and standards will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment (see Section 3.12, Corrective Action).

While not intended to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of rule infractions or misconduct that may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property;
- Falsification of timekeeping records (See Section 5.2, Timekeeping);
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs (See Section 4.6, Substance Abuse);
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace (See Section 4.6, Substance Abuse);
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace;
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace;
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of School owned or leased property;
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct;
- Violation of safety or health rules;
- Smoking in the workplace;
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment (See Section 4.3, Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment);
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice (See also, Section 4.1 Attendance/Punctuality and 4.2, Absence without Notice);
- Unauthorized use of telephones, or other School-owned equipment (See Section 4.4, Telephone Use);
- Using School equipment for purposes other than business (i.e. playing games on computers or personal Internet usage);
- Unauthorized disclosure of student records or any other non-public information;
- Violation of personnel policies; and
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.

Standards of Professional Conduct

Technical Academies of Minnesota will conduct business honestly and ethically wherever operations are maintained. TAM strives to improve the quality of our educational services and will maintain a reputation for honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility, integrity, trust, and sound business judgment. TAM's staff members are expected to adhere to high standards of business and personal integrity as a representation of our business practices. TAM expects that staff members will not knowingly misrepresent the School and will not speak on behalf of the School unless specifically authorized.

Violation of the Standards of Professional Conduct can result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment. The degree of discipline imposed may be influenced by the existence of voluntary disclosure of any ethical violation and whether or not the violator cooperated in any subsequent investigation. Although the language in the Standards of Professional Conduct reads "teacher", the expectation is that all staff members of TAM will adhere to the Standards.

Standards of Professional Conduct*

1. A teacher shall provide professional educational services in a nondiscriminatory manner.

2. A teacher shall make a reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to health and safety.
3. In accordance with state and federal laws, a teacher shall disclose confidential information about individuals only when a compelling professional purpose is served or when required by law.
4. A teacher shall take reasonable disciplinary action in exercising the authority to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.
5. A teacher shall not use professional relationships with students, parents, and colleagues to private advantage.
6. A teacher shall delegate authority for teaching responsibilities only to licensed personnel.
7. A teacher shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter.
8. A teacher shall not knowingly falsify or misrepresent records or facts relating to that teacher's own qualifications or to other teachers' qualifications.
9. A teacher shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about students or colleagues.
10. A teacher shall accept a teaching position that requires licensing only if properly or provisionally licensed for that position.

* From Minnesota Rules 8710.2100, Subp. 2, entitled *Code of Ethics for Minnesota Teachers*.

4.2 ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY

Technical Academies of Minnesota expects that every employee will be regular and punctual in attendance. This means being in the school building, ready to work, at their starting time each day. Absenteeism and tardiness places a burden on other employees and on the School.

If you are unable to report for work for any reason, you must notify the School Personnel Committee and office manager at each site by at least 7:00 a.m. You are responsible for speaking directly with the School Personnel Committee and office manager about your absence. When you return to work, please complete the PTO request in the TAM personnel system. It is not acceptable to leave a message on a voicemail, except in extreme emergencies. In the case of leaving a voicemail message, a follow-up call must be made later that day.

Should undue tardiness or absence become significant, as determined by TAM, disciplinary action may be required.

If there comes a time when you see that you will need to work some hours other than those that make up your usual workweek, notify the School Personnel Committee or designee at least seven (7) working days in advance. Each request for special work hours will be considered separately, in light of the employee's needs and the needs of the School. Such requests may or may not be granted based upon the discretion of TAM or its designee.

4.3 ABSENCE WITHOUT NOTICE

When you are unable to work due to illness or an accident, you must notify the School Personnel Committee. This will allow the School to arrange for temporary coverage of your duties and help other employees to continue work in your absence. If you do not report for work and the School is not notified of your status, it will be assumed after three consecutive days of absence that you have resigned, and you will be removed from the payroll.

If you become ill while at work or must leave the office for some other reason before the end of the workday, you must inform the School Personnel Committee of the situation.

4.4 HARASSMENT, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Technical Academies of Minnesota is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

If you believe you have been the victim of harassment, or know of another employee who has, report it immediately. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

Any staff member who becomes aware of possible harassment must promptly advise the School Personnel Committee or designee who will handle the matter in a timely and confidential manner.

TAM has adopted a Harassment and Violence Policy. It is the policy of TAM to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from religious, racial, sexual, or any other type of harassment and violence. This policy refers to staff and to staff harassment.

Policy Against Sexual Harassment, Harassment, and Sexual Violence.

Harassment is defined as verbal or physical contact, which has the intent or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's or group's work performance, which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Verbal and/or physical contact is defined as harassment when:

- Submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining or retaining employment or education; or
- Submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment or education; or
- That conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's employment or education or

creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment/educational environment

Harassment can be based on gender, race, religion, sexual preference, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, marital status, and status with regard to public assistance or any other classification protected by law. Discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence are all against the law. TAM enforces a policy of “Zero Tolerance” regarding such behavior and intends abide by all federal and state laws which prohibit harassment. TAM will attempt to maintain an employment atmosphere free of harassment, intimidation, and coercion. The School Personnel Committee of TAM is responsible for implementing this policy and their success in their jobs depends, in part, on a successful implementation.

Complaint Procedure: Any employee who feels that they are being subjected to harassment, sexual harassment, or violence in any form or they have witnessed sexual harassment, harassment, or sexual violence with regard to an employee, must contact the Human Rights Officer, at the school site. If the employee is uncomfortable or unwilling to contact the Human Rights Officer, they must contact the School Personnel Committee or the TAM Board Chair.

The following procedure will be used by the Technical Academies of Minnesota in each reported case of an incident of sexual harassment, harassment, or sexual violence. In all reported incidents, a prompt, thorough, and fair investigation will take place, giving careful consideration to protect the rights and dignity of all people involved. In addition, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken when it is determined that individuals have violated this policy.

NO RETALIATION OF ANY KIND WILL OCCUR BECAUSE AN EMPLOYEE HAS REPORTED AN INCIDENT OR SUSPECT SEXUAL HARASSMENT, HARASSMENT, OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO HELP KEEP THE TECHNICAL ACADEMIES OF MINNESOTA FREE OF HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE.

In summary, it is the belief of TAM that most employees conduct themselves in a professional manner. However, if harassment or sexual violence occurs, TAM is confident that the procedures outlined above will assist the employee in better understanding how to deal with this issue.

4.5 TELEPHONE USE

Technical Academies of Minnesota telephones are intended for the use of serving students and in conducting the School’s business.

Personal usage of TAM phones during business hours is discouraged except for extreme emergencies. All personal telephone calls should be kept brief to avoid congestion on the telephone line.

To respect the rights of all employees and avoid miscommunication in the School, employees must inform family members and friends to limit personal telephone calls during working hours.

Personal cell phone usage during School working hours is for the purpose of providing effective learning.

If an employee is found to be deviating from this policy, they will be subject to disciplinary action (See Section 3.13, Corrective Action).

4.6 PUBLIC IMAGE

A professional appearance is important anytime that a TAM employee comes in contact with students, parents, and the general public. Employees must be well-groomed and dressed appropriately for our business and for their position in particular. The TAM dress code is “business casual”.

On occasion, the School staff may designate "casual days," or approved special theme days, and appropriate dress guidelines will be provided .

Consult your School Personnel Committee members if you have any questions about appropriate school attire.

4.7 SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Technical Academies of Minnesota is committed to providing a safe and productive workplace for its employees. In keeping with this commitment, the following rules regarding the use of alcohol and drugs have been established for all staff members, regardless of rank or position, including both regular and temporary employees. The rules apply to all TAM employees during working hours of the School, while employees are on the School premises or elsewhere on School business/field trips.

In accordance with TAM District Policies, the school district may request or require that any school district employee or job applicant, other than an employee or applicant whose position requires a commercial driver’s license, submit to drug and alcohol testing in accordance with the provisions of this policy and as provided in Minn. Stat. §§ 181.950-181.957.

The manufacture, distribution, possession, sale, or purchase of controlled substances of abuse on School property is prohibited.

Being under the influence of legal or illegal drugs, alcohol, or substances of abuse on School property is prohibited.

Working while under the influence of prescription drugs that impair performance is prohibited.

Consistent with the rules listed above, any of the following actions constitute a violation of TAM's policy on alcohol and drugs and may subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

Using, selling, purchasing, transferring, manufacturing, or storing a legal or illegal drug or drug paraphernalia, or attempting to or assisting another to do so, while in the course of employment.

Working or reporting to work, conducting School business, or being on School property while under the influence of a legal or illegal drug or alcohol, in an impaired condition, or having the appearance (odor on breath, slurred speech, etc.) of being under the influence.

In order for TAM to be clear about these rules, please note the following definitions:

School property: All Technical Academies of Minnesota owned or leased property including vehicles, parking lots, and land.

Controlled substance abuse: Any substance listed in Schedules I-V of Section 202 of the Controlled Substance Act, as amended.

Drug: Any chemical substance including alcohol that produces a physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral change in the user.

Drug paraphernalia: Equipment, a product, or material that is used or intended for use in concealing an illegal drug, or otherwise introducing into the human body an illegal drug or controlled substance.

Illegal drug:

- a. Any drug or derivative thereof whose use, possession, sale, transfer, attempted sale or transfer, manufacture, or storage is illegal or regulated under any federal, state, or local law or regulation.
- b. Any drug, including – but not limited to – a prescription drug, used for any reason other than that prescribed by a physician.
- c. Inhalants used illegally.

Under the influence: A state of not having the normal use of mental or physical faculties resulting from the voluntary introduction into the body of an alcoholic beverage, drug, or substance of abuse.

Nothing in this policy prevents employees from the lawful consumption of products *outside* the workplace when not on working time. Even if the consumption outside work is lawful, however, employees may still violate this policy if they are impaired at work or have a positive test in violation of the drug testing policy.

4.8 TOBACCO PRODUCTS

The use of tobacco products is not permitted anywhere on the School's premises including the parking lot or at any School sponsored events regardless of the location. During the school day, employees are on the clock and are being paid. Therefore, they may not leave the building at anytime to go out and smoke either in their car or by leaving the campus in their car. If employees come to School and smell like smoke, they will be asked to leave to change clothes. Employees must follow all rules posted and adhere to all policies associated with this policy (See Sections 3.7, Break Periods and 3.15, Safety).

4.9 INTERNET USE

Employees are allowed the use of the Internet and TAM's e-mail system when necessary to serve our students and conduct the School's business.

Employees may use the Internet when appropriate to access information needed to conduct the business of the School. Employees may use TAM's e-mail system when appropriate for School correspondence.

Use of the Internet must not disrupt the operation of the School's computer network and use of the Internet must not interfere with an employee's productivity. Employees are responsible for using the Internet in a manner that is ethical and lawful.

Employee who use the Internet via TAM equipment and e-mail messages via TAM's e-mail system have no expectation of privacy and TAM reserves the right to access and monitor all files and messages of its employees.

SECTION 5

WAGE AND SALARY POLICIES

5.1 WAGE OR SALARY INCREASES

Each employee's hourly wage or salary will be reviewed at least once each year. The employee's review date will usually be conducted on or about the anniversary date of

employment or the date of the previous compensation review. Such reviews may be conducted more frequently for a newly created position or based on a recent promotion or change of job responsibilities.

Increases will be determined on the basis of school financial status, performance, adherence to policies and procedures, and ability to meet or exceed duties per the job description and achieve performance goals (See Section 3.11, Performance Review/Planning Sessions).

5.2 TIMEKEEPING

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every non-exempt/hourly employee. Time worked is the time actually spent on a job(s) performing assigned duties.

The School does not pay for *extended* breaks or time spent on personal matters.

The time log is a legal instrument. Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another team member's time record will result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

The School Personnel Committee will review time records every two (2) weeks and must approve any changes to an employee's time record. Questions regarding the payroll should be directed to the School Personnel Committee.

Time Log – Non-exempt/hourly employees will be provided access to the online time management system on their first day of employment. The employee will be given thorough instructions on usage and instructions on what to do should a problem occur.

5.3 OVERTIME

Overtime compensation is paid to non-exempt employees in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions. Overtime is payable for all hours worked over forty (40) in a work week at a rate of one and one-half times the non-exempt employee's regular hourly rate. Paid-Time-Off, personal time, holidays, or any leave of absence will not be considered hours worked when calculating overtime.

All overtime work performed by an hourly employee must receive the School Personnel Committee's prior authorization. Overtime worked without prior authorization may result in disciplinary action. The School Personnel Committee's approval on a time log authorizes pay for hours worked and overtime.

5.4 PAYDAYS

All employees are paid on the 15th and the last day of each month. In the event that a regularly scheduled payday falls on a weekend or holiday, employees will usually receive

payments on the next day of operation according to the Direct Deposit Electronic processing schedule.

TAM processes payroll through a direct deposit or paycheck system. Employees receive an “advice of deposit” or check stub indicating the paid hours and deductions.

Any overpayment of wages or salaries will be due and repayable to TAM immediately upon discovery of such overpayment.

5.5 PAYROLL SAFE HARBOR

TAM follows the federal and state wage and hour laws (Fair Labor Standards Act). Those laws have a variety of provisions, including, but not limited to, differing requirements for wages, overtime, vacation and absences for hourly and salaried “exempt” employees. That is why you will find some differing policies on these issues in the Handbook, based upon salary and hourly status. If you have any concerns about your pay, or believe there have been errors in payment amount, in withholding or in deductions in pay for absences or other issues, please promptly inform the School Personnel Committee immediately. Please be specific in identifying your concern or the error.

TAM will review the concern and will correct any errors as quickly as possible.

You have a right to raise concerns. TAM appreciates your concerns because it allows the School to be aware of and correct pay issues before they continue and become “accounting” issues. No employee will suffer retaliation for raising a concern about pay.

5.6 WAGE DISCLOSURE NOTIFICATION

In compliance with Minnesota law, the School will not:

- Require an employee to maintain the confidentiality of their wages as a condition of employment;
- Require an employee to sign a waiver or other document which purports to deny an employee the right to disclose their wages; or
- Take any adverse employment action against an employee for disclosing their own wages or discussing another employee’s wages which have been disclosed to them voluntarily; or
- Retaliate, discharge, discipline, penalize, interfere with, threaten, restrain, coerce, or otherwise discriminate against an employee for asserting rights or remedies under Minnesota Statute 181.172 and this Wage Disclosure Protection policy.

Although employees have these rights under Minnesota law, employees are not obligated to discuss their wages with any other person or business. Also, all policies and agreements restricting employees from disclosing the School's Confidential Information to third parties are in effect and not limited by this law.

Employees may bring civil actions against an employer for any violations of this policy. If a court finds that an employer has violated this policy, the court may order reinstatement, back pay, restoration of lost service credit, if appropriate, and the expungement of any related adverse records of an employee who was the subject of the violation.

If you have any questions regarding rights or obligations under this policy, please direct your questions to management.

SECTION 6

BENEFITS AND SERVICES

Technical Academies of Minnesota offers a benefits program for its full-time employees (See Definitions, Full-time, Sec. 2). Eligible employees at TAM are provided a wide range of benefits. A number of the programs (such as Social Security, workers' compensation, state disability, and unemployment insurance) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law.

Benefits eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification. The School Personnel Committee can identify the programs for which you are eligible. Details of many of these programs can be found elsewhere in the employee handbook.

TAM offers a benefits program for its employees eligible for such benefits. However, unless required by statute, the existence of these benefits programs does not constitute an entitlement to such benefits and does not signify that an employee will necessarily be employed for the required time necessary to qualify for the benefits included in and administered through these programs. TAM reserves the right and maintains the discretion to add, revise, drop and interpret the benefits program.

This handbook does not contain the complete terms and/or conditions of any of the School's current benefit plans. It is intended only to provide general explanations. If there is any conflict between the handbook and any documents issued by one of TAM's insurance carriers, the carriers' guideline regulations will be regarded as authoritative.

6.1 GROUP INSURANCE

TAM offers health and life insurance programs for FULL-TIME employees upon completion of 30 days of employment. For specific information regarding the plans *see the individual Summary Plan Description.*

HEALTH INSURANCE

This Plan is a fully insured medical plan. Coverage is subject to all terms and conditions of the Plan.

- Coverage begins upon completion of 30 days of employment
- Members have their choice of plans: \$500 Plan, \$2,500 Plan, or a \$3000 high deductible Health Savings Account (HSA).
- . TAM will pay up to 100% of the premium for single coverage under the \$2,500 Plan with any premium in excess of that amount being the responsibility of the employee through payroll deduction.

DENTAL

- Coverage begins on the first of the month following completion of 30 days of employment
- This is a voluntary plan and the employee covers the cost fully.

VISION

- Coverage begins on the first of the month following completion of 30 days of employment
- This is a voluntary plan and the employee covers the cost fully.

LIFE INSURANCE

TAM provides a Life Insurance benefit for all full-time employees. The School will cover 100% of the premium for a basic \$50,000 policy. There is an optional plan to select additional coverage and/or coverage for your dependents. Coverage is subject to all terms and conditions of the plan.

SHORT AND LONG TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE

The short term disability benefit plan provides for the continuation of part of your income during a major illness or injury. The premium is paid by TAM.

The long term disability benefit is available to eligible employees in situations where an employee is unable to perform substantially all of their essential duties because of a physical or mental condition, illness or injury, for a period of more than 90 days. See the Long-Term Disability Summary Plan Description for details.

The employee's portion of any premium deduction for health/dental insurance will be deducted on a pre-taxed basis. (See Flexible Spending Plan)

This manual does not contain the complete terms and/or conditions of any of TAM's current insurance benefits plans. It is intended only to provide general explanations. If there is ever any conflict between the manual and any documents issued by one of the TAM's insurance carriers, the carrier's guideline regulations will be regarded as authoritative.

6.2 COBRA BENEFITS

The Federal Consolidated Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under Technical Academies of Minnesota's health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility.

Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, or death of an employee; a reduction in an employee's hours or leave of absence, divorce or legal separation, and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements.

Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at TAM's group rates plus an administration fee. TAM provides each eligible employee with a written notice describing rights granted under COBRA when the employee becomes eligible for coverage under TAM's health insurance plan. The notice contains important information about the employee's rights and obligations.

6.3 SOCIAL SECURITY/MEDICARE

Technical Academies of Minnesota withholds income tax from all employees' earnings and participates in FICA (Social Security) and Medicare withholding and matching programs as required by law.

6.4 TEACHERS RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION -TRA (Licensed teachers only)

All full-time, part-time, and temporary teachers contribute a percentage of their gross income to the Teacher's Retirement Plan and the employer matches that percentage in accordance with the law. Teachers may also contribute an additional amount into the TSA Plan (see 6.5 Tax Sheltered Annuity Plan). The additional contribution is **not** matched by the employer.

6.5 PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION (PERA)

The PERA Coordinated plan offers TAM's non-licensed employees the opportunity for saving and favorable tax treatment. Both the employee and TAM contribute a percentage of the employee's gross salary to PERA in accordance with the law.

6.6 RECORD-KEEPING

The School Personnel Committee, along with the Office Manager, monitors Disability Days earned and used. Each employee is responsible for verifying their information to make sure the correct amount of available hours is accurate.

Each full-time employee is responsible for completing a leave request form in a timely manner.

6.7 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE, TRAINING, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Technical Academies of Minnesota recognizes that the skills and knowledge of its employees are critical to the success of Technical Academies of Minnesota. TAM offers educational assistance programs to encourage personal development, improve job-related skills, and enhance an employee's ability to compete for reasonably attainable jobs. If you are interested, gather the information and contact the School Personnel Committee for approval. The allocation of professional development funds for each employee will be established each year and will be subject to modification or cancellation at any time with or without notice.

6.8 LEAVES OF ABSENCE

1. Paid Time Off (PTO):

- a. Hourly full-time employees will earn a total of 12 PTO days/96 hours per school year. 10.67 hours are earned in one month and accrued on the 1st of the following month in which it was earned starting in September of the school year. Earned PTO will be capped at 12 days/96 hours per year. Employees may, however, roll-over their earned, but unused, PTO into the next year, but once they have a bank of earned (unused) leave of 96 hours they will no longer accrue PTO, until some is used moving them below 96 hours.
 - i. Hourly employees can only take PTO time for contract days
 - ii. PTO may be paid out upon retirement of a position as set forth below.
 - iii. Staff are able to go no more than 8 hours negative of PTO.
- b. Subject to the approval of the School Personnel Committee, PTO may be used at the discretion of the employee on required duty days only for any reason whether for personal business or illness of Employee or the Employee's family member, or to address safety matters or emergencies. Employees can use PTO any time they need a day off. When foreseeable, it is required that Employees give at least one week notice and receive pre-approval prior to taking PTO. When unforeseeable, such as in the case of illness or emergency, employees should provide notice as soon as practicable.
- c. Employees may use PTO for any use, including but not limited to:

1. Their own mental or physical illness, injury or other health condition, to seek a medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition, or for preventative medical or health care
 2. For the care of a family member who has a mental or physical illness, injury or other health condition; or who needs medical diagnosis, care or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury, or other health condition; or who needs preventative medical or health care;
 3. For absences due to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking, to obtain services from a victim services organization, to obtain psychological or other counseling, to seek relocation or take steps to secure an existing home due to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking, or to seek legal advice or take legal action including preparing for or participating in any civil criminal legal proceeding relating to or resulting from domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking;
 4. Due to the School's closure due to a weather or other public emergency or an employee's need to care for a family member whose school or place of care has been closed due to weather or other public emergency;
 5. For the employee's inability to work or telework because they are prohibited from working by the School due to health concerns related to the potential transmission of a communicable illness related to a public emergency, or seeking or awaiting the results of a diagnostic test for, or a medical diagnosis of, a communicable disease related to a public emergency and such employee has been exposed to a communicable disease or the School has requested a test or diagnosis; and
 6. When a health authority or health care professional has determined that the employee or their family member in the community would jeopardize the health of others because of the exposure of the employee or family member of the employee to a communicable disease, whether or not the employee or family member has actually contacted the disease.
- d. For absences not listed above in (c), TAM will generally grant a request for PTO at the time desired by the Employee pursuant to the following guidelines;
- i. No more than 10% or 2 employees per school will be granted leave on any given workday. In unusual circumstances, the School Personnel Committee may elect to exceed the limitations on the number of employees on leave on any given day.
 - ii. Employees may not use PTO for reasons not listed in (c) above, on the following blackout days; the first week of the school year, last two

weeks of the school year, parent-teacher conference days or staff development days.

- iii. While every effort must be made by staff to avoid scheduling medical appointments on these blackout dates, it is recognized that extenuating circumstances may arise that are outside of an Employee's control (i.e. availability of specialty or immediate nature of appointments). Essential appointments, to include those that are life-saving, or by not attending them will have irreparable effects, for example, loss of sight, hearing, limbs or mobility to either the staff or family members, and other procedures or emergency situations as deemed appropriate by the School Personnel Committee.
 - iv. No more than three (3) consecutive PTO days may be granted for foreseeable personal days that are not related to the employee's or their family member's sickness, security, or other reason allowed under Minnesota law.
- e. Except for the reasons listed above in (c), the School Personnel Committee reserves the right to make the final determination as to whether the employee is entitled to receive PTO for any given absence based upon the School Personnel Committee's assessment of the needs of the School and whether allowing PTO on any given day would disrupt the School's operation, present staffing problems, or interfere with the School's basic educational mission.
 - f. A request for a medical leave of absence of more than three (3) consecutive days under this section, must be accompanied by a written doctor's statement outlining the condition of health and an estimated date for which the staff member is expected to be able to resume normal responsibilities. (See also Sec. 6.8, #7 Child Care/Family Medical Leave)
 - g. The School will not do any of the following:
 - 1. Require the employee as a condition of using PTO to find a replacement worker to cover their hours while the employee uses PTO;
 - 2. Discharge, discipline, penalize, interfere with, threaten, restrain, coerce, or otherwise retaliate or discriminate against a person because the person has exercised or attempted to exercise rights protected under the Minnesota Sick and Safe Time law, including because the employee requested PTO, used PTO, requested a statement of accrued PTO, informed any other person of their potential rights under Minnesota Statutes sections 181.9445-181.9448, made a complaint or filed an action to enforce a right to PTO under the law, or is or was participating in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under the law;
 - 3. Consider any absence covered by the PTO policy as unexcused and subject to discipline;

4. Refuse to reinstate an employee upon conclusion of their PTO; and
 5. Refuse to reinstate employee upon conclusion of their use of PTO to the same rate of pay they were receiving prior to beginning to use PTO. Any automatic adjustments to pay or benefits will also apply for employee in spite of their using PTO. Employees on PTO shall maintain any seniority as well, as though there was no interruption in their service.
- h. Upon retirement of employment from the School, Employees with thirty (30) or more days of accrued but unused PTO may request a one-time payout of unused PTO under the following circumstances:
- i. The Employee must submit a written request for payout of accrued/unused PTO;
 - ii. The Employee will receive a lump sum payment of one-half (1/2) of any accrued/unused PTO days of thirty (30) days or more with the payout amount capped at thirty (30) days, (for example, an Employee with forty five (45) days of accrued/unused PTO at the time of termination will received payment of seven and one half (7 and ½) days of PTO; Employees with more than ninety (90) days of accrued/unused PTO cannot receive a payout of more than thirty (30) days of unused PTO at departure).
 - iii. Employees who are eligible for payout of PTO are those Employees who voluntarily retire from the school, provided the Employee provides written notice of retirement required by Section 3.14 of this Employee Handbook.
 - iv. Employees whose employment is terminated by the TAM due to poor performance or misconduct, in the judgment of TAM, or who resign without providing required timely written notification are not eligible for payout of accrued/unused PTO.

2. Voting

Employees will be granted paid time-off on Election Day to vote in any statewide general election or to fill a vacancy in Congress. Employees are encouraged to vote prior to or after normal working hours if it is at all possible.

3. Absences for Child's School Activities (Minnesota State Law)

Under Minnesota Law regarding working-parents rights, every employee is entitled to take up to 16 hours unpaid leave a year to attend their children's school conferences, classroom activities, child care, or another early childhood program. Employees may use PTO time. The employee should try to give the School Personnel Committee notice of the upcoming absence.

4. Absences to Care for Sick Child/Relatives

Under Minnesota Law, employees who work at least half time, are allowed to use accrued PTO to care for a child or other relative as allowed by law.

5. Jury Duty

An employee who has completed 90 days of employment and has been summoned for jury duty will be allowed time off with pay for jury duty. The employee must show evidence of selection and any fees received are to be given to the TAM except for allowance for transportation to and from jury duty.

The employee is expected to work as much of the regularly scheduled assigned day as possible when not actually on jury duty. Employees are required to work before and after jury duty if able to work a minimum of two consecutive hours. It is necessary for employees give TAM as much advance notice as possible of impending jury duty.

Employees who are already off work and receiving Disability Leave including short or long term disability or PTO pay are not eligible to receive additional paid time due to serving on jury duty.

6. Military Leave

Time off with or without pay will be granted for employees to attend to military duty pursuant to state and federal law.

7. Family and Medical Leave

Leave provided to employees pursuant to the federal Family Medical Leave Act affirms TAM's commitment to children and families. This parenting/childcare leave and family medical leave policy is intended to provide all staff with a clear understanding and interpretation of the use and administration of Minnesota Statutes (Parenting /Child Care Leave and Federal Public Law (Family and Medical Leave Act).

Furthermore, the TAM staff will provide its members with support and assistance in reviewing and selecting the most appropriate options available to them. For the purposes of this policy, "parent" shall be an eligible staff member who is a natural or adoptive parent or guardian.

All leaves covered by this policy, except as provided for in Federal law, Minnesota Statute, and/or PTO policy shall be unpaid leave. The statutory leave benefits will be provided to all staff members who are eligible for such leaves.

Twelve-week FMLA Leave (provided TAM has 50 or more employees combined at both sites)

Regular staff members who have been employed by the School for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave are entitled to a total of 12

workweeks of unpaid family or medical leave during the applicable 12-month period as defined below, plus any additional leave as required by law. Leave may be taken for one or more of the following reasons in accordance with applicable law:

- Birth of the staff member's child
- Placement of an adopted or foster child with the staff member;
- To care for the staff member's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition;
- and/or
- The staff member's serious health condition makes the person unable to perform the functions of the staff member's job.

1. For the purposes of this policy, "year" is defined as a rolling 12 month period measured backward from the date the staff member uses any leave.
2. A "serious health condition" typically requires either inpatient care, an absence of 3 or more days for a serious health condition, or continuing treatment by or under the supervision of a health care provider, as defined by applicable law. Family and medical leave generally are not intended to cover short-term conditions for which treatment and recovery are very brief.
3. Eligible spouses employed by the school are limited to an aggregate of twelve weeks of leave during any 12-month period for the birth or adoption of a child, the placement of a child for foster care or to care for a parent. This limitation for spouses employed by the school does not apply to leave taken by one spouse to care for the other spouse who is seriously ill, to care for a child with a serious health condition, or because of the staff member's own serious health condition.
4. Depending on the type of leave, intermittent or reduced schedule leave may be granted at the discretion of the school site or when medically necessary. However, part-time staff members are only eligible for a pro-rata portion of leave to be used on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis, based on their average hours worked per week.
5. If a staff member requests leave for a serious health condition of the staff member or the staff member's spouse, child, or parent, the staff member will be required to submit sufficient certification. In such a case, the staff member must submit the medical certification within 15 days from the date of the request or as soon as practicable under the circumstances.
6. Requests for leave shall be made to the School Personnel Committee. Staff members must give 30 days' advanced written notice of a leave of absence where practicable. Staff members are expected to make a reasonable effort to schedule leaves resulting from planned medical treatment so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the school site, subject to and in coordination with the health care provider.

7. During the period of a leave permitted under this policy (which does not exceed a total of 12 workweeks in the applicable 12 month period), TAM will provide health insurance under its group health plan under the same conditions coverage would have been provided had the staff member not taken the leave. The staff member will be responsible for payment of the staff member contribution to continue group health insurance coverage during the leave. A staff member's failure to make necessary and timely contributions may result in termination of coverage. The staff member may be allowed to substitute earned PTO leave for unpaid leave: the eligible PTO days must have been earned in the months prior to the implementation of the unpaid leave.
8. Staff members returning from leave permitted under this policy (which does not exceed a total of 12 workweeks in the applicable 12 month period) are eligible for reinstatement in the same or equivalent position as provided by law. However, the staff member has no greater right to reinstatement or to other benefits and conditions of employment than if the staff member had been continuously employed during the leave.
9. A staff member who does not return to work after leave or does not return for at least 30 working days, may, in some situations, be required to reimburse the school for the cost of the health plan premiums paid by it.
10. The provisions of this policy are intended to comply with applicable law, including the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) and applicable regulations. Any terms used from the FMLA will have the same meaning as defined by the ACT and/or applicable regulations. To the extent that this policy is ambiguous or contradicts applicable law, that language of the applicable law will prevail.

Minnesota Parental Leave Law

Employees are eligible for 12 weeks of unpaid parental leave in connection with the pregnancy, birth, or adoption of the employee's child and for pregnancy-related needs pursuant to the Minnesota state pregnancy and parenting laws. Parental leave may run concurrently or simultaneously with any other leave policy, but depending on the circumstances there may be additional leave available to the employee.

The leave shall begin at a time requested, and may be used for an employee who is:

- 1) A biological or adoptive parent in conjunction with the birth or adoption of a child; or
- 2) A female employee for prenatal care, or incapacity due to pregnancy, childbirth, or related health conditions.

The length of the leave shall be determined by the employee, but must not exceed 12 weeks, unless agreed to in writing prior.

Prior Notification

If leave is foreseeable, the employee must notify the School at least thirty (30) days prior to the first day of the Parental Leave. If thirty (30) days' notice is not provided in a foreseeable leave situation, and there is no reasonable excuse for the delay, The School reserves the right to deny the leave until at least thirty (30) days after the employee provides notice. In unexpected or unforeseeable situations, employees must provide notice to the School within two (2) business days of learning of the need to take Parental Leave or as soon as practicable.

Unpaid Nature of Leave

Parental Leave is not paid. If the employee has accrued PTO, the employee must substitute the accrued PTO time for unpaid Parental Leave. Substitution of paid leave or benefits shall not extend Parental Leave beyond the twelve (12) week limit. Parental Leave runs concurrently with an employee's entitlement to any other leave.

Continuation of Health Coverage and Benefits

The School will continue to make coverage available to an employee on Parental Leave under any existing group insurance policy, group subscriber contract, or health care plan for the employee and any dependents. The employee shall be responsible for paying the employee portion of the premium, which shall be deducted from any pay received by the employee during Parental Leave. If the employee does not receive compensation from the School during Parental Leave, the employee shall pay the premium to the School on or before the time it would be made by payroll deduction. Failure to make required premium payments on a timely basis may result in termination of coverage. An employee who chooses not to retain group health coverage while on Parental Leave will be entitled upon return from leave to be reinstated on the same terms as prior to taking the Parental Leave.

Reinstatement

Upon return from parental leave, employees are entitled to employment in their former position or one with comparable duties, hours, benefits, seniority, and pay as they had prior to taking the leave. Retaliation for requesting leave under this policy is strictly prohibited.

Contact the School Personnel Committee for the Leave Request Form.

SECTION 7

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

7.1 STAFF MEETINGS

Staff meetings will be held weekly and all staff members are required to attend. The time and day will be selected by the staff during staff development days in August. These informative meetings allow employees to be informed on recent TAM and/or School activities, changes in the workplace, and employee recognition.

7.2 BULLETIN BOARDS AND EMAIL

Bulletin boards provide employees access to important posted information and announcements. The employee is responsible for reading necessary information posted on the bulletin boards.

Each employee should check the bulletin board and the school email each morning and before leaving to ensure that they are informed of any school-related news or changes taking place.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS

Technical Academies of Minnesota encourages employees to make suggestions to help the school be a pleasant, efficient, and cost-effective employer. If employees do not want to offer suggestions verbally or in person, the suggestions may be written and submitted to the School Personnel Committee. If this is done anonymously, every care will be taken to preserve the employee's privacy.

7.4 PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Under normal working conditions, employees who have a job-related problem, question or complaint should first discuss it with their School Personnel Committee Representative. At this level, employees usually reach the simplest, quickest, and most satisfactory solution. If this does not solve the problem, the employee may talk with any other member of the School Personnel Committee and this team will make the final decision. The School Personnel Committee will keep the Board Chair of Technical Academies of Minnesota informed of any final written warnings or possible serious/legal issues and concerns. To the extent that there exist any conflicting procedures under applicable law or other TAM policies including but not limited to employee discrimination, harassment, maltreatment or discipline procedures, this Procedure for Handling Complaints is inapplicable. This Procedure for Handling Complaints is not, nor is it intended to limit an employee's legal right to submit complaints regarding alleged violations of law or policy.



Employee Handbook Acknowledgement

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the Technical Academies of Minnesota Employee Handbook. Any questions or concerns you may encounter before signing should be discussed with a member of the School Personnel Committee. Any violation of the processes and procedures discussed within the employee handbook will result in actions including, but not limited to: review by the School Personnel Committee, an employee instructional plan, probation, and possible termination.

I, _____, have read and understand the TAM Employee Handbook, and accept the terms described therein.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Personnel Member Signature: _____

Date: _____