



"Together We Fly"

Universal Academy Employee Handbook

2018- 2019

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with Universal Academy employment-related questions. This Employee Handbook serves as a resource for information on LTTS Charter School Inc. dba Universal Academy policies, procedures, benefits, and programs. Not all policies and procedures are included, and specific policy references are provided as a resource only. The UNIVERSAL ACADEMY Board Policy Manual, available on the UNIVERSAL ACADEMY website, contains further details of these and other LEA policies.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official LEA policy manual, nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of non-contract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures related to employment. The Board Policy Manual, district policy and procedures may change during the school year; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may confer with their supervisor, or contact the district office located at 2616 North MacArthur Irving, Texas. District policies can be accessed online by going to www.universalacademy.com.

Hiring Standards

Universal Academy believes that the quality of its professional staff greatly impacts the quality of education offered in the school. Universal Academy therefore recruits and hires those individuals who are best qualified to meet Universal Academy's educational needs. Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis to the UA's website.

Employee Duties

Each employee is expected to comply with the standards of conduct set out in this Handbook and any other policies, regulations, and guidelines that impose duties, requirements, or standards attendant to his or her status as a Universal Academy employee. Violation of Universal Academy policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the policy of Universal Academy Schools not to discriminate on the basis of any legally-protected classification, including race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or disability, age, or genetic information in its educational programs and employment practices as required by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Titles I and V of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA); the Age Discrimination in Education Act of 1975, as amended (ADEA); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act in Education of 2008 (GINA); and any other legally-protected classification or status protected by applicable law. In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at Universal Academy Schools will be based on merit, performance, qualifications, and/or abilities. Universal Academy Schools will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals in compliance with the ADA, as amended.

Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Any employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged **to bring these issues to the attention of their campus' Principal or H/R manager.**

District information

Description of the District

Universal Academy ranks within the top twenty Charter Schools in Texas and the Nation. The district has two campuses located in Irving and Coppell about 25 miles from downtown Dallas. The schools serve students from many communities in the Dallas-Fort-Worth Area.

Student enrollment is approximately 2,100 and staff members total over 200 for the 2018-2019 school year. Universal Academy is committed to serving and educating tomorrow's leaders and scholars.

The Universal Academy School Board, administrators, teachers and support staff firmly believe that ALL students deserve and shall receive academic excellence.

Mission Statement

To create a challenging and intellectually engaging curriculum within a safe, nurturing environment by providing varied learning opportunities that focus on the development of instructional excellence, leadership, and character building in partnership with a diverse community of lifelong learners.

Vision Statement

Universal Academy empowers all students to take their place in the world as knowledgeable, competent, responsible citizens. Students are articulate, creative, achieving individual academic, emotional and physical goals in a safe, equitable educational community. Students are well rounded, achieve in all subject areas, integrate technology, think independently and connect content to real life.

All district employees are student-centered, innovative, committed, enthusiastic, educational leaders. They respect student diversity, strengths, and learning challenges. They understand and implement research-based strategies. All employees have high standards for their students, colleagues and themselves.

The community is an empowered, positive, collaborative voice that supports teaching and learning and participates in educational decision making for students. The district embraces the global community and is committed to meaningful partnerships.

Universal Academy is committed to student success.

Goals

1. Students completing their education in the district's schools will:
2. Develop a love of learning and will be prepared and committed to be life-long learners
3. Achieve their full human potential as individuals and contributing members of society
4. Be prepared to live with the challenges and opportunities of a world that is characterized by interdependence and a variety of interconnections
5. Be prepared to live in a world that is characterized by a variety of individual differences and great diversity in social and natural systems
6. Be prepared to live in a world that is characterized by accelerating change

Board of Trustees

Texas law grants the Board of Trustees the power to govern and oversee the management of the District's schools. The Board is the policy-making body within the District and has overall responsibility for the curriculum, school taxes, annual budget, employment of the Superintendent and other professional staff, and facilities. The Board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal law and regulations.

The Board of Trustees are appointed by the citizens of the District to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the District's children. Board members serve without compensation.

Current board members include:

Diane Harris – Superintendent
Michael McKee – President
Dana Jobe – Member
Yolanda Brown – Member
Dr. Sharon Greggs – Member
Sandra Hall – Member
Diane Moshier – Member

General Counsel:

Tommy Fuller

Board Meetings:

All Universal Academy Board Meetings are open to the public. Regular meetings – Open Session – will be held at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of each month alternating between the Irving Campus and the Coppell Campus. With public notice, the School Board will also hold special meetings and work sessions as needed. When determined necessary the Board President; may change the date or time of the regular meetings. The notices for the meetings are posted on the Universal Academy website, at www.universalacademy.com. Within the limits of the Texas Open Meetings Act, parts of the Board meetings may be closed to the public for topics including, but not limited to: real estate transactions, personnel matters, student hearings, and legal matters.

To Address the Board:

The public may address the Board during the public participation portion of the Board meeting. Remarks may be related to any topic, whether agenda items or non-agenda items, and are limited to five minutes. Those wishing to speak during public participation may sign the roster that is located right outside the conference room.

Notice of all approved board minutes and agendas are available online at www.universalacademy.com.

Central Office Administration

Founders of Universal Academy

Mrs. Diane Harris,
Mrs. Janice Blackmon
Mrs. Catherin Jackson

Superintendent of Schools and Chief Educational Officer (CEO)
Director of Administrative Services
Director of Transportation and General Services
Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Director of Technology & Marketing
Principal (Irving Campus)
Director of Bilingual and ESL
Mathematics Facilitator
Director of Fine Arts
Athletic Director
General Counsel
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Mrs. Diane Harris
Mrs. Janice Blackmon
Ms. Perkina Gross-Dickerson
Dr. Dana Jobe
Mr. Nate McLaughlin
Mrs. Sheraton Duffey
Ms. Deborah Canup
Dr. Terea Jones
Mr. Dion Hood
Mr. Gerald Peoples
Mr. Tommy Fuller
TBA

District Services

Special Education Services
Director of Facilities
Child Nutrition and Food Services
Safety & Security

Mrs. Joyce Jackson
Mr. Kyle McNealy
Ms. Alfredia Thurman
Mr. Rodney Peoples

Instructional Leadership and Assigned Grade Levels

Universal Academy-Irving, Cohorts

Ms. Jessica Lee (Kindergarten – 2nd)
Mr. Roderick Peoples (3rd – 5th)
Dr. Terea Jones (6th)
Mrs. Daphne Hood (7th – 8th)
Ms. Ryan Martin (Instructional Coach, District)

Universal Academy-Coppell, Cohorts

Mrs. Monica Robertson (Kindergarten)
Mrs. Heather Adams (2nd – 3rd)
Mrs. Sandra Clark (1st and 4th)
Mrs. Dana Wylie (5th – 8th)
Mrs. Linda Walker (9th – 12th)

Campus Counselors

Universal Academy-Irving
Ms. Peace Jackson

Universal Academy-Coppell
Mrs. Joann Blasko

Campus Nurses

Universal Academy-Irving
Mrs. Valerie Matthis

Universal Academy-Coppell
Ms. Barbara Branson RN
Ms. Latanya Green, Nurse Assistant

Student Records

Ms. Jennifer Williams, PEIMS Manager

Universal Academy-Irving
Ms. Jennifer Williams

Universal Academy-Coppell
Ms. Shenee Davis

Helpful Contacts

From time to time employees have questions or concerns. If those questions or concerns cannot be answered by supervisors or at the campus or department level, the employee is encouraged to contact the appropriate department as listed below.

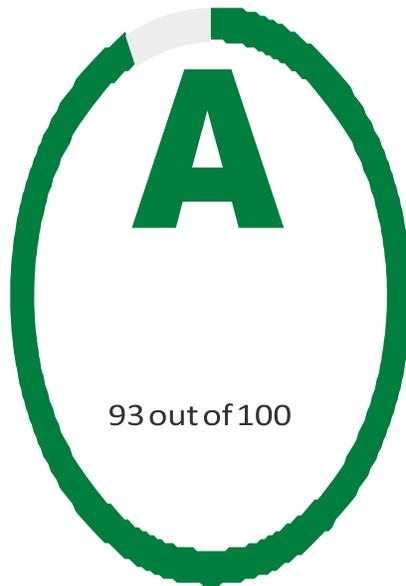
| Contacts | Address | City | Zip | Phone | Fax Number |
|--|----------------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Superintendent, Mrs. Diane Harris | 2616 N. MacArthur Blvd | Irving | 75062 | 972-255-1800 | 972-255-6122 |
| Director of Administrative Services, Mrs. Janice Blackmon | 1001 E. Sandy Lake Road | Coppell | 75019 | 972-393-5068 | 972-393-5657 |
| Associate Superintendent, Curriculum and Gifted & Talented Dr. Dana Jobe | 2616 N. MacArthur Blvd | Irving | 75062 | 972-255-1800 | 972-255-6122 |
| Director of Transportation/General Services, Ms. Perkina Gross-Dickerson | 1001 E. Sandy Lake Road | Coppell | 75019 | 972-393-5068 | 972-393-5657 |
| Principal (Irving Campus) Mrs. Sheraton Duffey | 2616 N. MacArthur Blvd | Irving | 75062 | 972-255-1800 | 972-255-6122 |
| Director of Technology & Marketing, Mr. Nate McLaughlin | 2616 N. MacArthur Blvd | Irving | 75062 | 972-255-1800 | 972-255-6122 |
| Special Education | 2616 N. MacArthur Blvd | Irving | 75062 | 972-255-1800 | 972-255-6122 |
| Student Records and PEIMS, Ms. Jennifer William (District) | 1001 E. Sandy Lake Road | Coppell | 75019 | 972-393-5068 | 972-393-5657 |
| Maintenance and Facilities Contact: Mr. Kyle McNealy | 2616 N. MacArthur Blvd | Irving | 75062 | 972-255-1800 | 972-255-6122 |
| Human Resources Mrs. Christy Phoenix | 2616 N. MacArthur Blvd | Irving | 75062 | 972-255-1800 | 972-255-6122 |
| Accounting TxEIS | 2616 N. MacArthur Blvd | Irving | 75062 | 972-255-1800 | 972-255-6122 |
| School Nurse (Irving), Mrs. Valerie Matthis | 2616 N. MacArthur Blvd | Irving | 75062 | 972-255-1800 | 972-255-6122 |
| School Nurse (Coppell), Ms. Barbara Branson | 1001 E. Sandy Lake Road | Coppell | 75019 | 972-393-5068 | 972-393-5657 |

UNIVERSAL ACADEMY ACADEMIC ACHEIVEMENTS

Texas Education Agency District Rating 2017-2018



HOW WELL IS THIS DISTRICT PERFORMING OVERALL?



UNDERSTANDING OVERALL PERFORMANCE



This report card is designed to tell us how well we are helping students reach grade level and how well we are preparing them for success after high school. Much like the grades we give students, we can use these grades to identify ways to help schools improve over time. The overall grade is based on academic performance.

CAMPUS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Universal Academy-Irving

2018 Accountability: Overall



Texas Education Agency

2018 Accountability Ratings Overall Summary

UNIVERSAL ACADEMY (057808101) - UNIVERSAL ACADEMY

| | Component Score | Scaled Score | Rating |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Overall | | 80 | Met Standard |
| Student Achievement | | 79 | Met Standard |
| STAAR Performance | 47 | 75 | |
| College, Career and Military Readiness | 44 | 76 | |
| Graduation Rate | 100 | 95 | |
| School Progress | | 81 | Met Standard |
| Academic Growth | 69 | 79 | Met Standard |
| Relative Performance (Eco Dis: 85.5%) | 46 | 81 | Met Standard |
| Closing the Gaps | 67 | 79 | Met Standard |

Distinction Designations

| | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| ELA/Reading | Earned |
| Mathematics | Earned |
| Science | Earned |
| Social Studies | Not Earned |
| Comparative Academic Growth | Not Earned |
| Postsecondary Readiness | Earned |
| Comparative Closing the Gaps | Not Earned |

CAMPUS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Universal Academy-Coppell

2018 Accountability: Overall



Texas Education Agency

2018 Accountability Ratings Overall Summary

UNIVERSAL ACADEMY - COPPELL (057808102) - UNIVERSAL ACADEMY

| | Component Score | Scaled Score | Rating |
|--|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Overall | | 95 | Met Standard |
| Student Achievement | | 93 | Met Standard |
| STAAR Performance | 73 | 93 | |
| College, Career and Military Readiness | 100 | | |
| Graduation Rate | 100 | | |
| School Progress | | 91 | Met Standard |
| Academic Growth | 82 | 91 | Met Standard |
| Relative Performance (Eco Dis: 1.4%) | 73 | 76 | Met Standard |
| Closing the Gaps | 99 | 98 | Met Standard |

Distinction Designations

| | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| ELA/Reading | Earned |
| Mathematics | Earned |
| Science | Earned |
| Social Studies | Earned |
| Comparative Academic Growth | Earned |
| Postsecondary Readiness | Earned |
| Comparative Closing the Gaps | Not Earned |



Universal Academy High School (2018-2019)

U.S. News Best High Schools Rankings

Universal Academy is recognized in the [National Rankings by U.S. News and World Report](#) as one of the **BEST High Schools in the Nation**. Universal Academy earned a bronze medal. Schools are ranked based on their performance on state-required tests and how well they prepare students for college.

The U.S. News rankings include data on more than 20,500 public schools in 50 states and the District of Columbia. Schools were awarded gold, silver or bronze medals based on their performance on state assessments and how well they prepare students for college.

All rankings:

Recognized in [National Rankings](#)

Recognized in [Texas High Schools](#)

Bronze

High-performing schools based on state exam performance.

Employment

Equal Employment Opportunity

The LTTS Charter School Inc. d/b/a Universal Academy does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Additionally, the district does not discriminate against an employee or applicant who acts to oppose such discrimination or participates in the investigation of a complaint related to a discriminatory employment practice. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any of the reasons listed above should contact Human Resources.

General Hours Campus Hours

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Elementary School Professional Hours | 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. |
| Middle School Professional Hours | 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. |
| High School Professional Hours | 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. |

Administrators may amend employee times without lengthening the workday based on campus needs. Professional school personnel shall occasionally be required to work additional duty hours outside those stated above to complete those tasks associated with their positions included but not limited to campus staff meetings, student ARD meetings, open house, and other activities, events, or meetings.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on the District's Web site (www.universalacademy.com) and Region X.

Employment Contracts – Employment At-Will

All employees are employed at-will and may be terminated with or without cause, with or without prior notice, at any time, for any reason or for no reason. Similarly, at will employment with LTTS Charter School, Inc. d/b/a Universal Academy is voluntary. At will employees are requested to provide two-week's notice of a resignation but are free to resign at any time, with or without cause or notice.

These contracts are terminable at the will of the District and for the reasons stated in their contracts. As such, these contracts do not create vested property right in the employee as to an expectation of future employment. The District will never discharge an employee because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, military status, or on any other basis prohibited by law.

Contract and Noncontract Employment

State law does not require Charter Schools to employ all full-time professional employees in positions requiring a certificate from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and nurses under probationary, term, or continuing contracts. Employees in all positions are employed at-will or by a contract that is not subject to the procedures for nonrenewal or termination under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. The paragraphs that follow provide a general description of the employment arrangements used by the Charter School. All employees are required to sign a contract or contract addendum each school year. All employees will receive a copy of their contract.

Probationary contracts

Full-time professional employees new to teaching or new to teaching in the state of Texas and employed

in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive a probationary contract during their first year of employment. Former employees who are hired after a two-year lapse in district employment or employees who move to a position requiring a new class of certification may also be employed by probationary contract. Probationary contracts are one year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the District may not exceed one school year.

For those with less experience, the probationary period will be three full school years (i.e. three one-year contracts) with an optional fourth school year if the Board determines it is doubtful whether a term contract should be given. All employees will receive a copy of their contract.

Continuing contracts

Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification and nurses will be employed by AT WILL contracts after they have successfully completed the probationary period. Campus principals and central office administrators are employed under two-year contracts. Non-certified professional and administrative employees may be employed under two-year contracts. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. All employees will receive a copy of their contract. All employees are required to complete an "Intent to Return", for each school year. Based on the Intent to return information as well as their job assessment the teacher may be offered a new contract. The teacher has 10 days from the receipt of contract to sign and return it to Christy Phoenix H/R Manager. If the signed contract is not signed and returned within the 10 day period, the employee status will be shown as resigned. If the employee signs a contract but resigns less than 45 days before the start of the new school year, Universal Academy will hold their Teacher Service Record for a period of one school year. In other words any resignations received after **July 9, 2019** will result in your service record being held for one school year.

Contract Addendums

Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification and nurses will be employed by AT-WILL contracts after they have successfully completed the probationary period. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the employee's contract and the District's employment policies. After successfully completing one year at Universal Academy, employees will sign an addendum to continue their employment at Universal Academy. All employees will receive a copy of their addendum.

Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees (Hourly)

All paraprofessional and auxiliary employees, regardless of certification, are employed at will and not by contract. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.

Consultant

A school consultant is an individual or business that provides services to another individual or business. The independent consultant is a separate business entity and is not considered an employee. They are hired only in the rare instances of not being able to find/hire a qualified person to perform the required duties. The consultants/Contractors contracts are based on need and our ability to pay, therefore these contracts are voidable without notice.

Noncertified professional and administrative employees

Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as non-instructional administrators) are employed by a one-year contract that is not subject to the provisions for nonrenewal or termination under the Texas Education Code. All employees will receive a copy of their contract.

Support and auxiliary employees

All support and auxiliary employees, regardless of certification, are employed at will and not by contract. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the District.

Documentation necessary for employment

All documentation necessary for the employment of contract employees must be delivered to the District within two weeks of date of hire. Any failure to deliver all documents necessary for employment in the District will result in placement of the employee on long term substitute status with a commensurate reduction in pay until such time that all documentation required is delivered. If an employee refuses to sign a contract, the employee will be immediately terminated by the district.

Employment after Retirement

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed under certain circumstances on a full-time basis without affecting their benefits, according to TRS rules and state law. Detailed information about employment after retirement is available in the TRS publication *Employment after Retirement*. Employees can contact TRS for additional information by calling 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. Information is also available on the TRS Web Site: (www.trs.texas.gov).

Certification and Licenses

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification or a professional license are personally responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to Employee Services in a timely manner.

A certified employee's contract may be voided without due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact Employee Services if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

Recertification of Employment Authorization

At the time of hire all employees must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) and present documents to verify identity and employment authorization.

Employees whose immigration status, employment authorization, or employment authorization documents have expired must present new documents that show current employment authorization. Employees should file the necessary application or petition sufficiently in advance to ensure that they maintain continuous employment authorization or valid employment authorization documents. Contact Employee Services if you have any questions regarding re-verification of employment authorization.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

The District may conduct searches in the workplace, including but not limited to accessing an employee's desk, file cabinets, or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes. *Therefore, employees are hereby notified that they have no legitimate expectation of privacy in those places.* In addition, the district reserves the right to conduct searches on District property or at a school-sponsored event when there is reasonable cause to believe a search will uncover evidence of work-related misconduct. Such an investigatory search may include drug and alcohol testing if the suspected work-related violation relates to drug or alcohol use. The district may search the employee, the employee's personal items and work areas, including district-owned technology resources, lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or work sites or used in district business.

Employees required to have a commercial driver's license

Any employee whose duties require a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to drug and alcohol testing. This includes all drivers who operate a motor vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people, counting the driver; drivers of large vehicles; or drivers of vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials. Teachers, coaches, or other employees who primarily perform duties other than driving are subject to testing requirements if their duties include driving a commercial motor vehicle.

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted following accidents. Return-to-duty and follow-up testing will be conducted if an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs is allowed to return to duty.

All employees required to have a CDL or who otherwise are subject to alcohol and drug testing will receive a copy of the district's policy, the testing requirements, and detailed information on alcohol and drug abuse and the availability of assistance programs.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact their supervisor or Employee Services.

Health Safety Training

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification or training in:

- 1) First aid,
 - 2) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR),
 - 3) The use of an automated external defibrillator (AED),
 - 4) Evaluation, treatment, and oversight of concussions, and 5) extracurricular athletic activity safety.
- Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, University Interscholastic League, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to Employee Services.

Reassignments and Transfers

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the Superintendent, Director of Administrative Services, or designee when the Superintendent or designee determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the District and the students. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract. Campus reassignments must be approved by the Superintendent, Director of Administrative Services or designee at the receiving campus except when reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes. In exercising their authority to approve assignments and reassignments, principals shall work cooperatively with the central office staff to ensure the efficient operation of the District as a whole. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time unless an extracurricular or supplemental duty assignment is part of a dual-assignment contract. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the District process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook.

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. Voluntary transfers to another campus shall be for a minimum period of three (3) years on the new campus. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. In addition, transfers during the school year may be permitted in the case of promotion by title, salary or instructional stipend increase, or increase in number of contract days. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Department of Employee Services and must be approved by both the sending and receiving supervisor. Any exceptions must be approved by the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent for Employee Services.

Workload and Work Schedules

Professional Employees

Professional employees and academic administrators are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10-, 11-, or 12-month basis, according to the work schedules set by the district. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule for teachers and all school holidays. Notice of work schedules, including start and end dates and scheduled holidays will be distributed each school year. Eligible classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation including conferences. The schedule of planning periods is set at the campus level but must provide at least 450 minutes within each two-week period in blocks not less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. Eligible teachers and librarians are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes. The district may require teachers to supervise students during lunch one day a week when no other personnel are available.

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees

Support employees are employed at will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor.

The workday is not the same as the instructional day. Principals may set hours of work for employees that require you to be on duty before daily instruction begins and after daily instruction ends. Exempt employees may be required to work beyond the school workday hours. The minimum school workday for campus employees is shown on the chart below.

| LEVEL | SCHOOL HOURS | | TEACHERS/COUNSELOR | | EDUCATIONAL AIDES | |
|-------------|--------------|---------|--------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| | Start | Dismiss | Start | Dismiss | Start | Dismiss |
| Pre-K | 8:00 | 3:30 | 7:30 | 4:00 | 7:30 | 4:00 |
| Elementary | 8:00 | 3:30 | 7:30 | 4:00 | 7:30 | 4:00 |
| Junior High | 8:00 | 3:30 | 7:30 | 4:00 | 7:30 | 4:00 |
| High School | 8:00 | 3:30 | 7:30 | 4:00 | 7:30 | 4:00 |

Professional Employees

Professional employees and academic administrators are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10-, 11-, or 12-month basis, according to the work schedules set by the District. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule and all school holidays. Notice of work schedules including start and end dates and scheduled holidays will be distributed each school year.

Planning Period

Classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation, parent teacher conferences, evaluation of student work and planning. ALL employees are required to stay on campus during the entire duration of their planning period. If there is an emergency to leave campus, employees must notify their immediate supervisor who must receive approval by a central administrator. All teachers will receive a 45 minute planning period each instructional day. Planning period times may vary or not be implemented on special days, early release days, or holidays. *Teachers may not use their planning period as their lunch or breakfast period and are not allowed to leave campus during this period.*

Can we be asked to meet with parents during our planning time?

Yes, that is one of the purposes of this time. The time is also for reviewing students' homework and for YOUR planning and preparation.

Duty Free Lunch

All employees are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of 30 minutes each day. Employees who elect to leave campus during their lunch time are required to sign in and out in the main office. Any employee who ignores this district policy may receive a verbal or written reprimand by their immediate supervisor.

Lunch Duty

The District may require employees to supervise students during lunch. Employees are required to closely monitor the students' behavior and the noise level in the cafeteria. This assigned duty must be taken seriously. Employees must review the Cafeteria Responsibilities that were sent by email from the Associate Superintendent. A copy of the Cafeteria Responsibilities are posted in this handbook.

Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees

Support employees are employed at will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must

be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor.

Breaks for Expression of Motherhood

The district supports the practice of expressing motherhood and makes reasonable accommodations for the needs of employees who express breast milk. A place, other than a multiple use bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from other employees and the public where the employee can express breast milk will be provided.

A reasonable amount of break time will be provided when the employee has a need to express motherhood. For nonexempt employees, these breaks are unpaid and are not counted as hours worked. Employees should meet with their supervisor to discuss their needs and arrange break times.

Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications

In schools receiving Title I funds, the District is required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. ESSA also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned to or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements.

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notice under ESSA is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) and individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call Human Resources at 972-255-1800.

Outside Employment and Tutoring

Employees are required to disclose in writing to their immediate supervisor any outside employment as it may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest of the district. Universal Academy employees may not conduct outside paid or unpaid tutoring or training to any Universal Academy student. Supervisors will consider outside employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

The District expects all instructional staff to make tutorials available to students and parents to ensure academic growth and success. Student tutorials should begin whenever need for remedial learning is necessary and beneficial. Tutorials may be held before school, within the school day, or after school. Students attending tutorial sessions should be those students who are failing a particular subject, or students who need review of a concept or extra help and support. Teachers will document the need for tutorials and attendance at tutorial sessions.

Saturday School Tutoring

All district employees are required to commitment to one Saturday of tutoring each school year. The district will determine the Saturday School Tutoring Window and employees may sign-up for one of the designated Saturdays.

Employee Involvement

At both the campus and District levels, Universal Academy offers opportunities for input in matters that affect employees and influence the instructional effectiveness of the district. As part of the District's planning and decision-making process, employees are elected to serve on District- or campus-level advisory committees. Plans and detailed information about the shared decision-making process are available in each campus office or from Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Services.

Professional Learning

Professional learning activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and the District. Professional learning for instructional personnel is predominantly district and campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, addressed in the campus improvement plan, and approved by a campus-level advisory committee. Professional learning for non-instructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements (e.g., bus drivers) and continued employee skill development.

Individuals holding renewable SBEC certificates are responsible for obtaining the required training hours and maintaining appropriate documentation.

Administrative and Counseling Internships

Any administrative or counseling internship or hours of observation sought by District employees as part of their completion of an advanced degree must be approved in advance by the Superintendent or Director of Administrative Services.

Performance Evaluation

Evaluation of an employee's job performance is a continuous process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor at least annually. Written evaluations will be completed on forms approved by the District. Reports, correspondence, and memoranda also can be used to document performance information. All employees will receive a copy of their written evaluation, participate in a performance conference with their supervisor, and have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

Teacher Appraisal Calendar 2018-2019

| | |
|---|--|
| First Six-Weeks (August 20 – October 2) | Appraisal Event (Fall Observations) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom Teacher complete Teacher Goal Setting and Reflection in Eduphoria 2. Pre-Observation Conference to discuss Goal Setting, Classroom Observation Agreement 3. Employee T-TESS Training 4. Observation Feedback |
| Second Six-Weeks (October 3 – November 14) | Appraisal Event (Fall Observations) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. T-TESS Observations and Feedback |
| Fifth Six-Weeks (March 1 – April 18) | Appraisal Event (Spring Observations) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. T-TESS Observations and Feedback |
| May 1 | All appraisal processes must be concluded |

****No classroom observations will be scheduled the day before or after a standardized assessment data.**

****Universal Academy Administration reserves the right to make any changes to the appraisal calendar.**

Appraisal Procedural Guidelines

2018-2019

1. All classroom teachers will be appraised annually.
2. Appraisal observations shall occur in core instructional settings and shall not be conducted in extracurricular assignments.
3. Classroom observations shall be announced or unannounced as determined by the appraiser.
4. Documentation of anecdotal information will be provided to the classroom teacher within 10 school days of the event being recorded. Any documentation not recorded by the appraiser will be confirmed and verified by the appraiser prior to being provided to the teacher.
5. The appraiser and teacher will complete an End of Year Conference via the Goal Attainment Review document no later than 15 schools days prior to the last day of student instruction. During Goal Attainment Review, the teacher and appraiser will discuss artifacts, instructional goals, and evaluation of placement on the T-TESS appraisal rubric to complete. Afterward, the appraiser will provide the teacher a completed copy of the appraisal within 10 days of the conference.
6. Each teacher will be provided an annual appraisal calendar for the current school year.

Appraisal Responses and Appeals

7. Teachers may provide written responses during the evaluative process at the following times: Following receipt of observation feedback,
 1. Following receipt of documentation of anecdotal information, and/or
 2. Following receipt of the completed T-TESS rubric instrument after the End of Year Conference/Goal Attainment Review.
8. Any teacher response must be provided to the appraiser within 10 school days of the documented event.
9. Teachers may request a second appraisal following receipt of completed observation feedback forms comprising at least 45 minutes of classroom observations.
10. Any request for a second appraiser must be provided to the Employee Services department within 10 school days of receiving all completed 60 minute observation feedback forms.
11. Second appraisers will be determined by the Superintendent or designee from the pool of T-TESS appraisers trained by the District.
 12. The second appraiser will make observations according to the teacher-appraiser Classroom Observation Agreement document not to exceed 45 minutes and as necessary and appropriate to complete observation feedback forms.

Employee involvement

At both the campus and district levels, LTTS Charter School Inc. dba Universal Academy offers opportunities for input in matters that affect employees and influence the instructional effectiveness of the district. As part of the district's planning and decision-making process, employees are elected to serve on district- or campus-level advisory committees. Plans and detailed information about the shared decision making process are available in each campus office.

Compensation and Benefits

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The District's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All District positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt, paid monthly salaries, and not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as non-exempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek.

Salaries and wages are reviewed annually and adjusted according to the budgeted amounts approved by the School Board. Classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time nurses, and full-time counselors will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extracurricular or supplemental duties **may** be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the District's extra- duty pay schedule.

Employees should contact Payroll at 972-255-1800 for more information about the District's pay schedules. Questions regarding an employee's own pay may also be directed to 972-255-1800.

Paychecks

All professional and salaried employees are paid monthly. Hourly employees are paid semi-monthly. An employee's payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information, and the amount of leave accumulated. Questions about your payroll statement should be directed to the Payroll Department at 972-255-1800.

2018-2019 Monthly Pay Dates

9/28/2018
10/31/2018
11/30/2018
12/28/2018
1/31/2019
2/28/2019
3/29/2019
4/30/2019
5/31/2019
6/28/2019
7/31/2019
8/30/2019

Automatic Payroll Deposit

Employees will have their paychecks electronically deposited into their account. With automatic deposit, an employee's salary is immediately available on the pay date, with the exception of the first of the month being a weekend or holiday, in which case it will be available on the next banking day. Contact the Payroll office at 972-255-1800 for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

To enroll or make changes to an employee's automatic payroll deposit, the employee must complete a Direct Deposit form and send it to the Payroll Department. In order to process, the form must be received at least 30 days before the Employee's actual pay date.

Payroll Deductions

The district is required to make the following automatic payroll deductions:

1. Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS)
2. Federal income tax
3. Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired in this district after March 31, 1986)
4. 457(b) FICA Alternative for substitutes & temporary employees
5. Child support and spousal maintenance, if applicable
6. Delinquent federal education loan payments, if applicable
7. IRS levies & Chapter 13 garnishments, if applicable

Other payroll deductions employees may elect include deductions for the employee's share of premiums for health, dental, life, and vision insurance; annuities; higher education savings plans or prepaid tuition programs; and savings deposits and loan payments. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

Wage offset or withholding

The District may withhold the paycheck or offset wages in the following situations:

1. Universal Academy may withhold a payroll check until all district issued items have been returned to the District. Such items include, but are not limited to, keys, badges, laptops and other District property assigned to an employee during the term of their employment.
2. Universal Academy has the right to offset wages for overpayment by withholding wages from a payroll check or payments from other monies due an employee while employed, or at the time of their separation from the District.
3. Universal Academy may withhold from an employee's payroll check for any monies due to the district.

Voluntary Retirement Plans – 403(b) and 457(b)

A 403(b) and 457(b) is a tax-deferred investment and savings program for employees of certain tax exempt employers. It allows employees of non-profit hospitals, educational institutions, and other nonprofit organizations to save and invest for their own retirement.

The 403(b) and 457(b) Plans were established by the federal government to encourage workers to establish retirement savings programs. The name refers to the relevant section in the Internal Revenue Code. These accounts are similar to both 401(k) plans and Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). The contribution limits and distribution rules are similar to 401(k) plans. The control of the account remains with the participant, similar to IRAs. This creates dual responsibility between the employer and the participant for compliance of 403(b) and 457(b) accounts with federal tax rules.

Employees of Universal Academy are eligible to participate in both the 403(b) and 457(b) Plans sponsored by Universal Academy. Participation is voluntary and no matching of funds is available. For information about the investment options available through the 403(b) or 457(b), please contact the Benefits Office.

Overtime Compensation

The District compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. All employees are classified as exempt or nonexempt for purposes of overtime compensation. Professional and administrative employees are ineligible for overtime compensation. Only nonexempt employees (hourly employees and paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. Nonexempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor. A nonexempt employee who works overtime without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action.

Overtime is defined by the federal Fair Labor Standards Act as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Employees who must work beyond their normal schedule but less than 40 hours in a work week will be compensated in straight-time pay. Employees must work more than 40 total hours in a work week to earn overtime compensation. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a work week begins at 12:01 a.m. Monday and ends at midnight Sunday.

Employees will be compensated with direct pay for overtime at time-and-a-half rate, with approval by supervisor and administration.

Weekly time records will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary

Travel Expense Reimbursement

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor must give approval. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule established by the District and the Internal Revenue Service. Employees must submit receipts to be reimbursed for allowable expenses other than mileage and the approved food allowance.

Standard Certification Pay Increase

In order to receive the annual pay increase approved by the school board. Employees must receive their Standard Certification by October 15 of the current school year. If the employee receives his/her standard certification after October 15 of the current school year, he/she will remain at the previous school year salary listed on his/her contract.

Health Insurance

Group health insurance coverage is provided through TRS-ActiveCare, the statewide public school employee health insurance program. The district's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the board of trustees. Employees eligible for health insurance coverage include the following:

1. Employees who are active, contributing TRS members
2. Employees who are not contributing TRS members and who are employed for 10 or more regularly scheduled hours per week (not eligible for the District Contribution)

TRS retirees who are enrolled in TRS-Care (retiree health insurance program) are not eligible to participate in TRS-ActiveCare.

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each year or when they experience a qualifying event (e.g., marriage, divorce, birth). Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees via the Benefits website. Employees should contact the Universal Academy Human Resources Office for more information at 972-255-1800.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

At their own expense, employees can enroll in supplemental insurance programs for dental, vision, disability or life insurance. Premiums for these programs are paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Human Resources Office for more information at 972-255-1800.

Termination of Health and Supplemental Insurance Benefits

All insurance benefits (health insurance and supplemental insurance benefits) are terminated at the end of the month in which an employee resigns, retires or is terminated, or for which premiums are not paid by the end of the month. However, if an employee works through the end of the school year, then insurance benefits are terminated at the end of the month in which the employee receives his or her last paycheck, except for health insurance, which may be continued through August 31.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

The District, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work related injury or illness. Benefits pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case. All work related injuries must be reported immediately to Human Resources. Employees who are unable to work due to a work related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities pursuant to Texas law.

Universal Academy has adopted the offset provision allowed by state law. This allows an employee to use a portion of their accrued sick leave benefits (state sick leave, state personal leave, vacation, and local personal leave) to supplement workers' compensation wage benefits up to the employee's regular pre- injury wage. As a result, employees will use any of these leave benefits to make up the difference between their normal weekly wage and the wage paid by workers compensation, including the initial seven days of lost time (state law does not provide for payment of lost wages for the first seven days an employee is unable to work) unless they elect not to use leave benefits.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act. Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months if they have employment contracts or reasonable assurance of returning to service. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact the Benefits Office.

Teacher Retirement

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least four and one-half months are members of the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS). Substitute's not receiving TRS service retirement benefits who work at least 90 days a year are also eligible to purchase a year of creditable service in TRS. TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify Human Resources and the Payroll Department as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at: Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web (www.trs.texas.gov). See *Employment after Retirement* in *Employment* section of Employee Handbook for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

All retiring personnel meeting state eligibility requirements for retirement shall be compensated for their accrued local personal leave based on the following schedule:

1. Employees who have 75 percent or more of their local personal leave remaining shall receive
2. \$55 per local personal leave day.
3. Employees who have 50 to 74 percent of their local personal leave remaining shall receive \$50 per local personal leave day.
4. Employees who have less than 50 percent of their local personal leave remaining shall receive
5. \$40 per local personal leave day.

Leaves and Absences

The District **does not** offer employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence. Employees who have personal needs that will require long leaves of absence should call the Human Resource Office for counseling about leave options, continuation of benefits, and communicating with the District.

Diane Harris, Superintendent or her designee must approve all leaves.

Request for Leave of Absence

Leave must be used in half-day increments. However, if an employee is taking intermittent family and medical leave, leave shall be recorded in one-hour increments.

The following steps must be taken to request leave:

- a. Complete a Request for Leave of Absence form and attach appropriate medical documentation.
- b. Return the completed form to the Human Resource office. If a substitute will be required during your period of leave, that can be arranged with the district administrator.
- c. When you are ready to return from leave, the following steps must be taken:
 - i. Complete the Return From Leave of Absence form.
 - ii. Return the original completed Return From Leave of Absence form and your physician's release to return to work to the HR Office.
 - iii. Provide a copy of your Return From Leave of Absence form to your principal or supervisor.

Employees on leave of absence may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. They are eligible to receive the district contribution toward medical in the following circumstances:

1. As long as a paycheck is issued

2. If time is worked during that particular month
3. During the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) approved 12 week time period
4. If on FMLA leave at the end of the school year, eligibility continues during the summer months
5. If at work on last contract day, eligibility continues during the summer months
6. If not working and receiving Workers Compensation benefits

Leave shall be recorded as follows:

1. Leave shall be recorded in half-day increments for all employees.
2. If the employee is taking intermittent FMLA leave, leave shall be recorded in one-hour increments.
3. If the employee chooses to offset leave against workers' compensation benefits, leave shall be recorded in the amount used.

Order of use: Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave shall be used in the following order, as applicable:

1. Local leave.
2. State sick leave
3. State personal leave.

Absent More Than Three Days

Any employee who is absent more than three days because of a personal or family illness or injury must submit a medical certification on letterhead from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness or injury, the reason for the illness or injury, and in the case of personal illness or injury, the employee's fitness to return to work.

State and Local Personal Leave

State and local personal leave is earned on a prorated basis. If an employee leaves the District before the end of the work year, the cost of any unearned leave days taken shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination ACT of 2008 (GINA)

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) prohibits covered employers from requesting or requiring genetic information of an individual or family member of the individual, except as specifically allowed by this law. To comply with this law, we ask that employees and health care providers do not provide any genetic information in any medical certification. 'Genetic information,' as defined by GINA, includes an individual's family medical history, the results of an individual's or family member's genetic tests, the fact that an individual or an individual's family member sought or received genetic services, and genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or an individual's family member or an embryo lawfully held by an individual or family member receiving assistive reproductive services.

Absence Reporting Requirements

All employees must report absences from work-duty by calling their assigned campus and their cohort as soon as it is determined that they will not be able to report to work.

Continuation of Health Insurance

Employees on an approved leave of absence other than family and medical leave may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave

designated under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the district as they were prior to the leave. Otherwise, the district does not pay any portion of insurance premiums for employees who are on unpaid leave.

Under TRS-Active Care rules, an employee is no longer eligible for insurance through the district after six months of unpaid leave other than Family Medical Leave. If an employee's unpaid leave extends for more than six months, the district will provide the employee with notice of COBRA rights.

Personal Leave and Sick Days

All employees are entitled to two days of paid personal leave and five sick days per year. Personal and sick leave are available for use after the first six-weeks of school. State personal leave accumulates without limit and is transferable to other Texas school districts, and generally transfers to education service centers. Personal leave may be used for two general purposes: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

Nondiscretionary

Leave taken for personal or family illness, emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered nondiscretionary leave. This type of leave allows very little, if any, advance planning and will be granted to employees in the same manner as state sick leave.

Discretionary

Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to the Superintendent, Director of Administrative Services or designee in advance of the anticipated absence. Discretionary personal leave will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered in determining whether to grant discretionary leave. No more than three (2) personal leave days may be taken consecutively without the prior written approval of the building principal/supervisor. Employees taking discretionary leave without approval may be subject to disciplinary action and/or salary deductions.

Discretionary personal state leave may *not* be taken during the following times. Employees taking discretionary personal leave during the times listed below may be subject to disciplinary action and/or salary deductions.

1. First six-weeks of instruction;
2. Last three weeks of instruction;
3. State testing days;
4. A day before or after a school holiday/Spring break or unused bad weather day; or
5. Professional Development Days / Teacher Workdays.

Leave Proration. If an employee separates from employment with the district before his or her last duty day of the year, or begins employment after the first duty day, state personal leave will be prorated based on the actual time employed. When an employee separates from employment before the last duty day of the school year, the employee's final paycheck will be reduced by the amount of state personal leave the employee used beyond his or her pro rata entitlement for the school year.

Sick Leave (State Sick Leave Awarded Prior to 1995-1996)

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. Sick leave is coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or

reduced-schedule basis or when coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

Sick leave may be used for the following reasons only:

1. Employee illness
2. Illness in the employee's immediate family
3. Family emergency (i.e., natural disasters or life-threatening situations)
4. Death in the immediate family
5. Active military service

Local Leave

All full-time employees (6 or more hours per day) shall earn two workdays of local personal leave per school year. Unused local personal leave will not accumulate. All local leave is available after the beginning of the school year. Employees taking discretionary local personal leave without approval will be subject to disciplinary action and salary deductions (see "Discretionary" above)

Hardship Leave

Full-time employees who have exhausted all earned sick leave and personal leave may request hardship leave. The approved hardship leave shall not exceed 20 equivalent workdays.

The employee may qualify for hardship leave under the following conditions:

6. The employee has an illness or disability requiring treatment by a certified health care provider (including pregnancy related disability) that results in the employee's incapacity to perform his or her duty function.
7. To care for the employee's spouse, child or parent if the spouse, child or parent has a serious health condition. The maximum number of hardship days available to care for a spouse, child or parent is ten (10) equivalent workdays per school year. Any hardship days granted to an employee for the care of a spouse, child or parent will be deducted from the maximum available per school year.
8. For bereavement leave due to the death of a child, spouse, or parent. The maximum number of hardship days available for bereavement due to the death of a child, spouse or parent is five (5) equivalent workdays per school year. Any hardship days granted to an employee for bereavement leave due to the death of a spouse, child or parent will be deducted from the maximum available per school year.

The employee shall be required to provide documentation of the health condition. The documentation shall accompany the request for hardship leave to the Benefits Department and shall identify the beginning leave date and return date. Approval for hardship leave must be granted by the Benefits Department before an employee may access such leave.

When the need for hardship leave is not foreseeable, the employee shall notify the Benefits Department as soon as possible. Under ordinary circumstances, an employee shall provide notice within three working days after learning of the need for hardship leave. Notice may be provided either in person, by telephone, fax, e-mail, or other electronic means. Hardship leave shall be non-cumulative and shall be taken with the daily rate of pay of a substitute deducted for each day used, whether or not a substitute is employed. Hardship leave shall not be used for any monetary gain, personal travel, or recreational purposes.

Hardship Leave must be requested within 60 days of the absence.

Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) – General Provisions

The following text is from the federal notice, *Employee Rights and Responsibilities Under the Family and Medical Leave Act*. Specific information that the district has adopted to implement the FMLA follows this general notice.

Leave Entitlements

Eligible employees who work for a covered employer can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the following reasons:

1. The birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
2. To bond with a child (leave must be taken within 1 year of the child's birth or placement);
3. To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a qualifying serious health condition;
4. For the employee's own qualifying serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job;
5. For qualifying exigencies related to the foreign deployment of a military member who is the employee's spouse, child, or parent.

An eligible employee who is a covered service member's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin may also take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member with a serious injury or illness. An employee does not need to use leave in one block. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, employees may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule. Employees may choose, or an employer may require, use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. If an employee substitutes accrued paid leave for FMLA leave, the employee must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

Benefits and Protections

While employees are on FMLA leave, employers must continue health insurance coverage as if the employees were not on leave. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to the same job or one nearly identical to it with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions. An employer may not interfere with an individual's FMLA rights or retaliate against someone for using or trying to use FMLA leave, opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA, or being involved in any proceeding under or related to the FMLA.

Eligibility Requirements

An employee who works for a covered employer must meet three criteria in order to be eligible for FMLA leave. The employee must:

1. Have worked for the employer for at least 12 months;
2. Have at least 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months before taking leave;* and
3. Work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the employee's worksite.

*Special hours of service eligibility requirements apply to airline flight crew employees.

Requesting Leave

Generally, employees must give 30-days' advance notice of the need for FMLA leave. If it is not possible to give 30-days' notice, an employee must notify the employer as soon as possible and, generally, follow the employer's usual procedures.

Employees do not have to share a medical diagnosis, but must provide enough information to the employer so it can determine if the leave qualifies for FMLA protection.

Sufficient information could include informing an employer that the employee is or will be unable to perform his or her job functions, that a family member cannot perform daily activities, or that hospitalization or continuing medical treatment is necessary. Employees must inform the employer if the need for leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

Employers can require a certification or periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. If the employer determines that the certification is incomplete, it must provide a written notice indicating what additional information is required.

Employer Responsibilities

Once an employer becomes aware that an employee's need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, the employer must notify the employee if he or she is eligible for FMLA leave and, if eligible, must also provide a notice of rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. If the employee is not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for ineligibility. Employers must notify its employees if leave will be designated as FMLA leave, and if so, how much leave will be designated as FMLA leave.

Enforcement

Employees may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer. The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

For additional information:

1-866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627

www.wagehour.dol.gov

Combined Leave for Spouses

Spouses who are employed by the district are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of FMLA to care for a parent with a serious health condition; or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. Military Caregiver leave for spouses is limited to a combined total of 26 weeks.

Use of Paid Leave

FMLA runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leave, compensatory time, assault leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. The district will designate the leave as FMLA, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

Intermittent Leave

When medically necessary or in the case of a qualifying exigency, an employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule. The district does not permit the use of intermittent or reduced-schedule leave for the care of a newborn child or for adoption or placement of a child with the employee.

Fitness for Duty

An employee that takes FMLA due to the employee's own serious health condition shall provide, before resuming work, a fitness-for-duty certification from the health care provider. If certification of the employee's ability to perform essential job function is required, the district shall provide a list of essential job functions (e.g., job description) to the employee with the FMLA designation notice to share with the health care provider.

Reinstatement

An employee returning to work at the end of FMLA will be returned to the same position held when the leave began or to an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

In certain cases, instructional employees desiring to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue on family and medical leave until the end of the semester. The additional time off is not counted against the employee's FMLA entitlement, and the district will maintain the employees group health insurance and reinstate the employee at the end of the leave according the procedures outlined in policy.

Failure to Return

If, at the expiration of FMLA, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the district may require the employee to reimburse the district's share of insurance premiums paid during any portion of FMLA when the employee was on unpaid leave. If the employee fails to return to work for a reason beyond the employee's control, such as a continuing personal or family serious health condition or a spouse being unexpectedly transferred more than 75 miles from the district, the district may not require the employee to reimburse the district's share of premiums paid.

District Contact

Employees that require FMLA or have questions should contact the Human Resources Office at 972-255-1800 for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Military Family Leave Entitlements

An eligible employee whose spouse, son, daughter or parent is on covered active duty or called to covered active duty status may use his or her 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period.

A covered service member is (1) a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness*;

or (2) a veteran who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable at any time during the five-year period prior to the first date the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for the covered veteran, and who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness.*

***The FMLA definitions of “serious injury or illness” for current service members and veterans are distinct from the FMLA definition of “serious health condition.”**

Definition of Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee’s job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

Temporary Disability

Certified employees

Any full-time employee whose position requires certification from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) is eligible for temporary disability leave. *All other classifications of employees are not eligible for temporary disability leave.* The purpose of temporary disability leave is to provide job protection to full time educators who cannot work for an extended period of time because of a mental or physical disability of a temporary nature. Temporary disability leave must be taken as a continuous block of time. It may not be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule. Pregnancy and conditions related to pregnancy are treated the same as any other temporary disability.

Full time educators must request approval for temporary disability leave. The leave request must be accompanied by a physician’s statement confirming the full time educator’s inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days, including holidays and weekends.

If a full time educator is placed on temporary disability leave involuntarily, he or she has the right to request a hearing before the Board of Trustees. The full time educator may protest the action and present additional evidence of fitness to work.

When a full time educator is ready to return to work, the full time educator’s supervisor and Benefits Department should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician’s statement confirming that the full time educator is able to do the job. Full time educators returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned if an appropriate position is available. If an appropriate position is not available, the employee may be assigned to another campus, subject to the approval of the Superintendent, Director of Administrative Services, or designee. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, full

time educators will be reinstated at the beginning of the following school year. If a full time educator is on an extended leave that results in the full time educator receiving a pay-off, the full time educator will be placed on the payroll schedule for payment on the 20th of each month when they return from leave and begin receiving salary.

Workers' Compensation Benefits

An employee absent from duty because of a job-related illness or injury may be eligible for workers' compensation weekly income benefits if the absence exceeds seven calendar days.

An employee receiving workers' compensation wage benefits for a job-related illness or injury will use available, partial-day increments of sick leave or any other paid leave benefits to make up the difference between wage benefits and pre-injury or -illness wages unless requesting in writing not to use available leave. While an employee is receiving workers' compensation wage benefits, the district will charge available leave proportionately so that the employee receives an amount equal to the employee's regular salary.

Assault Leave

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person's age or mental capacity renders the person non-responsible for purposes of criminal liability.

An employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to two years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. At the request of an employee, the District will immediately assign the employee to assault leave. Days of leave granted under the assault leave provision will not be deducted from accrued personal leave and must be coordinated with workers' compensation temporary income benefits. Upon investigation the District may change the assault leave status and charge leave used against the employee's accrued paid leave. The employee's pay will be deducted if accrued paid leave is not available.

Jury Duty

Employees will receive leave with pay and without loss of accumulated leave for jury duty. Employees must present documentation of the service to the Benefits Office and may keep or donate any compensation they receive as a result of the jury service.

Compliance with a Subpoena

Employees will be paid while on leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding and will not be required to use personal leave. Other absences for court appearances related to an employee's personal business must be taken as personal leave or leave without pay (if no personal leave is available). Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

Truancy Court Appearances

An employee who is a parent or guardian of a child and any court-appointed guardian ad litem of a child who is required to miss work to attend a truancy court hearing may use personal leave for the absence. Employees who do not have paid leave available will be docked for any absence required because of the court appearance.

Religious Observance

The district will reasonably accommodate an employee's request for absence for a religious holiday or observance. Reasonable accommodations such as changes to work schedules or approving a day of absence will generally be approved unless they pose an undue hardship to the district. The employee may use any accumulated personal leave for this purpose. Employees who have exhausted applicable paid leave may be granted an unpaid day of absence for this purpose.

Military Leave

Paid Leave for Military Service

Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, or a member of a state or federally authorized Urban Search and Rescue Team is entitled to paid leave when engaged in authorized training or duty ordered by proper authority. Paid military leave is limited to 15 days each fiscal year. In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during a time of active military service.

Reemployment after Military Leave

Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for reemployment within the time specified by law to Employee Services. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five years.

Continuation of Health Insurance

Employees who perform service in the uniformed services may elect to continue their health plan coverage at their own cost for a period not to exceed 24 months.

Employees should contact Employee Services for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

An FAQ on military leave is available on the TASB Legal Services Web Site
http://www.tasb.org/services/legal/esource/personnel/documents/userra_oct09.pdf

Other Requests for Leave

The District does not offer any other type of leave except those detailed in policy and in the Employee Handbook; all other types of leaves of absence for any reason are discouraged. Professional employees are contracted for days of service as specified in their contracts. Any request for leave not detailed in policy or in the Employee Handbook must be granted by the Superintendent.

Request for Workplace Accommodations

Any request for a workplace accommodation must be submitted to the Leave Coordinator in the Human Resources Office. The request must be accompanied by medical documentation which specifies, at a minimum, the following items:

1. Detailed description of the accommodation(s) requested
2. Length of time accommodation(s) are needed

The Benefits Office will work with the employee and the employee's supervisor in an effort to provide the accommodations(s) requested. The request for workplace accommodation(s) must be reasonable and cause no undue hardship to the District in order to be considered.

Absent Without Pay

An employee absent from work must use available paid leave benefits (state, local, hardship, sick leave bank, or vacation) before the employee may be absent without pay. Deductions may occur for unpaid administrative leave or unauthorized discretionary leave.

Requests to Change Type of Leave Used

No changes in reason for absence can be made on absences older than 60 days (for example, to change an absence from a local day used to a state personal day used or vice versa).

Employee Recognition and Communications

Employee Recognition and Appreciation

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the school district. Employees are recognized at School Board meetings, in the District's publications including media releases, service award, recognition dinners, and through other special events and activities. Each month the campuses will recognize a Teacher of the Month, Grade Level Team of the Month, and a Student of the Month. At the conclusion of each school year, each campus will select special awards, Teacher of the Year and the district will select a District Teacher of the Year.

District Communications

The Communication/Community Relations Office supports the students, teachers and administration of Universal Academy by promoting the District's outstanding achievements. The office is responsible for community and media relations, video production, web development, employee recognition, marketing and communication for the District. In order to keep employees and the community informed, the department utilizes multiple initiatives, including the following:

Media Relations and Public Information

Media Relations and Public Information serves as primary contact for media outlets. All media inquiries should be directed to this department.

Contact: Mr. Nate McLaughlin, nate.mclaughlin@universalacademy.com

Publications

1. Weekly District Updates/E-Newsletters
2. District Bond and Election Information
3. Realtor Brochure
4. Universal Academy Press Releases
5. Academic Calendar
6. Boundary Map
7. Other special publications

Video Production

Video production for both internal and external communication, highlighting student and staff across the District and communication important information to all stakeholder groups will occur in a variety of vehicles.

Web and Application Development

Develop and maintain online communications through multiple device browsers and applications.

Social Media

Provides training and best practices; to campuses on social media usage while maintaining the District social media pages.

Emergency Communication

Keeps the community informed with up-to-date information. In an emergency situation, the district will use multiple mediums to communicate accurate, consistent information. These methods include: Web Site, Facebook, Twitter, School App and School Messenger.

Complaints and Grievances

In an effort to hear and resolve employee concerns or complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the Universal Academy School Board has adopted an orderly grievance process. Employees are encouraged to discuss their concerns or complaints with their supervisors or an appropriate administrator at any time.

The formal grievance process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative grievance procedures are exhausted, employees can bring grievances to the Board of Trustees.

Any employee who reports a grievance may make an audio recording of any meeting or proceeding at which the substance of a grievance is investigated or discussed. Any such employee recording may not result in a delay of any timeline provided by the grievance policy and does not require the district to provide equipment for the employee to make the recording.

Employee Complaint Forms Universal Academy has adopted a grievance process for the purpose of resolving employee, student/parent, and public concerns as expediently and efficiently as possible.

Before filing a grievance, and pursuant to Universal Academy Board Policy, the District strongly encourages each individual to attempt to resolve his or her concerns with the applicable campus or department administrator or employee. The District believes it is typically in the best interest of everyone involved to informally resolve concerns if at all possible. Please keep in mind that any applicable timelines for filing a grievance are not affected by an attempt at informal resolution.

However, if an informal resolution is unsuccessful or not appropriate in a particular circumstance, the individual may file a grievance.

Employee Conduct and Welfare

Standards of Conduct

All employees are expected to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the District and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public. Employees are expected to observe the following standards of conduct:

1. Recognize and respect the rights and property of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.
2. Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
3. Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
4. Notify their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action.
5. Know and comply with department and District procedures and policies.
6. Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels.
7. Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
8. Use District time, funds, and property for authorized District business and activities only.

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day the superintendent knew of the incident. See *Reports to the Texas Education Agency* for additional information.

Dress Code and Hair Grooming

An employee's dress and grooming shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for his or her assignment, and in accordance with any additional standards established by his or her supervisor.

The standards set out herein are intended to promote community values and enhance an orderly educational environment, and shall not be applied to unlawfully infringe on any individual's religious beliefs or protected speech.

1. A District employee should serve as a role model, exemplifying high standards of professional appearance, to instill community values and proper grooming and hygiene.
2. **An employee shall be expected to wear the school uniform outlined by the district. Teachers are required to wear the full uniform daily and may receive a verbal or written reprimand if this district policy is ignored.**
3. **Teachers may not wear distracting hair colors (purple, green, orange, etc...)**
4. **Teachers may not cut their hair in designs or rigid lines.**
5. Attire that is provocative, revealing or likely to be distracting is not considered professional or appropriate.
6. An administrator shall have the discretion to determine appropriate attire and grooming and should notify employees when their dress or grooming fails to comply with these standards.

Bereavement Leave Policy

The Bereavement Leave Policy establishes uniform guidelines for providing paid time off to employees for absences related to the death of immediate family members and fellow employees or retirees of [Company Name].

Eligibility

All full-time, active employees are eligible for benefits under this policy.

Procedures

An employee who wishes to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify his or her supervisor as soon as possible. If an employee leaves work early on the day he or she is notified of the death, that day will not count as bereavement leave.

In addition to bereavement leave, an employee may, with his or her supervisor's approval, use any available vacation for additional approved time off as necessary. Employees under discipline for attendance issues may be required to provide documentation with regard to their bereavement leave.

Bereavement pay is calculated based on the base pay rate at the time of absence, and it will not include any special forms of compensation, such as incentives, commissions, bonuses, overtime or shift differentials.

Paid bereavement leave will be granted according to the following schedule:

- Employees are allowed up to four consecutive days off from regularly scheduled duty with regular pay in the event of the death of the employee's spouse, domestic partner, child, stepchild, parent, stepparent, father-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, or an adult who stood in loco parentis to the employee during childhood.
- Employees are allowed one day off from regular scheduled duty with regular pay in the event of death of the employee's brother-in-law, sister-in-law, aunt, uncle, grandparent, grandchild or spouse's grandparent.
- Employees are allowed up to four hours of bereavement leave to attend the funeral of a fellow regular employee or retiree of the company, provided such absence from duty will not interfere with normal operations of the company.

Bereavement Leave

Texas law does not require employers to provide employee bereavement leave. Bereavement leave is leave that is taken by an employee due to the death of another individual, usually a close relative. Employer may choose to provide bereavement leave and may be required to comply with any bereavement policy or practice it maintains.

Voting Leave

Texas law requires an employer to provide an employee with paid time off to vote if the employee does not have two (2) consecutive hours outside their scheduled work hours in which to vote while polls are open.

An employer that fails to provide the paid voting leave to an employee as required commits a Class C misdemeanor.

[TX Election Code 276.004](#)

Jury Duty Leave

An employer may not discharge a permanent employee because the employee serves as a juror. However, an employer is not required to pay an employee for time spent responding to a jury summons or serving on a jury. [Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code 122.001](#)

Sick Leave

Texas law does not require employers to provide employees with sick leave benefits, either paid or unpaid. [TX Labor Law FAQs](#). If an employer chooses to provide sick leave benefits, it must comply with the terms of its established policy or employment contract.

An employer in Texas may be required to provide an employee unpaid sick leave in accordance with the [Family and Medical Leave Act](#) or other federal laws.

Vacation Leave

In Texas, employers are not required to provide employees with vacation benefits, either paid or unpaid. [TX Labor Law FAQs](#). If an employer chooses to provide such benefits, it must comply with the terms of its established policy or employment contract. [TX Labor Code 61.001\(7\)\(B\)](#); [TX Admin. Code 821.25\(a\)](#).

Employee Email

You are sitting at your desk during planning time and get an email from a college friend, inviting you to a baby shower that weekend. You hit “reply to all” and respond that you would love to attend. Then someone else on the recipient list replies with a crude and inappropriate story about something that took place at a party you attended years ago in college. And you start to wonder... will my principal see this email? Could I be fired for this?

School districts have the right to review and retain email that is transmitted using their technology resources, including email and Internet, and most have adopted policies that specify that email shall not be considered private. Many districts have authorized specific staff members to monitor email and Internet usage to ensure appropriate use. You should assume that anything you say or do using school district email will potentially be seen by the administration.

Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

The *Educators’ Code of Ethics*, adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification, which all district employees must adhere to, is reprinted below:

Purpose and Scope

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community (19 TAC 247.1(b)).

Enforceable Standards

1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

Standard 1.1 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, educator preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and its certification process.

Standard 1.2 The educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

Standard 1.3 The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

Standard 1.4 The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

Standard 1.5 The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

Standard 1.6 The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

Standard 1.7 The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal laws.

Standard 1.8 The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.

Standard 1.9 The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, school board members, students, or parents of students.

Standard 1.10 The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.

Standard 1.11 The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.

Standard 1.12 The educator shall refrain from the illegal use or distribution of controlled substances and/or abuse of prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.

Standard 1.13 The educator shall not be under the influence of alcohol or consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

Standard 1.14 The educator shall not assist another educator, school employee, contractor, or agent in obtaining a new job as an educator or in a school, apart from the routine transmission of administrative and personnel files, if the educator knows or has probable cause to believe that such person engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law.

2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

Standard 2.1 The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 2.2 The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

Standard 2.3 The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.

Standard 2.4 The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Standard 2.5 The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.

Standard 2.6 The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.

Standard 2.7 The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

Standard 3.1 The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 3.2 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.

Standard 3.3 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

Standard 3.4 The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.

Standard 3.5 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.

Standard 3.6 The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.

Standard 3.7 The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

Standard 3.8 The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.

Standard 3.9 The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

1. the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
2. the subject matter of the communication;
3. whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
4. whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
5. whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
6. whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Universal Academy employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees, unpaid interns, student teachers, or students. While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment of other persons, including board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents. A substantiated charge of harassment will result in disciplinary action.

Individuals who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against or harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal, supervisor, or appropriate District official. If the campus principal, supervisor or District official is the subject of a complaint, the complaint should be made directly to the superintendent. A complaint against the Superintendent may be made directly to the board.

For reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation employees may contact Human Resources at 972-255-1800 or hr@universalacademy.com.

Harassment of Students

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to administration or other appropriate district official. All allegations of prohibited harassment or abuse of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law.

For reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation employees may contact Human Resources at 972-255-1800 or hr@universalacademy.com.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect, as defined by Texas Family Code §261.001, to a local or state law enforcement agency, the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), or the state agency that operates, licenses, certifies, or registers the facility in which the alleged abuse or neglect occurred not later than the 48th hour after the employee first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected.. Such a report *must* be made to DFPS, and not only law enforcement, if the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect involves a person responsible

for the care, custody, or welfare of the child. *State law makes clear that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person or administrator to make the report.*

Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the district is prohibited from retaliating against an employee who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

Employees are also required to make a report if they have cause to believe that an adult was a victim of abuse or neglect as a child and they determine in good faith that the disclosure of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of another child or person with disability.

Reports to DFPS can be made to 940-387-8544 or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400).

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics.

Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children

As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused or otherwise maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. If an employee suspected sexual abuse of a child, he or she is required to follow the procedures described above in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

Reporting Crime, Texas Whistleblower

The Texas Whistleblower Act protects district employees who make good faith reports of violations of law by the district to an appropriate law enforcement authority. The district is prohibited from suspending, terminating the employment of, or taking other adverse personnel action against, an employee who makes a report under the Act. State law also provides employees with the right to report a crime witnessed at the school to any peace officer with authority to investigate the crime.

Employee Arrests and Convictions

An employee who is arrested for, convicted of, or receives deferred adjudication for any felony or any offense involving moral turpitude must report the arrest to Central Office Manager of Employee Relations within three calendar days of the arrest. This includes any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty pleas, or other adjudication of the employee for any of the following offenses:

- Crimes involving school property of funds;
- Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator;
- Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity; or
- Crimes involving moral turpitude, which include but are not limited to:

- Dishonesty, fraud, deceit, theft, misrepresentation;
- Deliberate violence;
- Base, vile or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor;
- Felony possession, transfer, sale, distribution or conspiracy to possess, transfer, sell or distribute any
- controlled substance defined in Chapter 481 of the Health and Safety Code;
- Acts constituting public intoxication, operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, or
- disorderly conduct if two or more acts are committed within any 12-month period;
- Acts constituting abuse under the Texas Family Code.
- **Fingerprinting**
- In compliance with state law, all employees and substitutes hired must complete the fingerprinting process with the SBEC/Texas DPS Clearinghouse prior to employment.
- **Consumer Reports**
- Universal Academy may, at its discretion, and will, when required by law, utilize Consumer Reports – e.g., credit, criminal, employment references and Department of Public Safety reports to assist us in making employment decisions. In addition, Universal Academy may conduct annual driving record checks to verify that the drivers’ licenses and driving records of those employees required to drive Universal Academy-owned vehicles are valid and acceptable to Universal Academy’s insurance carrier.
- Where required by applicable law, prior to running any of the above-mentioned checks/records, each employee will be provided any required notice form(s), and must sign an authorization form at the time of the initial job interview or prior to being extended an offer of employment. Refusal to sign such authorization is grounds for disqualification from employment with Universal Academy. Continued employment is also expressly conditioned on satisfactory results from legally authorized or required record and background checks.
- In the event Universal Academy relies on a “consumer report” for an “adverse action” as defined by the Fair Credit Reporting Act and regulation – i.e., denying a job application, reassigning or terminating an employee, or denying a promotion – Universal Academy will take the following action(s):
- **Step 1:** Before taking adverse action, the employee will be provided a pre-adverse action disclosure that includes a copy of the individual’s consumer report and a copy of “A Summary of Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act” – a document prescribed by the Federal Trade Commission.

- **Step2:** After taking an adverse action, the employee will be provided notice—either orally, in writing, or electronically – that the action has been taken. This notice will include:
- The name, address, and telephone number of the Credit Reporting Agency (CRA) that supplied the report;
- A statement that the CRA supplying the report did not make the decision to take the adverse action, and
- cannot give specific reasons for it; and
- A notice of the individual’s right to dispute the accuracy or completeness of any information the agency
- furnished, and his or her right to an additional free consumer report from the agency upon request within 60 days.
- The employee will be given a reasonable time period to dispute the information. However, it is ultimately the decision of Universal Academy as to the action taken.

Technology Resources

The district’s technology resources, including its networks, e-mail accounts, devices connected to its networks, and all district-owned devices used on or off school property, are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use is permitted if the use:

1. Imposes no tangible cost to the district;
2. Does not unduly burden the district’s computer or network resources; and
3. Has no adverse effect on the employee’s job performance or on a student’s academic performance

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the technology resources are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use.

Employees are required to abide by the provisions of the acceptable use agreement and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact Nate McLaughlin (nate.mclaughlin@universalacademy.com) and Michael Stocks (Michael.Stocks@universalacademy.com).

Personal Use of Electronic Communications

Electronic communications includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), web logs (blogs), wikis, electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram). Electronic communications also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.

As role models for all Universal Academy students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic communications as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic communications interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

An employee who uses electronic communications for personal purposes shall observe the following:

1. The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network, or equipment.
2. The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, meal times, and before and after scheduled work hours; unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct district business.
3. The employee shall not use the district's logo or other copyrighted material of the district without express, written consent.
4. An employee may not share or post, in any format, information, videos, or pictures obtained while on duty or on district business unless the employee first obtains written approval from the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees should be cognizant that they have access to information and images that, if transmitted to the public, could violate privacy concerns.
 - i. The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:
 - ii. Confidentiality of student records.
 - iii. Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
 - iv. Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses.
 - v. Copyright law

- vi. Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

Use of Electronic Communications between Employees and Students

A certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated in writing by the superintendent or designee, may use electronic communications with students who are currently enrolled in the district. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. Electronic communications between all other employees and students who are enrolled in the district are prohibited. Employees may not provide students with their personal phone number or e-mail address.

An employee is not subject to the provisions regarding electronic communications with a student to the extent the employee has a social or family relationship with a student. For example, an employee may have a relationship with a niece or nephew, a student who is the child of an adult friend, a student who is a friend of the employee's child, or a member or participant in the same civic, social, recreational, or religious organization. An employee who claims an exception based on a social relationship shall provide written consent from the student's parent. The written consent shall include an acknowledgement by the parent that:

1. The employee has provided the parent with a copy of this protocol
2. The employee and the student have a social relationship outside of school;
3. The parent understands that the employee's communications with the student are excepted from district regulation; and
4. The parent is solely responsible for monitoring electronic communications between the employee and the student.

Access to the Universal Academy Systems is a Privilege, Not a Right

If given the privilege to access electronic communication including email, all users shall be required to acknowledge and understand all of the administrative regulations governing of use of the system and shall agree to comply with such regulations and guidelines.

Universal Academy reserves the rights to monitor, temporarily disconnect, or eliminate the electronic systems to any employee as it sees appropriate based on inappropriate conduct, misuse of electronic communication. In the change of classroom status or change within job descriptions, employees who no longer require consistent communication with students and parents may be disconnected from their email address and use of electronic devices. If this occurs, administration or campus leaders will provide hard copies of all important correspondences to the employee who will need to sign for his/her copies.

Universal Academy reserves the right to monitor all electronic communication.

The following definitions apply for the use of electronic media with students:

1. *Electronic communications means any communication facilitated by the use of any electronic device, including a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. The term includes e-mail, text messages, instant messages, and any communication made through an Internet website, including a social media website or a social networking website.*
2. *Communicate means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not*

targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee’s personal social network page or a blog) is not a *communication*: however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.

3. *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

An employee who communicates electronically with students shall observe the following:

1. The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students using any form of electronic communications, including mobile and web applications, that are not provided or accessible by the district unless a specific exception is noted below.
2. Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility. An employee who communicates with a student using text messaging shall comply with the following protocol:
 - i. The employee shall include at least one of the student’s parents or guardians as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and parent receive the same message;
 - ii. The employee shall include his or her immediate supervisor as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and supervisor receive the same message; or
 - iii. For each text message addressed to one or more students, the employee shall send a copy of the text message to the employee’s district e-mail address.
3. The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee’s professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
4. The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page (“professional page”) for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee’s professional page.
5. The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
6. The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators’ Code of Ethics including but not limited to:
 - i. Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records
 - ii. Copyright law
 - iii. Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student
7. Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more currently-enrolled students. If the employee elects to withhold this information he/she may be placed on administrative leave without pay or terminated.

8. Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.

An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor. The request will be reviewed by Employee Services for approval or denial.

Criminal History Background Checks

Employees may be subject to a review of their criminal history record information at any time during employment. National criminal history checks based on an individual's fingerprints, photo, and other identification will be conducted on certain employees and entered into the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Clearinghouse. This database provides the district and SBEC with access to an employee's current national criminal history and updates to the employee's subsequent criminal history.

Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention

Universal Academy is committed to maintaining an alcohol- and drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of alcohol and illegal drugs in the workplace and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours may be dismissed.

Electronic/Telecommunication Devices- Cell Phones

Teachers are never to use a cell phone to receive or make calls during class periods.

Electronic/Telecommunication devices and/or cell phones are not to be turned on during assigned duties and/or work time.

Students are not allowed to have cell phones/ electronic devices in class

They must check them in/out in the front office daily. Teachers are *not* allowed to hold cell phones/ electronic devices for students. Students violating this policy should be disciplined according to the discipline policies and procedures.

Extra Duty Assignments

Faculty/staff members will be required to handle some duty this year. If you have something that conflicts with your duty assignment, you need to arrange to change with someone. Please let the office know of any changes to the duty assignments. Duties may include, but not limited to the following:

- Duty at extracurricular activities (gatekeeper, concession stand, etc.)
- Hall Duty
- Lunch Period Duty (one period weekly for professional staff)
- Bus Loading/unloading Duty
- Parking Lot Duty
- Supervising detention hall or in-school suspension
- Supervising the students prior to the beginning of the school day

- After school Tutoring
- Housekeeping duties such as turning out lights, checking air conditioner/heat,
- Locking doors, etc.

Additional information regarding Faculty Dress Code

All personnel are expected to dress in a manner displaying a professional appearance, with a high standard of neatness, keeping in mind appropriateness and good taste. To help clarify specific questions, the following guidelines will apply.

1. Staff dress must meet the standards of the student code as a minimum and may not wear clothing prohibited by the student dress code.
2. Dresses and skirts should be approximately knee length. Capri's are allowed if neatly hemmed. City shorts, skorts (no shorter than knee length).
3. Only PE personnel may wear shorts. They may only be worn during the performance of physical education/coaching responsibilities. However PE should only wear athletic attire.
4. A designated school shirt (to be communicated by your principal in writing) may be worn with standard uniform bottom on Fridays only.
5. No visible tattoos or body piercing.
6. No beach shoes or shower shoes. Including Rubber flip flops
7. Men's facial hair must be neat and well groomed; hair length may not extend past the collar for men, no headscarves or do-rags are worn on campus or at any school event.
8. Blue jeans that have no holes or frayed areas, wind suits, teacher logo shirts, or school spirited t-shirts may be worn on staff days. The building principal may designate other casual days.
9. Staff with unique job requirements may dress in a manner appropriate for their job assignment as approved by their primary supervisor.
10. Ladies must wear stockings or Crew socks no anklets
11. No skirts shorter than 2 inches above the knees
12. No clothing that is tight or form fitting

Student Dress Code

All faculty and staff MUST ensure that all students are on compliance with the Universal Academy Dress Code Policy. (Please refer to the student handbook for uniform guidelines.)

Faculty Meetings

Faculty meetings or PLC's will be scheduled and held as deemed necessary by administration. The efficient operation of the school depends upon the timely and orderly dissemination of information and development of campus policies and procedures related to improving education. All staff members are expected to attend faculty meetings and PLCs unless otherwise excused by the principal. If you have items you feel should be discussed at the meeting please confer with the principal to have those items placed on the agenda.

Field Trip/Class Activities – Student off Campus

All field trips and extra class activities will be requested in advance and approved by the principal. Forms need to be submitted at least two weeks prior to a trip when possible. This form is required anytime a student will be missing regular classroom instruction.

Small amounts of “free time” may be appropriate as a reward for good performance or achievement; free days, parties and other non-educational activities will not be permitted without the advanced approval of the principal. Approval to leave campus must be granted by the principal. Students may only be released through the office; all students are required to sign out if only leaving campus for a short while. Students are to be monitored during all activities, as well as during travel. For more information please refer to the Field Trip Handbook.

Fire and Shelter in Place Drills

Fire drills, shelter in place drills, and lock down drills will be held on a regular basis. Some drills will be pre-announced to teachers, others will be unannounced. Please make sure the students in your classroom are familiar with the fire exits closest to your classroom. Evacuation plans are to be posted in each room. Students should leave the room and exit the building in an orderly manner. Staff is responsible for turning out the lights and closing the classroom door. Refer to the Emergency Management Plan for specifics.

First Aid & CPR Certification

Head coaches or chief sponsors of an extracurricular athletic activity that is sponsored or sanctioned by the district or University Interscholastic League (UIL) must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification must issue certification.

Tobacco Products and E-Cigarette Use

State law prohibits smoking, using tobacco products, or e-cigarettes on all district-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off school property. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for athletics and other activities. Drivers of district-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking, using tobacco products, or e-cigarettes while inside the vehicle. Notices stating that smoking is prohibited by law and punishable by a fine are displayed in prominent places in all school buildings.

Fraud and Financial Impropriety

All employees should act with integrity and diligence in duties involving the district’s financial resources. The district prohibits fraud and financial impropriety, as defined below. Fraud and financial impropriety include the following:

1. Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
2. Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
3. Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets including employee time
4. Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
5. Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
6. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
7. Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district
8. Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons

providing services or materials to the district, except as otherwise permitted by law or district policy

9. Inappropriately destroying, removing, or using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
10. Failing to provide financial records required by federal, state, or local entities
11. Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by law or district policy
12. Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district
13. Failure to comply with requirements imposed by law, the awarding agency, or a pass-through entity for state and federal awards

Nepotism

District Employees with responsibility for recommending for hire or supervising other District personnel shall not recommend for hire or supervise relatives within the first, second or third degree by blood relationship or marriage relationship. Individuals related within the first, second, or third degree by blood or marriage relationship who are employed by the District shall be assigned to different schools and/or different departments. At such point in time that two individuals become married while serving on the same campus or in the same department, one of the individuals shall be transferred to another campus or department. The School Board authorizes the Superintendent to make exceptions after consulting with the Board.

This policy shall not apply to persons who are employed by the District before September 1, 2003 and who have relatives within the first, second, or third degree by blood relationship or marriage relationship and who are on the same campus or in the same department.

Semester Exemptions

Teachers are required to give a semester exam unless documentation verifies that all students are exempt. Semester exams will be given on the assigned date and time and a copy of the exam is to be turned into the office.

Grievances

Any employee may file a grievance or present a complaint in the manner described in school board policy.

Hall Monitoring

Teachers, whose classes are in visual view, will be expected to be at the doorway of their classroom when classes are changing. Teachers whose students must go to classrooms that they do not have visual contact with are required to walk with their students. This helps to monitor activity during the passing period and is a preventative measure to keep problems at a minimum. This also helps to get students out of the halls before they are marked tardy. Students are not to be in the halls between classes without a pass.

Conflict of Interest

Employees are required to disclose in writing to the district any situation that creates a potential conflict of interest with proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or creates a potential conflict of interest with the best interests of the District. This includes the following:

1. A personal financial interest
2. A business interest
3. Any other obligation or relationship
4. Non-school employment

An employee with a substantial interest in a business entity or interest in real property must disclose the interest to the District prior to the award of a contract or authorization of payment. This is done by filing an affidavit with the School Board. An employee is also considered to have substantial interest if a close family member (e.g., spouse, parent, child, or spouse's parent or child) has a substantial interest.

Similarly, employees are discouraged from serving in any position in a campus based organization or entity as an officer responsible for managing the group's finances.

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

Gifts and Favors

Employees may not accept gifts or favors that could influence, or be construed to influence, the employee's discharge of assigned duties. The acceptance of a gift, favor, or service by an administrator or teacher that might reasonably tend to influence the selection of textbooks, electronic textbooks, instructional materials or technological equipment may result in prosecution of a Class B misdemeanor offense. This does not include Professional learning, teacher training, or instructional materials, such as maps or worksheets, that convey information to students or contribute to the learning process.

Copyrighted Materials

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of federal copyright law relating to the unauthorized use, reproduction, distribution, performance, or display of copyrighted materials (i.e., printed material, videos, computer data and programs, etc.). Electronic media, including motion pictures and other audiovisual works, are to be used in the classroom for instructional purposes only. Duplication or backup of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement. An employee may not stream movies from his/her personal paid subscription streaming service. The terms of use of many streaming services do not permit the subscriber to share the contents of the service with others. However, if these providers have content covered by a license purchased by the campus; content can generally be shown in the classroom.

Intellectual Property

As an agent of the District, an employee, including a student employee, shall not have rights to work he or she creates on District time or using District technology resources. The District shall own any work or work product created by a District employee in the course and scope of his or her employment, including the right to obtain copyrights.

If the employee obtains a patent for such work, the employee shall grant a non-exclusive, non-transferable, perpetual, royalty-free, Districtwide license to the District for use of the patented work. A District employee shall own any work or work product produced on his or her own time, away from his or her job and with personal equipment and materials, including the right to obtain patents or copyrights.

A District employee may apply to the Superintendent or designee to use District materials and equipment in his or her creative projects, provided the employee agrees either to grant to the District a non-exclusive, non-transferable, perpetual, royalty-free, District-wide license to use the work, or permits the District to be listed as co-author or co-inventor if the District contribution to the work is substantial. District materials do not include student work, all rights to which are retained by the student.

Upon the termination of any person's association with the District, all permission to possess, receive, or modify the District's intellectual property shall also immediately terminate. All such persons shall

return to the District all intellectual property, including but not limited to any copies, no matter how kept or stored, and whether directly or indirectly possessed by such person.

Associations and Political Activities

The District will not directly or indirectly discourage employees from participating in political affairs or require any employee to join any group, club, committee, organization, or association. Employees may join or refuse to join any professional association or organization.

An individual's employment will not be affected by membership or a decision not to be a member of any employee organization that exists for the purpose of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work.

Use of District resources, including work time, for political activist is prohibited.

Charitable Contributions

The School Board or any employee may not directly or indirectly require or coerce an employee to make a contribution to a charitable organization or in response to a fund-raiser. Employees cannot be required to attend a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions. In addition, the Board or any employee may not directly or indirectly require or coerce an employee to refrain from making a contribution to a charitable organization or in response to a fundraiser or attending a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions.

Safety

The District has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students and to protect and conserve District equipment, employees must comply with the following requirements:

1. Observe all safety rules
2. Keep work areas clean and orderly at all times
3. Immediately report all accidents to their supervisor
4. Operate only equipment or machines for which they have training and authorization

While driving on district business, employees are required to abide by all state and local traffic laws. Employees driving on district business are prohibited from texting and using other electronic devices that require both visual and manual attention while the vehicle is in motion. Employees will exercise care and sound judgment on whether to use hands-free technology while the vehicle is in motion.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact their principal or supervisor.

Possession of Firearms and Other Weapons

Employees, visitors, and students, including those with a license to carry a handgun, are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs, or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. A person, including an employee, who holds a license to carry a handgun may transport or store a handgun or other firearm or ammunition in a locked vehicle in a parking lot, garage, or other district provided

parking area, provided the handgun or firearm or ammunition is properly stored, unloaded, and not in plain view. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisor or call a District administrator immediately.

Visitors in the Workplace

All visitors are expected to enter any District facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the building's main office. The District will require a person who enters a District campus to display the person's driver's license or another form of identification containing the person's photograph. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the District premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge.

Asbestos Management Plan

The District is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each piece of District property. A copy of the District's management plan is kept in the Central Administration office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

Pest Control Treatment

Employees are prohibited from applying any pesticide or herbicide without appropriate training and prior approval of the integrated pest management (IPM) coordinator. Any application of pesticide or herbicide must be done in a manner prescribed by law and the District's integrated pest management program.

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a District building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located in an area of common access by employees. In addition, individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide applications. An employee who requests individualized notice will be notified by telephone, written, or electric means. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

District and Campus Level Planning

The Board shall ensure that a District improvement plan and improvement plans for each campus are developed, reviewed, and revised annually for the purpose of improving the performance of all students. The Board shall annually approve District and campus performance objectives and shall ensure that the District and campus plans are: 1) mutually supportive to accomplish the identified objectives and 2) at a minimum, support the state goals and objectives under Texas Education Code, Chapter 4.

Universal Academy General Policies and Procedures

Employee Identification Number

To safeguard employee identification, Universal Academy assigns an employee number (EP number) to every employee. Employees should use this number on all district forms, unless a social security number is required (for example, W-4 or I-9 forms).

General Employee Conduct

Universal Academy expects its employees to conduct themselves in a businesslike manner. Drinking, fighting, swearing, and similar unprofessional activities are strictly prohibited while on the job. Employees must not engage in sexual harassment, or conduct themselves in a way that could be construed as such, for example, by using inappropriate language, keeping or posting inappropriate materials in their work area, or accessing inappropriate materials on their computer.

Outside Activities, Employment, and Directorships

All employees share a serious responsibility for Universal Academy's good public relations, especially at the community level. Willingness to help with charitable and civic activities brings credit to Universal Academy and is encouraged. Employees must, however, avoid acquiring any business interest or participating in any other activity outside Universal Academy that would, or would appear to:

- Create an excessive demand upon their time and attention, thus depriving Universal Academy of their best efforts on the job.
- Create a conflict of interest - an obligation, interest, or distraction - that may interfere with the independent exercise of judgment in Universal Academy's best interest.

Relationships with Clients and Suppliers

Employees should avoid investing in or acquiring a financial interest, for their own accounts, in any Business organization that has a contractual relationship with Universal Academy, or that provides goods or services, or both, to Universal Academy, if such investment or interest could influence or create the impression of influencing their decisions in the performance of their duties on behalf of Universal Academy.

1. Kickbacks and Secret Commissions

Business Activities

Regarding Universal Academy's business activities, employees may not receive payment or compensation of any kind, except as authorized under Universal Academy's remuneration policies. In particular, Universal Academy strictly prohibits the acceptance of kickbacks and secret commissions from suppliers or others. Any breach of this rule will result in immediate termination and prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.

Bad Weather Closings

The District may close schools because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the District's facilities. The decision to close schools based on inclement weather will be made by 6:00 a.m. When it becomes necessary to open late or to release students early, the following media outlets will be notified by school officials:

School closing decisions are reported to:

- Television Channels 4 ([KDFW](#)), 5 ([KXAS](#)), 8 ([WFAA](#)), 11 ([KTVT](#)), 23 ([KUVN](#)) and 39 ([KXTX](#))
- Radio Stations 820 AM ([WBAP](#)), 100.7 FM ([KWRD](#)), FM ([KHKS](#)), 570 AM ([KLIF](#)), 99.5 FM ([KPLX](#)), 1080 AM ([KRLD](#)) and 103.7 ([KVIL](#))

- Posted on our website at www.universalacademy.com.
- Posted on our School App

If needed, late start times due to inclement weather will be communicated via the means listed above.

Emergencies

All employees should be familiar with the safety procedures for responding to emergencies, including a medical emergency and the evacuation diagrams posted in their work areas. Emergency drills will be conducted to familiarize employees and students with safety and evacuation procedures. Each campus is equipped with an automatic external defibrillator. Fire extinguishers are located throughout all district buildings. Employees should know the location of these devices and procedures for their use.

Identification/Keyless Access Badges

All employees are required to possess a District issued Identification Badge. Campus/Department administrators may require staff to display their District issued identification badge while on campus. Please refer to your campus/department administrator for your guidelines. Keyless access badges are issued only upon approval and request of the campus/department administrator. If a keyless access badge has been lost or stolen, the employee is required to notify the Director of Technology within 24 hours of when the employee knows or reasonably believes the badge has been lost or stolen. Keyless access badges shall not be shared with other employees, students, or community members to gain access to buildings or facilities. A replacement fee of \$35 is charged to the employee for lost or stolen keyless access badge.

Teachers who loan their assigned keyless access badges to parents, co-workers, students, or family members will receive a written reprimand and may be terminated.

Prompt Communications

In all matters relevant to parents, suppliers, government authorities, the public and others in Universal Academy, employees must make every effort to achieve complete, accurate, and timely communications - responding promptly and courteously to all proper requests for information and to all complaints.

Privacy and Confidentiality

When handling financial and personal information about employees, students, parents and others with whom the district has dealings, observe the following principles:

1. Collect, use, and retain only the personal information necessary for Universal Academy's business. Whenever possible, obtain any relevant information directly from the person concerned. Use only reputable and reliable sources to supplement this information.
2. Retain information only for as long as necessary or as required by law. Protect the physical security of this information.
3. Limit internal access to personal information to those with a legitimate business reason for seeking that information. Use only personal information for the purposes for which it was originally obtained. Obtain the consent of the person concerned before externally disclosing any personal information, unless legal process or contractual obligation provides otherwise.
 - Comply with every aspect of "Open Records" law and regulation.
 - *Additional information regarding employee protected health information (PHI) is contained in the Universal Academy Privacy Policy and Procedures Statement.*

Reports to State Board for Educator Certification

The dismissal or resignation of a certified employee will be reported to the SBEC when the superintendent first learns about an alleged incident of conduct that involves the following:

1. Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other illegal conduct with a student or a minor
2. The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
3. The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of school property or funds
4. An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle the individual to a professional position or to receive additional compensation associated with a position
5. Committing a crime on school property or at a school-sponsored event
6. Violating assessment instrument security procedures
7. Soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor
8. Carrying or bringing a weapon of any kind on school property
9. Verbal or physical assault of a student, teacher, administrator, parent or staff member
10. Stealing of any kind
11. Threats against School or employees of the school
12. Improper relationship with parents
13. False statements made against school, parents, students or any member of staff

Reports concerning court-ordered withholding

The district is required to report the termination of employees that are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance to the court and the individual receiving the support (The Texas Family Code §8.210, 158.211). Notice of the following must be sent to the court and support recipient:

1. Termination of employment not later than the seventh day after the date of termination
2. Employee's last known address
3. Name and address of the employee's new employer, if known

Purchasing Procedures

All requests for purchases are submitted to employees designated by the Director of Administrative Services. After appropriate approvals, a purchase order is issued with necessary signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the District can be made without a **signed** purchase order. The District will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without a purchase order in place. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the District's business office. Contact your campus secretary or Purchasing Department for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. An employee should change or update his or her address, phone number, e-mail address, emergency contact information, and W-2 delivery method with Human Resources. For name changes, the employee must obtain a new social security card and bring it to the Payroll Department. At that time, the employee can complete a name-change form to submit to TRS.

Personnel Records

Most District records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. In most cases, an employee's personal e-mail is confidential and may not be released without the employee's permission. Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

1. Home address
2. Home phone number, including personal cell phone number
3. Emergency contact information
4. Information that reveals whether they have family members

New employees will receive a link to a form allowing them to choose which of this information to withhold during the onboarding process. New or terminated employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit this form. Otherwise, the above-listed personal information will be released to the public. Employees may also choose to withhold/release the above information at any other time during their employment by contacting Employee Services.

Building Use

The School Board has chosen to exercise its authority to fix and collect rentals, rates, and charges from students and others for the occupancy or use of the District's gymnasiums, stadiums, or other recreational facilities, in such amounts and in such manner as determined by the Board.

Vehicles

District owned vehicles. All employees driving a District vehicle or using their own vehicle to transport students must have their driving record for the previous three years checked.

Employees are not qualified to operate a Universal Academy vehicle if the employee has:

1. Three moving violations, three accidents, one DWI, or one BTR (Breath Test Refusal) in the 36 months prior to the driving record check.
2. Lost state of Texas driving privileges by reason of revocation, suspension, withdrawal, or denial of license to drive. When the driving license is renewed, the employee may again submit for approval to drive.

Use of personal vehicle for school business

The use of personal vehicles for school business, including the transportation of students, is discouraged. To avoid confusion and to limit the potential liability to the District, with the District will enforce the following guidelines:

1. If an employee uses their personal vehicle, the employee's auto insurance is the primary carrier in the event of an accident. The District's auto carrier will be secondary.
2. All employees driving a District vehicle or using their own vehicle to transport students must have their driving record checked. A check of the employee's driving record for the past three years will be done.

Employees are prohibited from loaning their personal vehicles to students except in rare circumstances as approved by the District.

Termination of Employment

Resignations

Contract employees

Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received at least 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to Human Resources. Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the Superintendent or the Board of Trustees. Resignation without the consent may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

Administrators are required to notify the superintendent of an educator's resignation following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in Reports to Texas Education Agency. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in of the same acts.

Noncontract employees

Noncontract employees may resign their positions at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to Human Resources at least two weeks prior to the effective date. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so.

Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in District policies. The Board of Trustees may non-renew or terminate employees' probationary or term contracts at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The time lines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when written notice is given to an employee. Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or when the employee's certification is revoked for misconduct.

Information on the time lines and procedures can be found in the School Board policy that is provided to employees online at www.universalacademy.com.

Dismissal of Noncontract Employees

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the District to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the District process when pursuing the grievance.

Exit Procedures

All employees leaving the District must complete the Universal Academy Exit Form prior to separating from the District. For information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references, contact the Human Resources Department. Separating employees are asked to provide the District with a forwarding address, email address and phone number.

All District keys, books, property, including intellectual property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment. The District may withhold the cost of any unreturned items from the final paycheck. A final paycheck will not be rendered until all school properties are returned to the district.

Reports to Texas Education Agency

The resignation or termination of a certified employee must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA if there is evidence that the employee was involved in any of the following:

1. Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other unlawful conduct with a student or a minor
2. Soliciting or engaging in sexual contact or a romantic relationship with a student or minor
3. The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
4. The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of district property or funds
5. An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit for the purpose of promotion or additional compensation
6. Committing a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on district property or at a school-sponsored event

The reporting requirements above are in addition to the superintendent's ongoing duty to notify TEA when a certified employee has a reported criminal history. "Reported criminal history" means any formal criminal justice system charges and dispositions including arrests, detentions, indictments, criminal information, convictions, deferred adjudications, and probations in any state or federal jurisdiction that is obtained by a means other than the Fingerprint-based Applicant Clearinghouse of Texas (FACT).

Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding

The district is required to report the termination of employees that are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance. Notice of the following must be sent to the support recipient and the court or, in the case of child support, the Texas Attorney General Child Support Division:

1. Termination of employment not later than the seventh day after the date of termination
2. Employee's last known address
3. Name and address of the employee's new employer, if known

Use of Electronic Signatures

The District may utilize electronic signatures for many of its forms and other documents, including evaluation documents such as a teacher's summative annual appraisal. An electronic signature signifies the employee's consent to sign the form or document in the same manner as a handwritten signature. Prior to submitting some forms or documents, the employee may be required to provide additional personal identifiers in an effort to further authenticate the identity of the employee submitting the electronic signature.

Student Issues

Equal Educational Opportunities

Universal Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, or national origin should be directed to Mrs. Janice Blackmon, Director of Administrative Services and the Human Resources Department.

Student Records

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records.

The following people are the only people who have general access to a student's records:

1. Parents: Married, separated, or divorced parents have rights to their student's records unless parental rights have been terminated by court order and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights.
2. The student: The rights of parents transfer to a student who turns 18 or is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. A district is not prohibited from granting the student access to the student's records before this time.
3. School officials with legitimate educational interests as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and implementing regulations.

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus administrator for assistance.

Parent and Student Complaints

In an effort to hear and resolve parent and student complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the School Board has adopted orderly processes for handling complaints on different issues. Any campus office or the Superintendent's office can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint.

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teachers or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved should be directed to the campus administrator. The formal complaint process provides parents and students with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with administrator's response.

Administering Medication to Students

Only designated employees may administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. Written exceptions by a parent may apply to the self-

administration of asthma medication, medication for anaphylaxis (e.g., Epi-Pen[®]), and medication for diabetes management, if the medication is self-administered in accordance with district policy and procedures. A student who must take any other medication during the school day must bring a written request from his or her parent and the medicine in its original, properly labeled container. Contact the school nurse for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students.

Any unauthorized employee who administers nonprescription or prescription medication to a student may receive a written reprimand or immediate termination at the time the offense occurs.

Dietary Supplements

District employees are prohibited by state law from knowingly selling, marketing, or distributing a dietary supplement that contains performance-enhancing compounds to a student with whom the employee has contact as part of his or her school District duties. In addition, employees may not knowingly endorse or suggest the ingestion, intranasal application, or inhalation of a performance-enhancing dietary supplement to any student.

Any employee who ignores this policy may receive a written reprimand or immediate termination at the time the offense occurs.

Psychotropic Drugs

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

District employees are prohibited by state law from doing the following:

3. Recommending that a student use a psychotropic drug
4. Suggesting a particular diagnosis
5. Excluding from class or school-related activity a student whose parent refuses to consent to a psychiatric evaluation or to authorize the administration of a psychotropic drug to a student

Any employee who ignores this policy may receive a written reprimand or immediate termination at the time the offense occurs.

Student Conduct and Discipline

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management procedures that have been adopted by the District. Other employees that have concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or campus administrator.

Student Attendance

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the district's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require minor students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student, upon returning to school, must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the student handbook. Contact the campus administrator for additional information.

Bullying

Bullying is defined by Texas Education Code § 37.0832. All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying, including cyberbullying, to the campus administrator. The District's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students is below:

Hazing

Students must have prior approval from the Superintendent or designee for any type of "initiation rites" of a school club or organization. While most initiation rites are permissible, engaging in or permitting "hazing" is a criminal offense. Any teacher, administrator, or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, who has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing, or has engaged in hazing must report that fact or suspicion to the designated campus administrator.

Surveys and Data Collection

Universal Academy values input from students. When you determine to survey students as a faculty member at Universal Academy, please consider the following:

1. Does the information requested have the potential to increase student learning and/or improve my instructional practice?
2. Have I designed the survey such that student rights to privacy and protection from harm have been ensured?
3. Have I considered the sensitivity of the information being sought to ensure it is developmentally appropriate?
4. Have I discussed the survey with or gained approval from campus and/or administration?

Please review the enumerated items when considering any survey of student interests or information. In the event you have any questions, please contact an administrator. All conducted surveys must be approved by the Superintendent or designee.

Daily Attendance

Teachers must maintain accurate records of attendance. Attendance is taken each period in grades 9-12. Attendance is to be taken at 10:00 A.M. grades Pre-Kindergarten through eight. Teachers will maintain two attendance files. An electronic and a written file are required. Teachers are to mark absent those students that are not present at the time attendance is taken and up load the file to the office by 12:00 (Noon) on a daily basis. If the student enters class after the attendance time the teacher will change to student from absent to present and notify the office. The written records are to be marked in BLACK or BLUE ink and signed with the teacher's full name **daily**. No stamps or initials will be accepted. Failure to adhere to the daily requirements of the attendance will result in termination and a complaint will be filed with the SBOC. Class counts will be verified each six-week period. Teachers are also responsible for keeping a record of student tardiness. For more information please review the student tardy policy, which can be found in the student handbook.

Names of students who are absent are to be reported to the office with the lunch count for your class.

Calling Students from Class

Students will be called from class only in cases of emergency or disciplinary matters. Never permit a student to leave your classroom without a written or verbal request from the office. If a student must leave

your class, issue a hall pass and allow only one student out of the room at a time. This procedure is to be followed by all teachers. Do not send or allow a student to disrupt another teacher's classroom.

Channels of Communication

Complaints of students and parents should always go through the proper channels as follows:

1. A conference with the teacher and cohort.
2. If satisfactory adjustments or explanations are not made, a conference with the campus level administrator should be arranged.
3. If satisfactory adjustments or explanations are not made, a conference with the superintendent should be arranged.
4. If satisfactory adjustments or explanations are not made, a conference with the Board of Trustees should be arranged.

Complaints of faculty members/staff should always go through the proper channels. The person with whom you have an issue should be the first person you arrange to see. If the problem is not resolved, then the procedures outlined above should be followed.

Class Parties

Teachers may schedule class Birthday parties during the times of 2:45 to 3:10. No parties may continue after 3:10. Birthday parties are limited to parents **only**; no siblings or relatives will be allowed to attend. District approved parties are held only on Christmas (Winter Break), Valentine's Day, Easter and the End of the School year. These are the officially designated party days. Teachers scheduling parties shall allow time to clean the classroom before students are dismissed from class.

Contributions by parents for party refreshments and decorations shall be voluntary. All food should be purchased from a licensed food vendor and not prepared in the home. Individual party invitations shall not be distributed at school unless the entire class group is invited.

Teacher Parties

Teachers are not allowed to have parties unless the mandatory Campus Hospitality Group hosts these parties. Team parties amongst teachers are not allowed as they are exclusionary and do not foster a team unity attitude. There will be no separate eating area. All staff may eat in the cafeteria or their classroom, but may not use any equipment that requires electricity or gas. Baby Showers are approved if the party is a member of the Campus Hospitality Group and if the shower is given after school. You may never solicit gifts from students or their parents and no showers or birthday parties are allowed during the school day.

Classroom Management

Each teacher is expected to maintain an orderly, calm, and learning environment for all students. This is best achieved with a consistent reinforcement system emphasizing positive reinforcement for appropriate responses or performance. Each teacher is expected to:

- determine level on which the learner is working
- introduce new material in ways that the learner can relate to it on a basic level
- check for understanding of new concepts provide opportunities for student to practice what has been introduced (guided and independent practice)
- review the entire process: re-emphasize important concepts and re-teach if necessary
- test or evaluate the progress and/or achievement, re-teach if necessary

Computer/Internet Use

No employee is allowed to use their personal computer, I pad, or cell phone to conduct any school related business, including calls to parents or other teachers. We have developed guidelines for use of computers and software throughout the district (Acceptable Use Policy). This document will also apply to any students that you instruct in your classroom and have access to computers, whether that contact occur in the classroom or in the computer lab. Faculty/staff members are required to sign an Acceptable Use Policy each year. Faculty/staff are not to use the computer for personal benefit or enjoyment (i.e. trading stocks, earning points/income, chat rooms, etc.) These activities should not take place on school owned equipment. Teachers should not use the computer during class time, unless it is incorporated into the lesson or instruction. This includes times you should be monitoring students during guided practice, independent practice, changing of classes and other duties assigned by the principal.

All staff members are responsible for keeping computer equipment and computer work area clean and free of dust and clutter.

Equipment and software problems should be reported to the Technology Coordinator via e-mail.

Conference/ Planning Period

Teachers have a conference period in the daily schedule. Teachers may not leave the campus during the conference period without the express permission of the principal. The teacher's daily conference periods are used for the following purposes:

1. Conferences with administrators, supervisors, counselors, etc.
2. Conferences with parents
3. Lesson planning and preparation
4. Conferences with students
5. Grading and input of grades

Conferences with Parents and/or Students

One of the best ways to include parents in the educational process is to have conferences with them. TEC 28.002 requires that teachers confer with each parent during the year. Do not hesitate to contact parents by telephone when you need to work with them. Please use good judgment-these are their children. Document all conferences, including phone calls. Be persistent in your attempts to make contact. Do not forget that parents and student like positive reports from teachers. Remember that each parent must be contacted at least once per semester. Parent logs are to be turned into the office at the end of each six weeks. Since you are able to conference with every parent at least once per month (during the ACE'S program) you are expected to present an IAP (Individualized Academic Plan) on every student by the 5th week of school and you should be able to update or modify the IAP every 6 weeks. Anytime a student receives a grade below 75, a conference can be scheduled. However, if a student receives a grade below 75 on the progress report or report card a parent conference must be scheduled. Also we must conference with parents anytime the students grade drops by 10 point or more over a three week period.

Teachers are required to use the district's **Meeting Protocol Form** for all parent conferences including ARDs, LPACs and general parent conferences. Teachers should discuss and present the following items.

1. Student Leadership Forms (signed and unsigned)
2. Copies of Missing Assignment Forms
3. Discipline Forms
4. Samples of Student's Work

From beginning to current (demonstrating student's progress)

5. RTS Journals
6. ALL Assessment Data and Eduphoria Data Profiles
7. Response To Intervention (RTI) Documentation
8. Homework and Classwork
9. Gradebook
10. Parent Letters and Emails

Discipline

Effective discipline is essential for the smooth operation of any organization; schools are no exception. Communication and teamwork are a major part of the discipline process. The teacher, student, parents, and administration must work together to ensure that this takes place.

When discipline problems arise, they must not be allowed to disrupt the vital learning process. Teachers should remember that the principal is there for support when student behavior cannot be coped with successfully. When the principal becomes a part of the discipline process, he/she must use his/her administrative judgment to determine the best solution to the problem. Remember the principal cannot serve as the sole disciplinarian in the classroom; that responsibility rests with you the TEACHER. Teachers are expected to exhaust all recommended means of modifying student behavior before making an office referral. If misbehavior is not corrected a referral is to be filled out and turned into the office. The principal will get with the student and apply the step plan set out in the handbook. If a student's behavior is out of control, call the office and ask the principal to come and remove the student. The principal addresses this behavior

Discipline is the responsibility of ALL individuals involved in the school setting. The principal cannot serve as the sole disciplinarian in the school. Expectations for behavior must be supported and expected by all. It is necessary for the school-learning climate to be conducive to learning for all students.

Electronic/Telecommunication Devices- Cell Phones

Teachers are never to use a cell phone to receive or make calls during class periods.

Electronic/Telecommunication devices and/or cell phones are not to be turned on during assigned duties and/or work time.

Students are not allowed to have cell phones/ electronic devices in class

They must check them in/out in the front office daily. Teachers are *not* allowed to hold cell phones/ electronic devices for students. Students violating this policy should be disciplined according to the discipline policies and procedures.

Extra Duty Assignments

Faculty/staff members will be required to handle some duty this year. If you have something that conflicts with your duty assignment, you need to arrange to change with someone. Please let the office know of any changes to the duty assignments. Duties may include, but not limited to the following:

1. Duty at extracurricular activities (gatekeeper, concession stand, etc.)
2. Hall Duty

3. Lunch Period Duty (one period weekly for professional staff)
4. Bus Loading/unloading Duty
5. Parking Lot Duty
6. Supervising detention hall or in-school suspension
7. Supervising the students prior to the beginning of the school day
8. Tutoring
9. Housekeeping duties such as turning out lights, checking air conditioner/heat,
10. Locking doors, etc.

Student Dress Code

All faculty and staff MUST ensure that all students are on compliance with the Universal Academy Dress Code Policy. (Please refer to the student handbook for uniform guidelines.)

Faculty Meetings

Faculty meetings or PLC's will be scheduled and held as deemed necessary by the principal. The efficient operation of the school depends upon the timely and orderly dissemination of information and development of campus policies and procedures related to improving education. All staff members are expected to attend faculty meetings unless otherwise excused by the principal. If you have items you feel should be discussed at the meeting please confer with the principal to have those items placed on the agenda.

Field Trip/Class Activities – Student off Campus

All field trips and extra class activities will be requested in advance and approved by the principal. Forms need to be submitted at least two weeks prior to a trip when possible. This form is required anytime a student will be missing regular classroom instruction.

Small amounts of “free time” may be appropriate as a reward for good performance or achievement; free days, parties and other non-educational activities will not be permitted without the advanced approval of the principal. Approval to leave campus must be granted by the principal. Students may only be released through the office; all students are required to sign out if only leaving campus for a short while. Students are to be monitored during all activities, as well as during travel. For more information please refer to the Field Trip Handbook.

Fire and Shelter in Place Drills

Fire drills, shelter in place drills, and lock down drills will be held on a regular basis. Some drills will be pre-announced to teachers, others will be unannounced. Please make sure the students in your classroom are familiar with the fire exits closest to your classroom. Evacuation plans are to be posted in each room. Students should leave the room and exit the building in an orderly manner. Staff is responsible for turning out the lights and closing the classroom door. Refer to the District Crisis Management Plan for specifics.

First Aid & CPR Certification

Head coaches or chief sponsors of an extracurricular athletic activity that is sponsored or sanctioned by the district or University Interscholastic League (UIL) must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification must issue certification.

Semester Exemptions- sees Student Handbook. Teachers are required to give a semester exam unless documentation verifies that all students are exempt. Semester exams will be given on the assigned date and time and a copy of the exam is to be turned into the office.

Grievances

Any employee may file a grievance or present a complaint in the manner described in school board policy.

Hall Monitoring

Teachers will be expected to be at the doorway of their classroom when classes are changing. Teachers whose students must go to classrooms that they do not have visual contact with are required to walk with their students. This helps to monitor activity during the passing period and is a preventative measure to keep problems at a minimum. This also helps to get students out of the halls before they are marked tardy. Students are not to be in the halls between classes without a pass.

Homework Policy

I. Purpose:

Homework contributes toward building responsibility, self-discipline and lifelong learning habits. It is the intention of the Universal Academy staff to assign relevant, challenging and meaningful homework assignments that reinforce classroom-learning objectives. Homework should provide students with the opportunity to apply information they have learned, complete unfinished class assignments, and develop independence. Homework grades are modified based on students' individual needs (i.e. IEP, 504 Plans).

Homework assignments include:

1. Practice exercises to follow classroom instruction
2. Preview assignments to prepare for subsequent lessons
1. Extension assignments to transfer new skills or concepts to new situations
2. Creative activities to integrate many skills toward the production of a response or product

II. Time

Actual time required to complete assignments will vary with each student's study habits, academic skills, and selected course load. If your child is spending an inordinate amount of time doing homework, you should contact your child's teachers. Students are encouraged to pursue non-assigned, independent, leisure reading.

III. Late Work Policies

Students are expected to turn work in on time. Students who turn in late assignments on a consistent basis will receive any of the following based upon individual teacher discretion or grade level policy.

1. partial credit
2. no credit
3. missed reward activity
4. communication with parents
5. after school detention

Students who miss homework because of an absence will receive the opportunity to make up missed work. Students are given one calendar day for each day absent plus one extra day to turn in their work. It's the students' responsibility to get work missed due to illness or absence.

IV. Major Projects

Major Projects include research reports, book reports, major essays, and other assignments teachers designate as major projects. Work on these projects may exceed the maximum minutes per night.

Responsibilities of Staff:

1. Assign relevant, challenging and meaningful homework that reinforces classroom learning
2. Give clear instructions and make sure students understand the purpose
3. Give feedback and/or correct homework
4. Communicate with other teachers
5. Involve parents and contact them if a pattern of late or incomplete homework develops

Responsibilities of Parents:

1. Establish a quiet, well-lit study area
2. Monitor student's organization and daily list of assignments in their agenda
3. Help student work to find the answer, not just get it done
4. Be supportive when the student gets frustrated with difficult assignments
5. Contact teacher to stay well informed about the student's learning process
6. Set a regular, uninterrupted study time each day

Responsibilities of Students:

Write assignments in the "Universal Academy Student Planner"

1. Be sure all assignments are clear; don't be afraid to ask questions if necessary
2. Set aside a regular time for studying
3. Find a quiet, well-lit study area
4. Work on homework independently whenever possible, so that it reflects student ability.
5. Produce quality work.
6. Make sure assignments are done according to the given instructions and completed on time.

Homework Policy and Practices

The school faculty believes that homework plays an important role in the education of each student as a meaningful follow-up to classroom instruction.

- Homework will be assigned by teachers according to the abilities and needs of the students and will therefore vary among subject areas and teachers
 - All students are required to read at least 20 minutes each night as monitored through the reading log.
 - Students are expected to have assignments complete by assigned due date
 - It is the responsibility of the student to get missed work from his/her teachers
1. **Excused absences** – Students absent from school due to an excused absence will have the same number of days absent to turn in missed work for full credit.

2. **Suspensions out of school** – In case of students suspended out of school, major tests (e.g. finals or unit tests) and major projects or term papers may be made up for full credit. All other grades will be entered as zeros including; classwork, homework, and participation.

Missing Assignments

Teachers are required to send home missing assignment sheets to parents. All missing assignments, including homework, will be recorded as missing in the online student data collection program. Missing work will be accepted with the following restrictions:

- All students should have the opportunity to complete missing assignments in a supervised setting
- If a student is missing three (3) consecutive assignments the teacher will make contact with the parent/guardian by the preferred method of communication
- All assignments recorded as missing will appear as zeros until they are completed or the nine weeks ends
- When a student is failing a class the teacher will notify the parent/guardian with a documented form of communication such as email, letter, phone call or another type of documented communication. This communication should be recorded in the online student data collection system.

Lunch Detention

The school site base team passed this addition to the homework policy during the meeting on 9/7/2011. The site base team consists of teacher, administrators, parents, and a board member.

Failure to complete homework on time for class will result in an immediate lunch detention. If a student does not have the homework completed for a class that meets before lunch, they will be assigned a lunch detention to complete that homework while they are eating. If they did not complete homework for a class that meets after lunch, they will be assigned a lunch detention for the next school day. Lunch detention takes place in a classroom that is supervised by a teacher. When assigned a lunch detention, failure to report to lunch detention may lead to an office assigned detention.

If a student receives more than one lunch detention, a letter will be sent home to parents alerting them of their child's behavior. The letter will also state whom to contact to set up a plan for success for their child to hopefully avoid future lunch detentions.

Additional Professional Expectations and Responsibilities

I. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

1. Exchange Day (Monday, February 18):

- a. All faculty and staff who attend a 6-Hour (full day) professional development session may be eligible to exchange professional development hours to be off from work on Monday, February 18, 2019. The faculty and staff must provide an **official** certificate from the approved training.

The professional development may include workshops conducted by Region 10, Region 11 or any other district “**approved**” workshop attended between June 6, 2018 - August 10, 2018. The district will not approve any dates outside of the assigned window.

The ESL Preparation Course will ONLY be approved if the official TEXES Exams are taken between June 7, 2018 – August 10, 2018. The ESL Preparation Course without the TEXES Test Scores will not be approved for Exchange Day.

2. Teachers’ Daily Attendance:

- a. Universal Academy understands that sometimes circumstances happen beyond the control of an individual. However, faculty and staff are expected to be at work every day. Faculty and staff have 5 sick days and 2 personal days for the school year. After the seven days have been depleted, faculty and staff may lose their daily rate of pay for each absence taken after the 7 days. Please see the Employee Handbook for details.

3. Work Hours:

- a. The workday for faculty and staff begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m. All faculty and staff are required to be at work on time. Faculty and staff are required to be at their morning duty at 7:30 a.m.

4. Demonstrating Professional Behavior:

- a. Uniform should be neat and clean.
- b. Tone of voice should be courteous to co-workers, students, and parents at all times.
- c. Be respectful to self and to others.

5. Morning and Afternoon Duties:

- a. All faculty and staff are required to report to their assigned morning and afternoon duties on time. Faculty and staff may not switch or change duties without written approval from an administrator.

6. School Uniforms:

- a. All faculty and staff are required to wear the school uniform daily. Faculty and staff who do not adhere to the school uniform policy may receive a verbal or written reprimand. The school uniform standards will be highly enforced during the 2018-2019 school year.

7. Weekly Gradebook Check:

- a. Teachers are required to have their grade books checked each week by their cohorts. The cohorts will review the following:
 - i. Proper set-up of the grade book (Online and Hard Copy)
 - ii. The online and hard copy gradebooks must align/match each week.
 - iii. Two grades per week, per content subject
 - iv. List of assignments
 - v. Closely monitor Individual student grades
 - vi. Closely monitor Class averages on assignments
 - vii. Grade Weights
 - viii. Other

8. Build Positive Relationships with Students:

- a. Regularly communicate with parents and guardians.
- b. Review Cumulative Folders in PEIMS to gain more knowledge and information about the students in your classroom.
- c. Give positive feedback.
- d. Watch your tone of voice with your students, parents, and co-workers.
- e. Use a positive tone of voice with your students, parents, and co-workers.
- f. *Art and Science of Teaching / Relating to Students: It's What You Do That Counts* by **Robert J. Marzano**
 - i. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educationaleadership/mar11/vol68/num06/Relating-to-Students@-It%27s-What-You-Do-That-Counts.aspx>
- g. **Be A Champion (Rita Pierson):** <https://youtu.be/SFnMTHhKdkw>

9. Grade Deadlines (Progress Reports and Report Cards):

- a. All faculty and staff are required to post grades by the deadlines set by the district. Faculty and staff who fail to adhere to the district deadlines may receive a verbal or written reprimand.

10. Students' Daily Attendance:

- a. All teachers are required to post their attendance daily at 10:00 a.m. Teachers who fail to post their attendance on time may receive a verbal or written reprimand.

11. Clean Classrooms and Work Spaces:

- a. All faculty and staff are required to keep their classrooms and work spaces neat, clean and odor free at all times. Faculty and staff who fail to adhere to this policy may receive a verbal or written reprimand.

12. Meeting Protocol Form:

- a. Faculty and Staff are required to bring and be able to discuss the items/data listed on the Meeting Protocol Form to all ARD Meetings and Parent Conferences.

13. Practice the Golden Rule:

- a. Practice the Golden Rule: Treat students, parents, and co-workers the way that you would like to be treated. There is no “I” in Team UA. It takes TEAMWORK to make the DREAM WORK.

14. Saturday School:

- a. All Faculty and Staff are required to attend one Saturday school (9:00 – 12:00). The Saturday School dates will be released in September 2018.

II. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION:

1. Teaching Bell to Bell:

- a. Faculty and Staff are required to teach Bell to Bell (7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.). Our goal is to ensure that ALL students are reaching their academic and behavior potential.

2. Instructional/Curriculum Focus:

a. Reciprocal Teaching Strategy (RTS)

- i. Each student should have one RTS Journal per content. This journal should be specifically for RTS ONLY.
- ii. Teachers are required to bring all RTS Journals to ARDS and parent conferences.
- iii. RTS Implementation Date- August 27, 2018

b. Instructional Centers

- i. Faculty and staff are required to create instructional centers that are aligned to current data and the instructional needs of their students.

c. Rigor

- i. Standards-Based Planning
- ii. Practicing and deepening content
- iii. Providing cognitively complex tasks involving generating and testing hypothesis
- iv. Foundational Learning
- v. Deeper thinking
- vi. Complex Thinking
- vii. Using Formative and Summative Assessment Data for Instructional Decisions

d. Differentiation and Personalized Learning

e. Data Driven Instruction

f. Instructional Centers (based on the current data)

g. Blooms Taxonomy (Revised)

3. Lesson Plans:

- a. All lesson plans are due on or before every Monday at 7:30 a.m. and should be uploaded into Eduphoria Forethought.
- b. Although UA strongly encourages collaboration with other teachers and grade levels, teachers are required to complete their own lesson plans based on the instructional needs of their assigned students. There is no ONE SIZE FITS ALL standard at UA.
- c. All lesson plans should be purposeful and detailed.

4. Online Instructional/Curriculum Programs:

- a. ACTIVATE
 - i. All Special Education Students
 - ii. All 3rd – 8th-grade students who demonstrated difficulty in the content areas of reading and math on the STAAR Benchmarks.
 - iii. All students are required to use ACTIVATE 20 minutes 3X per week.
- b. Study Island (PK-12th)
- c. NWEA (PK-12th)
- d. Eduphoria (PK-12th)
 - i. TEKS Bank (embedded within Eduphoria)
- e. Goalbook (PK-12th)
- f. Reading Eggs (PK-2)
- g. TEKS Resource System

5. Classroom Management, Systems, and Procedures:

- a. Faculty and staff are required to post (in large print) Rules, Procedures, Rewards, and Consequences in their classrooms.
- b. Establish classroom management, systems, and procedures at the BOY.
- c. Create a seating chart at the BOY.
- d. Follow all district discipline policies and procedures.
- e. Keep all signed copies of discipline forms.
- f. Practice walking in quiet and straight lines at the BOY, MOY, and EOY.
- g. Grade Level Teams should practice classroom transitions. The transitions should take no more than 3 minutes.
- h. Faculty and staff should establish routines for morning work. The activities may include:
 - i. Chess
 - ii. Writing Prompts
 - iii. Logic Puzzles
 - iv. Reading or Math

6. Substitute Folders:

- a. All faculty and staff are required to keep a substitute folder that includes:
 - i. Daily Schedule
 - ii. Special Populations Schedule for specific students
 1. (ESL, SPED, Dyslexia, and Speech)
 - iii. Attendance Sheet (printed by the Front Office and/or Cohort)
 - iv. Student Roster (First and Last Name)
 - v. Parent Contact List
 - vi. Front Office Contact List
 - vii. Cohort Contact Information
 - viii. Seating Chart
 - ix. Current Work (this should change each six-weeks)
 - x. Logic Puzzles
 - xi. Spelling Words

7. Teacher Appraisal System:

- a. T-TESS

8. Special Populations:

- a. All faculty and staff are required to understand the state/federal governing laws and instructional practices of students who are identified under the special population's umbrella. Teachers are required to make the appropriate modifications and accommodations aligned with each program. In addition, teachers are required to work closely with the special population's staff to ensure all students are successful.
 - i. Special Education
 - ii. 504
 - iii. Speech
 - iv. Dyslexia
 - v. OHI
 - vi. English as a Second Language (ESL)
 - vii. Gifted and Talented (GT)

9. 2018-2019 Assessments:

- a. **CIRCLE (Prekindergarten)**
 - i. BOY (September-October)
 - ii. MOY (January-February)
 - iii. EOY (April-May)
- b. **UA Assessments (Prekindergarten and Kindergarten)**
 - i. BOY (September-October)
 - ii. MOY (January-February)
 - iii. EOY (April-May)
- c. **Texas Primary Reading Inventory (K-2)**
 - i. BOY (September-October)
 - ii. MOY (January-February)
 - iii. EOY (April-May)
- d. **NWEA (PK-12)**
 - i. BOY (September)
 - ii. MOY (January)
 - iii. EOY (March-April)
- e. **Six-Weeks Assessments**
 - i. 1st – 6th
- f. **Gifted and Talented Testing**
 - i. New Referrals & 2017-2018 Identified Students who did not test in June 2018 (September-October)
 - ii. New Referrals & Identified Students (April)
- g. **STAAR Benchmarks**
 - i. BOY (September) and MOY (January)

10. Educational Rounds:

- a. All Educational Rounds will start in September 2018. The specific days for each campus will be released in August 2018.

11. Gifted and Talented:

- a. For those teachers who are GT Certified/Endorsed, you will need to have your 6-hour GT Updates completed on or before August 10, 2018.
- b. For the 2018-2019 school year, all teachers who are currently teaching GT Students and Advanced Students must be GT Certified/Endorsed (6-hour Update or 30 GT hours) by August 10, 2018.
- c. For teachers who are interested in the GT Certification/Endorsement, you must complete 30 hours of GT Training. You may take the Certification Courses (30 hours) and the 6-hour GT Update Courses online. You may register on the Region 10 Website.

12. Leadership Form (PK-12):

- a. All teachers are required to use the approved Leadership Form provided by the district. Parents are required to sign the leadership Form each week and return it to the teacher. The form should be placed in the student's file each week and should be presented at all parent conferences and ARD Meetings.

13. Parent Conferences and ARD Meetings:

- a. Teachers are required to provide all instructional information, attendance, and data profiles listed on the meeting protocol form. The updated 2018-2019 Meeting Protocol Form will be distributed in August 2018. Teachers should bring all RTS Journals to the parent conferences and ARD Meetings.

14. ACES-Makerspace:

- a. ACES-Makerspace will start in September 2018.
- b. There will be four parent nights to display the students' PBL Projects.
 - i. 2 Fall and 2 Spring
- c. Parent Conferences

15. Weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):

- a. All faculty and staff including Specials, P.E., SPED, and ESL teachers will attend a weekly PLC.
 - i. Student-Centered
 - ii. Instructional- Centered
 - iii. Teacher-Centered
 - iv. Data-Centered

Disclaimer:

Universal Academy reserves the right to edit any or all professional expectations and responsibilities at any time

HUMAN RESOURCES

1. Plan and Employment Policy

From School Board Policies

The Superintendent of Schools shall have the sole authority to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding the selection of all personnel other than the Superintendent. If the Board rejects the Superintendent's recommendation, the Superintendent shall make alternate recommendations until the Board accepts a recommendation.

In March each year, the Superintendent shall present to the Board a plan for staffing the school district for the succeeding school year. The plan shall show all professional personnel positions required for the normal and efficient operation of the school district. Upon the plan's approval by the Board of Trustees, the Superintendent is authorized to make recommendations for selecting professionals for positions contained in the plan. The Superintendent may recommend the selection of professional personnel for vacancies that occur during the school year or at any time that the Board approves a new position.

The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to assign professional employees to positions and duties, which the employees are, qualified to serve. The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to assign professional employees to supplemental duties with supplementary salaries. Those employees serve in those assignments at the will of the district, and the Superintendent may dismiss them from those assignments at the Superintendent's discretion.

The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to hire, to assign, to suspend without pay, and to dismiss no contractual employees, including all paraprofessional, clerical, service, and support personnel. The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to suspend professional employees from the performance of any and all duties with pay for a period not to exceed thirty (30) consecutive days or for sixty (60) cumulative days in any contract year. The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to accept the resignations of employees. The Superintendent may appoint administrative supervisors as the Superintendent's designee to accept resignations of employees or to dismiss no contractual employees.

The Superintendent shall submit to principals a pool of qualified applicants for campus staff positions. The principal must approve each assignment to the principal's campus unless the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee because of enrollment shifts, program changes, or for the purposes of desegregation makes the assignment. Principals may assign a campus staff member to perform appropriate duties. Principals do not have the authority to hire, to suspend, or to dismiss professional employees. However, a principal may remove from the campus for not more than three consecutive days any staff member assigned to the campus if the principal believes that the person's conduct or performance interferes with the efficient, orderly, or safe operation of the school, and the principal shall notify the Superintendent immediately after any removal. A day shall be deducted from a person's sick leave balance for each day for which a person is suspended or removed from duty. If no sick leave is available, the suspension or removal shall be without pay.

II. Employment Contracts

1. General Contract

All professional employees shall be employed under officially approved, written probationary or term contracts executed by officers of the Board of Trustees. A **term contract** is a contract of employment for a fixed term between the school district and a professional employee. A probationary contract is not a term contract.

A person employed under a probationary contract has no expectation of employment and no property interest in a contract beyond the probationary period. A person employed under a term contract has no expectation of employment and no property interest in a contract beyond its term. “Professional employee” means a person whose assignment description in board policy requires the issuance of a contract, including a superintendent, director, administrative assistant, program director, supervisor, principal, assistant principal, counselor, classroom teacher, nurse, or librarian. The maximum length of a term contract is stated in the position’s assignment description in Board policy and shall not exceed five years. The length of each person’s contract is set by official action of the Board.

Contracts shall be considered for renewal based upon the needs of the school district and the performance of the employee. Periodic written evaluations of employees’ performance shall be conducted and reviewed by the Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent’s designee prior to the Superintendent’s annual submission of recommendations for renewal and nonrenewal. The completed evaluations will be discussed with the employee prior to the submission of the Superintendent’s recommendation.

An assignment involving an additional salary supplement is at the will of the school district and is subject to annual review. The Superintendent is the Board’s designee to assign and to dismiss employees from supplemental duties and supplemental salaries.

In lieu of non-renewing or terminating, a person employed under a term contract and after first giving the person notice of proposed nonrenewal or termination, the school district may, with the person’s written consent, return the person to probationary contract status. The person must serve a new probationary period as if the district employed the person for the first time.

2. Probationary Contracts

Probationary contracts shall be for one school year, and may be renewed for two additional one-year periods. A person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for five of the eight years preceding employment by the district shall serve only one probationary year. A person shall not receive a probationary contract for a fourth consecutive year unless the Board of Trustees determines during the third consecutive probationary year that it is doubtful whether the person should be given a term contract.

The employment of a person employed under a probationary contract may be terminated at the end of the contract period if in the Board’s judgment the best interests of the district will be served by terminating the employment. Not later than the 45th day before the last day of instruction required under the contract, the Board shall give notice of its intention to terminate the employment to a professional employee assigned to a school. Not later than the 45th day before the last workday of the contract, the Board shall give notice of its intention to terminate the employment to a professional employee not assigned to a school. The notice is not required to notify the employee of a particular reason for the termination. Persons employed under a

probationary contract are not entitled a hearing after receiving the district's notice of its intention to terminate the probationary contract. The Board's decision is final and may not be appealed.

If the Board fails to give a person employed under a probationary contract a timely notice of its intention to terminate the person's employment at the end of the year, the person shall be employed for the following school year under a probationary contract if the person has been employed by the school district under a probationary contract for less than three consecutive school years or under a one-year term contract if the person has been employed for three consecutive school years under a probationary contract.

A person employed under a probationary contract may be discharged from employment at any time for good cause as determined by the Board, good cause being the failure to meet the accepted standards of conduct for the profession as generally recognized and applied in similarly situated school districts in the state. In lieu of discharge and for good cause, the Board may suspend a probationary employee without pay for a period not to extend beyond the current school year.

3. Term Contracts and Nonrenewal of Term Contracts

Term contracts must be in writing and shall not exceed five years. Before a person may first be employed under a term contract, the district must have employed the person the previous year under a probationary contract.

For professional employees whose contracts are about to expire, the Board shall give written notice whether the Board proposes to renew or not renew the contract not later than the 45th day before the last day of instruction in a school year. If the notice is not given, the person will be employed the following school year in the same professional capacity.

If the person desires a hearing after receiving the notice of proposed nonrenewal, the person shall notify the Board of Trustees in writing not later than the 15th day after the date the person receives the notice of proposed nonrenewal. Unless the parties agree in writing to a different date, the Board shall provide for a hearing to be held not later than the 15th day after the date the Board receives the request for a hearing. The hearing shall be conducted before the Board of Trustees in closed session unless the person requests an open hearing. At the hearing, the person may have a representative, may hear evidence supporting the reason for nonrenewal, may cross-examine adverse witnesses, and may present evidence.

If the person does not request a hearing, the Board shall take appropriate action to renew or not renew the contract and shall notify the person in writing of that action not later than the 30th day after the date the notice of proposed nonrenewal was sent to the person. If the person requests a hearing, following the hearing the Board shall take the appropriate action to renew or not to renew the contract and shall notify the person in writing of that action not later than the 15th day after the date on which the hearing was conducted.

A person aggrieved by the action of the Board of Trustees on the nonrenewal of the person's contract may appeal to the Commissioner of Education for a review of the decision of the Board. The Commissioner will not substitute the Commissioner's judgment for the judgment of the Board of Trustees unless the Board's decision was arbitrary, capricious, unlawful, or not supported by substantial evidence.

A person employed under a term contract may be discharged from employment at any time for a financial exigency that requires a reduction in personnel or for good cause as determined by the Board, good cause being the failure to meet the accepted standards of conduct for the profession as generally recognized and

applied in similarly situated school districts in the state. In lieu of discharge and for good cause, the Board may suspend a term employee without pay for a period not to extend beyond the current school year. A term employee who is not discharged after being suspended without pay pending discharge is entitled to back pay for the period of the suspension.

4. Reasons for Nonrenewal and/or Reduction of Professional Employees

Any one or more of the following reasons shall be sufficient for non-renewal of the contract of a professional employee:

- 1) For good cause, including but not limited to one or more of the specified reasons for which the employee could be terminated from employment before the end of the contract period;
- 2) Willful failure to pay debts;
- 3) Failure to comply with such reasonable requirements as the Board of Trustees may prescribe for achieving professional improvement and growth;
- 4) Failure to perform duties in a prompt and efficient manner, or
- 5) Reduction in staff because of decreased enrollment, budgetary considerations, consolidation of schools, phasing out of programs, departments, or for other just causes. The following guidelines will be followed:
 - a. The reduction will be on a district wide basis rather than by school. The Superintendent will first determine the areas to be affected. Employment areas will be defined as:
 - 1) Elementary grades as a single unit.
 - 2) Elementary departments such as music, physical education, etc.
 - 3) Secondary departments such as mathematics, social studies, Science, music, art, physical education, etc.
 - 4) Special departments such as compensatory, bilingual, Title I, Special education, etc.
 - 5) Specialists such as librarians, nurses, diagnosticians, counselors, Consultants/program directors, etc.
 - 6) Administrative positions such as assistant principals, principals, directors, etc.
 - b. Every effort will be made to avoid canceling an employment contract within such specific fields through:
 - 1) retirements
 - 2) resignations
 - 3) voluntary transfers
 - 4) administrative transfer
 - 5) changes of assignment

c. In determining employees to be dismissed within a specific area, the Superintendent will use the following criteria:

- 1) Contract status - those holding probationary contracts will be dismissed prior to those on term contracts.
- 2) Certification - those holding emergency or temporary certification within the affected area shall be dismissed prior to those holding appropriate certification.
- 3) Seniority - those having fewer total years of employment with the district shall be dismissed prior to those having more total years of employment with the district.

d. When a need exists to recall personnel, the recall will be in reverse order of the dismissal. (Last dismissed-first recalled). Dismissed personnel will have five days to answer a recall notice. Failure to report within five days will result in the next person on the recall list being notified or a new hire being made if the list has been exhausted. Such a recall privilege will exist for two years from the date of a person's dismissal.

5. Notice of Proposed Termination During the Year or of Suspension Without Pay

If a teacher receives notice of a proposed decision to terminate the teacher's probationary or term contract before the end of the contract period or to suspend the teacher without pay, the teacher may file a request for a hearing conducted by a hearing examiner appointed by the Commissioner of Education. The teacher must file the request not later than the 15th day after the date the teacher receives written notice of the proposed action and must provide the district with a copy of the request. "Teacher" means the Superintendent, a principal, supervisor, classroom teacher, counselor, or other full-time professional employee who is required to hold a certificate or a nurse. If the professional employee is not a certified teacher, the termination hearing may be conducted before the Board and not before the hearing examiner.

The Board shall consider the hearing examiner's recommendation and the record of the hearing examiner at the first available board meeting following the issuance of the recommendation. The meeting must be held not later than the 20th day after the board president receives the recommendation and record. Each party may present an oral argument to the Board, but not to exceed 10 minutes each. Within 10 days after convening the meeting to consider the hearing examiner's recommendation and record, the Board shall announce its decision. The decision shall include findings of fact and conclusions of law and may grant relief. The Board may adopt, reject, or change the hearing examiner's conclusions of law or proposal for granting relief. The Board may reject or change a finding of fact only after first reviewing the record of the proceedings before the hearing examiner and only if the finding of fact is not supported by substantial evidence. If the Board changes or rejects a finding or a conclusion, the Board shall state in writing the basis for the change or rejection. The oral argument and the Board's decision shall be recorded by a certified shorthand reporter and at school district expense.

6. Good Causes for Termination During the Year

Professional employees may be terminated from employment before the end of the contract period for good cause, good cause being the failure to meet the accepted standards of conduct for the profession as generally recognized and applied in similarly situated school districts in the state. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- 1) Falsification of information on documents used for consideration of employment or reassignment;
- 2) Failure to maintain certification or license necessary to serve in assigned position;
- 3) Failure to comply with Board policy and/or administrative policy;
- 4) Willful or repeated failure to comply with official directives;
- 5) Insubordination, which is defined as a disobedience of express or implied directions of the Board or other person in authority, infraction of rules, or a generally disaffected attitude toward authority, or any other action importing willful or overt defiance of, or complete contempt for, authority or a conscious disregard thereof;
- 6) Failure to remediate unsatisfactory performance of regularly assigned duties;
- 7) Repeated or gross neglect of duties;
- 8) Inability or failure to perform the terms and conditions of the contract;
- 9) Unexcused absence from regularly assigned duties;
- 10) Appearance at school or a school-related function while in possession of, or under the influence of, any narcotic, hallucinatory, hypnotic or sedative drug or any chemical, alcohol, or stimulant as defined by the Penal Code of the State of Texas, not prescribed by a licensed physician for the employee's current illness.
- 11) Participation in any activity, school-related or otherwise, that, because of the publicity given it or knowledge of it among students or staff, impairs or diminishes the person's effectiveness in the school system.
- 12) Any conviction for public intoxication, whether by alcohol, addictive drugs, hallucinogens, or otherwise;
- 13) Sexual harassment of, sexual abuse of, or physical violence against students or other employees;
- 14) Commission of an act, which would constitute lewdness, indecency, or pornography;
- 15) Commission of an act, which would constitute either a felony or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude; and,
- 16) Commission of an act that would constitute any crime involving theft, robbery, embezzlement, misapplication of funds, fraud, or organized crime.

III. Criminal History Checks for Employees and Volunteers

In order to ensure that the District has qualified teachers, support staff, administrators, and caring volunteers, the “continued employment process”, as well as the “school volunteer process” includes a criminal history check of all prospective and current employees and volunteers. In accordance with Texas Education Code 22.083, the District must obtain criminal history record information that relates to a person the District intends to employ or a person who has indicated in writing, an intention to serve as a volunteer with the District, as well as to a person currently employed or serving as a volunteer. This administrative procedure outlines the District’s expectations and guidelines regarding the criminal history checks for present and prospective District employees and volunteers.

1. CONVICTION DEFINED

For the purposes of this policy, the word “conviction” shall mean a verdict by plea of guilty, or otherwise by plea of nolo contendere, upon judgment of a court (with a jury having been waived), without regard to subsequent disposition of the case or suspension of sentence, probation, deferred adjudication, or other disposition.

2. MORAL TURPITUDE DEFINED

Moral turpitude includes but is not limited to dishonesty; fraud; deceit; misrepresentation; deliberate violence; base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor; drug-or alcohol-related offenses; or acts considered abuse under the Texas Family Code.

Examples of offenses that involve moral turpitude include, but are not limited to:

1. Arson
2. Forgery
3. Public lewdness
4. Prostitution
5. Theft (in excess of \$500.00 in value)
6. Sexual offenses (various)
7. Swindling
8. Any crime involving assault or indecency with a child.

3. DEFERRED ADJUDICATION DEFINED

The legal process of resolving a dispute is often referred to as deferred adjudication. The formal giving or pronouncing a judgment or decree in a court proceeding; also the judgment or decision given. The entry of a decree: by a court in respect to the parties in a case. Delay; put off; remand; postpone to a future time.

Nolo contendere DEFINED

“I will not contest”. Do not wish to contend a plea in a criminal prosecution that subjects the defendant to conviction but does not admit guilt or preclude denying the charges in another proceeding.

4. CURRENT DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

Annually on date of birth, the Human Resources Department will obtain criminal history record information that relates to all persons employed by the Universal Academy. The following guidelines are applicable to current employee criminal history checks:

3. UA will obtain information regarding crimes, but will not use any information unless the information demonstrates the employee: (1) failed to disclose on employment application any conviction, probation or deferred adjudication not protected by an order of non-disclosure; (2) committed a crime involving moral turpitude; or (3) committed violence toward a person or injury or indecency with a child, or conspiracy. This policy would apply whether the above offenses were committed before or after employment. They would still be grounds for immediate termination.
4. An employee who did not disclose a prior criminal history when requested at the time of employment and whose records are not protected by an order of non-disclosure may be recommended for termination.
5. An employee who did not have a criminal history at the time of employment application and was involved in an incident that resulted in criminal history after employment in Universal Academy will be reviewed on a “case by case basis” and disciplinary action up to and including termination may result.
6. District employees must notify the Superintendent in writing, within three days, if they are arrested for, charged with, convicted of, granted deferred adjudication for or if they have entered a plea of *nolo contendere* to any felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude.

5. Failure to make such notification will constitute grounds for termination.

1. A district employee placed on *deferred adjudication* may be recommended for termination based upon the underlying facts that led to the deferred adjudication. For the purpose of a termination hearing, the facts to which the employee pleaded in order to obtain deferred adjudication will presume to exist and be correct.
2. The District may suspend or terminate any employee convicted of a felony or misdemeanor if the crime directly relates to their fitness for duty, their job duties and responsibilities or adversely affects their job effectiveness or the mission of the school district.
3. District employees under felony indictment may be reassigned, placed on administrative leave with or without pay, or recommended for suspension with or without pay pending adjudication of their cases.

In compliance with Texas Education Code 22.083 (c), Universal Academy must report to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) any known criminal record of employees who hold certification.

IV. VOLUNTEERS

The District will obtain criminal history records of any volunteers including mentors and tutors, who intend to volunteer with the District. Volunteers are to complete and sign the second page of the Authorization for Release of Criminal History Records Information for Mentors/Volunteers and return it to the selected school. The campus administrator will immediately send the signed authorization form to the Area Superintendent, who will forward the document to the Human Resources Department for processing. In addition, the following guidelines will be followed:

- All elementary campuses will complete a criminal history check on any volunteers by swiping their I.D. through the “Raptor” system, which will list any felony warrants and sex offenses.
 - Any individual who fails or refuses to grant authorization for the District to conduct a criminal history check will not be eligible for volunteering. All prospective volunteers, including previously approved volunteers, will complete and sign the Criminal History Records Information form for the present school year in order to become an eligible volunteer.
 - No individual charged with a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or a felony will be eligible for volunteering.
 - The District may allow individuals with non-moral turpitude felonies or non-moral turpitude misdemeanors to serve as volunteers. After a case-by-case review of the applicant’s circumstances, including the nature of the offense, the applicant’s post- conviction history, and the number of years since the conviction, the District at its discretion may allow individuals to serve as volunteers. The Superintendent or his/ her designee will consult with other administrators before making the final decision.
 - Volunteers will notify the campus principal in writing within three days if they are arrested for, charged with, convicted of, granted deferred adjudication for or if they have entered a plea of *nolo contendere* to any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or felony. Volunteers will not be allowed to perform any volunteer duties until a written report has been made and the campus principal has issued a written approval to continue with volunteering. Failure to make such notification will constitute grounds for termination of services.
 - Volunteers under felony indictment will be removed from volunteering pending adjudication of their cases.

V. EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES CRIMINAL RECORD REVIEW

A current employee who has a criminal record that would preclude him/her to continue employment with the District using the criteria contained in this policy or in the administrative regulations may appeal to the criminal record review committee made up of district personnel as designated by the Superintendent. The Deputy Superintendent will serve as chair of the committee. The decision of the criminal record review committee is final.

The criminal record review committee shall assess the records of employees found to have committed crimes. The committee shall use the guidelines set out in the administrative regulations concerning criminal records checks to determine if an employee shall be recommended for termination and/or terminated based on his or her criminal record.

1. REQUIRED NOTIFICATION BY EMPLOYEE

An employee who is arrested for any felony or any offense involving moral turpitude must report the arrest to the Superintendent or his/her designee within three calendar days of the arrest. An employee, who is convicted of or, as defined in this policy, receives deferred adjudication or probation for such an offense must also report in writing to the Superintendent or designee, within three calendar days of the event. Failure to report shall be considered job-related misconduct.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY

Criminal history information is privileged and for the use of the District, the Texas Education Agency, and the State Board for Educator Certification only. No District employee shall release or disclose such information to a person other than the person who is the subject of the information, under penalty of law and/or possible discharge. Except that in compliance with the Texas Education Code 22.083 (c), the District shall report to the State Board for Educator Certification any known criminal record of employees who hold certification.

Questions regarding the Employee Section of this procedure should be addressed to the Superintendent. Questions regarding the Volunteer Section of this procedure should be addressed to the Assistant Superintendent

3. APPLICANTS

The District reserves the right to terminate any employee or decline to employ an applicant if the person fails to disclose any criminal conviction or misrepresents information regarding any such conviction on an employment application.

Criminal record checks shall be conducted in accordance with procedures outlined in the administrative regulations concerning criminal history records checks.

Information obtained in this manner shall be used only to evaluate an individual who, in the sole opinion of the District, is a finalist for employment and may be offered a position. The District shall not issue to any applicant a written contract of employment until it has obtained and reviewed an initial criminal history record

4. DRUG FREE WORKPLACE COMMITMENT

PURPOSE: This document is designed to state Universal Academy commitment to a drug-free work environment and its expectations of staff in regard to that commitment.

SCOPE: This document encompasses all current and future employees of LTTS Charter School Inc. dba Universal Academy.

Universal Academy is committed to providing its employees with a working environment that is free from the problems associated with the use and abuse of illegal substances. Non-compliance with the following statements will carry serious penalties:

- Any employee using, selling, possessing, distributing, transferring, or manufacturing illegal substances in any setting and at any time will be in violation of Universal Academy's employment policy and faces swift and severe disciplinary action and probable dismissal.
- Any employee convicted of a controlled substance violation or pleading guilty or nolo contendere to charges of such a violation must inform Universal Academy within five (5) days of such a conviction or plea. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action, which may include termination from employment for a first offense.
- Employees needing assistance related to drug or alcohol abuse may contact an area Alcoholics Anonymous, Palmer Drug Abuse Program, or another program of their choice.

5. TOBACCO FREE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The use of all tobacco products, including but not limited to snuff, dip, chewing tobacco, cigarettes, cigars, and pipe tobacco, shall be prohibited on District property at all times and at functions sponsored by the district or one of its schools.

Students in violation of this prohibition shall be subject to progressive disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Discipline Management Plan.

Staff members in violation of this prohibition shall be subject to progressive disciplinary consequences and shall be afforded opportunities to participate in smoking cessation activities. Repeated violations may result in dismissal.

Members of the general public in violation of this prohibition shall be subject to consequences ranging from a verbal warning to removal from the premises for refusal to abide by the prohibition.

CLASSROOM TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION

- The classroom teacher shall have a valid Texas teacher's certificate
- The classroom teacher shall hold a bachelor's degree, or higher, from an accredited college or university, and /or the required years of work experience to attain certification. A master's degree shall be earned prior to beginning the seventh year in the district.
- The classroom teacher shall comply with the personal and health requirements of the district and shall provide any required credentials before employment.
- The classroom teacher shall have a demonstrated mastery of the teacher competency exam.

The district shall employ a person who is not certified teachers only in emergency conditions. When this is necessary, the SBEC guidelines for temporary certification shall be followed, and the teacher shall file a deficiency plan as required by SBEC.

The classroom teacher shall be under the general supervision of assigned building principal or sited based management team. However, special program personnel shall also be under supervision of program administrator/supervisor (vocational, gifted/talented, special education, athletics, etc.)

1. Uphold the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Education.
2. Contribute to the educational system by upholding and enforcing school rules, administrative regulations and board policies.
3. Cooperate with all charter school personnel in implementing the goals and policies of the district and campus and/or program assigned.
4. Develop and implement long and short-range plans for the instructional responsibilities assigned.
5. Prepare lessons and lesson plans that reflect district guidelines and TEA requirements for curriculum.
6. Demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and skill in the subject area taught.
7. Employ a variety of instructional techniques and media to accommodate the needs and abilities of the student involved.
8. Evaluate student progress on a regular basis and notify parents/students as to the results of the evaluation.
9. Participate as required in the district's student testing program as an administrator, proctor, and/or recipient of results.
10. Develop and maintain classroom environment conducive to effective learning (i.e. Establish control in the classroom).
11. Implement the discipline management program of the district.
12. Take all necessary precautions to promote student welfare and protect the student's equipment and facilities.
13. Demonstrate an active interest in the social, political, and cultural activities of the community.
14. Maintain accurate and complete records as required by TEA, policy and administrative regulation.
15. Be responsible for receiving and maintaining textbooks, study materials, teaching supplies, and classroom equipment provided by the district and keeping an inventory of such as required by the district.
16. Attend and participate in faculty meetings and grade level/ departmental meetings.
17. Participate in the staff development program provided by the district.
18. Work to maintain and improve professional improvement requirements of the state and district, participating in professional organizations of choice, entering advance degree programs.
19. Implement any policies regarding handicapped students and the instructional program.
20. Maintain a professional relationship with all district personnel, parents, and students.
21. Be responsible for all grading of student work.
22. Be available before and after school day and during planning time for parent conferences.
23. Provide adequate plans and materials for substitute teachers.
24. Perform other duties assigned.

Appendix I

What Makes a Great Teacher and a Great School?

Americans are looking for schools they can trust. A recent poll revealed that confidence in public schools is at a 40-year low — only 29% of respondents expressed “a great deal” of confidence in the public education system. Increasing numbers of students are opting out of their neighborhood schools and into the challenging marketplace of school choice. Parents, the consumers in this new marketplace, need information to figure out what a healthy, high-functioning learning, environment actually looks like.

But the elusive recipe for school success is extremely difficult to convey simply and clearly with one exception “the single most important factor determining the quality of the education a child receives is the quality of his teacher.” **Here are some characteristics of great teachers:**

- **Great teachers set high expectations for all students.** They expect that all students can and will achieve in their classroom, and they don't give up on underachievers.
- **Great teachers have clear, written-out objectives.** Effective teachers have lesson plans that give students a clear idea of what they will be learning, what the assignments are and what the grading policy is. Assignments have learning goals and give students ample opportunity to practice new skills. The teacher is consistent in grading and returns work in a timely manner.
- **Great teachers are prepared and organized.** They are in their classrooms early and ready to teach. They present lessons in a clear and structured way. Their classrooms are organized in such a way as to minimize distractions.
- **Great teachers engage students and get them to look at issues in a variety of ways.** Effective teachers use facts as a starting point, not an end point; they ask "why" questions, look at all sides and encourage students to predict what will happen next. They ask questions frequently to make sure students are following along. They try to engage the whole class, and they don't allow a few students to dominate the class. They keep students motivated with varied, lively approaches.
- **Great teachers form strong relationships with their students and show that they care about them as people.** Great teachers are warm, accessible, enthusiastic and caring. Teachers with these qualities are known to stay after school and make themselves available to students and parents who need them. They are involved in school-wide committees and activities, and they demonstrate a commitment to the school.
- **Great teachers are masters of their subject matter.** They exhibit expertise in the subjects they are teaching and spend time continuing to gain new knowledge in their field. They present material in an enthusiastic manner and instill a hunger in their students to learn more on their own.
- **Great teachers communicate frequently with parents.** They reach parents through conferences and frequent written reports home. They don't hesitate to pick up the telephone to call a parent if they are concerned about a student.

Characteristics of Great Schools

1. Students want to be There Effective schools have a warm climate. Students feel welcome and know that the staff cares about them. Although there is pressure to perform, it comes in a way that promotes learning, with an expectation that students will excel and the support is provided to make it happen.

2 Highest Expectations For the School, Teachers and Students Only the best is good enough. Quality is expected, and nothing less is acceptable. Passion for excellence is a driving force each and every day. A good school has an involved staff working together, pushing themselves and their students to be the best. Failure is not an option for the teacher or the students.

3. Dedicated Teachers The best teachers work to improve their ability to teach. They read and explore the techniques used by others in a never-ending effort to better themselves and their skill. Effective teaching demands that the teacher be knowledgeable in the subject area. The teachers must have a detailed understanding of what is being taught.

4. Effective Discipline: Discipline should not be an issue. Students must respect others and failure to do so cannot be tolerated. Students must understand school and class rules and expectations, and adhere to them. When discipline is necessary, it is not vindictive, but just a consequence when a student does not do what is required.

5. There are a Variety of Instructional Techniques: No two classes, or two students are identical. An effective school has teachers that understand this and differ instruction to best help students be the successful. Key concepts are presented in ways to enable visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners grasp it. Students are actively involved in learning with a variety of opportunities to grasp key concepts.

6. Individualized Instruction and Approaches to Students: Students' abilities and needs are different. To effectively teach all students, the school staff must understand this. The teaching and interactions with students must reflect the needs of each, with the understanding of each as individuals.

7. Leadership: The building principal must have the respect of students, parents, and staff with a vision, high expectations, and the ability to help others succeed. This person must be able understand people, and motivate them, creating a positive attitude throughout the building. Successful schools have a sense of trust built on the back of an honest and caring leader.

Remember, Many factors go into helping a child become a productive adult, and there is no way one assessment a year can measure success or failure. The fact that so many people believe that one test on a couple of mornings each spring can determine school quality, teacher quality, and student learning shows an alarming lack of understanding in what makes a good school.

This factory model of assessment would have been great 50 years ago, when schools were modeled after and trained students for work in factories. However, that day has long passed. Leaders in education need to look at what it takes for students to succeed and help create schools to educate the students of today and tomorrow.

KNOW WHO YOU ARE

Universal Academy hired you because you are a **”Super Teacher”** or you have the potential to become a **“Super Teacher”**.

The goal of every school is to eventually become a source for academic excellence as well as high student achievement. Highly sort after super teachers are of much value in this regard. One super teacher can significantly enhance the value of the school by bringing in creative and innovative ideas that can make children enjoy learning. He/she is known for approaching their lesson presentations with an unbreakable confidence that demands respect in whatever classroom he/she instructs.

Best Practices

The secrets of a super teacher are their inner portfolio of best practices and strategies that has been thoroughly researched and executed for their effectiveness. A super teacher's knowledge of every teaching method is highly internalized, including the practical theory of multiple intelligence, cooperative learning, discovery learning, project learning, textbook, thematic learning and much more. Along with a powerful set of inner, secret capabilities, the super teacher can transform an entire school environment to one of thriving excellence.

Sense of Conviction

Becoming a super teacher requires seven must have characteristics, one of which is a sense of conviction. A super teacher believes in their power to affect a student's destiny and to help close the achievement gap. She never thinks about giving up on a single student. Every student has a capacity to become an academic genius in her mind. Learning obstacles are only temporary illusions that only require personal enlightenment to dissolve.

Forward Thinking

A super teacher is forward thinking. They have the entire school year planned before it begins. They have several themes that they desire to integrate into the curriculum and lesson plans. Their evaluation of each student is ongoing. At the end of the school year, their delight is to know that they have met and exceeded the needs of their students. All obstacles and challenges to their success in the classroom have been assessed, with plans to resolve them as soon as they occur.

High Expectations

High expectation for every child is the hallmark of the super teacher. No child should be excluded from a quality education. They believe that every child has the potential to be greater than he is at any given moment. A super teacher creates a desire for achievement within their students through a variety of strategies, including games, role playing, visual and audit oral prompts, reward systems and effective encouragement and verbal empowerment. A super teacher doesn't accept a child's doubt and unbelief in its ability to achieve.

Constant Innovation

A super teacher is always involved in constant innovation. They keep themselves aware of the latest teaching theories and strategies. They continue to discover new and interesting teaching ideas, some even unorthodox. If it can awaken a desire to learn in an under performing student, any strange teaching method is worthwhile. The whole objective is that the student obtains a quality education, whether it is by going on field trips, camping in the park down the street, inviting certain aspects of the community into the classroom, or recruiting parents for specific assignments regarding their child. Thinking outside of the box is the essence of constant innovation.

Unafraid of Negative Consequences

In order to be a super teacher, an individual must not be afraid to confront their fear of change and must be willing to accept the consequences of their actions. A super teacher must execute performances that may go against school polices and standards. It is not that a supper teacher will require anything of the students that

would harm them. In stead a super teacher may utilize teaching strategies and methods that may be unorthodox, such as having water balloons and food fights just to internalize a concept. Such activities is what make a super teacher what he/she is-unpredictable.

Mastery of Subject Areas

Mastery of subject areas comes easy to a super teacher. Because he/he desires to fulfill the needs of her students, she makes sure she has mastered the subject from A to Z. No aspect of the subject area is left unchecked. In order to deliver the best ideas to their students, they are aware of the newest literature on the subject. Whether the subject is English, math, science, social studies or economics, the super teacher has complete competence in their ability to teach it. Because he/she knows their stuff, the students are excited in what they have to say. They enjoy learning.

Dynamic Presentations

A super teacher commands absolute attention from their students. They give dynamic presentations that elicit high student engagement. Their presentations consist of a variety of activities that involve the student input. Students share, role-play, think and interpret the lesson. Since students are so involved in what a super teacher is doing, there are little or no times to get bored or detracted by any other person or thing. A super teacher has a way of making time race when presenting a lesson to a classroom. Before the student realizes it, the class is over.

The Call for Super Teachers

The need for super teachers across America has skyrocketed. Overwhelmed teachers are also experiencing a great degree of burnout, resulting in changes of careers. Opportunities for super teachers are everywhere, but such teachers don't have to be sought after. Any teacher with a passion for students and teaching can become a supper teacher by mastering the secrets and going beyond the call of duty and placing the student's education as the number one priority in their lives.

KNOW WHO YOU DON'T WANT TO BE

One would hope that all teachers would strive to be excellent, effective teachers. However, education is just like any other profession. There are those who work extremely hard at their craft getting better on a daily basis and there are those that are just simply there never striving to improve. Even though this type of teacher is in the minority, these bad teachers contribute significantly to making all teachers look ineffective. It is a frustrating reality in education, but there are bad teachers.

There are bad teachers that honestly believe they ARE GOOD TEACHERS. These teachers either lack a significant skill to become effective or simply do not have a grasp on what being an effective teacher requires. There are other bad teachers that know exactly what they are and what they are doing. These teachers can typically be grouped into two categories. They are the veteran teachers that are burned out or the newbie that realized they did not want to be a teacher until it was too late. In any case, these teachers are not doing themselves their students, or the profession any favors by hanging on just to draw a paycheck.

There are many different ways a teacher can be bad. Even an overall effective teacher may be ineffective in certain areas. A major part of a principal's job is to identify which teachers are effective, which teachers need to improve, and which ones are ineffective and need to be dismissed. This process begins with an accurate teacher evaluation.

What qualities can deem a teacher ineffective or bad? There are many different things that can derail a teacher's career.

Lack of Classroom Management

A lack of classroom management is probably the single biggest downfall of a bad teacher. This issue can be the demise of any teacher no matter what their intentions are. If a teacher cannot control the students in their classroom they will not be able to teach them effectively. Being a good classroom manager starts on day one by incorporating simple procedures and expectations and then following through on predetermined consequences when those procedures and expectations are compromised. Any teacher trying to befriend students will be ineffective in the area of classroom management. Students will test teachers quickly, recognize a weakness, and take over a class before a teacher knows what happens.

Lack of Content Knowledge

Most states require teachers to pass a comprehensive series of assessments to obtain certification within a specific subject area. With this requirement, you would think that all teachers would be proficient enough to teach the subject area(s) they were hired to teach. Unfortunately there are some teachers that do not know the content knowledge well enough to teach it. This is an area that could be overcome through preparation. All teachers should thoroughly go through any lesson before they teach it to make sure they understand what they are going to be teaching. Teachers will lose credibility with their students extremely fast if they do not know what they are teaching, thus making them ineffective.

Lack of Motivation

There are some teachers that are not motivated to be effective teachers. They spend the minimum amount of time necessary to do their job never arriving early or staying late. These teachers are just there. They do not challenge their students, rarely give homework, are often behind on grading, show videos often, and give "free" days on a regular basis. There is no creativity in their teaching, they rarely smile or seem excited to be there, and they typically make no connections with other faculty or staff members.

Lack of Organizational Skills

Effective teachers must be organized. A teacher has to keep up with so many things on a daily basis that they must be organized to do their jobs effectively. There is not a cookie cutter approach to being organized. A system that works for one teacher may not necessarily work for another. A teacher needs to develop some sort of

organizational system that works for them. Teachers who lack organizational skills will be ineffective and overwhelmed. It will lead to unnecessary frustration and can take away from the good things that the teacher is trying to do. Teachers who recognize a weakness in organization should seek help in improving in that area. It is an area that can be improved very quickly with some good direction and advice.

Lack of Professionalism

Professionalism encompasses many different areas of teaching. A lack of professionalism can quickly result in a teacher's dismissal. Teachers who are routinely absent or tardy are ineffective. They cannot do their job if they are not there to do it. Failing to follow the district dress code on a regular basis can also land a teacher in hot water. This is especially true for young female teachers who dress provocatively. Teachers who use inappropriate language in their classroom on a regular basis undermine the moral responsibility they have as an authority figure. Each of these situations involves a serious lack of professionalism; which will undermine a teacher's overall effectiveness.

Poor Judgment

Teachers like any other human being make decisions on a daily basis. However, many of the decisions that a teacher makes affect their students, which they are charged with leading, educating, and protecting. Opportunities can present themselves at various times. Teachers have to keep their wits and make good smart decisions in every situation they encounter. Too many good teachers have lost their careers because they had a moment of poor judgment instead of thinking things all the way through. Common sense goes a long ways in protecting yourself. If there is a chance that it will harm someone, then you probably should lean the other way.

Poor People Skills

Having excellent people skills can mask a lot of inefficiencies. On the flip side, having poor people skills can undermine your effectiveness in other areas. A teacher has to be effective at dealing with people including their students, parents, other teachers, staff members, and administrators. Good communication is essential. Parents especially want to know what is going on in their child's classroom. Having good people skills is essential and the lack of such skills could destroy and at the very least limit a teacher's overall effectiveness.

What does this entire overview mean? How do I teach each child individually in one academically diverse classroom setting? How do I inject the training I have received? These are some of the questions many new teachers ask. Universal Academy has proven over the past 16years that the instructional model that works best for us is "individualization of instruction."

A One-Sentence Definition of Individualized Instruction; Individualized instruction consists of any steps taken in planning and conducting programs of studies and lessons that suit them to the individual student's learning needs, learning readiness, and learner characteristics or "learning styles".

What 21st Century Learning Should Look Like

In contrast to traditional classroom instruction, which often consists of a single educator transmitting the same information to all learners in the same way, the model puts students at the center and empowers them to take control of their own learning by providing flexibility on several dimensions. A core set of standards-based concepts and competencies form the basis of what all students should learn, but beyond that students and educators have options for engaging in learning: large groups, small groups, and work tailored to individual goals, needs, and interests.

"The secret of teaching is to appear to have known all your life what you learned this afternoon." –

Anonymous

Appendix II



Meeting Protocols

2018-2019

Please bring and be ready to discuss all of the data and items listed below. You will need to bring these items to ALL:

- Parent Conferences
- ARD Meetings and Brief ARD Meetings
 - Special Education
 - Speech
 - Dyslexia
 - 504
- Response To Intervention (RTI) Meetings
- Bilingual/ESL Meetings
- Administration Accountability Meetings
- Other (as directed by administration)

Key Discussion Points for the Meetings:

- When reviewing Data...** areas of strengths, areas for improvement, how are you addressing the students' instructional needs, talk from the data only and share the FACTS in the meeting (have the data printed to send home with the parent)
- When discussing Behavior...** areas of strengths, areas for improvement, review the leadership forms, review the discipline forms, behavior charts, and review the parent-teacher correspondences you have received (have everything printed)
- When reviewing overall student progress...** share samples of the students' work (ex. student started here... now he/she is here... or based on the grade level TEKS, student is making very little or no progress), share RTS Journals, Spelling Tests, classwork, daily work, and assessments (bring copies to the meeting)
- When discussing grades...** have a printed copy of all of the student's grades (progress reports, report cards, and current grades) BEFORE the meeting, be ready to explain (based on the facts and data) why the student is doing well, why the student did not score well on certain test... (ex. Student is doing well in this area however, he/she is still struggling on this...)
- When discussing attendance and tardiness...** have a printed copy of student's attendance and tardiness BEFORE the meeting (ex. I noticed that student is tardy every morning during ELAR which causes him/her to miss half of my class, this may be reason for his low grades in ELAR...)

- **Leave the Parents with tips to help at home...** remind the parents about the UA Parent Portal, TEKS Resource System (curriculum), class newsletters, address the student's instructional needs (each night can you read with student for an extra 15 minutes...), discuss UA's Resources, Materials and Curriculum

WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING TO THE MEETING?

I. For Special Education and Bilingual/ESL Teachers ONLY:

- Student Services Comprehensive Data Sheet-Weekly (**SPED ONLY**)
- Weekly Schedule
- Student Case Load
- Content Service Minutes
- Accommodations and Modifications
- Student Progress (strengths and areas for improvement)
- SPED Grading Rubric (**SPED ONLY**)

SPED and ESL Teachers are required to bring all other items on this form where applicable.

II. Parent Correspondences and Student Leadership Forms (PK-12): REQUIRED

- Teachers will bring all signed and unsigned forms to the meeting.
 - Teachers are required to keep the leadership forms in the students' portfolio every week.
- Printed copies of all parent emails and letters.

III. Discipline Forms:

- Teachers are required to bring copies of all classroom and district discipline forms to All Meetings.
 - Signed or Unsigned

IV. Samples of Students' Work:

- RTS Journals/Composition Books (be ready to explain the process and the student's progress)
- Writing Samples
- Assessments/Tests
- Content Based Samples (ELAR, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science)
 - Aligned to the grade level teaching assignment

V. Response To Intervention (RTI) Documentation:

- Student Profile Sheet
- Student Documentation Form
- Minutes from all of the RTI Meetings

VI. ALL Data (be ready to explain):

- CIRCLE (PK)
- UA Assessments (PK-K)
- Fluency Assessments (PK-K)
- Texas Primary Reading Inventory-TPRI (K-2)
 - Bring the entire booklet to the meeting to review all of the components
- STAAR Benchmarks (Print student Profile Sheet from Eduphoria and send a copy home)
- Six-Weeks Assessments
- Daily and Weekly Teacher Assessments
- NWEA (RIT Scores, Student Growth, be ready to explain the Learning Continuum)
- Study Island Reports
- ACTIVATE Reports
- Khan Academy
- Other
- Grades
 - Homework
 - Classwork
 - Weekly Assessments

VII.

- Teacher Documentation

Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Meeting Protocols:

Signature of Teacher _____

Date _____

Signature of Cohort _____

CAFETERIA DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Objective: Provides assistance and supervision for children during lunch to ensure a positive and safe environment.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Supervises students at lunchtime and maintains a quiet atmosphere throughout the 30-minute lunch period.
2. Consistently circulating/monitoring throughout the cafeteria during lunch. Help students by opening packages and drinks.
3. Assists students through the cafeteria line in an orderly fashion.
4. Make sure students are orderly and acting appropriately throughout the 30-minute lunch period.
5. Interacts with students to maintain order and provide assistance when needed.
6. Directs movement of students from the lunchroom in a safe and organized manner.
7. Reports disciplinary and other concerns to the classroom teacher and cohort.
8. Maintains a safe and quiet environment for students at all times.

Appendix III

Universal Academy Technology Services

**Staff Access to Network Information and Technological Resources
USER AGREEMENT**

Please sign and return this form to IT Administrator.

Staff Name _____ **Assignment** _____

FACULTY AND STAFF:

I have read and understand the Universal Academy User agreement for staff access to network information and technological resources. I agree to follow the rules contained in this policy. I understand that if I violate the rules, my Internet access or Technology Lab access can be terminated and I may face other disciplinary measures. Depending on the seriousness of the violation, appropriate legal action may be taken.

Staff Signature

Date

Universal Academy Technology Services

Staff Access to Network Information and Technological Resources
USER AGREEMENT

Please sign and return this form to your homeroom teacher.

Student Name _____ Teacher/Grade _____

STUDENT:

I have read and understand the Universal Academy User agreement for student access to network information and technological resources. I agree to follow the rules contained in this policy. I understand that if I violate the rules, my Internet access or Technology Lab access can be terminated and I may face other disciplinary measures. Depending on the seriousness of the violation, appropriate legal action may be taken.

Student Signature

Date

PARENT or GUARDIAN: *A parent or guardian must also read and sign this document for any student under the age of 18.*

As the parent or guardian of the above student, I have read the Universal Academy User agreement for student access to network information and technological resources. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. I also recognize that it is impossible for Universal Academy to restrict access to all controversial materials, and I will not hold them responsible for controversial materials acquired on the Internet or for the unauthorized use of the system to purchase products or services. I will instruct my child regarding any restrictions against accessing material that are in addition to the restrictions set forth in the attached agreement. I will emphasize to my child the importance of following the rules for personal safety. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use of the Internet is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission to allow my child to use networked resources as well as Universal Academy-owned technological resources.

Parent Signature

Date

LTTS CHARTER SCHOOL INC. DBA UNIVERSAL ACADEMY
057-808
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK RECEIPT
2018-2019

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

Campus/department _____ Current Position _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of my personal copy of the LTTS Charter School Inc. dba Universal Academy Employee Handbook. **I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies and procedures defined or referenced in this document.** All new employees will receive a hard copy and returning employees can view the document on the web. A hard copy is available to any employee upon request.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or eliminate the information summarized in this booklet. As the district provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes. In addition, changes to Federal, State, and Universal Academy Board Policy take precedence and supersede information in this handbook.

I understand that this handbook intends no modifications to contractual relationships or alterations of at-will relationships.

I understand that I have an obligation to inform my campus supervisor and the Personnel Department of any changes in personal information, such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting my supervisor if I have any questions, concerns, or need further explanation.

Signature

Date

Note: This handbook includes two copies of this form. Please sign and date one and retain for your records. Sign and date the other copy and forward it to your campus office, which will then forward to Personnel Services.

LTTS CHARTER SCHOOL INC. DBA UNIVERSAL ACADEMY
057-808
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK RECEIPT
2018-2019

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

Campus/department _____ Current Position _____

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General FAQ

Charter Schools - FAQs^[SEP]^[SEP]^[SEP]

^[SEP]**This page contains frequently asked questions about charter schools.**

Are charter schools permitted to charge tuition and fees?

Must a charter accept any student?

Are charter schools required to provide meals or transportation to students?

Are charter schools required to provide a certain number of days of instruction?

What are the requirements for student/teacher ratio and class size for charter schools?

How do I obtain records from a closed charter school?

Are the teachers at open-enrollment charter schools required to be certified?

Is a charter school required to have a full-time school nurse?

Must charter schools provide a teacher planning period like traditional public schools do?

Must open-enrollment charter schools have written employment contracts?

What are the procedures for filing a complaint against a charter school?

ANSWERS

Are charter schools permitted to charge tuition and fees?

An open-enrollment charter school may not charge tuition (except for certain pre-kindergarten classes). A charter school may only charge the same fees that a traditional public school may charge. [Texas Education Code \(TEC\) §11.158\(a\)](#) lists allowable fees.

Must a charter accept any student?

As a general rule, charter schools are open enrollment and must accept any student who applies. There are exceptions though. A charter is only allowed to serve students in the grades in its approved charter. The school may also only accept students who live in the charter's approved geographic boundary. A charter also will have a cap on the total number of students it may serve.

Are charter schools required to provide meals or transportation to students?

The charter must provide meals if 10% of the students qualify for free or reduced breakfast. [TEC §33.901](#) requires the school provide a breakfast program for qualified students.

A charter school does not have to provide transportation for students unless it is a condition in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Are charter schools required to provide a certain number of days of instruction?

House Bill (HB) 2610, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, amends Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.081, by striking language requiring 180 days of instruction and replacing this language with language requiring districts and charter schools to provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recess.

Charter schools are subject to the 75,600 minutes requirement. To receive full funding, a charter school must offer 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recess, minus any minutes waived by the TEA in writing.

What are the requirements for student/teacher ratio and class size for charter schools?

Charter schools are not subject to [TEC Sections 25.111 and 25.112](#) that state such guidelines for districts. Instead, the charter for the school sets any student-teacher ratios or class size limitations.

How do I obtain records from a closed charter school?

Charter school records for students and staff of formerly operating charter schools are housed at Education Service Center Region 13. To request a copy of records, please call 512-919-5418. Alternatively, a form may be downloaded from the service center's website at: [Student records request](#) The completed form should be returned to ESC Region 13. Instructions are available on that website.

Are the teachers at open-enrollment charter schools required to be certified?

It depends. Teachers at an open-enrollment charter school must have at least a baccalaureate degree unless they are a special education or bilingual education/ESL teacher. These teachers must also have state certification. The governing body of a charter holder may set the qualifications for teachers at a standard above what state law requires.

Is a charter school required to have a full-time school nurse?

No. Charter schools are not required to hire a school nurse. If a charter school does hire a nurse, that person is not required to be a full-time employee or to be full time at any one location. If a charter school wanted to hire only one person as a nurse, that person must be an RN because an LVN is not allowed to work without supervision.

Must charter schools provide a minimum teacher planning period like traditional public schools do?

Because [Texas Education Code \(TEC\) §21.404](#) does not apply to charters, the decision whether or not to have planning periods is a local issue. Even so, if the school's charter states it will provide a teacher planning period, it must do so.

Must open-enrollment charter schools have written employment contracts?

No. State law does not require that charters enter into employment contracts with professional employees. Instead, the governing body of the charter holder makes this decision. They may also set their own salaries for professional employees.

What are the procedures for filing a complaint against a charter school?

The process should begin by approaching the campus administrators with any concerns. If the problem is not resolved at the campus, the next level would be the superintendent. If the issue is not solved at this level, approaching the charter holder board is the next step. The charter's board has the responsibility of ensuring that the charter follows all school laws.

- Charters must have a grievance process. The process allows the charter's governing board to address the complaint and make a decision. It is important to follow the steps and the timelines required by the charter's policies and procedures. School administrators can provide copies of the complaint policies and forms.
- The legislature has given TEA the authority to investigate issues involving:

student records;

teacher service records;

admissions and enrollment procedures;

tuition;

teacher qualifications (non-NCLB matters);

criminal history concerns;

governance;

conflicts of interest;

nepotism;

financial mismanagement;

state testing violations (TAKS, STAAR); and

special education programs.

If you have followed the above steps but feel that your complaint still requires attention from the agency, and complaint falls into one of the categories above (except for Special Education), visit the [TEA Complaints](#) webpage. Instructions and more information are available there. If your complaint involves Special Education, please visit the [Special Education Dispute](#) webpage instead.^{[[SEP]]} If you have any questions about the information on this page, contact the [Division of Charter School Administration](#) at (512) 463-9575.^{[[SEP]]}

