



**CROSSWOOD INC.'s  
STAFF HANDBOOK FOR  
THE PATHWAYS SCHOOLS**

**2024-2025**

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Pathways Employee,

The Pathways Schools would like to welcome you to our team. You are the most important asset we have and we depend on each of you to provide the best service possible for our programs' and students' successes. The purpose of this handbook is to help you understand the rules and policies which have helped us to get to where we are today and will help us to sustain our quality and integrity. Our legacy and continued success is dependent upon your professional work.

The Staff Handbook has been designed to help new and current employees familiarize themselves with Pathways' expectations, policies and procedures. Pathways will always try to give employees notice when a policy or benefit is expected to be changed. However, Pathways reserves the right at any time, and with no prior notice, to change, delete, add, remove or otherwise modify any or all content in this handbook to meet legislative, economic, organizational or other conditions as needed. The regulations and benefits required by law will always remain in force.

This Handbook:

- will apply to all employees unless they are excluded or exempted by their employee type;
- is not a contract for employment; and
- includes the most recent policies and procedures and supersedes all previous versions that have been issued.

Be advised you will be required to sign an acknowledgement of this handbook. This acknowledgement is done at the time of hiring and then at the start of each school year. If you sign the acknowledgement before reading the manual, it implies you understand you have the responsibility to read the manual at a later time on your own terms. Your supervisor will review key expectations and it is also expected you will use common sense and ethics in the workplace and ask questions as needed for a better understanding of expectations.

If you have any questions regarding the policies and procedures at any time, you are encouraged to contact the Human Resources representative at the Administrative Office for clarification.

It is with your commitment to upholding the integrity and professionalism of Pathways that I am confident we will continue to provide quality services to our students, their families and the community.

Respectfully,



Dr. Tania DuBeau  
Executive Director

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## **SECTION 1 – ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW**

### ***THE PATHWAYS SCHOOLS OVERVIEW***

The Pathways Schools operates three therapeutic educational school programs in Maryland's Montgomery, Prince George's, Baltimore and Anne Arundel counties for students, aged 11 through 21, who have emotional and behavioral disabilities. All of the programs have Certificates of Approval from the Maryland State Department of Education and, for programs serving District of Columbia's students, the District of Columbia's Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

Students are referred to The Pathways Schools primarily by the Special Education placement offices of Maryland's Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Howard County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County and the District of Columbia's Public Schools and Office of the State Superintendent of Education. The Department of Juvenile Services, Department of Social Services, and education advocates/attorneys may also serve as secondary referral agents to local educational agencies.

Each school provides a unique, comprehensive, success-oriented alternative day program in a small family-oriented setting of not more than 30 students.

Services at all three schools include: individualized academic instruction, behavioral management programming, restorative practices to support learning environments without physical restraints, transition services, small group instruction, individual and group therapy, and family support services. Transition support is provided as students return to public schools or enter the world of work and independent living. Related services, such as speech therapy and occupational therapy, are provided based on the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP.)

Our goal is to enable students with emotional and behavioral disabilities to take responsibility for their lives and to become independent contributing members of our communities and society. To support our goal and access federal, state and local resources, Pathways is a member of the National Association of Private Special Education Centers (NAPSEC), Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities (MANSEF), and Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health.

### ***HISTORY***

Crosswood, Inc. is a non-profit corporation established in the State of Maryland to operate nonpublic schools for students with emotional disabilities. Incorporated in July 1982, Crosswood, Inc. established The Pathways Schools (formerly The Pathways Center).

Since the mid-seventies, Northwood Presbyterian Church has supported programs serving students with emotional disabilities. During the 1981-82 school year, at the request of parents, the church housed a new school serving this population. When problems beyond the church's control forced the school to close, plans were made to establish Northwood's own school, The Pathways Center, to serve the same students and their families. As a result, the corporation was formed to operate a state-approved nonpublic special education school.

Crosswood, Inc. is now responsible for The Pathways Schools' operation of programs serving students with emotional disabilities ages eleven through twenty-one. Over the years, other churches have joined Northwood Presbyterian Church in supporting our mission to serve students, including Luther Rice Memorial Baptist Church.

## **Organizational Milestones**

- 1982 Pathways established its first school in Northwood Presbyterian Church
- 1989 Maryland's first Type II program, DuVal Re-Entry, developed in collaboration with Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) and DuVal High School, to assist students in their transition when returning to public school
- 1990 Edgewood program (formerly Work-Entry) was developed to focus on helping students transition to the world of work
- 1990 Hyattsville program established to serve younger students, aged 9-14, in Hyattsville Presbyterian
- 1992 Springville program was initially designed to prepare students for the transition to the DuVal Re-Entry program and mainstream into public schools
- 1995 Edgewood Community-Based program was added to serve students in need of more intensive and individualized programming
- 1995 Professional Development School (PDS), in collaboration with The George Washington University at the Hyattsville program, trained master level special education teachers until 1999
- 2000 Edgewood merged programs to provide a continuum of services including community and school-based programming
- 2000 In response to the expressed need of Anne Arundel County for intensive community-based programming for their students, a new site was opened in the county
- 2006 Another Type II Re-Entry program opened at Crossland High School in Temple Hills in collaboration with PGCPS to replicate the model in the southern part of the county
- 2010 Facilitating a smoother transition from middle to high school, the Hyattsville and Northwood programs were merged to serve grades 6-12 and ages 11 to 21 at Northwood at Hyattsville and later moved to Beltsville
- 2012 Initiated an MSDE-supported partnership program, Pathways Kindergarten Intervention Program, with PGCPS to provide resources and strategies to support special education students who are exhibiting challenging behaviors in public school classrooms and later expanded to also serve first graders in the Pathways Early Elementary Intervention Program until 2018
- 2016 Crossland Type II program relocated to Friendly High School until merging into the DuVal Type II program in 2018, and Springville and Northwood consolidated to form the Horizons program at the Beltsville location to continue to serve middle and high school students
- 2020 The last Type II program was closed when Re-Entry at DuVal honored its last graduating class in June.
- 2021 Catonsville program was opened to accommodate the growth of the community-based student population from primarily Baltimore and Howard Counties.
- 2023 Edgewood and Horizons consolidated into one program, Edgewood serving school-based and community based middle school and high school students

## **CREDO**

"We believe that our students can:  
learn,  
be successful,  
trust themselves and others,  
change and take charge of their lives."

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

To enable our students to acquire the skills they need to succeed in school, career and life through individualized education and supports.

## ***VISION STATEMENT***

We are a non-public special education school for 11-21-year-old students seeking to provide diverse quality programs to meet individual needs.

Our vision is to access community-based opportunities and support from various businesses, agencies, organizations and institutions to work with our diverse families and students so they can be better advocates for themselves by learning to:

- identify their strengths and needs,
- set realistic goals,
- successfully transition to public school, continued education or work,
- utilize available resources, and
- acquire the academic, vocational, social and technological skills needed to contribute positively and to participate responsibly in society.

The Pathways organization is committed to the development and dissemination of professional best practices in the field of special education.

## ***PHILOSOPHY***

We believe that in order for students to live independently and productively with their families and community, they must be taught the social, emotional, academic and transition skills needed to live independently and productively with their families and in their communities. Teaching should begin at each student's level of emotional and academic competence. It should be appropriate to the individual future goals of each student. We provide a continuum of program options ranging from a school-based model to a unique community-based model. This continuum is designed to meet the diverse needs of our student population.

We believe that the students entering our programs are worthy of every effort that can be made on their behalf so that they may realize their own self-worth and, if possible, to overcome, but at least to cope effectively with, their social/emotional disabilities. We believe that providing them with small, structured, safe and caring environments is best for enabling this self-discovery and change. Small student populations make it possible for them to receive the individual attention they need; structure enables the setting of limits and consistency they require for learning academics, as well as more appropriate behaviors.

Only safe environments can remove their fears of emotional or physical harm from their peers or adults and foster the establishment of trusting relationships. It is only in a caring place that healing and growth can begin, particularly for those children who have known the trauma of loss, abuse, instability or chaos in their home environments. We believe that students benefit from their interaction with a caring and committed professional staff and from members of the broader community who we seek to involve in the school program.

While we believe that the individualized educational services, the variety of therapeutic interventions, and the modeling of caring adults that take place on site positively impact our students' chances, we also believe that their home environments have a significant impact. Therefore, we seek to establish close working relationships with families and/or guardians to facilitate communication, restoration strategies and training to meet their children's needs. For students as well as their families our goal is to provide PATHWAYS to a brighter future.

## **CROSSWOOD, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Crosswood, Inc. Board of Directors determines the Pathways Schools mission and purpose, selects and evaluates the Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director, ensures organizational planning, oversees and ensures adequate resources, ensures for an annual independent audit of the financial condition of the corporation, monitors the educational program, enhances the school's public image, establishes major policies, and ensures compliance with all relevant laws and regulations. The management of the school and its property and affairs is vested in the CEO/Executive Director, subject to the oversight authority of the Board of Directors. The Board works with the CEO/Executive Director to review staff manuals, improve employee benefits, maintain a retirement plan, and retain legal counsel.

There are a minimum of seven (7) voting Directors of the corporation who serve on a non-paid basis. The Directors represent the community-at-large. Approximately one-third of the Board is elected each year for three-year terms.

The Board establishes major policies and oversees the financial management of the school and consults with the CEO/Executive Director on the hiring of the key finance personnel. It delegates the authority as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to the Executive Director who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school.

The Board regularly evaluates the programs of The Pathways Schools through development and review of a strategic/priority plan for the organization, in addition to soliciting input from outside consultants, parents, staff and students.

The Board of Directors holds regularly scheduled meetings in the David H. Peters Conference Room at the Kennedy House or virtually. The Executive Director, who is the Chief Executive Officer and an ex-officio member of the Board, is the staff liaison person with the Board.

Duties of the Board of Directors include attending meetings of the full Board of Directors, annually electing a President and Vice-President and the executive officers of the corporation, serving on standing Board Committees and assisting the President as requested. The standing Board Committees are: Finance, Personnel, Strategic Planning, and Nominating.

The Board of Directors is committed to maintaining a strong relationship with the staff of The Pathways Schools. It also seeks to communicate and interact directly with staff through: participation in graduations, award ceremonies, all-school staff gatherings, invitations to staff to participate on Board committees, and Board visits to the school sites.

## **SECTION 2 – GENERAL EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

### ***AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP***

The Pathways Schools hopes that every employee will find the employment relationship satisfying and rewarding in all respects. While we hope our relationship will be mutually beneficial, it needs to be emphasized that the employment relationship is "at-will." Employment with the school is voluntarily entered into and we recognize that employees are free to resign at any time, with or without cause or notice. Similarly, the school is free to end any employment relationship at any time it deems appropriate, with or without cause or notice. No employee, other than the President of the Board of Directors with the consent of the entire Board, has the authority or legal ability to modify the at-will nature of the employment relationship, and even then it can be modified only in writing.

### ***EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY***

Our school is committed to the full utilization of all human resources and to a policy of equal employment opportunity. Our school will not discriminate against employees or applicants for employment on any legally-recognized basis including, but not limited to, race, color, religion, genetic information, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, physical or mental disability, citizenship status and/or age.

This policy encompasses and, at the same time, transcends mere non-discrimination. It connotes a sustained, on-going, affirmative effort to assure that all members of the community are given full opportunity to qualify for staff vacancies as they occur, and to progress in their work to the full extent of their individual capabilities. This positive, aggressive Equal Opportunity Policy is fully supported by each Board member and the officers of the Corporation. Employees may discuss equal employment opportunity related questions with the site Supervisor or the Executive Director.

### ***AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT***

Our school is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities, which may include providing reasonable accommodation where appropriate, unless undue hardship to the school would result. In general, it is the employee's responsibility to notify the Executive Director of the need for an accommodation. Upon doing so, the Executive Director may ask for the employee's input or the type of accommodation that may be necessary or the functional limitations caused by the disability. Also, when appropriate, Pathways may need permission to obtain additional information from a physician or other medical or rehabilitation professionals. The school will then conduct an investigation to identify barriers to performing the job, and possible accommodations, if any, which will help resolve the limitation. If the accommodation is reasonable and will not impose an undue hardship, the school will make the accommodation.

## ***PERSONNEL FILE***

A personnel file is maintained for each employee including, but not limited to, the job application, resume, performance appraisals, disciplinary records, commendations, and other documents related to each employee's performance.

An employee may inspect his/her/their personnel file during normal working hours and in the presence of a Human Resources representative. If an employee wishes to review his/her personnel file, he/she must contact Human Resources for an appointment. Employees may copy material in the file if it contains their signature, but employees may not alter, add to, or delete any existing information in their file.

Access by others is granted only for legitimate school business, on a legal need-to-know basis, or if approved or directed by the Executive Director.

## ***PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT***

We need to maintain up-to-date information about each employee so we would be able to provide assistance in matters of personal emergency. Changes in name, address, telephone number, marital status or number of dependents should be updated online in Paycor and Employee Navigator.

Employees should contact the Human Resources representative at the Kennedy House and/or make changes in Paycor to obtain or update information such as direct deposit, paychecks, benefits, W-4 changes, and change of address or contact information.

Employees should contact the Executive Director at the Kennedy House for employment questions, such as, salary, long term leave, relocation, position changes and resignation.

## ***EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES***

There shall be no discrimination in favor of or against applicants because they are immediate family members of an individual who is employed by Pathways. An employee may not be in a position that directly supervises, evaluates, or disciplines an immediate family member. Immediate family members may not be hired, assigned, transferred, or promoted if such action would violate this prohibition. This policy will be considered when making all assignments, transfers, and promotions. Should two employees enter into a relationship or living arrangement that would create a violation of this policy, the position will be modified or one of the employees will be transferred to a position in the same job classification, if feasible. If accommodations of this nature are not feasible, the employees will be permitted to determine which of them will resign or accept another position. There is no prohibition beyond these standards against immediate family members working together in the same location.

Immediate family members include: the spouse, sibling, parent, stepparent, child, stepchild, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, grandchild, or anyone who has lived regularly in the employee's household.

## SECTION 3 – CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT AND COMPENSATION

### **PERSONNEL ACTION NOTICE (PAN)**

Crosswood, Inc. is the employer of all individuals who work for The Pathways Schools. When individuals are hired, they are issued a Personnel Action Notice (PAN) which gives information regarding the terms of employment. That information includes: designated number of work months (10-month or 12-month), number of work days, category of employment (exempt or non-exempt), salary (annual, per diem, or hourly) and benefits. Employees are presented with a specific position and location based on program needs. However, these are subject to change at any time by the Executive Director. Start and end dates are also given to indicate the term of employment. Individuals are asked to sign the PAN to indicate their acceptance of the salary and benefits and their intent to honor the terms of employment.

### **CATEGORIES**

<b>FULL-TIME SALARIED</b>	Employees who are regularly scheduled to work Pathways Schools full-time schedule of at least 30 to 40 hours per week. They are eligible for Pathways Schools' full benefits package, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit.
<b>FULL-TIME HOURLY</b>	Full-time hourly employees work between 30 and 37.5 hours per week. They are generally NOT eligible for leave benefits with the exception of sick leave.
<b>PART-TIME SALARIED, HOURLY OR PER DIEM</b>	Employees who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week. They are NOT eligible for employer paid benefits except for paid sick leave. Benefits may be available at the employee's expense.
<b>TEMPORARY</b>	Temporary employees are hired to perform a specific function or task for a limited, usually pre-determined, period of time. Temporary employees, whether full-time or part-time, generally are not eligible for leave benefits.

All employees are provided all statutory benefits which are required by law or regulation.

### **EXEMPT AND NON-EXEMPT STATUS**

State and federal wage and hours laws include exemptions from overtime pay for certain categories of employees. Whether the position is exempt or non-exempt is determined by the duties, responsibilities and salary.

**NON-EXEMPT** employees are entitled to overtime pay under the specific provisions of federal and state laws.

**EXEMPT** employees as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act and state law are those whose duties meet the legal definition of primarily executive, administrative or professional and who make the threshold minimum salary and are paid the same salary every week. While exempt employees are expected to adhere to regular schedules to ensure effective workflow, the number of hours actually worked in a given week may vary. An exempt employee is paid a salary which does not, except in limited circumstances authorized by law, change based on the number hours worked.

Employees in exempt positions are not entitled to overtime pay. Exempt employees are always paid in full-day increments.

## **TERM OF EMPLOYMENT**

Employees are hired to work for a designated number of days during a 10-month or 12-month period. In late May or early June, employees who are being offered re-employment for the following school year receive a Personnel Action Notice (PAN) with information on in the updated terms of employment for the upcoming school year, i.e., new salary, etc. An additional PAN is issued to employees who agree to work during the Extended School Year (ESY) Program. If an employee does not sign and return the new PAN or the ESY PAN by the date specified when it is issued, his/her assigned position is considered open. If an employee does sign the new PAN, his/her assigned position is considered to be filled and the expectation is that the employee will appear for work to honor the term of employment.

If an employee does not honor a term of employment, that is if they resign prior to the end date on their PAN, it may impact employee benefits, supplemental compensation, professional development reimbursement, future references and/or eligibility for retirement.

Final paycheck calculations for salaried employees separating employment during the term of their PAN is calculated based on actual days worked versus PAN days. Calculations subtract all unpaid days i.e., breaks, closings, holidays, etc. when determining days worked for the final paycheck.

## **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

In compliance with Maryland law, the school conducts reference checks, child sexual abuse and sexual misconduct history review, and criminal background checks on all new hires on or before the first day of work. In compliance with District of Columbia law, the school also conducts a Child Protective Services (CPS) background check in Maryland. If the individual is hired prior to receiving the results of the criminal, sexual abuse/misconduct review or CPS background checks, continued employment will be contingent upon receipt of acceptable results. If employment has begun and results received at any time are unacceptable, the employee may be terminated.

## **WORK AUTHORIZATION**

In accordance with the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, all employers are required to verify that every new employee is legally permitted to work in the United States. This definition includes citizens and nationals of the U.S. and aliens authorized to work in the U.S. Proof of work eligibility and U.S. citizenship or lawful residency must be provided within 72 hours of reporting to work. The Pathways School may wait 21 days if evidence is provided that application has been made to the appropriate agency for the required documentation. Otherwise, the organization is prohibited by law from hiring candidates who cannot provide the required documentation within 72 hours.

## **LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION**

Employees who are hired as professionals in the fields requiring licensure or certification (e.g., special education teaching, social work, or counseling) must submit official license(s) and/or certification(s) in a timely manner. It is the employee's responsibility to provide documentation (i.e. official transcripts, appropriate license(s) and/or certification(s), fees, etc.) within 30 calendar days of employment so that Pathways may forward these documents to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in a timely manner.

It is also the **employee's responsibility** to maintain/ update his/her license(s) and/or certification(s). **Any employee who fails to renew license(s) and/or certification(s) before expiration dates may be terminated or reassigned to a different position.** All professional staff must send all required documentation (transcripts, fees, etc.) when required for timely renewal. The status of employee's license and certification will be taken into consideration when offering PANs to continue employment for the following school year.

## **TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

Should an employee resign, retire, or voluntarily terminate employment with Crosswood Inc, the employee is expected to complete and submit the Notice of Resignation Form along with the Consent for Reference Check Form to Human Resources at the time of termination. The Notice of Resignation Form should include the reason for leaving and the last day to be worked. A voluntary termination of employment includes resignation with or without notice, an unauthorized absence, or failure to return from leave of absence.

To minimize disruption to our students and schools, it is reasonably expected an employee will give your supervisor immediate written notice with a minimum of two (2) calendar weeks. However, it is important to recognize that even that time period creates disruption at anytime during the school year and prior to the end of PAN term. Leave requests may be granted at the discretion of the Executive Director once notice of resignation has been provided.

The decision to terminate an employee is never taken lightly. Employees may, however, be terminated for any reason, or no reason at all, with or without notice. Where possible, Pathways will strive to give an employee reasonable notice in advance of termination. Such notice, however, is not required and will be provided at the sole discretion of the Executive Director.

The following is an illustrative list of actions which may result in immediate termination. This list is a non-exhaustive list.

- Sexual offense or sexual abuse of a minor, student, co-worker or other individual;
- Acts or threats of violence against any others including but not limited to employees, students, volunteers, contractors, and visitors;
- Use of obscene, abusive or threatening language;
- Theft or malicious damage of Pathways property;
- Insubordination;
- Gambling or fighting on Pathways property;
- The possession, distribution, manufacture, transportation, use, sale, purchase, or transfer of controlled substance or illegal drugs;
- Being at work or on Pathways property while under the influence of a controlled substance, illegal drugs, alcohol or marijuana;
- Requesting or accompanying a student to purchase alcohol beverages or drugs;
- Employee purchasing alcohol or legal drugs for use “on the job” with employees or students;
- Falsification of documentation; or
- Providing false or misleading information during an internal or external investigation.

Should an employee leave Pathways (voluntarily or involuntarily), the employee is responsible for returning all Pathways property including but not limited to: photo issued ID badge, Chromebook or other computer devices, cell phone, keys, fobs, media storage devices, and any and all proprietary and confidential information. If Pathways property is not returned, the employee will be responsible for payment of the value of the property.

At the time of termination, the employee is responsible for immediately reimbursing any of the following:

- Any outstanding balance on a loan from Pathways;
- Any leave used beyond accrued leave; and
- Any benefits costs not covered by deductions from paychecks.

## **PAYCOR PAYROLL MANAGEMENT**

Pathways Schools utilize Paycor, an electronic payroll system, to support time reporting and payroll.

Paycor integrates the following systems:

- Time and attendance management
- Payroll
- Annual Benefits enrollment
- New Employee onboarding
- Employee and manager self-service portal

You may log into the Paycor self-portal at any time and securely perform the following tasks:

- Enter and approve worked time and paid leave
- View leave balances and request time off
- View and print paycheck stubs (current and past year)
- View and print W-2s (current and past year)
- Make direct deposit changes online
- Make tax withholding changes online
- Make address and other contact updates online

Pathways uses the services of Paycor to record and monitor staff attendance and leave and comply with federal wage and hour guidelines. Employees are expected to apply for all leave using the Paycor system to be approved by the supervisor. In addition, employees are expected to review and approve their Paycor timecard by close of business on the Monday following each pay period. If inaccuracies or omissions are noted, these should be immediately reported to the supervisor. Failure to utilize the payroll system may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination. See Section 5 of this handbook for further information regarding leave procedures.

## **METHOD OF COMPENSATION**

Ten-month employees will be paid on a 10-month basis with 21 pay periods between August 31 and June. All other employees will be paid 24 pay periods across 12 months. Checks are issued on the 15<sup>th</sup> and last business day of each month. Staff will be notified of any exceptions to this schedule due to holidays or weekends. ***Salaried employees are paid the same amount each pay period regardless of holidays or emergency closing days.*** The annual pay for salaried employees is noted on the PAN, calculated based on the total number of workdays, and based on a per diem rate (i.e., total number of PAN workdays x per diem rate = annual salary). Leave Without Pay (LWOP) will be deducted at least quarterly if not during the pay period it was used. Staff who is paid on an hourly basis will be informed of their pay schedule. Ten-month employees who work during ESY will be paid by separate checks on July 31 and August 15 with no benefit deductions.

Employees are paid through our direct deposit option, unless arrangements are made for an exception. You are strongly encouraged to authorize direct deposit of your paychecks. Direct deposit ensures that paychecks are not lost or stolen and saves you from having to spend unnecessary time making deposits. You can access your pay stub/statement showing the earnings and deductions taken in your Paycor profile.

Each pay period is twice monthly (approximately 15 days duration). For purposes of pay, each calendar week stands alone and is calculated separately; the workweek begins Sunday at 12 midnight and ends on the following Saturday at 11:59PM (although our workweek is Monday – Friday). Employees are paid twice monthly on the 15<sup>th</sup> and last day of the month. Pathways Schools reserves the right to correct errors made in calculating earnings payable to employees that may have resulted in underpayment or overpayment. This may occur through deductions in a future paycheck or through a request for reimbursement if the final paycheck has been issued.

If you have questions about your paycheck, please contact the Human Resources Administrator at HRAdmin@pathwayschools.org . Questions regarding hours paid on your paycheck should be directed to your supervisor first for confirmation of the work and/or time-off hours approved for payment.

## **GARNISHMENTS**

Pathways is legally bound, when served with a court order or other equivalent legal documentation, to withhold earnings from your “disposable earnings.” Disposable earnings are the amount of earnings left after legally required deductions, e.g., federal & state taxes, social security, have been withheld. For the payment of debt, until the debt has been satisfied, or as otherwise required by the order, the amount withheld will be limited according to applicable laws. You will be notified by Human Resources if Pathways receives a garnishment against your wages.

## **OVERTIME**

Nonexempt employees are entitled to one and one-half times the employee’s regular rate for all hours worked over forty (40) in one workweek. Holiday hours will not be considered as time worked for the purpose of determining eligibility for overtime payment. Overtime may be assigned to nonexempt employees by a supervisor. All nonexempt employees must receive approval from their supervisor *prior to working overtime or more than their regularly scheduled hours.*

## **REIMBURSEMENT FOR OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES**

To be eligible for reimbursement of any out-of-pocket expenses, approval must be received in advance from a Principal/designee or the Executive Director. Nominal expenses (\$15.00 or less) can typically be paid from Petty Cash funds. Other expenses should be sent via the Principal or designee to the Bookkeeper at the Administrative Office. Itemized receipts/documentation should accompany any requests for reimbursement.

All mileage reimbursement requests must be submitted through Paycor’s expense management system. Approved reimbursements will be paid at the same time as paychecks, on the 15<sup>th</sup> or the last business day of each month.

It is the employee’s responsibility to keep good tax records and to get outside tax advice to determine whether unreimbursed out-of-pocket expenses may be deducted for income tax purposes.

## SECTION 4 – BENEFITS INFORMATION

### **EMPLOYEE NAVIGATOR BENEFITS MANAGEMENT**

Pathways Schools utilizes an electronic benefits system, Employee Navigator, to support benefits management and Human Resources functions. Employee Navigator integrates the following systems:

- Annual Benefits enrollment
- New Employee onboarding
- Employee and manager self-service portal

You may login to the Employee Navigator self-portal at any time and securely perform the following tasks:

- Access benefit information and download important information and forms
- Enroll in benefits
- Make change to benefits

Employee Navigator is accessible through the Pathways Schools homepage (<https://pathwayschools.org>). Because of confidential personal information being stored within the system, it is important to keep your password private. No other employee, including your supervisor, should use your login.

### **HEALTH INSURANCE**

Eligible employees may participate in one of our health insurance plans. Employees covered by spousal insurance or any other health insurance are considered ineligible for coverage in the health plans offered to employees of The Pathways Schools.

Employees may enroll in a plan for coverage of the employee, employee plus one, or family. Information and enrollment forms may be obtained from the Human Resources representative and/or online through Employee Navigator.

### **DENTAL AND VISION INSURANCE**

Eligible employees may participate in available dental and vision insurance plans. Information and enrollment forms may be obtained from the Human Resources representative and online.

### **COBRA**

In accordance with Federal and state laws, most employers sponsoring group medical/dental plans are required to offer employees and their families the opportunity for temporary extension of medical/dental coverage. This “continuation coverage” is offered at group rates in certain instances where coverage under the plan would otherwise end. This notice is intended to inform employees, in a summary fashion, of their rights and obligations under the continuation coverage provisions of the law.

Employees and their families have the right to choose this continuation coverage if they lose group medical/vision/dental coverage because of a reduction in hours of employment or the termination of employment (for any reason other than gross misconduct on the employee’s part).

Spouses or eligible dependent children ALSO have the right to choose continuation coverage under the school's group medical/dental insurance plan if he or she would lose group medical/dental coverage because of any of the following events: 1) employee's death, 2) employee's termination of employment (for reasons other than gross misconduct) or reduction in employee's hours of employment, 3) a divorce or legal separation, 4) entitlement to Medicare benefits, or 5) employee's child loses dependent status under the group medical/dental plan.

Under the law, the employee or family member must inform the school's plan administrator of a divorce, legal separation or loss of dependent status within 60 days after the occurrence of the event.

When the plan administrator is notified that one of these events has happened, the plan administrator will notify the qualified individual of the right to choose continuation coverage. The individual has 60 days from the date coverage would be lost because of the events described above, to inform the plan administrator that continuation coverage is desired.

**If continuation coverage is not chosen, the employee's group medical/dental insurance coverage will end.**

If continuation coverage is chosen, our school is required to give coverage which is identical to the coverage provided under the group plan. The law requires the opportunity to maintain continuation coverage for 36 months unless group medical/dental coverage is lost because of termination of employment due to gross misconduct. In that case, the required continuation coverage period is 18 months. (The 18-month continuation coverage period will be extended to 29 months if the employee is determined by social security to be disabled at the time of termination of employment.) However, the law also provides that continuation coverage may be cut short for other reasons.

Under the law, the individual has to pay the entire premium for the continuation coverage. In preparation for the end of the 18-month or 36-month continuation coverage period, (s)he may review options at [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

A full statement of rights to COBRA continuation coverage is included with the materials describing the employee's group medical/dental insurance.

### ***FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT (FSA)***

Full-time salaried and hourly employees may participate in Flexible Spending Accounts for unreimbursed medical expenses and dependent care expenses. Information and enrollment forms may be obtained online during open enrollment at the start of the school year or from the Human Resources representative at anytime.

### ***SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE***

Supplemental insurance providing coverage over and above the previously described health, dental and vision insurance is available to eligible employees at 100% cost to the employee.

Information and enrollment forms may be obtained from the Human Resources representative and online.

## ***LIFE INSURANCE***

Eligible employees are enrolled in our school's group life insurance plan. It is designed to help plan for the financial needs of the employee's family in the event an employee's death. Employees who work at least 30 hours each week are qualified for this benefit. The cost of this insurance is fully paid by the school. Additional information on this plan may be obtained from the HR Specialist.

## ***DISABILITY INSURANCE***

Full-time employees are provided short-term and long-term disability insurance at Pathways expense. After 30 days of a certified disability, the employee will be paid up to 60 percent of monthly salary. Additional information on this plan may be obtained from the Human Resources representative.

## ***EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM***

All employees may use the services available through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at no charge. Through the EAP, the employee and his/her family may receive professional consultation and short term assistance that can help identify and evaluate problems, discuss possible solutions, and if necessary, make a referral for additional helping resources. The EAP is voluntary and strictly confidential.

## ***PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE***

Professional liability coverage protects against errors and omissions made while providing counseling services to the students of Pathways Schools. This policy protects both the employees and the school against allegations of professional misconduct, sexual abuse, and the molestation of students. **In no circumstance is coverage provided to an employee for intentional or criminal acts.**

## ***WORKERS' COMPENSATION***

On-the-job injuries are covered by our Workers' Compensation Insurance Policy provided at no cost to the employee. If an employee is injured on the job, no matter how slightly, the incident should be reported immediately to the Supervisor. Consistent with applicable state law, failure to report an injury within a reasonable period of time could jeopardize the claim. We ask for assistance in alerting the Supervisor to any condition which could lead or contribute to an employee accident. Please see our procedure for reporting accidents and injuries in Section 8.

## ***UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION***

Pathways Schools responds to all requests from state agencies for information on the separation of employment of former staff members who have applied for unemployment benefits. Pathways Schools complies with all regulations, policies, and procedures of state unemployment programs. Former staff members seeking unemployment benefits must work with the state or the local unemployment office and file an application for benefits. For 10-month employees, if the PAN for the new school year has been signed, any time off between school years in the summer is not considered termination of employment and therefore, is typically not eligible for unemployment compensation. The unemployment office reviews each case and notifies applicants directly regarding its decision.

## **RETIREMENT PLAN**

Pathways provides eligible employees with a 403(b) Tax-Deferred Annuity Plan. This plan is designed to be used in combination with your Social Security benefits and personal resources to provide employees with an assured income at retirement age.

Complete details of the plan may be found in the Summary Plan Description. A copy may be obtained from the Human Resources representative and on the plan website.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REIMBURSEMENT**

To promote professional development and to maintain or increase professional skills for use in a Pathways position, Pathways grants reimbursement for college courses, professional workshop and conference participation.

Funds for the program are limited. Any regular full-time employee may be eligible for up to \$1000 per school year. Decisions on requests for reimbursement exceeding \$500 will be made at the end of the fiscal year. Requests for additional funds exceeding \$1000 may be submitted by June 1, and may be allocated if funds are available. Only employees who sign their Personnel Action Notice for the following school year will be eligible for reimbursement of more than \$500. *If the employee does not return for the following school year, the employee may be asked to repay funds exceeding \$500.*

The funds will be allocated for the following purposes according to these priorities:

1. to obtain/maintain professional certification and licensure,
2. to pursue advanced degrees/certification for use in a Pathways position, and
3. to improve professional skills

To apply for funds, employees **MUST** submit Pathways professional development approval forms to the Academic or Clinical supervisor for preliminary approval. Please refer to the Employee Resource page on our website for further information.

Allocation of funds is for program tuition or registration only. Books, materials, fees are not covered. Transportation and room and board costs for overnight conferences are eligible for reimbursement at the discretion of the Executive Director.

To receive payment of funds, proper documentation is required. For courses, required documentation is a copy of official grade slip showing grade of “A” “B” or “C” and proof of payment, cancelled check or receipt. Attach documentation to the Professional Development Reimbursement Form. Documentation must be received within 60 days of course completion.

For workshop, Professional Development Reimbursement Form, proof of attendance and proof of payment, cancelled check or receipt, must be received within 30 days of workshop date.

**When an employee signs a PAN accepting employment for a school year and resigns prior to the end of the terms of employment, that employee is responsible for reimbursing The Pathways Schools for professional development reimbursements paid in the preceding 6 months or exceeding \$500.**

## PRESENTING AT REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONFERENCES

As staff becomes knowledgeable in their field of expertise, they may be inclined to submit or be requested to submit a proposal to present at a regional or national conference. If presenting as a representative of Pathways, a staff member may submit a proposal if:

1. All licensure and/or certification requirements have been met for their profession.
2. The staff member has at least three years of experience in her/his discipline.
3. The staff member has been employed by Pathways for at least one year.
4. The staff member has demonstrated expertise in the area/topic s/he is presenting.
5. The proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Executive Director.

A staff member must forward their proposals for presentation prior to mailing them for acceptance **ONLY** if they are presenting a Pathways program or program component. In this sense, we believe when a professional presents at regional and national conferences, the staff member also represents Pathways. If a staff member is presenting a new strategy or technique s/he has developed on his/her own separate from her/his Pathways School employment, s/he may do so without receiving approval.

A staff member who desires reimbursement should submit a copy of his/her budget with the proposal including cost of: a) conference registration; b) travel and c) lodging. A staff member may choose to pay for his/her own expenses. The Executive Director will review the reimbursement request and advise the staff member of the amount approved. Reimbursement will occur after the presentation and upon submission of expense receipts.

We have developed these guidelines to facilitate, as well as coordinate, presentation activities.

## **CREDIT UNION**

Employees are eligible to join the Educational Systems Federal Credit Union (ESFCU). More information is available at [www.esfcu.org](http://www.esfcu.org). The Credit Union is focused on serving the education community. Their services include check and savings accounts, credit cards, in addition to home, auto and personal loan options. *They also offer bank accounts designed for school personnel who receive 21 pays, to allocate a percentage of each check for "summer pay".*

## **TERMINATION OF BENEFITS**

Benefits for employees are terminated effective on the first day of the month following the last day of employment. *If an employee has terminated employment prior to the end of the PAN termination date, benefits may be terminated effective the last date of employment.* The employee is responsible for reimbursing The Pathways Schools for any professional development reimbursements paid during that school year based on the guidelines noted previously in the handbook.

When an employee resigns during the summer, after signing a PAN accepting employment for the next school year, that employee is responsible for reimbursing The Pathways Schools and professional development reimbursements paid since January 1 of that calendar year or exceeding \$500 during the school year.

## SECTION 5 – ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE INFORMATION

### **DUTY HOURS**

In order to provide a safe school environment for students, it is essential that staff adhere to established duty hours. School hours vary at our different sites and are determined by the site Supervisor and Executive Director or designee. The typical work day is considered to be 7.5 hours. **Site staff is expected to report prior to the arrival of students and to remain for scheduled meetings after the dismissal of students.** At designated times, staff may be expected to attend Pathways trainings and/or student/family functions requiring extended duty hours. Examples include Back to School Nights and the Annual Art Show. **Tardiness, attendance, and participation in Pathways events/activities extending beyond regular duty hours will be addressed in the performance appraisals and affect continued employment.** The work hours of the administrative staff are determined by the appropriate Supervisor.

### **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Attendance and punctuality are essential factors for success within our school. We work as a team, and this requires that each person be in the right place at the right time. Staff are required to be present at the school site during school operating hours unless on an assigned duty off-site. Staff should get approval from the Supervisor prior to absences and prior to leaving school grounds during the workday. **Staff is expected to accurately document their attendance in the online Paycor system.**

### **LUNCH, PLANNING PERIODS, AND OTHER BREAKS**

From the start of the work day through the end of the work day, including those days when students have an early dismissal, employees are expected to be performing tasks and activities for Pathways' purposes. Employees are required to seek permission from the site supervisor to use any time during the day to complete personal tasks or to leave the school building.

### **UNSCHEDULED OR EXCESSIVE ABSENCES AND TARDINESS**

Good attendance and punctuality are vital to the successful operation of our schools. Although you accrue paid sick leave and other leave which may be substituted for unscheduled absences with your supervisor's approval, supervisors retain discretion to determine whether absences and late arrivals are excessive.

An unscheduled absence occurs when you fail to report for and remain at work as scheduled. An unscheduled absence includes all unplanned time lost from the work schedule, whether avoidable or unavoidable, voluntary, or involuntary. Tardiness is late arrival at the beginning of the workday.

Determining whether scheduled absences are excessive, your supervisor may consider the frequency and length of the absences, as well as the reasons for the absences. Supervisors may notice patterns demonstrating abuse of the Sick Leave policy such as calling out on particular days, even though sick days remain available. Examples of potentially abusive patterns include 3 or 4 partial or full-day absences in a short period of time; tardiness or early departures occurring 3 or more times in a 60-day period; and calling in sick on a day you previously requested off, but which was denied. Excessive tardiness and absenteeism may have an adverse effect on any future requests for time off, salary considerations or promotion considerations, and may result in an unsatisfactory performance rating and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment (except in time covered by approved Family Medical Leave or similar leave of absence).

If an emergency arises regarding a tardy arrival or unscheduled absence, please use the following procedures. Employees must personally notify the Principal/Supervisor as soon as possible so a substitute for your duties may be contacted (preferably the night before). Employees are responsible for providing a daily schedule, lesson plans and/or group activities to the Principal/Supervisor who will then provide direction to the substitute covering the activities or classes for the day.

To facilitate planning during an absence employees are requested to call and/or text their Supervisor before 6:30 AM or the time designated by your Supervisor. If an employee does not reach the Supervisor or designee directly, a message should be left on her/his mobile phone voicemail and an email should be sent to the Supervisor and/or designee.

Provide the following information if unable to reach the Supervisor or designee directly;

- Name
- Day(s) to be out and reason
- Telephone number to be contacted

Location of lesson plans, group activities, etc. to provide direction to staff providing coverage

Failure to obtain prior approval for absences and/or to follow reporting procedures may result in unpaid leave, to the extent permitted by law. **Repeated offenses of tardiness or absences without prior approval may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from employment.** If an employee is absent for three days without notifying the school, it is assumed that the position with the school has been voluntarily abandoned and the employee will be terminated and normal termination procedures will be followed.

## ***EMERGENCY/INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSINGS AND DELAYED OPENINGS***

Announcements regarding the status of schools' emergency closings or delays for students and staff will be available through Pathways' website ([www.pathwayschools.org](http://www.pathwayschools.org)) and employee email. If schools are closed for students already for a Professional Day, announcements about emergency closings or changes in the schedule for staff will only be made through the Pathways email.

Pathways has a policy to close individual schools based on the county in which it is located and the decisions made by that local school system in response to emergency situations or inclement weather. In the event that school is closed, an additional school day will be added during the school year as the schedule allows and/or at the end of the school year. ***Employees are encouraged to take this into consideration when making vacation plans and anticipate the possibility for schedule changes and make-up days.***

When schools are closed for inclement weather or other emergency reasons, the Executive Director will determine, based on safe accessibility to each workplace, whether or not 12-month employees and Administrative Office employees will be expected to report to work or whether or not they may use the option of working from another location. All other employees are not expected to report to work. In school years when there are more emergency days lost than permitted by the school calendar, those excess days must be made up at times specified by the Executive Director.

If one school site is closed for a local emergency, the other school sites shall remain open as scheduled.

## **GENERAL LEAVE POLICY**

Paid leave is a benefit provided to eligible employees and is to be used only for the purposes stated in these policies. Leave accrual can be initiated on the date identified in each PAN as the beginning date.

Employees are expected to cooperate with the Supervisor in scheduling leave during periods when their services can best be spared. All requests for leave (unpaid or paid) on the following days must be approved in advance by the Executive Director: day before and after holiday days off or breaks, professional development days, and in the month of June.

***EMPLOYEES SHALL OBTAIN PRIOR APPROVAL UTILIZING THE PAYCOR SYSTEM FOR ALL LEAVE FROM THEIR SUPERVISOR(S) AT LEAST THREE DAYS IN ADVANCE.***

Exceptions will be made in the event of an emergency or in the event of a sudden illness. If an unscheduled absence occurs, employees shall report or have their absences reported in the Paycor system as soon as possible.

**Failure to report or to secure prior approval for leave may, at the discretion of the Supervisor, result in placement of the employee in a non-pay status for the duration of that leave, to the extent permitted by law.** Excessive abuse, as determined by the Executive Director, of a leave without advance approval, will be one factor considered before offering future employment to a present employee.

***STAFF IS EXPECTED TO ACCURATELY DOCUMENT THEIR WORK HOURS AND LEAVE IN PAYCOR ON A DAILY BASIS AND WILL BE APPROVED FOR EACH PAY PERIOD BY A SUPERVISOR.***

All staff are expected to accurately document their work hours and leave in the designated format on a daily basis and to approve their time in the Paycor system by close of business on the Monday following the end of the pay period in the Paycor system. **Falsification of work hours and leave documentation may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.**

All work hours and leave are recorded on an electronic timecard in Paycor. You are required to login into Paycor, review and approve your timecard for accuracy at the end of every pay period. This is very important since your pay and deductions are computed from these recorded hours. Your supervisor is required to ensure any requests for leave are approved timely to ensure the employee's timecard is coded accurately within each pay period.

Failure to ensure your electronic entries are recorded accurately on your timecard more than three (3) times within the PAN year, may result in a formal disciplinary warning that may result in further disciplinary actions up to no PAN renewal for the next school year.

## **UNPAID LEAVE**

To the extent permitted by law, employees may not be paid under the following circumstances:

- leave taken in excess of allocated days,
- failure to secure prior approval for absence, tardiness, or time off-site,
- failure to attend a designated professional meeting, or
- failure to adhere to leave policies and procedures.

## **HOLIDAYS**

Our school observes holidays during the year. A schedule of the designated holidays will be distributed to all employees at the beginning of the school year and will be made available on the Pathways Employee Resource Page at [www.pathwayschools.org](http://www.pathwayschools.org).

In order to provide smooth program functioning, leave taken immediately before and after holidays is discouraged. Requests for personal and annual leave at these times will be approved at the Executive Director's discretion. A doctor's certificate may be required if sick leave immediately precedes or follows a holiday.

## **SICK AND SAFE LEAVE**

### **Earning Sick and Safe Leave ("sick leave")**

Full-time salaried employees earn sick and safe leave at the rate of one day for each month worked for full-time employees. Full-time hourly paid employees shall accrue sick and safe leave in proportion to the time worked. Part-time employees shall accrue sick and safe leave at the rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked up to a maximum of 40 hours of leave per year.

### **Use of Sick and Safe Leave**

Sick and safe leave is granted to an employee who, through personal illness, injury, quarantine, pregnancy, miscarriage or childbirth and recovery, is unable to perform the duties of his/her position. Sick and safe leave may also be used for medical, dental or optical examinations or treatment that may not be scheduled on non-duty days for self and for other family members. It may also be used when a member of his/her immediate family is ill and his/her presence in the home is required. It also may be used when the absence from work is necessary due to domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking committed against the employee or the employee's family member and the leave is being used: (1) to obtain medical or mental health attention; (2) to obtain services from a victim services organization; (3) for legal services or proceedings; or (4) because the employee has temporarily relocated as a result of the domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. Sick leave may not be used in lieu of vacation or personal leave when vacation and personal leave is exhausted. Sick leave may be approved in advance of accruing the leave for the year at the Executive Director's discretion. It cannot be used when an employee is receiving monies under the Worker's Compensation Law. **Supervisors may not grant leave for absences from Pathways' professional meetings which include retreat, in-service, and professional development meetings at individual sites or across Pathways. Any leave from these meetings must be requested from the Executive Director.**

***All absences qualifying for sick and safe leave that exceed two (2) days require a doctor's certificate be presented immediately upon return to work for paid leave to be approved.*** A doctor's certificate may also be required if sick and safe leave (paid or unpaid) is excessive, frequent or immediately precedes or follows a holiday or other paid absence. Refer to the Staff Handbook Sections, "Unscheduled Absences and Tardiness" and "Family and Medical Leave" (FML) for more detailed information. No sick leave will be accrued for any pay period that includes any wage payment by a third-party insurer, including Short Term Disability (STD), Long Term Disability (LTD) or Workers Compensation. While on a leave of absence, other than for approved FML, sick leave accruals will be suspended.

Once an employee has tendered a resignation during the school year or has not signed a PAN for the next school year, requests for leave will be granted only at the Executive Director's discretion. Employees will be required to reimburse Pathways for any sick and safe leave used beyond the accumulated amount.

### **Accumulation and Carryover of Sick and Safe Leave**

For any one year, an employee may carry forward up to, but not exceeding, 90 days of sick and safe leave earned in prior years. The balance of sick leave may not exceed 90 days at any time.

### **Compensation for Accumulated Sick and Safe Leave at time of Termination**

Up to a maximum of 90 days, sick and safe leave is reimbursed to employees upon termination at the following rates: 0% for 0 – the completion of 3 years employment, 25% for 4 years – completion of 15 years, 30% for more than 15 years. *Employees who do not fulfill the term of their employment are not entitled to payment for accrued sick and safe leave.*

## **PERSONAL LEAVE**

### **Earning Personal Leave**

Full-time salaried employees earn five days of personal leave annually. Personal leave is accrued on a monthly basis for the term of the employee's Personnel Action Notice. Full-time and part-time hourly paid employees are not eligible for personal leave.

### **Use of Personal Leave**

To request a planned personal day, a leave request must be submitted in the Paycor system for approval by the Supervisor. **Supervisors may not grant leave for absences from Pathways' professional meetings which include retreat, in-service, and professional development meetings at the site or across Pathways. Any leave from these meetings must be requested from the Executive Director.** Personal leave may be approved in advance of accruing the leave for the year at the Executive Director's discretion.

All planned and unplanned absences for reasons other than illness and exceeding three (3) consecutive days require a written statement presented to the Executive Director prior to the leave or immediately upon return to work explaining the need for extended leave.

Upon submission and acceptance of resignation prior to the end of the terms of employment, personal leave may be granted at the Executive Director's discretion. The same policy applies at the end of the school year for employees who have not signed a PAN for the next school year. Employees will be required to reimburse Pathways for personal leave used beyond the accumulated amount.

### **Accumulation and Carryover of Personal Leave**

One day of unused personal leave can be carried over into the personal leave balance for the next school year. An additional one day of unused personal leave may be carried over into the sick leave balance for the next school year within the limits of the sick leave policy.

### **Compensation for Accumulated Personal Leave at time of Termination**

Employees will not be paid for any unused personal days.

## **ANNUAL LEAVE**

### **Earning Annual Leave**

Annual leave is granted to each 12-month full-time salaried employee who is assigned to work all days the offices are open. Employees in the 1<sup>st</sup> – end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year with Pathways in any position, accrue 15 days of annual leave, at the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> year – 14<sup>th</sup> years accrue 20 days and beginning with the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> year, accrue 26 days per year. Annual leave is accrued on a monthly basis for the term of the employee's Personnel Action Notice.

### **Use of Annual Leave**

Annual leave will be taken at times when such leave will not adversely affect the ongoing program needs. The employee will collaborate with affected employees to determine a plan to assure appropriate continued coverage of tasks.

Employees who do not fulfill the PAN's term of their employment will be required to reimburse Pathways for annual leave used beyond the accumulated amount.

### **Accumulation and Carryover of Annual Leave**

For any one year, an employee may carry forward up to, but not exceeding, 30 days of annual leave earned in prior years. The balance of annual leave may not exceed 35 days at any time in the PAN year.

### **Compensation for Accrued Annual Leave at Time of Termination**

Up to a maximum of 30 days, annual leave is fully reimbursed to employee upon termination. *Employees who do not fulfill the term of their employment are not entitled to payment for accrued annual leave.*

## **PROFESSIONAL LEAVE**

An employee, must have the advance approval of his/her Supervisor, to be granted paid professional leave for the attendance of conferences, workshops and for other professional activities where attendance is assessed as being in the interest of The Pathways Schools. Professional leave may not be granted when the employee is receiving compensation from another agency. Failure to receive advanced approval for professional leave will result in personal leave charged. If there is no personal leave available, then absence will be considered a request to take unpaid leave.

## **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

For full-time salaried and hourly employees, up to four days of absence will be granted, with pay, upon the death of a spouse; or of a child, parent, grandparent, sibling of the employee or spouse; or of anyone who has lived continuously in the employee's household. Additional paid leave may be granted for good cause at the discretion of the Executive Director.

## **CIVIL LEAVE FOR JUROR OR WITNESS SERVICE**

Upon approval from the Executive Director, a staff member who is subpoenaed as a witness in a civil or criminal case, or is called and serves on a jury, may be granted a paid leave of absence for that period of time (s)he is unable to report to work. Request for the leave must be made in advance and submitted with a copy of the subpoena or summons. If the staff member is paid by Pathways for the day AND receives money from the court assignment, the staff member shall transmit the monies to Pathways that are received, if it is beyond the personal expenses (i.e. parking).

## **MILITARY LEAVE**

Employees who are required to serve in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States or are engaged in state military service will be given the necessary time off, without pay. A copy of the military orders must accompany the request for a leave of absence.

Reasonable efforts will be made to return an employee to the same or similar job as held prior to the leave of absence, subject to our staffing and organization requirements.

Employees who are called for periods of reserve training may be compensated for the difference, if any, between their Pathways' salary and their military pay for a period not to exceed two weeks during any one school year. Compensation for reserve duty training will be paid only when the training must be taken during a period when the employee would otherwise be working at Pathways.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Under special circumstances employees may be granted a leave of absence without pay. The granting of this type of leave is normally for compelling reasons and is dependent upon the written approval of the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.

Reasonable efforts will be made to return an employee to the same or similar job as held prior to the leave of absence, subject to our staffing and organization requirements.

During any leave of absence without pay, the employee must continue to pay their share of the cost of participating benefits, by check or other authorized forms of payment to and delivered to the Organization, and at the times these amounts would have been paid if there had not been a leave of absence.

## **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

In accordance with the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), eligible employees may take family/medical leave and be restored to the same or an equivalent position upon their return to work. This leave is granted with accrued paid leave or unpaid leave.

To be eligible for family/medical leave, an employee must have satisfied both of the following conditions:

1. Worked for Pathways for at least 12 months (not necessarily consecutive) and for at least 1,250 hours in the past 12 months; and
2. Worked at a work-site that has 50 or more employees within 75 miles of another work-site at the time you request the leave. (Pathways employees meet this requirement.)

Eligible employees may take 12 workweeks of family/medical leave for any of the following reasons:

1. The birth of a child and to care for such child;
2. The placement of a child with an employee for adoption or foster care and in order to care for the newly placed son or daughter;
3. To care for an employee's spouse, child or parent ("covered relations") with a serious health condition; and
4. Because of employee's own serious health condition, documented by a medical professional, that renders him/her unable to perform an essential function of the position.

Any leave due to the birth and care of a child or the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, and care of the newly placed child, must be completed within one (1) year of the date of birth or placement of the child.

Eligible employees may take up to 26 workweeks of family/medical leave to:

- care for spouse, parent, son, daughter, or next of kin who is a 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.

The substitution of paid leave time for unpaid time does not extend the family/medical leave period. Also, family/medical leave may run concurrently with other types of leave.

During an approved family/medical leave, the school will maintain the employee's health benefits under the same terms and conditions applicable to employees not on leave.

If paid leave is substituted for unpaid family/ medical leave, the school will deduct the employee's portion of the health plan premium as a regular payroll deduction.

If leave is unpaid, the employee must pay his/her portion of the premium by making arrangements with the Human Resources Manager.

Health coverage will cease if your premium payment is more than 30 days late. If the payment is more than 30 days late, we will send a letter to this effect. If we do not receive the co-payment within 15 days of this letter, the employee's coverage may cease.

If an employee elects not to return to work at the end of the leave for at least 30 calendar days, he/she will be required to reimburse the school for maintaining coverage during the unpaid leave, unless he/she cannot return to work because of a serious health condition or because of other circumstances beyond his/her control.

When spouses are employed by this school, they are entitled to a combined total of 12 weeks' leave: (1) for birth, adoption or foster care and in order to care for such a child; or (2) to care for a parent with a serious health condition. Each individual is entitled to 12 weeks' leave because of his/her own serious health condition or the serious health condition of his/her child or spouse without counting leave time taken by the other spouse.

Leave due to a serious health condition may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of time due to a single health condition) or on a reduced leave schedule (reducing the usual number of hours worked per workweek or workday) if medically necessary. If the leave is unpaid, the school will adjust the salary based on the amount of time actually worked. In addition, while an employee is on an intermittent or reduced-schedule leave, the school may temporarily transfer him/her to an available alternate position that better accommodates the recurring leave and that has equivalent pay and benefits.

**Employees must complete a Leave Request Form and submit it to their Supervisor who will forward it to the Executive Director. Additional forms may be required.**

If the need for family/medical leave is foreseeable, the employee must give 30 days' prior written notice. If this is not possible, please give notice to the Supervisor as soon as practicable (within one or two business days of learning of the need for leave). Failure to provide such notice may be grounds for delay of leave. If the need is because of a planned medical treatment, attempt to schedule the treatment to avoid disrupting the school's operations.

#### MEDICAL CERTIFICATION FOR A SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION

If an employee is requesting leave because of his/her own or a covered relation's serious health condition, the appropriate health care provider must supply medical certification. Obtain a medical certification form from the Human Resources representative. If possible, an employee should provide the medical certification 15 days after leave was requested. If an employee provides at least 30 days notice of the need for medical leave, the medical certification should be provided before the leave begins. If the required medical certification is not provided in a timely manner, the leave may be delayed until it is provided.

The school, at its expense, may require an examination by a second health care provider designated by the school, if it reasonably doubts the medical certification initially provided. If the second health care provider's opinion conflicts with the original medical certification, the school, at its expense, may require a third, mutually agreeable, health care provider to conduct an examination and provide a final and binding opinion. The school may require subsequent medical recertification. Failure to provide requested certification within 15 days if such is practical may result in delay of further leave until it is provided.

#### TRACKING LEAVE

The 12-month period in which the 12 or 26 weeks of leave may be taken will be tracked based on the first day of the family/medical leave.

## REPORTING WHILE ON LEAVE

If leave is taken because of the employee's own serious health condition or to care for a covered relative with a serious health condition, contact the Supervisor on a prescheduled basis regarding the status of the medical condition and the intention to return to work. In addition, notice must be given as soon as practicable (within two business days if feasible) if the dates of leave change or are extended or initially are unknown.

## RETURNING TO WORK

If leave is taken because of the employee's own serious health condition (except if taking intermittent leave), medical certification must be provided indicating the ability to resume work before returning. Obtain return-to-work medical certification forms from the Human Resources representative.

Employees failing to complete the return-to-work medical certification form will not be permitted to resume work until it is provided.

Certain highly compensated or essential employees may be denied restoration to their prior or equivalent position. Essential employees are those employees who are among the highest paid ten percent of employees within 75 miles of the work-site. Denial is based on the following conditions:

1. The denial is necessary to prevent substantial economic injury to the employer;
2. The employer has notified the employees of its decision to deny restoration should the leave take place or continue; and
3. The employee elects not to return to work after being notified of the employer's decision.

## SECTION 6 - PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND APPRAISALS

### **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

Performance management is an important tool for achieving organizational excellence and a critical responsibility of Supervisory and Administrative staff.

Key objectives of performance management include:

- Communicating performance expectations and clarifying changes in role or expectations which occur over time.
- Providing ongoing feedback to staff relative to demonstrated performance against job responsibilities and standards.
- Linking plans for individual professional growth and performance improvement with the achievement of the mission of the organization.
- Supporting employment decisions and compensation practices in a consistent and equitable manner.

Performance management is an ongoing process, which includes the identification of employee performance needs, guidance and support in meeting those needs, and assessment of outcomes against organizational criteria and standards.

### **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Supervisors may utilize a variety of performance management activities such as data sources throughout the performance year, depending on the nature of the job, the needs of the individual and past performance improvement goals.

**These include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- |   |                                      |                     |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • formal and informal   | • review of:                         | • Participation in: |
| • observations  | ○ lesson plans                       | ○ Staff meetings    |
| • review of records relative to operational policies and procedures | ○ IEPs                               | ○ In-services/PDM's |
| • staff attendance  | ○ Progress reports – behavioral data | ○ Committees        |
|   | ○ Student demonstration              |                     |

### **PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

Performance appraisal is a key component of the performance management process and includes the following objectives:

- Establishing a common structure to assist supervisors and employees in assessing performance results in a consistent and objective manner.
- Providing a predictable opportunity for employees to receive feedback related to demonstrated performance, to focus on improvement needs and to plan for professional growth and development.
- Providing supervisors with a predictable opportunity to receive feedback from employees related to their needs for support in the achievement of their professional and career goals.
- Documenting individual contributions toward continuous quality improvement of the Pathways program and the achievement of organizational goals.

Employee performance appraisals are generally conducted on a scheduled basis as follows:

### Introductory Appraisal Period

The introductory appraisal period of 60 calendar days applies to new hires, rehired and promoted employees. Due to the nature of the job, the introductory appraisal is the time for you to demonstrate your qualifications and ability to perform your duties to the satisfaction of Pathways. Requests for paid leave during this period may affect the introductory appraisal.

The 60-day introductory period can be extended up to an additional 60-days in the event performance standards are in question and your supervisor needs additional time to evaluate employee fit. The extension must be provided in writing to the employee along with the concerns or performance issues that are grounds for the extension and the desired remediation.

### December-January

Appraisals conducted in this time period apply to first and second-year employees only, providing them with the opportunity to receive/give structured feedback on an interim basis to ensure that the standards, expectations, and improvement requirements of The Pathways Schools are fully understood.

### May-June

This time period comprises the annual performance appraisal period and applies to all employees regardless of length of service, in accord with the guidelines contained herein.

## **PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

The ongoing performance management process, as well as the structured performance appraisal, is based on the following:

### **Organizational Criteria**

These are core criteria which are based on the values and expectations of The Pathways Schools and apply to all Pathways employees. They comprise Section I of the Performance Appraisal Form.

### **Site Team Criteria**

This group of criteria, applicable to all employees of The Pathways Schools, includes those standards which ensure program excellence through teamwork and collaboration. These standards comprise Section II of the Performance Appraisal Form.

### **Job Responsibilities**

Each position within the structure of The Pathways Schools has core job responsibilities, which are listed on the employee's job description. Only the major responsibilities of the position are listed in Section III of the Performance Appraisal Form, and included in the evaluation process.

The Performance Appraisal Form includes the definitions of criteria and the levels by which they are rated to facilitate understanding and consistency among rating decisions and communication relative to performance improvement goals. His/her Supervisor will provide a copy of this form to each employee.

## **RATING PERFORMANCE**

The Pathways Schools are committed to providing students and families with programs and services which consistently exceed expectations. Accordingly, each member of the staff is challenged to continuously improve performance and to exceed the expected standard. The following rating levels have been established to support the Pathways philosophy of excellence.

Exceeds Expectations (EE)	Employee demonstrates the ability to master most elements of the criteria, consistently exceeding standards. Review of activities and accomplishments noted in employee’s Professional Development Portfolio will be taken into consideration. Requires minimal direction and guidance.
Meets Expectations (ME)	Employee demonstrates the ability to master most elements of the criteria, consistently meeting standards and expectations. Requires minimal direction and guidance.
Needs Development (ND)	Employee demonstrates the ability to master some elements of the criterion, requires guidance and direction to meet performance standards. A rating of Needs Development requires specific improvement actions relative to the criteria.
Ineffective (I)	Employee does not demonstrate the ability to master the criteria. Rating at mid-year at this level may: 1) require significant improvements for employee to maintain his/her position, 2) require significant improvements for employee to be offered a Personnel Action Notice for the next year, or 3) be the basis for discharge from employment. Year-end rating at this level can be the basis for non-renewal of Personnel Action Notice for the next year.

Each section is followed by a space for comments, which may be utilized to support rating decisions.

## **PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SUMMARY AND ACTION PLAN**

The Performance Appraisal identifies organizational, site and job specific criteria which are rated by supervisors to indicate the level of staff mastery in each area. These ratings are then summarized in a narrative format which notes the major strengths and contributions the employee has made to The Pathways Schools, as well as identifies needed improvements in key areas. It should be emphasized that criteria ratings are weighted by supervisors according to program specific needs.

If an employee receives an overall rating of Needs Development, the Executive Director in the review process, will consult with the Principal and determine the level of resources needed for improvement and whether or not an action plan is needed. An Action Plan is an outline of objectives and strategies that will assist in development or remediation of identified criteria. If an employee receives an overall rating of Ineffective, the Performance Appraisal will be conducted jointly with the Principal or Executive Director and a formal Action Plan may be developed and implemented. An overall Ineffective rating has implications for continued employment.

## ***SELF-EVALUATION***

Self-evaluation provides employees and Supervisors with an opportunity to reflect on the performance period and to communicate their point of view relative to past performance, barriers to excellence and expectations. Employees and Supervisors are encouraged to view this phase as a means for communicating openly, fostering positive working relationships and leading to higher levels of work satisfaction.

## ***PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW***

Supervisors will notify staff in advance of the date and time of their performance appraisal interview. The performance appraisal interview will include discussion of improvement in the carrying out of position responsibilities and the employee's self-evaluation, the Supervisor's ratings in each section, and performance improvement and professional development plans.

At the conclusion of the interview, the employee signs and dates the evaluation form, indicating that the appraisal has been discussed and that the improvement goals are understood. A copy of the Performance Appraisal and Action Plan will be provided. The signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with results and employees may attach their self-evaluation and/or written comments to the performance appraisal form. Any attachments are initialed by the Supervisor and retained in the personnel file. The contents of the personnel file are the property of The Pathways Schools. Performance appraisals are not released to outside sources.

## ***REVIEW PROCESS***

In the event disagreements or concerns about the process or results of the performance appraisal arise between the Supervisor and employee, a review process has been established. The employee should contact the identified Reviewer on the appraisal form within ten (10) days following the performance evaluation interview, stating in writing the reason the review has been requested. The Reviewer will then contact the Supervisor and discuss the employee's review concerns. Once the information from both parties has been assessed the Reviewer will inform the employee of the final determination.

## ***PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE***

Pathways procedure is to assist employees in overcoming work-related problems, performance deficiencies, or behavior that violates the Agency's policies, procedures, and practices. It is also a procedure to establish and maintain supervisory practices and procedures that support Pathways progressive discipline procedure.

Although Pathways strives to generally apply the progressive discipline procedure set forth below, circumstances may warrant disciplinary action outside of the progressive procedure. For example, the progressive discipline procedure may not be appropriate (1) when the conduct at issue involves severe performance deficiencies, performance problems related to skill or ability, or certain types of inappropriate conduct; (2) when the initial steps of progressive discipline do not assist the employee in correcting the problem; (3) when the employee occupies a position requiring the exercise of effective management and leadership; and (4) when the employee's actions or inactions may seriously impair the Agency's ability to carry out its mission. Moreover, under certain circumstances, a supervisor may determine that although the procedure should be utilized, certain steps in the procedure should be omitted or repeated.

The progressive disciplinary procedure does not apply to introductory period employees.

## **PROGRESSIVE PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION**

Open communication and the establishment of a positive, constructive relationship among staff at all levels contribute significantly to eliminating performance problems. When problems do arise, the intent of the progressive performance documentation system is to ensure that the staff has the knowledge of the specific expectation relative to performance and is given the opportunity to correct the problem. The process includes staff conferences and written communication which summarize both the discussion and agreements for corrective action. Under no circumstances, however, does this policy constitute a guarantee of employment nor does it negate the at-will provisions of this Handbook. If an employee creates an unsafe work environment, The Pathways Schools retains the right to circumvent this Progressive Performance Documentation Policy.

This documentation system applies to all employees, so that performance problems may be addressed in a consistent and positive manner.

## **PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES**

At any time during employment or at the time employment is terminated, each employee has the opportunity to complete a *Consent to Disclose Information for Reference Checks* form. While employed with Pathways, the form may be signed at any time by an employee to provide authorization to provide a more detailed reference. Unless a signed written authorization has been obtained from a current or former employee that permits a more detailed reference, only the following information will be released by the Human Resources representative:

- a. Dates of employment
- b. Job titles during employment
- c. Salary
- d. Information mandated to be provided on a Maryland's Employment History Review Form of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct signed by our current or former employee.

Only the Executive Director or Human Resources representative may provide a limited work reference. They may provide, or designate a supervisor to provide, a more detailed reference on behalf of The Pathways Schools. Comments will be restricted to those aspects of the employee's job performance about which the supervisor or administrator has specific knowledge. Record of references will be maintained in the personnel file.

## SECTION 7 – WORKPLACE PROFESSIONALISM AND REPRESENTATION

### ***PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT***

Each employee has an obligation to observe and follow the school's policies and to maintain proper standards of conduct at all times. If an individual's behavior interferes with the orderly and efficient operation of a department, corrective disciplinary measures will be taken.

Disciplinary action may include a verbal warning, written warning, suspension without pay and discharge. The school will determine the appropriate disciplinary action imposed. The school does not guarantee that one form of action will necessarily precede another.

#### **The following are examples of behavior that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination:**

- poor performance;
- violation of the school's policies or safety rules;
- insubordination;
- poor attendance;
- falsification of attendance documentation;
- theft or dishonesty;
- unauthorized possession, use or sale of weapons;
- possession, use or sale of alcohol, marijuana, or controlled substances on work premises or during working hours;
- firearms or explosives on work premises;
- physical harassment; or
- sexual harassment or disrespect toward students and/or fellow employees, visitors or other members of the public.

These examples are not all inclusive. The school emphasizes that discharge decisions will be based on an assessment of all relevant factors.

### ***DRESS CODE***

The dress guidelines are as follows:

- Individual employees are free to select clothing to wear on a daily basis, based on its appropriateness for the tasks that he/she anticipates performing on a given day. That clothing should be appropriate for performance of those tasks.
- Staff is expected to wear more professional attire for situations such as, whenever they will be attending meetings off-site on behalf of Pathways or when they are aware that there will be visiting officials at their site.
- Staff should never wear provocative clothing to work; nor should staff wear clothing with offensive slogans, alcohol, drug, tobacco related messages, etc.
- There should be consistency between the standards for dress that students are held to and the standards that staff upholds for their own dress.
- Casual attire is allowed. However, in allowing casual attire, the intention is that it will be presentable, i.e., no holes in the clothing and appropriate lengths of shorts, dresses and skirts for a professional setting.
- Staff members who are not dressed appropriately may be asked to change clothes. If changing to something appropriate requires leaving school grounds, the employee may be required to use leave.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT AND STAFF MATTERS**

It is the policy of The Pathways Schools to follow the guidelines of FERPA (The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and HIPAA (The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) to protect the right of privacy of staff and of students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) relative to access to, and release of health information of individual staff members and records of individual students.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY OF STAFF HEALTH INFORMATION:**

Pathways will share health-related information about a staff member with his/her family member if it is deemed necessary in the event of an emergency by the Executive Director. Staff should be aware that the information provided on the Staff Information Form may be made available to staff and/or emergency personnel when deemed necessary in an emergency situation.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT INFORMATION:**

Whenever a student reaches the age of 18 years, the rights accorded to and consent required of the parent(s) of the student, shall transfer to the child if the child has not been ruled incompetent under state law and if there is documentation of one of the specified circumstances detailed in Education Article § 8-412.1a, such as parents are unavailable, parents have affirmatively rejected participation in the special education process, or the child is living out of the parents' home and is not in the care or custody of another public agency.

Parents and guardians have the right to request information regarding their child. The Pathways Schools will not disclose personally identifiable information from a student's record without prior consent from the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). Personally identifiable information includes name of student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or family members, student's address, social security number or student number, and personal characteristics or other information which makes it possible to identify the student with reasonable certainty. Two Way Consent and Authorization for Release of Information form must be completed and signed for information regarding students to be shared between Pathways Schools and other agencies or individuals. It is our policy to maintain written records of requests to access student files. A copy of this form will be included in the student's file as a written record of the request. ***Each student file contains an Access Form for Student File, which must be signed when any individual accesses the records for review or updating or any other purpose.***

When in doubt regarding the disclosure of information, follow these guidelines:

- discuss situation with the site supervisor;
- obtain written consent before giving out any identifiable information about a student;
- employees should never give out information that might be covered under FERPA or HIPAA regulations; and
- be sure to check all state and local codes related to confidential information.

If regulations are not followed, The Pathways Schools, employees, and the student are at risk.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA PRACTICES**

Employees who post information on social media websites and social networking services such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, Twitter, or Pinterest must be aware of how it may be interpreted by anyone with access to the information. Examples of information posted by or of a Pathways employee that is at risk of creating concern include, but is not limited to: provocative photographs; sexually explicit messages; offensive or disparaging remarks regarding students, other Pathways employees, or Pathways in general; and illegal or provocative use of alcohol, drugs, or weapons.

Pathways reserves the right to regulate the use of social media by employees, including employees' personal use of social media, when use: interferes with the work of the organization; is used to harass coworkers or other staff members of the organization; creates a hostile work environment; breaches Pathways' confidentiality policies; disrupts the educational process; harms the goodwill and reputation of the organization or associated entities; violates the law, Pathways' policies and/or other school rules and regulations; or uses social media to enter into inappropriate contact with students, their families or guardians.

Misconduct, even if it occurs off school property or during off-time, can be subject to disciplinary action. If anyone, including students, parents, and other employees, discovers information that is of concern and reports it to school officials, an investigation will be conducted by the Pathways administration and/or other officials. If warranted, based on the investigation, the employee may be disciplined up to and including termination, depending upon the severity and nature of the offense. Additionally, licensed or certified personnel may have their case forwarded to the appropriate state department for review and possible further sanctions.

The following are suggested guidelines for monitoring your web presence:

- “Google” or search yourself to see what others can see about you,
- Review how your social media accounts can be viewed by the public,
- Be very select about whom you friend, follow, etc. and what you “like”,
- Consider using the highest privacy setting for social media sites,
- Be cautious about revealing personal information about yourself, and
- Be cautious about sharing information about colleagues and other professionals.

## **TELEPHONE CALLS**

The way in which the school's phone is answered and handled makes an impression on a caller. All calls should be answered in a polite and professional manner announcing it is The Pathways Schools. The callers' needs should be addressed to the best degree possible.

It is important to keep our telephone lines free for school program calls. Although the occasional use of the school's telephones for a personal matter may be necessary, routine personal calls should be kept to a minimum.

Communication with parents/guardians, school systems and other agencies regarding specific students should be documented. The documentation of calls regarding students must be uploaded into IEP or LSS online systems as appropriate and required.

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

**Electronic communication devices, such as cell phones, should be turned off when on site during school hours, unless otherwise directed by Supervisor. Use of personal cell phones for phone calls and/or texting should be limited to work-related and personal emergency calls during school hours. At no time, without prior approval from a Supervisor, should earphones be worn during work hours.** The provisions of The Pathways Schools Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) are delineated in a separate document and must be signed by each staff member. **If a staff member violates these provisions, the staff member may be subject to disciplinary action.**

Pathways cell phones are allocated for designated staff use by the Executive Director and distributed by the site Cell Phone Coordinator. Upon receipt of the cell phone, each staff must sign a Cell Phone Assignment Acknowledgement Form that will be kept on file at the House until the cell phone is returned to the Coordinator at the end of the school year or staff assignment. The use of the Pathways cell phone should only be for work-related purposes. Misuse of the cell phone may result in disciplinary consequences, including reimbursement of any associated expenses. Questions concerning cell phones, including repair requests, report of theft, or distribution should be directed to the site Cell Phone Coordinator.

## **INTERNET ACCESS**

Pathways provides Internet access to its staff and students at each school and administrative site. While The Pathways Schools will make reasonable efforts to monitor student and staff use in order to prevent misuses and abuses of Internet use, we cannot guarantee protection of students and staff on the Internet. Users may encounter material which is controversial and which users, parents, staff, guardians, or administrators may consider inappropriate or offensive. Individual users of the Pathways Internet services are responsible for their use of this resource. This resource is not intended for personal use, but rather for educational purposes in support of education and research which is consistent with academic actions of The Pathways Schools. ***The provisions of The Pathways Schools Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) are delineated in a written form, which must be signed by any student, and/or staff member who uses the Internet. If a user violates these provisions, access to the Internet may be denied and the user may be subject to disciplinary action.***

## **E-MAIL**

In order to maximize effective communication and collaboration throughout The Pathways Schools all employees are assigned an email account for professional use and we ***require*** use of the Pathways' e-mail system. ***Pathways employees are expected to read their email at minimum on a daily basis and to respond in a timely manner.***

All employees who use Pathways' e-mail system are required to comply with this policy statement and the Acceptable Use Policy:

**BUSINESS USE:** The e-mail system is provided to staff for business purposes of Pathways. The use of the e-mail system for external or personal business purposes is not acceptable.

**OWNERSHIP:** All information and messages that are created, sent, received or stored on Pathways' e-mail system is the sole property of Pathways.

**E-MAIL REVIEW:** All e-mails are subject to the right of Pathways to monitor, access, read, disclose and use such e-mail. E-mail may be monitored and read by authorized personnel for Pathways for any violations of law, breaches of Company policies, communications harmful to Pathways, or for any other comparable reason.

**NO PRESUMPTION OF PRIVACY:** E-mail communications should not be assumed to be private and security cannot be guaranteed. Highly confidential or sensitive information should not be sent through e-mail.

**PROHIBITED CONTENT:** E-mails may not contain statements or content that is libelous, offensive, harassing, illegal, derogatory, or discriminatory. Foul, inappropriate or offensive messages such as racial, sexual, or religious slurs or jokes are prohibited. Sexually explicit messages or images, cartoons or jokes are prohibited.

**CERTAIN PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES:** Employees may not, without Pathways' express written authorization transmit trade secrets or other confidential, private or proprietary information or materials through e-mail.

**SECURITY:** The e-mail system is only to be used by authorized persons, and an employee must have been issued an e-mail password in order to use the system. Employee codes and/or passwords are to be kept confidential and may be disclosed only with the permission of the employee.

**MESSAGE RETENTION AND CREATION:** Employees should be careful in creating e-mail. Even when a message has been deleted, it may still exist in printed version, be recreated from a back-up system, or may have been forwarded to someone else. Please note that appropriate electronic messages may need to be saved. And, Pathways may be required to produce e-mail in litigation.

**VIRUSES:** Any files downloaded from e-mail received from non-Company sources must be scanned with Pathways' virus detection software. Any viruses, tampering or system problems should be immediately reported to the Pathways Technology Coordinator or his/her designee.

**CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATIONS:** Violations of this policy or other company policies may result in discipline, suspension and even termination of employment.

## ***USE AND CARE OF FACILITIES***

In order to provide positive learning environments, employees have a responsibility to facilitate good site maintenance. Since our facilities are shared with churches, businesses and other communities, every effort should be made to effectively coordinate use. Courtesy and cooperation should always be uppermost in our employees' minds as they interact with others who use the facilities. Questions and concerns regarding facilities should be brought to the Principal's attention. Principals will provide their staff with site-specific information on the use of each of the rooms and on the procedures to be followed when communicating with other building tenants. Safety concerns, damages and thefts should always be promptly reported. Significant concerns and incidents should be reported immediately to the Executive Director. An incident report may be completed if a staff member feels that documentation of the incident would be helpful and/or if the investigation of the source of the problem seems indicated.

### **SCHEDULING OF BUILDING USE OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS**

Principals should be notified of any desired extra use of the building so that (1) permission can be requested and (2) the event can be scheduled at a time not in conflict with others using the facility. Principals will request use of the facility through appropriate building contact persons.

## ***PERSONAL USE OF SUPPLIES***

Be sensitive to the fact that personal use and consumption of Pathways supplies, such as paper, copiers, printers, food, stamps, office supplies, and other items, has a direct impact on the funds available for student programming. Arrangements may be made with the site supervisor if the need arises to use Pathways supplies for personal use.

## ***BUSINESS CARDS***

Standardized Pathways cards approved by the Executive Director will be used for business purposes. Principals and other designated staff will have individualized Pathways business cards. All sites will have site business cards which Pathways site employees may use to conduct Pathways business. Business cards must be ordered through the Administrative Office.

## ***RAISING CONCERNS***

It is the responsibility of each employee to bring concerns to the Supervisor. If a problem is identified, the situation should be presented to the Supervisor so the problem can be settled by investigation and discussion of the facts. The Supervisor will identify the problem, investigate the facts and deliver, in writing, recommendations for a resolution.

If questions or concerns still exist after meeting with the Supervisor or further clarification on the matter is needed, the concern should be submitted in writing to the Executive Director, who will review the issues and determine appropriate follow-up.

## ***WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY***

Pathways Schools requires directors, officers, and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are to establish policies and procedures for: The submission of concerns regarding questionable accounting or auditing matters by employees, directors, officers or any other interested party, on a confidential and anonymous basis; the receipt, retention, and treatment of complaints received regarding accounting or auditing matters; and the protection of reporters from retaliatory actions.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Pathways Schools has an open door policy and suggests that employees share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with their supervisor. If an employee is not comfortable speaking with the supervisor or is not satisfied with the supervisor's response, the employee is encouraged to speak with the Executive Director, or the Board President, if appropriate.

### **Handling of the Reported Concern**

The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that all complaints are investigated and resolved. After a report is made to a Supervisor or the Board President it will be immediately conveyed to the Executive Director. The Board President is not required to notify the Executive Director if the concern(s) directly involve(s) him/her. The Executive Director or Board President will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the concern within ten business days, if possible. It will not be possible to acknowledge receipt of anonymously submitted concerns.

All reports will be promptly investigated by the Supervisor, Executive Director, and/or Board President and appropriate corrective action will be taken, if warranted by the investigation. In addition, action taken must include a conclusion and/or follow-up with the complainant (unless anonymous) for complete closure of the concern. The investigation, corrective action, and conclusion shall be documented in a written summary and maintained indefinitely.

The Board of Directors has the authority to retain outside legal counsel, accountants, private investigators, or any other resource deemed necessary to conduct a full and complete investigation of the allegations.

### **Acting in Good Faith**

Anyone filing a written complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

### **Confidentiality**

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

### **No Retaliation**

This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable directors, employees and volunteers to raise concerns within our organization for investigation and appropriate action. With this goal in mind, no director, employee or volunteer who, in good faith, reports a concern shall be subject to retaliation or adverse employment action for making such report. Any person who so retaliates will be subject to corrective action, including termination. Likewise, an individual who reports a concern who is not acting in good faith, does not have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates an improper accounting or auditing practice, or who makes unsubstantiated allegations that prove to have been made maliciously, recklessly, or with the foreknowledge that the allegations are false, may be subject to corrective action, including termination.

## ***CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY***

This conflict of interest policy is designed to help directors and officers, of the school identify situations that present potential conflicts of interest. It is also designed to provide a procedure that, if observed, will allow a transaction to be treated as valid and binding even though a director, officer, or employee has or may have a conflict of interest with respect to the transaction. In the event there is an inconsistency between the requirements and procedures prescribed herein and those in federal or state law or contracts, then those laws, contracts and/or agreements shall control.

## “Conflict of Interest” Defined

For purposes of this policy, the following circumstances shall be deemed to create Conflicts of Interest:

### Outside Interests

- A Contract or Transaction between Pathways Schools and a Responsible Person or Family Member.
- A Contract or Transaction between Pathways School and an entity in which a Responsible Person or Family Member has a Material Financial Interest or of which such person is a director, officer, agent, partner, associate, director, personal representative, receiver, guardian, custodian, conservator, or other legal representative.

### Gifts, Gratuities and Entertainment

A Responsible Person accepting gifts, entertainment, or other favors from any individual or entity that:

- does or is seeking to do business with Pathways Schools;
- has received, is receiving, or is seeking to receive a loan or grant, or to secure other financial commitments from Pathways Schools; or
- under circumstances where it might be inferred that such action was intended to influence or possibly would influence the Responsible Person in the performance of his or her duties.

This does not preclude the acceptance of items of nominal or insignificant value or entertainment of nominal or insignificant value that are not related to any particular transaction or activity of the school.

## Definitions

*Responsible Person* is any person serving as a director or member of the board of directors of Pathways Schools.

*Family Member* is a spouse, domestic partner, parent, child of a Responsible Person, or spouse of a child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild of a Responsible Person.

*Material Financial Interest* in an entity is a financial interest of any kind that, in view of all the circumstances, is substantial enough that it would, or reasonably could, affect a Responsible Person’s or Family Member’s judgment with respect to transactions to which the entity is a party. This includes all forms of compensation.

*Contract or Transaction* is any agreement or relationship involving the sale or purchase of goods, services, or rights of any kind, the providing or receipt of a loan or grant, or the establishment of any other type of pecuniary relationship. The making of a gift to the school is not a Contract or Transaction.

## Procedures

- Before board or committee action on a Contract or Transaction involving a Conflict of Interest, a director, committee member, or officer having a Conflict of Interest and who is in attendance at the meeting shall disclose all facts material to the Conflict of Interest. Such disclosure shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.
- A director or committee member who plans not to attend a meeting at which he or she has reason to believe that the board or committee will act on a matter in which the person has a Conflict of Interest shall disclose to the chair of the meeting all facts material to the Conflict of Interest. The chair shall report the disclosure at the meeting and the disclosure shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.
- A person who has a Conflict of Interest shall not participate in or be permitted to hear the board’s or committee’s discussion of the matter except to disclose material facts and to respond to questions. Such person shall not attempt to exert his or her personal influence with respect to the matter, either at or outside the meeting.

- A director or committee member who has a Conflict of Interest with respect to a Contract or Transaction that will be voted on at a meeting shall not be counted in determining the presence of a quorum for purposes of the vote. The person having a conflict of interest may not vote on the Contract or Transaction and shall not be present in the meeting room when the vote is taken, unless the vote is by secret ballot. Such person's ineligibility to vote shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.
- Responsible Persons who are not members of the board of directors of Pathways School, or who have a Conflict of Interest with respect to a Contract or Transaction that is not the subject of board or committee action, shall disclose to their supervisor any Conflict of Interest that such Responsible Person has with respect to a Contract or Transaction. Such disclosure shall be made as soon as the Conflict of Interest is known to the Responsible Person. The Responsible Person shall refrain from any action that may affect Pathways School's participation in such Contract or Transaction. The employee's supervisor will discuss the conflict with the Executive Director. If the Executive Director deems a conflict to be significant, the Executive Director will report it to the Chair of the Board.
- In the event it is not entirely clear that a Conflict of Interest exists, the director, committee member or officer with the potential conflict shall disclose the circumstances to the Chair of the Board, who shall determine whether there exists a Conflict of Interest that is subject to this policy. Similarly, in the event it is not entirely clear that a Conflict of Interest exists, the employee with the potential conflict shall disclose the circumstances to the employee's supervisor, who shall determine whether there exists a Conflict of Interest that is subject to this policy.

### **Confidentiality**

Each Responsible Person shall exercise care not to disclose confidential information acquired in connection with such status or information the disclosure of which might be adverse to the interests of the school. Furthermore, a Responsible Person shall not disclose or use information relating to the business of the school for the personal profit or advantage of the Responsible Person or a Family Member.

### **Review of Policy**

- Each new Responsible Person shall be required to review a copy of this Policy and to acknowledge that he or she has done so.
- Each Responsible Person shall annually disclose any relationships, positions, or circumstances in which the Responsible Person is involved that he or she believes could contribute to a Conflict of Interest. Such relationships, positions, or circumstances might include ownership of a business that might provide goods or services to the school. Any such information regarding business interests of a Responsible Person or a Family Member shall be treated as confidential and shall generally be made available only to the Chair of the Board, the Executive Director, and any committee appointed to address Conflicts of Interest, except to the extent additional disclosure is necessary in connection with the implementation of this Policy.

Any changes to the policy shall be communicated immediately to all Responsible Persons.

## ***PUBLIC RELATIONS***

It is through the positive image promoted by staff that Pathways has developed such a good reputation in the community. Each employee is encouraged to be sensitive to the importance of providing courteous treatment in all working relationships and continuing to promote the success of Pathways to benefit the students and programs.

## ***MEDIA RELATIONS***

**Any inquiry from the media should be referred to the Executive Director.** Student and employee privacy rights are legally protected. The only information we are allowed to give is about the nature of our programs and the population we serve. We are not to reveal the names of any students currently or previously enrolled; we also cannot confirm that information.

## ***COPYRIGHT NOTICE***

The contents of all printed and/or electronic materials originally created or produced by The Pathways Schools and/or their employees within the scope of employment (collectively, “Pathways”) pertaining to any and all activities in which Pathways is engaged, including but not limited to educational, instructional, clinical, and student management activities as well as business and administrative activities, are the intellectual property of Pathways and are copyrighted by Pathways unless otherwise indicated. (Copyright is not claimed as to any part of an original work prepared by a US or state government officer or government employee as part of that person's official duties.) All rights are reserved by Pathways, and content may not be reproduced, downloaded, disseminated, published, or transferred in any form or by any means, except with the prior written permission of Pathways, or as indicated below. Only authorized employees, contractors and other agents of Pathways may use or copy such content for their own use, consistent with the mission and purpose of Pathways. No part of such content may be otherwise or subsequently reproduced, downloaded, disseminated, published, or transferred, in any form or by any means, except with the prior written permission of and with express attribution to Pathways. Copyright infringement is a violation of federal law subject to criminal and civil penalties, and Pathways will enforce its rights against any such violation by any individual or entity.

## **SECTION 8 - SAFETY AND WELLNESS**

### **WORKPLACE SAFETY**

Safety can only be achieved through teamwork at The Pathways Schools. Each employee must practice safety awareness by thinking defensively, anticipating unsafe situations and reporting unsafe conditions immediately.

It is EACH EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITY to observe the following precautions:

1. Notify the site Supervisor of any emergency situation. If an employee is injured or becomes sick at work, no matter how slightly, the site Supervisor must be informed immediately.
2. Use, adjust and repair machines and equipment only if trained and qualified.
3. Get help when lifting or pushing heavy objects.
4. Understand job tasks fully and follow instructions. If you are not sure of the safety procedure, don't guess; ask the site Supervisor.
5. Know the locations, contents and use of first aid and firefighting equipment.
6. Be familiar with school emergency evacuation procedures and off-site gathering locations.

A violation of a safety precaution is in itself an unsafe act. A violation may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

### **NON-HARASSMENT**

It is our policy to prohibit harassment based on an individual's Title VII protected status of anyone attending, volunteering, or employed by The Pathways Schools. Protected statuses include, but are not limited to, gender, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, national origin, physical or mental disability, pregnancy and/or age.

The purpose of this policy is not to regulate our students' or employees' personal morality. Rather, it is to assure that, in the workplace, no student or employee harasses another on any of these bases.

While it is not easy to define precisely what harassment is, it certainly includes slurs, epithets, threats, derogatory comments, unwelcome jokes and teasing.

Any student or employee who feels that s/he is a victim of such harassment should immediately report the matter to his/her Supervisor. All reports are communicated to the Executive Director. Our school will investigate all such reports as confidentially as possible. Pathways will take no adverse action against a student or employee solely because h/she reports a violation of this policy. Violation of the non-harassment policy will not be permitted and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

It is our firm policy to prohibit sexual harassment of any employee by another employee, student or a Supervisor. The purpose of this policy is not to regulate the morality of employees. Rather, it is to assure that in the workplace, no employee is subject to sexual harassment. While it is not easy to define precisely what sexual harassment is, it certainly includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and/or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature including, but not limited to, drawings, internet sites, pictures, jokes, teasing, uninvited touching or other sexually related comments.

Sexual harassment of an employee will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. For students who violate this policy, disciplinary action initiated by Pathways will result in action consistent with both individual LSS disciplinary and due process guidelines and The Pathways Schools Student Policies and Procedures. Pathways will take no adverse action against an employee solely because (s)he reports a violation of this policy or participates in the investigation of such violations.

Any employee who feels that (s)he is a victim of sexual harassment should immediately report such actions in accordance with the following procedures. All complaints will be promptly and thoroughly investigated.

1. Any employee who believes that (s)he is a victim of sexual harassment should report the act immediately to his/her Supervisor or the Executive Director. Reports made to the Supervisor will be shared with the Executive Director, who is the Title IX Coordinator.
2. The school will investigate every reported incident immediately. Any employee, Supervisor or agent of the school who has been found to have sexually harassed another employee or student may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. In the case of a student, disciplinary action will be consistent with individual LSS's codes of student conduct, student due process guidelines and The Pathways Schools Student Policies and Procedures.
3. The school will conduct all investigations in a discreet manner. The school recognizes that every investigation requires a determination based on all the facts in the matter. We also recognize the serious impact a false accusation can have. We trust that all employees will continue to act responsibly.
4. The reporting employee and any employee participating in any investigation under this policy have the school's assurance that no reprisals will be taken as a result of a sexual harassment complaint. Rather, it is our policy to encourage discussion of the matter so as to help protect others from being subjected to similar inappropriate behavior. In cases where our students are involved, discussion of the matter will be in accordance with existing Pathways' guidelines regarding student and family confidentiality.
5. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (10 South Howard St, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Baltimore, MD 21201) and the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (6 Saint Paul Street, Suite 900, Baltimore, MD 21202) investigate and prosecute complaints of prohibited harassment in employment. If an employee believes he or she has been harassed or discriminated against or has been retaliated against for resisting or complaining, a complaint may be filed with the appropriate agency in addition to exhausting the above complaint procedure. The contact information for these agencies is available online.

## ***SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS***

It is the responsibility of staff members who have students assigned to them, to provide appropriate supervision at all times during school hours and school-sponsored activities to assure everyone's safety and welfare. The supervision of students must allow for immediate feedback and guidance and must not be only line of sight supervision. Sufficient staff supervision of students should be planned for school activities, on- and off-site. Off-site activities must be approved in advance by the Principal/designee.

Each staff member is responsible for adhering to procedures at each school regarding students leaving the staff member's current area, such as, but not limited to: following the student, providing hall passes, alerting other staff when a student (e.g., via walkie talkie) is going to a different location (e.g., classroom, restroom, principal's office) with or without permission, and/or giving clear expectations for students using the restroom in a public location.

## ***MAINTAINING A THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY***

We are a therapeutic community. Although staff members have distinct roles and have varying responsibilities, all are hired to contribute to the growth of the whole student. A student's primary therapist, as well as other staff, needs to receive relevant information from students, their families, staff members, and other significant persons. Communication among all staff is, therefore, essential, to:

- Facilitate the development and implementation of an intentional plan toward pursuing common goals for individual students and their families.
- Develop and maintain healthy patterns of interaction.
- Provide stronger support for students and their families.
- Promote proactive and preventative therapeutic interventions.
- Address the complexity of our student population.

Confidential information will not be shared with volunteers except on an as-needed basis determined by the site Supervisor.

## ***SETTING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES***

As professionals working with students with emotional disabilities, it is essential to create and maintain appropriate boundaries that foster respect for the students and staff, and do not impede or distract students from their goals. It is important to understand that the students' emotional disabilities make them particularly vulnerable to emotional harm as a result of poor boundaries with adults. The following are intended to serve as guidelines for setting professional boundaries:

- Maintain a clear sense of the overall purpose of the relationship and professional role.
- A discussion should be held with the site supervisor before making any plans or arrangements to meet any student(s) or to have contact with any student(s) outside of school hours or off school grounds.
- Protect personal or private matters without being rude or secretive. Learn to distinguish the type of personal information to share with students that is helpful.
- Prevent using the relationship to meet personal needs. Be aware of anything that appears or feels unprofessional.
- Seek guidance of the site supervisor to help obtain clarity regarding boundary issues.

Examples of interactions which may cause concern include, but are not limited to, employees: socializing or communicating with students as if they are peers in writing or in person; calling or texting students' cell phones regarding non-school related matters; giving gifts to some students; sending pictures to students; bullying; or engaging in sexualized dialogue.

**Inform a supervisor of any concerns there may be about inappropriate boundaries between a student and an adult working with him/her.**

## **REPORTING CHILD NEGLECT/ABUSE**

Pathways adheres to State Law that requires staff members, having reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected, to report this suspicion as soon as possible to the principal or designee and to the local Department of Social Services or appropriate law enforcement agency.

**Any professional who knowingly fails to make a required report of child abuse or neglect may be subjected to certain professional sanctions. The professionals identified in Maryland law include: school employees, health practitioners, police officers, and human service workers.**

The law protects confidentiality for anyone reporting child abuse or neglect in good faith, unless required to do so for legal proceedings, criminal investigations, or child protective services investigations.

### **Medical Attention**

The Administrator or Executive Director shall arrange immediate transportation to the nearest hospital if it is determined that emergency medical treatment is needed; otherwise, Protective Services or the police will arrange medical care.

### **Definitions (extracted from State Law)**

*Child* means any individual under the age of 18 years.

*Abuse* means: (1) the physical or mental injury of a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed; or (2) sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not.

*Sexual Abuse* means: any act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation of a child by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member. Sexual abuse includes: incest, rape, or sexual offense in any degree; sodomy; and unnatural or perverted sexual practices.

*Neglect* means: intentional failure to provide necessary assistance and resources for the physical needs or mental health of a child that creates a substantial risk: (1) to the child's physical health or; (2) of mental injury to the child. Neglect does not include the failure to provide necessary assistance and resources for the child when the failure is due solely to a lack of financial resources or homelessness.

*Mental Injury* means: the observable, identifiable, and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function.

*Family member* means: a relative by blood, adoption, or marriage of a child.

*Household member* means: a person who lives with, or is a regular person in, a home of a child at the time of the alleged abuse or neglect.

## **SECURITY**

The following is a brief overview of the security policy observed at The Pathways Schools. **OFFICES:** Because valuables and confidential records are kept in the main offices, care should be taken that they be locked when unattended.

### **OUTSIDE DOORS:**

Rules should be followed in accordance with the wishes of the property owners for locking outside doors. At sites with security systems, employees are responsible for learning and maintaining appropriate security procedures. A general rule is that whichever staff is the last to leave should take responsibility to make sure that all doors are locked.

### **KEYS:**

Keys, including key fobs at some sites, are issued to employees at the beginning of the school year and collected at the end of the school year or at time of termination. The employee is responsible for securing the keys to prevent theft or loss. The Administrative Assistant or designee keeps a log of all keys issued. Lost or stolen keys should be promptly reported to the Principal/Supervisor.

### **VALUABLES:**

Each staff member is responsible for the security of his or her valuables. It is strongly recommended that these be locked in a file drawer in the classroom or office. **Pathways is not responsible for loss, damage, or theft of personal belongings.**

### **VISITORS ON PREMISES:**

All school visitors should be asked to report to the office. The presence of any persons unwilling to identify themselves or demonstrating any suspect behavior should be immediately reported to the office and/or site administrator. If there is a concern of immediate safety, the police may be called. The relevant guideline is as follows: awareness of strangers on the school's premises should not be ignored but investigated with caution and not overreaction.

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUGS**

No employee shall work, report to work or be on school premises, in school vehicles or engage in school activities while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or controlled substances which may affect job performance.

The unlawful or unauthorized manufacturing, distribution, possession, sale or use of alcohol, marijuana, or controlled substances on school premises, in vehicles or while engaged in school activities are also strictly prohibited. Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

The school further reserves the right to take any appropriate and lawful actions necessary to enforce this policy including, but not limited to, the inspection of the employee's personal property and vehicles used for work purposes, in certain circumstances, as well as school-issued lockers, desks or other suspected areas of concealment. Full compliance with this alcohol and drug policy is a condition of employment and continued employment.

Consistent with our fair employment policy, the school maintains a policy of non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation with respect to recovering addicts or alcoholics, those who are perceived as having a dependency and those having a medical history reflecting treatment for this condition.

## **REPORTING EMPLOYEE ACCIDENTS OR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

Whether or not injury is evident, all accidents involving staff should be reported immediately to the site Supervisor and an *Employee Injury Report* should be completed, if appropriate. Supervisor will report the accident to the Human Resources representative who will give directions for providing information for Worker's Compensation and will make a report to the insurance carrier.

## **SMOKING IN THE WORKPLACE**

Our school is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for students, employees and visitors. Therefore, smoking is not permitted inside the school, on school grounds or during school-sponsored activities. Smoking includes the use or possession of any lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, other tobacco products of any kind, or vaping devices.

## **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

In October 1986, the U.S. Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private elementary and secondary schools. These regulations require most schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings and implement response actions in a timely manner. These regulations assign schools many new responsibilities. Our program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in our asbestos management plan. This plan contains information on our inspection, re-inspection, response actions and post-response action activities, including periodic surveillance activities that are planned or are in progress. Contact the Facilities Manager at the Administrative Office to review this plan.

## **TESTING FOR LEAD IN DRINKING WATER**

In April 2018, Maryland regulations, Lead in Drinking Water – Public and Nonpublic Schools, became effective. Under the law, all school must test for the presence of lead in all drinking water outlets every three years. Contact the Facilities Manager at the Administrative Office for additional information.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL**

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish procedures for preventing and controlling the spread of diseases in school.

### DEFINITIONS

*Blood and body fluids* are body components that are to be considered potentially infectious for communicable diseases. Blood and body fluids include amniotic fluids, feces, blood, blood products, breast milk, cerebrospinal fluid, nasal secretions, peritoneal fluid, pleural fluid, purulent drainage, saliva, semen, synovial fluid, tears, urine, vaginal secretions, vomit, and wound drainage.

*Bloodborne pathogens* are microscopic organisms that are present in human blood or body fluids and can cause disease in humans.

*Exposure* is contact with an infectious person, environment, or contaminated item or surface that may be capable of disease transmission.

*Immunity* is the state of resistance to a communicable disease by a person due to natural body defenses or by defenses acquired through exposure to disease or vaccination.

*Standard precautions* are guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce the risk of transmission of bloodborne and other pathogens. They apply to blood, all body fluids, secretions, excretions (regardless of whether they contain blood), non-intact skin, and mucous membranes. The precautions are designed to reduce transmission of microorganisms from both recognized and unrecognized sources of infection.

*Communicable disease* is a contagious or infectious disease that may be spread from person to person, or animal to person, or through other means, including inanimate objects.

## BACKGROUND

- Methods used to control the spread of communicable diseases in the school setting have limitations. Many diseases have periods of communicability that precede the onset of identifiable symptoms or are without symptoms throughout the entire contagious period. Consequently, efforts to prevent or control the spread of communicable diseases must continue on an ongoing basis.
- Exposures to blood and body fluids from all individuals are to be considered as potentially infectious for blood-borne pathogens. Universal precautions are to be used to minimize the possibility of transmission of infections from blood and body fluids. These precautions include proper hand washing and the use of personal protective equipment such as gloves and/or protective barriers for performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, as well as the proper disposal of bloodborne pathogen waste material.
- The State of Maryland requires students to show proof of immunization against certain infectious diseases; depending on the students' age and grade. To maintain effective immunity against certain diseases, booster doses may be necessary at intervals throughout life as recommended by a physician. Both education and health services staff should actively and continuously educate the students, parents, and community about the importance of such immunizations as an essential part of disease prevention and wellness.

## PROCEDURES

- The single most important technique for preventing the spread of disease is proper hand washing. Students and school staff will be encouraged to practice proper hand washing using soap and water, or if necessary alcohol-based hand cleansers can be used.
- Annual bloodborne pathogen training is conducted so that staff can implement measures to protect themselves from potential disease-causing microscopic organisms, use universal precautions, and clean up blood spills properly.
- When a student is suspected of having a communicable disease, steps will be taken in accordance with guidelines of the Maryland Department of Health Infectious Disease Bureau.
- Pathways administrators will consult with the local health departments and Maryland Department of Health as needed. Principal will be advised regarding needed follow-up, such as verbal and/or written communication to school staff, the parent community, and/or students, and provide information to staff about specific control measures, as needed.
- Staff will actively and continuously educate the students and parents/guardians about the importance of immunizations as an essential part of disease prevention and wellness. They will work cooperatively to assure that all students are immunized according to the State of Maryland's *Vaccine Requirements for Children Enrolled in Preschool Programs and Schools*.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE

Although disclosure of a student having a communicable disease to school personnel is not mandatory, parents and students are encouraged to do so in order to ensure appropriate school programming. It is recommended that disclosure is done in consultation with the student's medical care provider.

All persons involved with supervising a student with a communicable disease in any Pathways setting shall respect that person's right to privacy and treat the student with compassion and respect. The number of personnel who are made aware of the student's condition will be kept to the minimum necessary to ensure successful school programming for the student. The student's health records will be kept in locked files with access limited to designated persons. Health status of students, family members, or other significantly involved individuals with a communicable disease should not be included in written reports, unless deemed to be directly relevant to the student's educational placement or programming.

## SECTION 9 - DRIVING FOR WORK

### ***DRIVING FOR PATHWAYS PURPOSES***

The purpose of this policy is to promote the safety of students and employees using personal vehicles for The Pathways Schools purposes. All staff driving a vehicle for The Pathways Schools shall maintain a valid driver's license and must operate the vehicle in a safe manner at all times, and if driving a personal vehicle shall have appropriate insurance coverage.

Upon hiring and at the start of each school year, every staff member or intern who may be driving any vehicle on Pathways business will be asked to disclose any history of moving violations and sign a statement that he or she possesses a valid local license and agrees to a driving record check by Pathways with the jurisdictions in which the staff member resides or works. The Executive Director will review the records to determine eligibility for driving students for Pathways.

In general, the Executive Director will follow these guidelines for determining eligibility.

A staff member may **NOT BE CONSIDERED ELIGIBLE TO** drive for Pathways if he or she:

- Has more than one moving violation in the past year;
- Has more than two moving violations in the past 5 years;
- Has had any driving accident or incident in the past 5 years, which, in the judgment of the Executive Director, raises questions about the safety record of the driver; or
- Is under 21 years of age.

The following are standards for driving for Pathways:

- Only authorized employees may transport students in Pathways or personal vehicles.
- To qualify to transport students in a personal vehicle, the employee must have an acceptable driving record based on Pathways' insurance carrier's guidelines and submit documentation of a current insurance policy. Driving records must remain within the insurance carrier's guidelines for continued employment or assignment in positions with driving duties. Employees who do not maintain acceptable records will not be allowed to transport students and may be disqualified for an assigned position.
- All employees driving for Pathways must maintain a valid driver's license and insurance on all personally owned vehicles they drive for Pathways. Any change in the status of their driver's license or insurance must be reported to the HR Administrator prior to driving for Pathways.
- Employees driving for Pathways may have their driving records checked at any time at the Executive Director's discretion.
- The personal vehicle used to transport students must be properly maintained, in good working condition, and clear of any items that may be deemed inappropriate or dangerous for a student.
- The driver and all passengers must wear seat belts at all times. No vehicle should be operated when the number of occupants exceeds the number of passenger restraints available.
- The driver must use hand's free equipment when necessary to talk on a cell phone when driving. In no event shall the driver text message or operate any other electronic equipment while driving the vehicle. It is always preferred that the driver park in a safe location to use a cell phone.
- Consistent with Pathways "Smoking in the Workplace" policy, there shall be no smoking in personal vehicles while transporting students.
- Transportation of students and for other Pathways' purposes should be documented on the Paycor mileage reimbursement log, Van Use Log, and/or site specific forms.

## **PATHWAYS VAN/TRUCK USAGE**

### VAN SCHEDULING:

All reservations for van use should be made through the Van Coordinator at the Administrative Office. They should be made at least one week prior to date requested, whenever possible. Concerns with scheduling will be handled by the Van Coordinator and/or Executive Director/designee. The Van Coordinator will monitor a master calendar documenting all reservations.

### VAN LOG RECORDING:

The driver is responsible for completing the "Van Use Log", which is to be picked up when signing out a van. Information contained on the form must be specific.

### CONDITIONS OF USAGE:

*Staff members who utilize a Pathways vehicle should make every effort to ensure students are properly supervised to avoid vandalism to the vehicle.* The Van Coordinator will be responsible for coordination and oversight of van usage.

### GAS PURCHASES AND DAILY MAINTENANCE:

Pathways has credit cards for gas purchases. Credit card charges will be checked against the van log. Gas should be charged to these cards to the extent possible. **Initial and turn in credit card receipts with van keys.** When the van is returned after a trip, the driver should make every effort to make sure it still has at least a half-full tank and that **the van is free of all trash, debris, and personal belongings.** If a driver needs to leave a van with less than one-half tank full of fuel, he/she is responsible to inform the Van Coordinator or Principal.

### MAINTENANCE:

The Facilities Manager will be responsible for maintenance at least once every three months or as needed. The Facilities Manager will also monitor and schedule interior and exterior cleaning, as needed.

### DRIVER RESTRICTIONS:

Only staff members who have met the Board's Driving Policy standards, as determined by the Executive Director, will be eligible to drive the vans.

### VAN ACCIDENTS:

If involved in an accident while driving a Pathways van, the employee must fill out the *Vehicle Accident Report, Student Accident* and/or *Employee Injury* forms as appropriate, and report Worker's Comp information to the Human Resources representative who will make the report to the insurance carrier. All accidents should be reported to the immediate Supervisor and Executive Director/designee as soon as possible.

### VAN RENTALS:

The Executive Director or designee must approve all van rentals for Pathways activities in advance. Insurance will be covered by Pathways and should not be purchased with the rental company.

## **AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY**

Automobile liability coverage is provided on behalf of Pathways Schools for all vehicles owned and/or leased by the organization. Non-owned and hired automobile liability coverage is provided to protect the organization from claims brought forth as a result of any vehicle not owned by the organization (such as vehicles used in the course of business owned by employees).

***For employees using their own vehicles, in the event of an accident, they must rely on their own insurance policy to be primary. IT IS THE EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO VERIFY THAT THE INSURANCE CARRIER COVERS DRIVING AND/OR TRANSPORTING STUDENTS FOR WORK PURPOSES.*** In the event of liability claims, Pathways has excess liability coverage which is only applicable when the liability limits of the employee's coverage have been exhausted.

The physical damage to the employee's vehicle would always be covered by the employee's personal insurance policy.

## **AUTO ACCIDENTS**

All automobile accidents occurring while on Pathways business must be reported to the immediate Supervisor and Executive Director/designee as soon as possible.

If involved in an accident while driving his or her own vehicle, the staff member must report Workers' Compensation information to the Human Resources representative whether or not injury is evident. The Human Resources representative will make a report to the Pathways insurance carrier.

If involved in an accident while driving a Pathways vehicle, the staff member must fill out the *Vehicle Accident Report* form, a *Student Accident* and/or *Employee Injury Report* as appropriate, and report Worker's Comp information to the Human Resources representative. The Human Resources representative will determine the need to make a report to the appropriate Pathways insurance carrier.

## **TRAFFIC AND PARKING VIOLATIONS**

Drivers are responsible for all fines incurred due to traffic and parking violations while driving for Pathways business (e.g., violation tickets, red light camera violations, speed camera violations, EZ Pass violations). Notify the Van Coordinator or Supervisor as soon as possible about any parking or traffic violations while driving a Pathways vehicle. In the event Pathways receives notification of a violation of a Pathways vehicle captured on camera, the driver who had signed out the Pathways vehicle for use will be held responsible for the payment. Violations may affect an employee's eligibility for driving students.

## **PARKING**

Free parking facilities are available to employees. Employees should be aware of and adhere to parking procedures at each site. Each employee is required to park within the designated areas. The school is not responsible for loss, damage or theft of a vehicle. Therefore, we suggest that everyone locks their car doors and secures belongings within the car.

## **REIMBURSEMENT FOR MILEAGE EXPENSES**

The mileage rate is determined at the start of each school year and is subject to change at the discretion of the Executive Director. Prior to incurring mileage charges that will be submitted to Pathways for reimbursement, school-site staff must receive approval from their Principal or designee and Administrative Office staff must have approval from either the Executive Director or designee.

Transportation in personal vehicles eligible for mileage reimbursement:

- Staff members who take students from and/or to the students' homes may submit for reimbursement of the miles exceeding the staff members' commuting distance between home and the employee's assigned site.
- Transportation provided for a student between school and other locations for approved school-related activities.
- Driving to perform tasks for work-purposes, such as purchasing supplies for school.

Transportation in personal vehicles NOT eligible for mileage reimbursement:

- Transportation to a Pathways-sponsored professional development activity (e.g., PDM's)
- Transportation between Pathways' sites without prior approval.

More detailed guidelines about mileage that is eligible for reimbursement are available. They are particularly more detailed for providing guidance for the Community-based programs. On an individual basis, the Executive Director may approve reimbursement for mileage driven for Pathways purposes beyond the typical expectations (e.g., working at multiple sites within a work day, delivering documents to another location).

Requests for mileage reimbursement should be submitted on at least a monthly basis, on the "Mileage Reimbursement" through the online Pay Expense management system based on the Supervisor's direction and must go through the approval process.

Generally, employees are reimbursed within 10 working days or less from the time their expenses are received by the Bookkeeper. **Therefore, we request that inquiries about expense checks not be made prior to 10 working days.** If an inquiry does need to be made, it should only be done by an Administrative Assistant or Principal.

It is the employee's responsibility to keep good tax records and to get outside tax advice to determine whether unreimbursed mileage expenses may be deducted for income tax purposes.

## SECTION 10 - STUDENT POLICIES AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

### **ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES**

The following Administrative Practices and Procedural Guidelines are updated annually and provided in The Pathways Schools Parent/Student Handbook:

- school hours
- emergency closings, delays, and early dismissals
- student attendance
- transportation guidelines
- academic guidelines
- family participation
- Maryland's Safe to Learn Act of 2018
- bullying, harassment and intimidation
- state and local school system monitoring
- procedural safeguards, parental rights, and complaint process
- least restrictive environment
- procedures for requesting inspection and review of a student's record
- acceptable use policy for students using computers and other electronic devices
- interns
- maintaining confidentiality
- student accident insurance
- asbestos management plan
- water testing plan
- requesting reconsideration of instructional materials
- rights of appeal and/or review
- reporting child neglect/abuse
- response to suicidal gestures or threats
- guidelines for communicable disease control

### **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

The following Behavior Management Practices are updated annually and provided in The Pathways Schools Parent/Student Handbook:

- positive behavior interventions and restorative practices
- documentation of physical interventions
- functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) and behavior intervention plans (BIPs)
- policies and procedures for prevention of self-injurious behaviors
- identifying and defusing potentially dangerous behaviors
- behaviors with discretionary and mandatory consequences
- techniques and disciplinary actions for managing inappropriate behaviors
- search and seizure
- behavior management data review
- professional development
- parent and student training

Employees are expected to review the Parent/Student Handbook and uphold, implement and adhere to the guidelines and policies presented.

## **POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT TRAINING**

Pathways bases its disciplinary philosophy on the use of positive behavioral supports We seek to create a safe environment that promotes respect and pro-social behavior and provides students with the support they need to manage their own behaviors so that inappropriate and destructive behavior can be minimized. Positive behavioral supports should be used as a prevention that decreases or prevents the need for a more restrictive behavioral management intervention.

The following practices are prohibited in all programs under any circumstances:

- Physical restraints;
- Corporal punishment;
- The use of aversive stimuli;
- Interventions that involve withholding nutrition or hydration, or that inflict physical or psychological pain;
- The use of demeaning, shaming or degrading language or activities;
- Forced physical exercise to eliminate behaviors;
- Punishment by peers;
- Group punishment or discipline for individual behavior;
- Deprivation of basic needs, health care, mental health services, drink, food, and
- Use of seclusion or secured time-out rooms.

Training, in regard to providing a restraint-free environment, was initiated across all Pathways' schools during the 18-19 school year. All staff that may come into contact with students will be expected to participate in competency-based training appropriate to their responsibilities using approved curriculum. The curriculum includes information on Pathways behavior support and management intervention procedures and practices including: how to promote and support positive behavior; staff role in influencing the behavior of students; limitations on the use of physical techniques; prohibited practices; communication techniques; encouraging self-calming behaviors; separation of individuals involved in an altercation; offering a brief escort to a safe location; time out to allow the person to calm down; and other non-restrictive ways of deescalating and reducing episodes of aggressive and out of control behavior.

Senior management conducts quarterly reviews of the use of behavior support and management interventions. Reviews will include effective practice, need for change, policy revisions as needed, additional resources needed and support efforts to minimize risk.

## **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

An incident is any alleged, suspected, or actual event or occurrence involving a Pathways student, employee, contractor, subcontractor, or volunteer that adversely affects or compromises the integrity of Pathways' programs or which threatens the health or safety of an individual. All incidents are to be identified, reported, assessed, and monitored by designated staff, regardless of severity of harm sustained.

- The staff who witnesses or becomes aware of an incident must verbally report it immediately or as soon as it is safely possible to do so, to the immediate supervisor or designee at the time.
- After making a verbal report of the incident, the staff must complete a written/typed report on the appropriate form prior to leaving work and forward it to the supervisor, unless other arrangements are made for immediate completion the following day.

- The supervisor receiving a report must:
  - Ensure the information is promptly reported verbally to the Executive Director or designee before the end of the day;
  - Determine if any further action is needed;
  - Make family and LSS notifications (if appropriate) immediately or as soon as possible; and
  - Complete and forward the reports to the Executive Director or designee.
- The Executive Director must:
  - Make appropriate notifications following pre-established procedures and practices and State of Maryland law;
  - Ensure that any employee or individual receiving services who reports an incident in good faith will not be subjected to retaliatory action by Pathways, any employee of the organization, or any person affiliated with Pathways; and
  - Determine if any further action is needed.

### ***SERIOUS INCIDENTS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS AND IN COMMUNITY SETTINGS***

The Pathways Schools considers the following to be examples of serious incidents if they occur during the school day or school-related activities:

- Incidents on the bus or in a vehicle posing a danger;
- Possession or use of weapons;
- Possession or distribution of illegal substances;
- Physical contact, physical aggression, sexual contact, or sexual assault;
- Theft; or
- Criminal offenses

**The Principal and Executive Director or designees must be informed of serious incidents as they happen in the school or in the community.** The Administrator(s) will assure the appropriateness of the interventions as they are transpiring and the necessary actions for follow-up. At the time of the incident, this may include immediate involvement of parents/guardians, other community agency representatives.

Staff members dealing with a serious incident in a community setting are expected to communicate with appropriate community members that they represent Pathways and that they are involved in a school activity with the student. Every effort should be made by Pathways employees to cooperate with any others involved or impacted by the serious situation (e.g., store personnel or management, security officers, members of the public, etc.).

Follow-up may include consequences for the incidents, participation in manifestation hearings and return conferences regarding the serious incident.

Principals should also contact the LSS (Local School System) by phone or email regarding the incident. The Executive Director will review the documentation. If a manifestation hearing is required, the Principal, LSS representatives, student, parent and other involved agencies or professionals will be invited to participate.

**If student and/or staff are in imminent danger, CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY.**

**All incidents above may require police involvement. If there is NOT imminent danger, call the Executive Director or designee to assess the situation.**

## **BUS INCIDENTS**

There are specific procedures to follow if there are serious incidents on a bus.

- All Principals work directly together with the bus drivers to address serious or ongoing bus incidents.
- Each bus incident is documented by the bus driver and/or aide.
- If more than one site is involved in the bus incident, the Executive Director is called.
- If it is necessary to involve the supervisor of the Transportation Office or the Director of Nonpublic Special Education, the Pathways Executive Director will make the contact.

## **POSSESSION OF WEAPON OR ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES**

Student, family, employee and community safety should be the primary concern when an employee receives information that indicates a student or employee possibly possesses a weapon or illegal substance. Employees should inform a supervisor immediately. In the event the employee's immediate supervisor is not available, the employee should immediately inform the Executive Director or designee as available.

Any school administrator or designee may search a student, his/her possessions on the school premises, or any part of the physical plant of the school **if there is a reasonable suspicion that there are items, such as drugs or weapons, which constitute a criminal offense under the laws of the state of Maryland or a violation of a school rule.** Any search must be made in the presence of a third party who is of majority age. Depending on the situation, reasonable suspicion of the possession of a weapon or illegal substances may require the search of one or more students. These searches can only be conducted at the direction of the Principal or designee. Administrative designees will immediately contact and follow the guidance of the Executive Director.

**POLICE SHOULD BE CONTACTED TO CONDUCT A SEARCH IF THERE IS ANY REASONABLE DOUBT REGARDING STAFF OR STUDENT SAFETY.**

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT OR AGGRESSION, SEXUAL CONTACT OR ASSAULT**

Each site has different behavioral management procedures regarding physical contact. Employees should enforce site consequences under the direction of the Principal or his/her designee. **In all cases of serious physical aggression, and all cases of sexual contact or sexual assault, the Executive Director or designee should be contacted.** In consultation with one of these administrators, decisions will be made regarding the order and timing of contact with police, parents/guardians, medical/therapeutic support persons, and LSS.

## **THEFT**

Thefts are reported to the Executive Director or designee. Depending upon the circumstances of the theft, students may be searched and/or police may be involved. If the allegations of the theft warrant further action parents will be informed. If notified that a student is involved in a theft during a field trip or off-site activity, staff should cooperate with the reporting entity and the police, if called. The staff member will contact the principal or designee immediately, who will coordinate with the Executive Director/designee to determine appropriate measures.

# EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Although every possible emergency cannot be anticipated, an attempt has been made to standardize emergency procedures and response as much as possible. Specific emergencies that might affect The Pathways Schools include the following: bomb threats, fire, suicide threats, accident or serious injury. Placing or having a bomb, explosive device or look-alike object; threatening to use a bomb; fire setting; or causing a false alarm are acts covered under Maryland State Law. Any student violating the laws governing such acts will be subject to disciplinary action.

## CODE RED AND CODE BLUE PROCEDURES

Following are the procedures to be followed at each school when a Code Red or Code Blue drill is announced. These plans would be activated in case of an emergency either within the school or the community.

<b>THE PATHWAYS SCHOOLS</b>	
Program: _____ Address: _____	
<p><b><u>CODE RED</u></b>            This is a term used to describe an emergency/ crisis at school. Code Red alerts staff that imminent danger exists inside or outside the building, and requires moving to an immediate lockdown mode. It requires all students to be accounted for and under supervision. It requires all students and staff to be accounted for. The on-site emergency team (OSET) is <b>NOT</b> activated during a Code Red.</p> <p><b>Persons authorized to call a Code Red</b>            School administrators or their designee will notify staff and students when the Code Red is in effect. It is recommended that an "age-appropriate" announcement of a Code Red include a brief description of the nature and location of the incident. Directions should be given to move to a lockdown mode.</p> <p><b>Lockdown</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Secure all interior doors to enhance security when safe to do so.</li> <li>▪ Exterior and stairwell doors are secured <b>ONLY</b> when deemed safe to do so.</li> </ul> <p><b>Code Red Staff Guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>When the administrator announces a Code Red, scan the immediate area outside the classroom for any students and staff. Allow them in the classroom, and immediately lock the classroom door (lockdown).</i></li> <li>▪ <i>If a Code Red is announced and there is no key available to lock the classroom door, safely move students to the nearest location that can be secured or locked.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>If staff and students are outside the classroom when a Code Red is called, safely move students to the nearest location that can be secured and locked.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>If moving to the nearest securable classroom/area is not feasible, make the room look "unoccupied" by closing the door, turning off the lights, closing/covering the windows and blinds, moving away from the doors and windows, and remaining silent.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>When students are in a secured location, turn off the lights, close/cover windows and blinds, and move away from the doors and windows. Remain calm and quiet.</i></li> <li>▪ Staff must document attendance and report any discrepancies to an administrator/designee when it is safe to do so.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Sweep/Scan</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In certain circumstances, staff volunteers may be asked to sweep/scan the facility or grounds for any suspicious items.</li> <li>▪ A sweep/scan should be conducted in teams and only by visual means (eyes and ears only).</li> <li>▪ If a suspicious item is discovered during a sweep/scan, evacuate to a 300-foot zone and notify administrator immediately.</li> <li>▪ If a suspicious item is located, do not use a radio or cell phone in the immediate area within 25 feet in all directions.</li> <li>▪ No suspicious item should be handled in any manner by school staff (do not touch it!)</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>CODE BLUE</u></b>            This is a term used to alert staff that an emergency/ crisis exists at or near school. It requires all students to be accounted for and under supervision. Administrators may activate the OSET and set up a command post when appropriate.</p> <p><b>Persons authorized to call a Code Blue</b>            Administrators or their designee will notify staff and students when a Code Blue is in effect. It is recommended that an "age-appropriate" announcement of a Code Blue include a brief description of the nature and location of the incident.</p> <p><b>Code Blue Staff Guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>When the administrator announces a Code Blue, all students should be accounted for in an instructional area. Wait for further instructions. Classroom instruction may continue.</i></li> <li>▪ Staff must document attendance and report any discrepancies to an administrator/designee when it is safe to do so.</li> <li>▪ <i>During a Code Blue, classroom lockdown is <b>NOT</b> required.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The OSET may be activated by an administrator during a Code Blue via (intercom, bell)</i></li> <li>▪ Depending on the Code Blue situation (the nature of the emergency or potential threat), it may not be safe to change classes. In these situations, students/staff should remain in their classrooms until directed otherwise by the administrator/designee.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>CONTACT INFORMATION</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tania DuBeau            ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE            1106 University Blvd., W, Silver Spring, MD 20902            301-648-0778</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Church/Building contact</p> <p>Name: _____            Office # _____ Home# _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Other building contacts</p> <p>Organization: _____            Name: _____            Office # _____ Home # _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OSET members</p> <p>1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____            4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Alternates</p> <p>1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____</p>

## **SUICIDE THREAT**

When an individual (student or staff member) expresses a written or verbal intent to commit suicide to either a staff member or to a student who informs a staff member, these procedures are to be followed.

1. Following initial contact with the individual, the staff member will notify his/her supervisor immediately and the Executive Director.
2. A responsible adult is to physically remain with the individual until the situation is stabilized.
3. **When the individual is a staff member**, the identified emergency contact on the Staff Information Form will be contacted by the Executive Director and/or designee by using an appropriate means.
4. **When the individual is a student**, the therapist will conduct a risk assessment and coordinate actions to be taken with the Principal/designee in conjunction with the Executive Director/designee. The parent/guardian will be notified and the seriousness of the situation will be discussed. If indicated, a referral for a psychiatric assessment may be recommended. If the parent cannot be contacted or is unwilling to accept the gravity of the situation, assistance from Protective Service is to be sought.
5. If the situation presents a serious injury or a medical emergency requiring immediate transportation of the individual to a medical facility, the student should be transported to the emergency room.
6. **Any and all actions taken in response to the suicide concern must be documented by the therapist or staff member involved on the Suicide Intervention/Prevention Form.** This form must be submitted within 24 hours to the Principal with a copy submitted to the Executive Director.

The ruling of the Court of Appeals of Maryland in the case of Eisel v. Board of Education of Montgomery County requires a counselor, teacher, or administrator who becomes knowledgeable about a student's attempt to commit suicide, either from that student directly or from another source, to notify the student's parents and school officials, even if the student denies such intent.

## **ACCIDENT OR SERIOUS INJURY**

### ***Of a student:***

When a student is in an accident or has a medical emergency, even if no injury is apparent, staff will notify the parent/guardian by appropriate means the day of the accident.

### ***Of a staff member:***

Whenever a staff person is in an accident, even if no injury is apparent, he/she is to notify the supervisor or designee immediately.

### ***Serious Injuries:***

When a student or staff is seriously injured, the emergency contact must be notified **IMMEDIATELY**.

First aid should be administered, and a determination must be made regarding the severity of the injury and transportation to the hospital. Check student and/or staff emergency folder for specifics.

The emergency medical services should be called if the injury is serious enough to warrant an ambulance. For less serious injuries requiring medical attention, the Principal or designee may transport the student/staff to the hospital while waiting for the parent/emergency contact to meet them.

### ***Accident or Medical Emergency Report Form:***

Notify the Executive Director as soon as possible. When an accident occurs, the Accident or Medical Emergency Report form is completed and is to be submitted to the Administrative Office within 24 hours.

## **STUDENT FORMS**

The following Pathways' wide forms are used for documenting various situations involving students. Several of them have been created as fillable pdf forms which can be completed in Adobe Acrobat Reader. They are available in the Pathways email systems' Public Folders.

In addition to these forms, some of the LSS have specific forms required to be completed for their students when appropriate. Each Pathways' program also has site-specific forms related to their behavior management system.

- **ACCIDENT OR MEDICAL EMERGENCY REPORT**—This form is used to document the occurrence of an accident or serious injury that may happen during school operation.
- **COMMUNICATION LOG**—Each program has a site-specific log. All incoming and outgoing calls with family members, outside agencies, outside therapists and LSS's that are related to the case management of individual students must be documented. This log is maintained in a designated area at the program. The therapist maintains a communication log regarding each individual student. This information may be required to provide through state and local systems.
- **HARASSMENT OR INTIMIDATION (BULLYING) INCIDENT SCHOOL INVESTIGATION FORM** – This form is used to document any concerns or allegations of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The follow-up steps taken to address the issue must be documented as well.
- **PHYSICAL INTERVENTION FORM** – This forms is used to document which physical intervention was used: 1) briefly holding a student in order to calm or comfort the student; 2) holding a student's hand or arm to escort the student safely from one area to another; 3) moving a disruptive student who is unwilling to leave the area if other methods such as counseling have been unsuccessful; and/or intervening in a fight in accordance with Education Article 7-307, Annotated Code of Maryland. A description of the intervention will also be provided.
- **RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM** – This form is required for any information to be shared about a student with any individual who is not a Pathways employee or the parent or guardian. This form is filed in the student's record.
- **REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT** – This form is used to document any suspected child abuse/neglect and the status of making a report with Child Protective Services.
- **STUDENT BEHAVIOR REPORT**—This form is used to document student behavior incidents that are of a notable nature. It is filed in the student's record under "Incident Reports" and sent to the Administrative Office.
- **SUICIDE PREVENTION/INTERVENTION REPORT**—This form is used to document when a student has made a suicide threat. It is to be completed by a therapist or other staff member who has assisted in addressing the suicide threat. This form is filed in the student's record and is submitted to the Executive Director at the Administrative Office.
- **SUSPENSION NOTICE** —This form is completed whenever a student is suspended in- or out- of-school. The completed form is filed in the Student's Record, submitted to the Executive Director/designee, provided to the parent, and the LSS.

## SECTION 11 – POLICIES RELATED TO REMOTE WORK

### **WORKING REMOTELY**

The lessons of the pandemic and resulting safety expectations are continuously changing. Therefore, these policies are intended to provide guidance in the event that at anytime during the 2023-2024 school year there are plans for an individual or all students to receive distance learning and/or telehealth. The plans for safe in-person interactions are in place as well. These policies may also be relevant if an employee may only work remotely for a period of time for other approved reasons.

### **REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS WHEN WORKING IN-PERSON**

If employees are expected to work in-person with students and other staff and **an employee has a medical reason why this will not be possible, the employee will be expected to complete the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) documentation signed by a medical professional indicating the necessary accommodations and restrictions.** The documentation will be reviewed to determine eligibility for any requested accommodations. More detailed information about the ADA is provided in this handbook.

### **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS**

Working in-person or virtually does not change the conditions of employment or required compliance with policies. Pathways policies, rules and practices, including those in The Pathways Schools Staff Handbook, continue to apply during the period of blended programming. Performance evaluation requirements will not change either, although your supervisor's methods of monitoring and assessing performance will likely focus on results and process in addition to direct observation.

Professionalism, integrity, honesty and work ethics as they relate to job responsibilities, work output, and services to students are expected to continue to meet Pathways' standards. The employee must maintain the same or an improved level of productivity and work quality while working in any expected manner or environment. To some degree, the blended model may allow an amount of flexibility for employees to complete their work in a timely and proper manner. It is further expected that employees will not abuse this opportunity by allowing their productivity or work quality to decline. Performance evaluation requirements, performance elements and standards will not differ.

During distance learning experiences with students, employees are expected to participate with their live faces showing for students. An acceptable exception may be if a platform necessary to meet a student's needs or to implement a specific activity does not allow for an employee's live face to be shown.

### **WORK HOURS**

Unless approved by your supervisor or designee, employees will be available to work normal work hours, which will be the school's normal hours, **approximately 8:00-3:30, as set at each site.** It is each employee's responsibility to ensure that time and leave are accurately entered into Paycor by the required deadlines. A non-exempt employee must obtain advance written approval from the supervisor before working overtime.

## **COMMUNICATION AND ACCESSIBILITY**

If working remotely and/or working at a location other than the school building, employees must be reachable, within reason, during all agreed upon work hours. Employees must notify their supervisor if they are not available during any of the work hours (much like they would notify the supervisor when leaving work during a regular workday) and document the appropriate leave in Paycor.

***In order to contribute to the team efforts and efficiency while working remotely, employees are expected to check and respond to emails, texts and voice mails frequently.***

Supervisors will make themselves available to employees to every extent possible during the work hours in order to support the employees' work, answer questions and ensure continuity of Pathways operations. It is expected that Principals will convene remote meetings/calls, if not in person, for their site employees regularly, and at least weekly. Employees are expected to participate as a part of their workday.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

As always, it is the policy of The Pathways Schools to follow the guidelines of FERPA (The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and HIPAA (The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) to protect the rights of privacy of staff and of students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) relative to access to, and release of health information of individual staff members and records of individual students.

## **STUDENT EMERGENCIES AND CONCERNS FOR SAFETY**

As always, if at any time you have concerns for the safety of any student (e.g., suicide, abuse) or another individual (e.g., threats to harm), you ***MUST report the information to a supervisor immediately***. A determination must be made with the supervisor or designee regarding the need for contacting and involving family members, police or other emergency personnel, and/or Child Protective Services.

## **DEPENDENT CARE AND PERSONAL BUSINESS DURING WORK HOURS**

Employees must manage dependent care and personal responsibilities in a way that allows them to successfully meet job responsibilities. Employees may not engage in work related to other jobs, run a business or any other outside activities, such as church, community organization or club activities during work hours. Furthermore, no personal business may be conducted on Pathways-owned equipment unless approved in advance by the supervisor.

## **WORKSPACE**

Each employee is responsible for establishing and maintaining an adequate workspace during distance learning and for providing a work environment free of interruptions and distractions to the greatest degree feasible. When the alternate site is the employee's home, the employee is responsible to maintain a designated workplace in a safe, healthy, professional, and secure manner.

## ***PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)***

Pathways continues to obtain PPE's for disease prevention and to develop a plan to distribute these items for employee use as needed, including disposable masks, thermometers, disinfectant, and hand sanitizer, to provide a safe environment for any in-person interactions. Within vehicles and within close proximity of others, employees may be expected to wear masks based on the most updated guidance. More clarity on expectations for use of PPE's by students and employees will continue to be provided. Additional cleaning protocol will be developed for each individual situation.

## ***TECHNOLOGY***

Pathways may provide specific technology for employees to perform the expected duties. This may include computer hardware, software, mobile hotspots, cell phone, connectivity to host applications, and other applicable equipment as deemed necessary. Equipment provided by the employer may not be used for personal purposes without specific permission. Pathways reserves the right to request return of property at any time during or at the end of the school year. Upon separation with Pathways the employee must return all technology including chargers. Failure to return any issued item will result in a deduction for the cost per item in the final check or a full reimbursement from the separating employee.