SARASOTA ACADEMY OF THE ARTS

2015-2016

EMPLOYMENT MANUAL HANDBOOK

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Sarasota Academy of the Arts Employment Manual 2015-2016

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Section One – Employment

Mission Statement

The mission of the Sarasota Academy of the Arts (SAA) is to provide a motivating, challenging, and creative learning climate with a safe, caring, family atmosphere. SAA will provide students interested in visual and performing arts with rigorous skills in line with the Florida Standards and a strong infusion of the arts. SAA believes that the opportunity to experience the arts on a continual basis promotes and enhances academic success. The goal of SAA is to prepare students to become well-rounded, confident, academically-prepared adults who are able to reach their full potential as caring and responsible citizens.

1.1 Equal Opportunity Employment

Sarasota Academy of the Arts is an equal opportunity employer. The Academy is committed to providing equal opportunity for all individuals in all areas of recruitment, selection, placement, training, assignment, compensation, benefits, discipline, retention, and promotion. The Governing Board commits itself to the policy that there shall be no unlawful discrimination against any person because of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, or disability. All decisions with regard to employment shall be in compliance with applicable and federal laws.

SAA is required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act to employ only American citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States. The purpose of this law is to preserve jobs for those individuals who are legally entitled to them.

1.2 Employment Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment

Sarasota Academy of the Arts does not discriminate against anyone, to general operations of the organization, and to any basis prohibited by applicable law or regulation.

SAA is committed to an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. We believe that each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, SAA expects that all relationships among persons in the workplace will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice, and harassment. The organization does not and will not tolerate discrimination against or harassment of or by our employees, students, vendors, or other person. The term "harassment" includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, sex (including discrimination against or harassment of individuals of the same sex), pregnancy, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, disability, workers compensation claims, marital, veteran or any other protected status. "Harassment" may include a wide range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors and also includes unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances, requests or demands for favors, offensive

touching, and other types of conduct whether it be physical, verbal, graphic, or electronic communication (including e-mails or facsimiles) of a harassing or sexual nature involving individuals of the same or different gender. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome or unwanted physical contact or sexual advances
- Unwelcome requests or demands for favors
- Verbal or written abuse or unwelcome kidding
- Any form of behavior that unreasonably interferes with work performance
- Actions that create a work environment that is intimidating, hostile, abusive, or offensive.
- The distribution, display, or discussion of any written or graphic material that belittles or shows hostility or aversion toward a person, his/her relatives, friends, or associates or a group because of race, color, religion, sex (including same sex discrimination or harassment), pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, disability, workers' compensation claims, marital, veteran or other protected status.

All employees and applicants are covered by this policy and are strictly prohibited from engaging in any form of discriminatory or harassing conduct. Further, no employee has the authority to suggest to another employee or applicant that the individual's employment, continued employment, or future advancement will be affected in any way by entering into, or refusing to enter into, a personal relationship. Such conduct is a direct violation of this policy.

Conduct prohibited by this policy is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as school trips, school meetings and school-related social events.

1.21 Retaliation is Prohibited

Sarasota Academy of the Arts prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such reports. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation or claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

1.22 Reporting Procedures and Investigation

Sarasota Academy of the Arts strongly urges the reporting of all incidents of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe they have experienced conduct that they believe is contrary to the organization's policy or who have concerns about such matters should file their complaints with the school Principal or an member of the Governing Board or the Board's designee, whereupon the matter will be discretely and thoroughly investigated. The organization will then take immediate steps to stop any behavior which violates this policy and see that it does not repeat itself. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, calculated to tend the discrimination or harassment, will be taken, when appropriate, against the offender(s).

Employees who believe they have experienced conduct they believe is contrary to this policy have an obligation to take advantage of this complaint procedure. An employee's failure to fulfill this obligation could affect his or her rights in pursuing any claim.

Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method or resolving actual or perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment. Therefore, while no fixed reporting period has been established, the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns is strongly urged so that rapid and constructive action can be taken.

The availability of this complaint procedure does not preclude individuals who believe they are being subjected to harassing conduct from promptly advising the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome and requesting that it be discontinued.

1.2.3 Responsive Action

Conduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with appropriately. Responsive action may include training, referral to counseling and/or disciplinary action such as warning, reprimand, withholding of a promotion or pay increase, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay or termination, as the organization believes appropriate under all of the circumstances.

Any person utilizing this complaint resolution procedure will be treated courteously, and the problem will be handled swiftly and as confidentially as possible in light of all the circumstances, with appropriate correction action being taken. The registering of a complaint will in no way be used against that individual, nor will it have an adverse impact on their employment status. A record of the complaint and findings will become a part of the complaint investigation record and that file will be maintained separately from the personnel files.

1.2.4 Conclusion

Individuals who have questions or concerns about this policy may talk with the school Principal or any member of the Governing Board.

Please keep in mind that the very nature of discrimination, harassment and retaliation makes it virtually impossible to detect unless a complaint is appropriately reported. Do not assume that the organization is aware of your problem! It is your responsibility to bring this information to the attention of the organization so the issue can be resolved.

1.2.5 Training

New employee orientation training shall include a component on the harassment policy. All administrators are responsible for assuring that their staff members are familiar with the harassment and that new employees are oriented as necessary throughout each school year. As part of the review of the Code of Student Conduct at the beginning of the school year, this policy will be discussed in student classes at the appropriate grade levels, school advisory councils, and parent/teacher association. Students enrolled after the beginning of the school year will be

provided a copy of the Code of Student Conduct and advised of this policy as appropriate to the age of the student.

1.3 Personnel Records

Personnel records shall be maintained in accordance with state and federal laws. The following records for each employee shall be maintained in a secure file:

- Evidence of successful completion of required education (college transcripts)
- Florida Teaching Certificate (Letter of Eligibility or Temporary Certificate)
- Employee assessments
- Signed contract
- Withholding allowance certificate (W-4)
- Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9 Form)
- Benefits enrollment documentation
- Background verification (results of Sarasota County School district fingerprint test)
- Letter of reprimand and information regarding any disciplinary action taken
- Personnel data sheet
- Drug-free Workplace Policy

Personnel records shall be open for inspection and copying consistent with Florida law, Chapter 119 and Federal laws. Social Security numbers will not be disclosed to the public. Evaluations shall be confidential and not open to the public until the end of the school year immediately following the school year in which the evaluation was made. The following payroll deductions ware not open to the public: credit union cards, W-4s, tax shelter information, tax levy, and court records.

1.4 Compensation and Benefits

1.4.1 Salaried Employees

Instructional and administrative staff members shall be salaried employees. Salaried shall be made in accordance with schedules adopted by the Governing Board of Sarasota Academy of the Arts, and in accordance with state and federal law.

1.4.2 Initial Salary Placement

The initial placement of the salary schedule shall be based upon the degree and experience held by the employee on his/her first day of work. For the 2015-2016 school year, the base salary shall be $ 37,050. A $1000 supplement shall be added for a Master's or Doctorate degree. There will be an incremental raise for every year of experience. A supplement shall also be added for critical needs areas or assumption of specific additional duties.

1.4.3 Benefits

All full-time employees will be eligible to participate in the SAA benefit plan which will include, but not be limited to , a health plan (50% of the employee plan paid by the employee/50% by

SAA; family members at 100% by the employee), voluntary supplemental benefits such as vision, dental, life, cancer, and disability, and a contribution to a retirement plan.

1.4.4 Paid Time Off

Salaried employees will be granted Paid Time Off (PTO) within the contract/agreement with SAA

1.4.5 Approval

PTO requests must be approved by the school Principal prior to the absence, unless the absence is a sick-day and prior notification is not possible. Absence for illness or personal reasons necessitates that notification be given as early as possible, but no later than one hour prior to time of scheduled arrival and in no case later than 8:00 am. Substitute plans, roll book, schedules, etc. must be available for the substitute teacher. Failure to notify on time and/or provide the above will result in an unpaid day of leave.

1.4.6 Overuse of PTO

PTO will be awarded at the beginning of the school year. Should an employee leave before the end of the school year, PTO will be prorated and the employee will be expected to pay back over-used PTO. If an employee uses all PTO days allotted to him/her, any additional sick days will be without pay.

1.4.7 Unused PTO

Accrued PTO time may be carried forward to the following school year or redeemed at a rate equivalent to one-half substitute daily pay.

1.4.8 Hourly Employees

Non-instructional and non-administrative employees shall be paid hourly. Hourly rates will be set by the Governing Board of Sarasota Academy of the Arts and in accordance with state and federal laws.

1.4.9 Overtime

Whether an employee is exempt from or subject to overtime pay will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will be indicated in the employee's job description.

Non-exempt employees may be required to work beyond the regularly scheduled workday or workweek as necessary. In determining whether non-exempt employees are entitled to overtime pay, only actual hours worked in a given workday or workweek will be considered. All overtime work must be previously authorized by the school Principal. The organization provides compensation for all overtime hours worked by non-exempt employees in accordance with state and federal law as follows:

- For employees subject to overtime, all hours worked in excess of eight (8) hours in one workday or forty (40) hours in one workweek shall be treated as overtime.

- Compensation for hours in excess of forty (40) for the workweek or in excess of eight (8) but not more than twelve (12) for the workday, and for the first eight (8) hours on the seventh consecutive day in one workweek, shall be paid at a rate of one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay. Compensation for hours in excess of twelve (12) in one workday and an excess of eight (8) on the seventh consecutive workday of the workweek shall be paid at double the regular rate of pay. Workweeks begin each Sunday at 12:01 am.

1.4.10 Payroll Withholdings

SAA shall withhold taxes from each employee's pay according to the law. Every deduction from an employee's paycheck is explained on the employee's check voucher. If there is a concern, please talk to the business manager.

Employees may change the number of withholding allowances to claim for Federal Income Tax at any time by filling out a new W-4 form and submitting it to the business office. The business office maintains a supply of these forms.

All Federal and Social Security taxes will be automatically deducted from paychecks. Federal Withholding Tax deduction is determine by each employee's W-4 form. The W-4 form should be completed upon hire and it is each employee's responsibility to report any changes in filing status to the business office.

1.5 Substitutes

SAA will utilize only qualified substitutes for all employee groups. The school Principal (or designee) will develop procedures for reporting absences, assigning substitutes, and developing a substitute compensation plan.

Substitute teachers shall meet all legal requirements. The rate of compensation shall be according to the annual school budget approved by the Governing Board. Records shall be kept for the business office concerning the number of days taught by substitutes and the amount of funds expended. The Governing Board shall be informed concerning this data at periodic intervals.

Staff members who require substitutes shall call the school Principal (or designee) according to the time frames delineated in Section 1.4.

1.6 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

An unpaid leave of absence can be granted by the school Principal for family leave. The teacher is guaranteed a position on the staff on return from family leave if a position exists for which the teacher is qualified, but hours, job description, and salary may vary.

1.7 Jury Duty

If an employee is called for jury duty during a period regularly scheduled to work, the employee is not required to use PTO to cover the absence.

Section Two – Employee Behavior

2.1 Hours of Duty

All SAA staff will have an eight (8) hour day. Starting and ending times may vary based on the individual duty schedules. It is important that teachers be in their assigned locations ready to assume their duties at their designated times.

2.2 Professional Conduct

Employees shall not use the classroom, or any other part of school facilities, as a platform for making disparaging remarks against students, parents, teachers, or administrators. Conduct contrary to this policy may constitute grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

2.3 Ethical Standards

All employees are required to comply with SBE Rule 6B-1.006, Code of Ethics for the Education Professions and SBE Rule 6B-1.006, Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida.

- Employment Screening – All current and prospective personnel will be subject to the screening process as set forth by the Florida Department of Education and Sarasota County School District. Employment history checks will be conducted for all new personnel prior to offering a final contract of employment. Three verbal references will be made immediately available and three written letters of reference must be available to be placed in the personnel file. Level Two criminal history reports will be screened for all new personnel by the Human Resources office of Sarasota County School District. All personnel will be screened for offenses listed in Section 435.04, Florida Statutes. Any employee convicted of an offense listed in Section 435.04, Florida Statutes. Any employee convicted of an offense listed in Section 1012.315 will be disqualified from employment at SAA.
- Employee Standards of Ethical Conduct – All staff members will comply with the Florida Department of Education Ethics in Education Act. A professional Code of Ethics governs all certified teachers in the state of Florida.

2.3.1 Reporting Requirements

It is the duty of all employees to promptly report to the school Principal or the Governing Board chairman any alleged misconduct by any employee that affects the health, safety. Or welfare of a student. Failure of an employee to report such misconduct shall result in disciplinary action. The report may be made verbally, however the Principal or Governing Board Chairperson may request a written explanation, which the employee shall be required to provide.

2.3.2 Investigation

The school Principal shall investigate any allegation of misconduct by an employee that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. In the event that the allegation is made against the Principal, the Governing Board chairperson may contact Sarasota County Schools District to assist with the situation.

Upon receiving a complaint of misconduct, a prompt preliminary investigation will be undertaken to determine if a reasonable basis exists. If the allegation warrants further investigation, the employee who is alleged to have committed such misconduct shall be reassigned to a position not requiring direct contact with students, or shall be placed on administrative leave with pay pending the outcome of the investigation.

Information related to the alleged misconduct shall be confidential during the investigation.

2.3.3 Legally Sufficient Complaint

The Principal or Governing Board chairperson shall file any legally sufficient complaint with the Department of Education within thirty (30) days after the date the school became aware of the subject matter of the complaint. A complaint is considered to be legally sufficient if it contains ultimate facts that show an instructional or administrative employee has committed a violation as provided in 1012.795, F.S., and defined by State Board of Education rule.

2.3.4 Resignation or Retirement in Lieu of Termination

SAA, or any of its employees, shall not enter into a confidentiality agreement regarding terminated or dismissed instructional personnel or administrators, or personnel or administrators who resign in lieu of termination, based in whole or in part on misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student, and may not provide instructional personnel with employment references or discuss the personnel's performance with prospective employees in another educational setting, without disclosing the personnel's or administrator's misconduct.

2.3.5 Training

All employees shall be offered the opportunity to go through training on the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct. Annually employees will be reminded of the reporting requirements of this policy, and participate in a refresher discussion regarding the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct.

2.3.6 Confidentiality

Employees, volunteers, and board members are bound by ethical and legal codes to protect the confidentiality and privacy of our students and their families and to protect and maintain the confidentiality of all information related to them. Confidential communications may include conversations, grades, progress reports, forms, correspondence, and computer generated communications with, about, or involving in any way students or their families.

2.4 Professional Standards

Employees are expected to observe certain standards of job performance and good conduct. When performance or conduct does not meet organizational standards, the school will endeavor, when it deems appropriate, to provide the employee a reasonable opportunity to correct the deficiency. If,

however, the employee fails to make the correction, s/he will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

The rules set forth in the Code of Ethics are intended to provide employees with notice of what is expected of them. Necessarily, however, such rules cannot identify every type of unacceptable conduct and performance. Therefore, employees should be aware that conduct not specifically listed but which adversely affects or is otherwise detrimental to the interests of the school's other employees, students, or parents may also result in disciplinary action.

2.5 Academic Freedom

It is the rightful duty of a qualified educator to encourage within students a never-ending search for truth in its many forms. Such a search may inevitably lead to areas of controversy. It is the belief of SAA that discussion of such issues, dealing with local, state, national and international affairs, shall be encouraged. Free, logical, and intelligent dialogue within the classroom is a necessity in the search for truth. Such freedom of expression should be viewed, not simply as a constitutional guarantee, but as a fundamental necessity for the successful practice of scholarship in a free society. All sides of such controversial issues shall be presented where reasonable and feasible in the judgment of the teacher and school Principal.

It is recognized that SAA is a K-8 program and that teachers must consider the relative level of maturity of their students and their need for guidance in the study of such issues to arrive at objective and balanced views. Teachers may not enter into a discussion of religious or political beliefs during class time except when necessary to teach a historical or cultural fact.

2.5.1 Teacher Use of Potentially Controversial Materials

It is the responsibility of the teacher (or other instructional staff members) that intends to use materials that may be considered offensive to reasonable persons within the community, to notify the school Principal of the potentially controversial materials. It is the Principal's responsibility to insure that the materials used are at grade level or below, and appropriate with Florida Standards. If the materials are potentially controversial, a notice will be sent home to the parents giving them the opportunity to allow their student to an alternative project.

2.6 Occupational Safety

SAA is committed to the safety of its employees, vendors, contractors, and the public and to providing a clear safety goal for management.

The prevention of accidents is the responsibility of every employee. It is also the duty of all employees to accept and promote the established safety regulations and procedures. Every effort will be made to provide adequate safety training. If an employee is ever in doubt how to perform a job or task safely, assistance should be requested. Unsafe conditions must be reported immediately.

It is the policy of SAA that accident prevention shall be considered of primary importance in all phases of operation and administration. SAA's administration is required to provide safe and healthy working conditions for all employees and to establish and require the use of safe practices at all times.

2.6.1 Accident/Incident Reporting

It is the duty of every employee to immediately, or as soon as is practical, report any accident or injury occurring during work or on SAA's premises so that arrangements can be made for medical or first aid treatment, as well as for investigation and follow-up purposes.

Section Three – School Rights

3.1 Employment of Relatives

No prospective employee shall be hired in which a close relative holds an administrative or supervisory position that directs an employee directly or indirectly.

No prospective employee shall be hired without disclosure of a close relative holding any position within the school or as a member of the Governing Board.

If a close relative is employed by SAA, both parties shall agree in writing to maintain professional conduct while on duty or at school related activities.

If the close relative is a member of the Governing Board, the Board member shall abstain from any motions that directly involve employment matters or financial gain for the specific relative employee.

"Close relative" shall be defined as the first degree of kindred: husband, wife, father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, and in-laws of the same degree.

3.2 Pre-Work Physical Examinations

Pre-work physical examinations are required of some employees, as mandated by Florida Law and as prescribed by these policies.

3.3 Initial Appointment

Except as otherwise provided for in Florida Statute, applicants for teaching positions must be eligible for a Florida Certificate and qualified for the positions for which they are recommended.

Appointments shall be made only by the school Principal. Priority shall be given to the employment of elementary teachers who are competent to teach reading and/or mathematics skills and concepts. Teacher who profess such competencies but do not or cannot demonstrate them, whether deliberately or not, may be terminated at the discretion of the Principal. SAA may require newly appointed teachers to participate in staff development activities throughout the year. Such training shall be provided outside regular school ours at no cost to the teacher.

Employment decisions shall be made by the school Principal, subject to guidelines and requirements set forth by the Governing Board and to the annual budget.

3.4 Background Screening

Prior to employment, candidates must be screened by SAA using the Department of Education's electronic screening tools. SAA shall also check each reference from the prospective employee's previous employers and character references when provided and reasonably feasible. All employment candidates that pass the screening shall undergo Level Two background check (fingerprinting) with

Sarasota County Schools District to ensure they are eligible for employment under 1012.315 F.S. The cost of the background check will be borne by SAA (check page 51 of contract with LEA).

3.5 Initial Probationary Period

Employees shall be subject to an initial probationary period of ninety (90) calendar days. Should the employee be discharged for unsatisfactory performance during such initial probationary period, as provided by Section 443.131, Florida Statutes, SAA will not be liable for an unemployment compensation benefits.

Section Four – Employee Evaluations

4.1 Intent

It is the intent of SAA that assessment of personnel be used for three reasons: 1) Determining the suitability for retention of the continuing and professional service of the contract personnel; 2) Method of assisting staff in their professional development to best impact the education of students and the operation of SAA; and 3) Compliance with Florida Senate Bill 736 regarding teacher and administrator performance evaluations. SAA acknowledges and agrees to follow all legal requirements as set forth in Florida Statute as they apply to charter schools.

4.2 Observations

Teachers will have at least two formal observations during each academic year by the school Principal. There will also be informal walk-throughs conducted to assist in collecting data as related to the PRIDE evaluation program. PRIDE (Professional Rubrics Investing and Developing Educator Excellence) defines the process used to evaluate instructional staff in the Sarasota County School District. Teachers will receive training related to this at the beginning of each school year. Before observations, the school Principal will share with the teacher the evaluation criteria and expectations. The Principal will either provide a written summary or a personal conference to discuss the results of the observation within two weeks after the observation.

4.3 Student Performance Data

Professional staff members shall have a portion of their annual evaluation based upon student performance indicators, as required by Florida law. If the student performance data is not available prior to the due date of the annual evaluations, the evaluations may be amended to incorporate the data once it becomes available.

4.4 Annual Evaluation

Every staff member will receive a written annual evaluation each year, and the evaluation shall be presented to the employee by the last day of the school year. Teachers and support staff will be supervised by an administrative member of the staff. The school Principal will be evaluated by the Governing Board.

4.5 Categories

As required by SB 736, every instructional employee working under an annual performance contract must be evaluated and rated at one of the following performance levels:

- Highly Effective
- Effective
- Needs Improvement

Or, for instructional personnel in the first three years of employment who need improvement:

- Developing
- Unsatisfactory

The bill also ties 33% of teachers' and administrators' evaluation performance ratings to student growth, as measured by designated statewide assessments.

4.6 Unsatisfactory Evaluations

In an employee has received an unsatisfactory performance assessment or concerns exist throughout the year such as following a formal observation, the supervisor shall confer with the employee and shall make specific recommendations for actions the supervisor believes should results in improvement. The supervisor and employee shall develop a plan, which would be shared with the school Principal. The plan shall include a prescribed period of time in which the corrective actions must be completed. If the employee has received an unsatisfactory evaluation, the employee shall be placed on a ninety (90) day probationary period in which the employee shall receive assistance and training to correct the deficiencies noted in the evaluation.

Section Five – Employee Rights and Responsibilities

5.1 Professional Development

SAA, the Florida Charter Support Unit, and Sarasota County School District conduct various types of professional development opportunities which shall serve to increase the efficiency of all staff members, instructional, administrative, and supportive. Staff members are expected to participate in professional education activities. Days and times as designated as professional development training must be used as such unless the school Principal agrees to another use of the time in writing. Teachers will be given information regarding District online courses as they become available.

5.2 Reporting Child Abuse, Neglect, and/or Abandonment

In 2012, House Bill 1355 was passed into law and is referred to as "Protection of Vulnerable Persons" Ch. 2012-155 of the Laws of Florida. This bill adds to the current reporting requirements of 39.201, F.S., removing the limitation that only "caregiver" abuse be reported to the hotline by requiring any person to report known or reasonably suspected physical or emotional abuse of a child by any adult person. The bill also requires any person to report known or reasonably suspected sexual abuse of a child by any person. The bill requires the central abuse hotline to accept any call reporting child abuse, abandonment, or neglect by someone other than a caregiver and to forward the concern to the appropriate sheriff's office for further investigation. The bill also states suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect is elevated from a first degree misdemeanor to a *third degree felony*. As a result, the potential prison sentence is raised from one year to five years, and the potential fine is raised from a maximum of $1,000 to a maximum of $5,000. In addition, the bill creates subsections 39.205(3) and (4), F.S., which provide penalties for Florida educational institutions whose personnel fail to report certain child abuse taking place on the campus of the institution or during an event or function sponsored by the institution. The bill subjects the institution to a $1,000,000 fine for each failure to report child abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

5.3 Reproduction of Copyrighted Materials

SAA employees are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the provisions of the copyright laws currently in force under Title XVII of the United States Code. Any reproduction of copyrighted materials shall be done wither with the permission of the copyright holder or within the bounds of the "fair use" doctrine of the copyright law; otherwise, the individual employee responsible for reproduction may be liable for breach of copyright under existing laws.

5.4 Transporting Students

Unless an employee is transporting a student at the direction of the school Principal, during an emergency, or during an official approved trip in accordance with the organization procedures, such transportation shall be furnished at the employee's own risk or liability. SAA does not expect employees to transport students except when such transportation is provided during an emergency or an officially approved trip. An employee who provides such transportation except for an emergency or during an officially approved trip shall be acting outside the scope of that employee's employment.

Each employee must provide a copy of a valid driver's license and proof of insurance to SAA prior to transporting any student for any reason.

5.5 Smoking of Tobacco Products on School Property

The purpose of this policy is to comply with the "Florida Clean Indoor Air Act" in protecting public health, comfort and environment by creating areas in all school facilities that are free from tobacco smoke. No person may be in possession of a lighted cigarette, lighted pipe, lighted cigar, or any other lighted tobacco product in any school facility, including the outside grounds, or within 100 feet of any building or area used by SAA. No areas for smoking shall be designated on SAA's property, or within 100 feet of any building or area used by SAA. Students and staff members found in possession of tobacco products will face disciplinary actions as described within this policy manual. Other adults found in possession may be restricted from access to SAA property based on the circumstances of the incident.

5.6 Drug-free and Alcohol-free Workplace

SAA is a drug-free workplace. Each employee shall be given a copy of this policy as part of this Policy Manual. Additionally, each employee shall be notified that, as a condition of employment, the employee will abide by the terms of this policy and notify the employer of any criminal drug and/or alcohol statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) days after such conviction. This policy is clearly defined in the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C 812) and further defined by regulations at 21 CFR 1200.1.11 through 1300.15 or Florida Statutes, Chapter 893.

The main points of the policy are summarized as follows:

- The use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated. SAA reserves the right to request an employee submits to a drug test at any time for any reason at a testing location designated by SAA. Refusal to submit to an immediate drug test or a positive test for an illegal substance is grounds for immediate termination.
- Consumption of alcohol between the beginning and end of the workday is prohibited. At no time may any employee be under the influence of alcohol while at SAA and if abuse is suspected, SAA reserves the right to request an employee submits to a blood alcohol test at a testing location designated by SAA. Refusal to submit to an immediate blood alcohol test or a positive test for alcohol is grounds for immediate termination.
- Working at SAA under the influence of any substance that impairs the staff member's ability to safely supervise children will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, prescription medication that impairs a staff member mentally or physically.

5.7 Weapons Policy

At no time may any staff member have anything on property or at any school activity in his/her possession that could be considered a weapon or a facsimile of a weapon. Guns, whether operable or inoperable, loaded or unloaded, facsimile weapons or antique weapons may not be brought on to school property including the parking lot or to a school activity. Any weapon confiscated shall be immediately turned over to the school Principal/building administrator who shall turn the weapon over

to the proper authorities. Authorized law enforcement officers may have weapons in their possession while on duty.

5.8 Telephone Use

Phone calls of a nonemergency nature should be made and taken during non-instructional times. Messages will be delivered to the staff member. Please limit incoming calls and inform family members who may need to reach you during the day the times of your break and/or planning time. Long distance phone calls may not be placed from any SAA phones. Cell phones may not be used in the classroom or playground at any time, other than for emergency use to contact the office. Cell phone use disrupts the learning environment and hinders supervision.

5.9 Professional Appearance

All personnel will be appropriately and neatly dressed at all times. Visual body piercings are limited to ears only and no more than two rings in each ear. Rings will be such that they are not distracting or unsafe. Consider the "image" SAA wishes to convey to the students and dress accordingly.

5.10 Staff Meetings

We will have one after-school meeting per month. All staff members are required to attend these meetings. There will also be weekly meetings in each building during planning time. Teachers will be expected to participate as request for the School Advisory Team, MTSS Team, CARE Team, Literacy Team, IEP meetings, 504 meetings, and gifted educational plan meetings. Times for these will be established by the team members.

5.12 Faculty Attendance at School Functions

Attendance at school functions is an important part of faculty, student, and family relationships. Attendance at functions or participation in events is required by all contractual employees. Staff members are required to attend one PTO meeting per year to provide recognition of student achievement, relative to a subject that the staff member is teaching.

TEACHING AND LEARNING GUIDELINES

The Governing Board and Administration of Sarasota Academy of the Arts feel strongly that parents, students, and faculty are all vital to the success of our program. The Academy will design programs to meet the individual needs of students and measure their academic progress by using all available data including report cards, student portfolios, standardized test scores, Individual Education Plans, 504 Plans, Gifted Education Plans, and English Learners Programs. The SAA Leadership Team will collaborate with teachers and parents based on the data to implement an educational plan at the beginning of each school year to challenge and improve each student's academic growth.

Sarasota Academy of the Arts will offer a rigorous academic program in line with Florida Standards enhanced by strong visual arts, performing arts, and enrichment program that will build self-esteem and set high expectations for students and teachers.

Section One – Curriculum

1.1 Curriculum Development

SAA recognizes the need and value of a systematic and on-going program of curriculum review. SAA encourages and supports the professional staff in its efforts to identify and review new curricular ideas, develop and improve existing programs and evaluate all instructional programs.

The Principal will continuously carry out the curriculum development and implementation process. As used in this manual, "curriculum" is the process, attitudes, skills, and knowledge which is taught and learned at the appropriate levels.

In its charter application and contract with the sponsoring entity, SAA has agreed to follow the Sarasota County Schools District Pupil Progression Policy and Reading Plan. These can be accessed in their entirety at www.sarasotapublicschools.net. Every effort will be made to ensure the SAA curriculum is current and based on sound educational research findings.

1.2 Curriculum Maps

The school Principal (or designee) will ensure that there is a current curriculum map identifying the instructional objectives to be met at each grade level taught at the school. The curriculum map will be updated as necessary and posted on the school's website. A faculty team will work together to produce a map based on CCSS implementation according to the Florida schedule for conversion/fusion of Florida Standards.

The school Principal (or designee) will appoint a committee of teachers and administrators to

review textbook offerings in specific instructional areas. For the most part, SAA will use textbooks recommended by the Sarasota County School District in the areas of reading, science, math, and social studies. SAA will ensure that all textbook and curricular materials utilized by the school will align with the Florida Standards.

1.3 Challenged Materials

The SAA Governing Board has the ultimate responsibility for establishing the curriculum and for purchasing instructional and/or media materials to be used by the School. While the Board recognizes the rights of students to free access to many different types of books and instructional materials, the Board also recognizes the rights of teachers and administrators to select books and other materials in accord with current trends inn education and established curriculum.

It is therefore the policy of SAA to require that books and other instructional materials shall be chosen for values of educational interest and the enlightenment of all students in the community. Instructional materials shall not be excluded on the basis of the writer's racial, nationalistic, political, or religious views. Every effort will be made to provide materials that present all points of view concerning international, national, and local problems and issues of our times. Books, or other instructional or media materials of sound factual authority, shall not be prescribed, nor removed from library shelves or classrooms on the basis of partisan or doctrinal approval or disapproval. SAA will strive to provide stimulating, effective materials that will be appropriate to the community's values and the students' abilities and maturity levels.

Instructional or media materials used in the School's educational program consist of various types of print and non-print materials. Despite the care taken to select those materials deemed to be educationally useful, occasional objections to the selection of instructional materials may be made by the public. However, the principles of academic freedom and the freedom to read must be defended, rather than the materials.

If a challenge is made, it should be properly channeled through the complaint process described elsewhere within this policy manual.

1.4 Lesson Plans

Teachers will be expected to submit lesson plans that correlate with both the school's Curriculum Guide and aligned to the Florida Standards. A lesson plan template will be shared during in-service days prior to the start of the school year. Lesson plans shall be submitted electronically through the method identified by the school Principal, not less than one hour prior to the start of school each Monday morning. Lesson plans should also be displayed in printed or digital form in the classroom. Lesson plans will be reviewed to ensure compliance

with school and state requirements and will be kept on file.

1.5 Reporting Student Progress

SAA believes parents are an integral part of their child's education. To keep parents informed, student progress will be formally reported eight (8) times a year. Midway through each marking period, a progress report will be sent home with students. At the end of each quarter, report will be distributed documenting student progress.

Additionally, SAA parents will have access to student grades and assignments through Sarasota Public School District's Crosspoint program, an electronic gradebook. Individual teacher websites linked through www.sarasotaacademyofthearts.com will also be available.

1.6 Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

SAA, as a public charter school, is obligated to follow existing and formulate new Individual Education Plans (IEPs). SAA is required to admit all students based on space availability. The Academy does not however serve a broad array of all exceptional educational needs. By virtue of our charter, SAA will serve students with disabilities whose needs can be met in a regular classroom environment (at least 80% of instruction occurring in a class with non-disabled peers) with the provision of reasonable supplementary supports and services and/or modifications and accommodations. The Academy will also serve students with disabilities whose needs can be met in a regular classroom and resource room combination (40% - 80% of instruction occurring in a class with non-disabled peers) with the provision of reasonable supplementary supports and services and/or modifications and accommodations.

SAA will retain the services of an ESE Liaison/teacher, and a Reading Specialist. We provide classroom services, and contract for therapeutic needs (speech/language therapy and occupational therapy). If during the application/enrollment period, it is determined that additional services are required that we are unable to provide or contract out, we will work with the parents and the Sarasota County School District to find the appropriate placement for the child.

1.7 Section 504 Plans

SAA provides a free and public education to students entering with a Section 504 Plan of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

SAA will consider a 504 Plan for accommodations if the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Team feels the child may have a disability which would meet the criteria for such a plan. This can occur when a teacher identifies a student who is having difficulties, a parent requests a team to consider the needs of the student, or if a medical report has been submitted

identifying the student as having a disability.

If the MTSS Team recommends a student be considered for a 504 Plan, the school Principal or designee will coordinate a meeting among the student's teachers and school specialist. The teacher will also ensure the parents have been invited to the meeting. While at the meeting, the team members will consider whether the student's disabilities qualify him/her for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If so, the team will identify the accommodations necessary to allow the student to be successful within the school environment. The authorizing School District's forms will be used for both determination and the actual 504 Plan.

1.8 School Based Leadership Team (SBLT)

The purpose of the School Based Leadership Team (SBLT) is a diverse group of professionals that will meet to discuss issues that may arise regarding specific students. The team will brainstorm strategies and research-based interventions to use with students that may be having academic, behavioral, or other concerns within the school. The SBLT will analyze school data, assist with providing accommodations for the RtI (Response to Intervention) process, make recommendations for modifications in the classroom and monitor student progress by analyzing interventions to assess response to those interventions.

1.8.1 Membership

The Principal shall, at the start of each school year, assign members to the School Based Leadership Team. Membership will consist of the Principal, ESE Liaison, and a careful selection of other staff members who represent a variety of backgrounds and expertise. Members shall serve for the entire school year. Additionally, the specific team of teachers who work with an individual student will be requested to attend when that specific student is being discussed.

1.8.2 Procedure

The SLBT, in conjunction with the school Principal, will regularly review school assessment data to determine students needing extra assistance. If a staff member wishes to seek the advice of the SBLT for a specific student, they shall complete a request form and forward to the Principal. The Principal shall then schedule a team meeting and distribute the relevant information to team members. When the staff member requesting the meeting completes the form, they shall indicate whether or not they feel it would be beneficial to invite the parents to the meeting. The Principal shall make the determination whether parents will be invited and will coordinate their attendance if requested.

When the SBLT meets the staff member requesting the meeting has the responsibility to

explain what the key issues or concerns are, and the team shall work together to brainstorm a list of action items to be attempted with the student. One staff member will be assigned to follow up at a specified time interval after the meeting to see how the recommendations are working.

1.9 English as a Second Language

Sarasota Academy of the Arts is committed to identifying and assessing the educational needs of students whose native or home language is other than English. Once identified, SAA will provide appropriate programs to address the needs of these students in accordance with the Sarasota Public School District plan. A copy of the plan is available at the Sarasota County website and in print in the administrative office.

Upon being accepted to the school, each student's records will be reviewed to ensure a home language survey/assessment has been completed, and if it has not, the Principal (or designee) will ensure the survey is completed by the student's parents within the first two weeks of enrollment.

SAA will also take steps to ensure to the maximum extent practicable that the interests of ELL/ESL students are included in the development and implementation of SAA programs and services that are offered by the school to and for its student body. The Principal will ensure that all legal requirements are adhered to in regards to the instruction and services provided to students who qualify for ELL/ESL services as required by the sponsoring entity.

1.10 Instructional Time/Policies

The primary focus of SAA's staff and programs is maximization of student learning. The staff's prime responsibility is to educate students and keep them free from harm. Mutual cooperation is essential to the successful operation of the school. Staff responsibilities differ, but there are several areas which, in general, apply to all:

- Safety must always be our primary concern!
- At Sarasota Academy of the Arts, lines of communication between the faculty and the administration need to remain open at all times.
- All personnel will be in agreement with the philosophy and policies of Sarasota Academy of the Arts and will be willing at all times to support that philosophy and those policies with students, parents, other faculty members, and the community. The staff has the power to create a positive image for SAA in the community. Please use that power constructively.
- All staff will be professional in their associations with parents, other faculty members, and the administration. It is essential that any and all information about a student be kept confidential. At no time may a teacher discuss a student or a parent with another parent or in the presence of students or parents.

- It is essential that students be happy, secure, and comfortable for learning to take place. At all times, it is necessary for staff members to be sensitive to the feelings of the students and constantly strive to create a positive, happy, and warm environment. Ridicule, sarcasm, humiliation, and unkindness have no place in a positive educational environment.

1.12 Filing of Pertinent Information

Each teacher is required to regularly file reading and math scores up through fifth grade, conference reports, end of year tests for first through eighth grades, standardized test scores, final report cards, and other pertinent information. Please keep files up-to-date every nine weeks. Files, arranged alphabetically by class, should be checked and properly arranged at the beginning of the year. Permanent files may never be removed from the file room.

Section Two – Grading

2.7 Report Cards

Report cards are issued to students each quarter. Teachers are responsible for turning in grades and report cards in a timely manner. Please allow ample time for the Principal to review each report card before it is issued to students. It is imperative that homeroom teachers determine that parents do indeed see the report card.

All grades will be available for parents through Crosspoint. Teachers are responsible for posting grades as they are earned so that the information is always up-to-date.

2.7.1 Elementary Level Grading (K – 5th)

The following guidelines as described in the Sarasota County School District Elementary Student Progression Plan will be followed:

GRADING OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

A. The teacher shall be the authority in assigning each student a grade.

B. The grades reflecting achievement for academic subjects in grades 1-5 with numerical equivalents will be:

- A 90 – 100% Outstanding Progress
- B 80 – 89% Above Average Progress
- C 70 – 79% Average Progress
- D 60 – 69% Lowest Acceptable Progress
- F 0 – 59% Failure
- I Incomplete

C. The grades reflecting achievement for art, music, physical education and, in grades one and two, for science and social studies shall be:

- O = Outstanding achievement
- S = Satisfactory achievement
- U = Unsatisfactory achievement
- D. The grades reflecting achievement for work habits in grades 1 – 5 shall be:
- P = Pass
- F = Fail

D. A "---"is to be used in the grading section for students in Resource/ESE Programs who are missing instruction in that subject.

E. Evaluation of achievement will include progress toward mastery of the Florida Standards objectives.

F. The academic grade represents the progress made on a student's instructional level; it does not reflect achievement on grade level. The instructional level of the student shall be indicated by the designation on, above or below, which shall be placed immediately before the academic letter grade in reading and mathematics. These designations will be reflected in grades 2 –5 quarterly and beginning with the second quarter for grade one.

The designation shall indicate the student is working on mastery of the Florida Standards objectives predominately at that level.

G. Student effort shall be indicated by the following codes:

- E = Excellent Shows outstanding participation. Strives beyond class assignment and homework. Is highly motivated and well organized.
- G = Good Participates much of the time. Completes class assignments and homework. Is motivated and organized.
- S = Satisfactory Usually participates. Completes class assignments and homework. Is attentive.
- N = Needs Improvement Rarely participates. Frequently does not complete assignments. Is inattentive and poorly organized.
- U = Unsatisfactory Does not participate. Does not complete assignments. Lacks motivation and organization.

H. Kindergarten grading shall be a checklist of specific competencies marked to indicate progress.

2.7.2 Middle school level (6^{th} – 8^{th}) Grading

The following guidelines as described in the Sarasota County School District Middle School Student Progression Plan will be followed:

GRADING SYSTEM

A. The teacher shall be the authority in assigning each student a grade.

B. Evaluation of achievement will indicate progress toward the mastery of the Florida Standards. The grades reflecting achievement in academic courses in grades 6-8 with numerical equivalents shall be:

• A	90-100%	4.0 GPA	Outstanding Progress
• B	80-89%	3.0 GPA	Above average progress
• C	70-79%	2.0 GPA	Average progress
• D	60-69%	1.0 GPA	Lowest acceptable progress
• F	0-59%	0.0 GPA	Failure
• I	0%	0.0 GPA	Incomplete
• N			No Grade

C. The student's final grade in a course will be determined by quarterly academic grades and other relevant performance criteria (e.g., exams, projects and other demonstrations of mastery of the Florida Standards). Teachers have the responsibility to determine final grades using quarter grades and other evaluations as appropriate. (The final grade does not always reflect a simple average of quarter grades).

D. Student Work Habits and Effort will be indicated by the following codes:

- E = Excellent
- G = Good
- S = Satisfactory
- N = Needs Improvement
- U = Unsatisfactory
- __ = Not evaluated

These factors will be considered when evaluating student work habits and effort:

- Attends class regularly
- Arrives to class on time
- Comes prepared with required work tools
- Completes assigned homework
- Maintains an assigned notebook or other organization system
- Is dressed appropriately
- Participates in class work and discussions
- Is motivated and organized
- Shows an attitude of cooperation with teacher and fellow students

- Is respectful of others' class participation and opportunities to learn

E. Teacher comments on the report card shall be indicated through a coding system, and the report card shall contain a narrative explanation of the grading system.

F. Advisory and Character Education programs are not evaluated using the district report card grading and work habits coding system.

G. Report cards shall be issued four times during the school year. In addition, schools are required to issue mid-quarter progress reports to all students.

H. Any time during a grading period that a student is in danger of failing, the teacher must make a documented contact with the parent by speaking with them on the phone, meeting in a conference, or sending written notification [FAC 6A-6.0908].

I. Parent-teacher conferences shall be scheduled as requested by parents and/or teachers.

J. Any parent or guardian, after consulting with the teacher, may request that the Principal review any grade given a student at the end of a reporting period. However, such grade may not be changed or altered unless there is an apparent error in the grade calculation.

2.8 Honor Roll

Honor Roll will be determined by the following for 3rd - 8th grades:

- Principal's Honor Roll (Superior) – All "A" report card
- Honor Roll – 3.8 to 3.9 GPA
- Improved GPA – improvement from previous quarter grades

2.9 Interim (Progress) Reports

If a student has an academic average below a "C" at any time during the report period, the teacher will make a phone call or send an email to the parents immediately informing them and possibly requesting a parent-teacher conference. No child may receive a "D", "N", or below on a nine-week report card unless a parent has been notified. Verification of the contact will be documented and kept on file. Parents should be encouraged to check the "Crosspoint" website frequently.

2.10 Homework

Homework is purposeful and designed to further a student's understanding and proficiency in a particular topic or subject. It is an opportunity to complete independent assignments that have been made and discussed thoroughly in class. Teachers should assign homework in a consistent manner when needed. Homework should never be given as "busy work" or as punishment, and

never before the skill has been thoroughly taught.

Homework is a learning experience designed to help students develop effective study habits. The length of time that students need to complete an assignment will vary with the individual and even from day to day. It is imperative that teachers work together to assure that no student is "overloaded" on any one evening. Homework assignments, quizzes, tests and projects will be posted on each teacher's website and updated daily. In addition, each student will write the daily assignments in his/her planner which will be checked and initialed daily. Homework assignments of all subjects are geared so that the majority of students can complete them in the following times:

- K - 1st grade 30 minutes
- 2nd - 3rd grades 45 minutes
- 4th - 5th grades 60 minutes
- 6th - 8th grades 90 minutes

Section Three – Other Duties

3.1 Testing

Teachers in the academic areas will be required to administer tests at various times of the year. This requires extra time and energy, but it is a very important tool in pupil evaluation. Please allow adequate time to prepare, administer, and record results. Test results will be accurately recorded and kept confidential except to the parents. All students in the class will have an equal opportunity to complete tests. Please remember that students may not be denied the opportunity to take a test because of poor behavior before or during test time. You may administer the test during learning support but students may not be sent to the office to take a test.

In the event you suspect a student of cheating on a test, the issue may not be addressed in front of the class. You may detain the student after class to speak to him/her privately and make arrangements for the student to retake the test during learning support.

3.2 Absentee Assignments

Students are expected to keep up with classwork and homework. Parents can arrange to pick up a student's work through the office personnel or from the teacher. This is necessary when the student will miss one or more days of school. Students who are absent will be given sufficient time to turn in make-up work. (The exception is made for the long-term assignment. Students will know the due date and are expected to submit the work on the first day back to school.)

Parents who prearrange for assignments prior to a planned extended absence will be given the assignments in a timely fashion or have access electronically during the absence. It is an area of

grave concern for parents when they do not receive assignments in a timely fashion.

3.3 Field Trips

SAA staff members design a variety of experiences throughout the year for students in all grades. Field trips can be a valuable learning opportunity for students; however, behavioral expectations are even more important when students are taken off campus. As a result, if a child has demonstrated an inability to control their behavior in school, extra steps may need to be taken to ensure the student has a successful experience. This may include requiring the parent to accompany the child or remaining at school. Teachers will work with students and parents to ensure every child has an opportunity to participate.

3.3.1 Approval

All trips off campus must be approved by the Principal two weeks prior to the event occurring. Field trips should have an educational purpose to be approved. All trips must be conducted under the supervision of a current certified teacher employed by SAA. Additional chaperones may be necessary dependent upon the activity. (Chaperones are subject to the background clearance policy set forth elsewhere in this manual.) The request for approval must include all locations the students will visit on the trip, the details of transportation, and any other logistical issues the Principal requests. Also included is the way the field trip will tie in to the Florida Standards. Students will follow the specific itinerary provided to the administration on the field trip request.

3.3.2 Financial Limitations

Students cannot be excluded from a field trip based on the inability to pay the accompanying fee. If a family is facing financial difficulties and unable to pay the fee, the student's parent or guardian must contact the Principal (or designee) prior to the date the field trip permission slip is due back to school to make alternative arrangements. Opportunities for "raising funds" for longer and more expensive trips will be provided.

3.3.3 Student Supervision

While attending field trips, students will be closely monitored and supervised. Each student shall be directly assigned to a staff person or chaperone for the duration of the trip. If a teacher is concerned about a child's possible disruptive behavior on a field trip, please contact the ESE liaison teacher to discuss alternative options for that child (paired with an adult, invite parent to attend with the child, etc.)

3.3.4 Chaperones

Chaperones must follow the volunteer guidelines found within the policies of SAA. Chaperones must be registered with the school prior to attending the field trip. All chaperones must be provided with a detailed list of the students they are responsible for, emergency contact information to reach the teacher in charge, as well as students' parents if the need arises. Chaperones must have the appropriate clearance level, either through the Volunteer Center or Level 2 clearance through the district security office.

3.3.5 Teacher Check-ins

While attending field trips where groups are separated from one another, the teacher in charge of the trip will coordinate times and locations where all staff and chaperones shall rendezvous periodically throughout the day.

3.5.6 Student Counts

Before transporting students to or from any field trip the teacher and at least one other adult will do a complete roll call of all students to ensure all students are accounted for. At any given time each staff member and chaperone should know the number of students they are currently responsible for.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Section One – Students

1.1Supervision of Students

Students are to be supervised at all times while under the control of Sarasota Academy of the Arts. This includes the time students are attending school, while away from school on school-sponsored events, or while participating in extra-curricular activities, such as performances or sports. Supervision will be provided for 15 minutes prior to and 15 minutes after the end of the school day. Students may not be left alone without supervision.

1.2Security of Student Records

All student information is considered confidential and will be maintained as such in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Such information will be available to the parent or guardian. Professionally competent personnel shall be available for interpreting any data within the student's cumulative folder. Copies of such contents shall also be made available to parents, within the limitations of copying facilities.

The school may, without the consent of the student or his/her parents, release the records contained within the cumulative folder or any supplementary classifications to school officials who have a proper educational purpose in examining such information.

No other person may have access to or make copies of a student's records, except under the following circumstances:

- The consent must be given by the student's parent or guardian.
- The consent shall be written and shall specify the records to be released and to whom they are to be released. Each request for consent shall be handled separately; blanket permission for the release of information shall not be acceptable.
- Under compulsion of law: courts, law enforcement agencies, agencies subpoenaing such records.
- When data for outside purposes is released in such form that no individual student is identifiable.
- When the Principal determines the release of specific information as described by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is in the best interests of the students, provided such information has not been disallowed by the parents.

The parent or guardian shall have the right to challenge the accuracy and authenticity of the data recorded within the student's cumulative folder. Any such data that is determined by the Principal to be in error will be expunged from the record and an appeal from the decision of the Principal shall be made to the Governing Board.

In each instance in which a student's record is transferred out of SAA, the school shall retain a copy of the student's academic record, together with all other confidential information and reports. After five (5) years, this material will be sent to Central Files with Sarasota County Public Schools.

It is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to keep the school office informed and up to date regarding any changes of names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, etc. so that important student information may be received from or provided to the parent/legal guardian in a timely manner for the benefit and well-being of the student.

Section Two – Emergency Procedures

2.1 Fire Drill Procedures

SAA shall maintain an evacuation plan to be used in the case of fire or other emergency situations. This plan will be reviewed annually by SAA's administrators for effectiveness. All students and staff will be made aware of the plan, and maps highlighting the escape routes will be posted in all school rooms. Fire drills will be conducted at least once per month. Drills will be held at various times of the day and will test various types of fire emergencies. Documentation of the drills will be maintained by SAA for review and appropriate forms will be submitted to the district office as required by Florida Statutes.

On the first day of school, teachers will go over with each class where they would go for a fire drill. Be sure all exits are marked and a fire drill map is posted by each door. Attendance sheets will be carried during a fire drill and roll will be taken immediately when destination is reached.

2.2 Tornado Drill Procedures

SAA will maintain an emergency plan for use during tornado and inclement weather. This plan will be reviewed annually. All staff and students will be made aware of the plan. The plan will be practiced at during Severe Weather Week as required by Florida law. Documentation of the drills will be maintained by SAA for review.

If the school area is under a tornado watch, it means there is a chance of dangerous weather later with damaging winds. All teachers should be on the lookout for the danger signs listed below and be ready to have their classes in shelter and in the protected position. A tornado warning means a tornado has been sighted nearby and the class will go at once to shelter if they are not already there. Once inside, if given instructions to do so, have children curl up on the floor with knees up under the body with the back of the head covered with hands. Students should be in the middle of the room, away from windows, using desks as protection. Blinds are to be pulled closed to minimize injury from flying glass. The danger signs of tornadoes are: severe thunderstorms (thunder, lightning, heavy rains, and strong winds), hail (pellets of ice from dark-clouded skies), roaring noise (like a hundred railroad locomotives or a crashing thunderous sound), or a funnel sighting. Students will follow instructions under tornado warning.

2.3 Hurricane Closures

SAA will follow the Sarasota County School District emergency closures for hurricanes. Parents should monitor local news outlets during inclement weather. If the traditional public schools are closed, SAA will also be closed. Information may also be found at www.sarasotacountyschools.net.

2.4 Intruder/Lock Down Procedures

SAA will maintain an emergency Intruder/Lock Down Procedure as prescribed by Sarasota County School District. This plan will be reviewed annually for effectiveness and to ensure compliance by school personnel. All staff and students will be made aware of the procedures. The procedures will be practiced at least twice a year, and documentation of such will be maintained as required.

Section Three – Fund Raising

SAA is a nonprofit organization which relies on governmental funds and contributions to effectively educate our students. As a result, fundraising is necessary to help support the educational programs offered. The Principal and/or Financial Officer shall approve all fundraising activities and ensure that families are not being asked to contribute excessively at any given time. Efforts will be made to ensure only one fundraiser occurs at a time. All fundraisers will identify the purpose for the money raised.

Section Four – Photographs of Students

4.1 Portraits

SAA will sponsor several formal portrait days for students. A company which best meets the needs of the families for a reasonable cost will be selected by school staff. The fall photo will be utilized for the creation of the yearbook.

4.2 Play Pictures

Photos will be taken to use for advertisement purposes as well as the yearbook to document the Spring Broadway Musical and other performance events.

4.3 Snapshots

Frequently throughout the school year school staff members take pictures of events that happen during the school day. Should a parent not want their child photographed in such a way, they must submit written notification of their request to the Principal (or designee). This request will then be passed on to the school staff. Snapshots may periodically be used for promotional material for the school. Every attempt will be made to receive parental permission prior to the publishing of promotional materials which include the photograph of students. A blanket permission will be included with the Student and Parent Handbook. Additionally, the school reserves the right to utilize such snapshots through electronic media which do not individually identify any specific student. If a parent or guardian requests the removal of such a photograph, the school staff will comply with the request.

Section Five – Volunteers

5.1 Background Checks

All individuals who are not employed by SAA must enter through the administrative office. Should they wish to enter the playground area or classrooms, their identification must be scanned by the background check system, and a printed badge to wear, identifying that they have been properly checked in through the office. It is the responsibility of all staff members to help police the campus to ensure that all visitors have properly checked into the office. Any individual who does not have an appropriate name badge must be walked back to the office to ensure they are signed in properly.

5.2 Background Check Concerns

If, during the background check, an individual is identified as having a background as a sexual predator, the Principal will immediately be notified by the system. The person running the check should call the Principal and/or designee to decide what to do about the situation. The following guidelines are in place:

- If the person trying to gain entry has a relative who is a student attending the school, and there are no outstanding court orders barring that person from having contact with the child, the person may enter the school only with a staff member escort. The individual may not be left alone with any student on school property.
- If the person trying to gain entry has a relative who is a student attending the school, and there are restrictions on the visitation, the appropriate action will be taken as identified by the court documents. IN most situations, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Department will be called.
- If the person trying to gain entry does not have any relatives attending this school, they will not be permitted access to the campus, and the Sarasota County Sheriff's Department will be called.
- If the person trying to gain entry is a volunteer, the person will not be granted entry until after their information has been entered into the school district's volunteer background check system, and a clearance is given from the offices of Human Resources through the district offices.

5.3 Student Supervision Background Checks

If an adult plans to volunteer with students (such as field trip chaperones, student tutoring, etc.), the individual must complete a volunteer registration form and be Level 1 cleared through the Volunteer & Partnership Council system. If the adult will be responsible for student supervision (such as running an after-school club or chaperoning an extended field trip), the volunteer must go through a Level 2 background check, the cost of which the volunteer is responsible. The school district conducts the complete background check to ensure the individual is clear of anything in his/her past which would prevent the individual from working with children.

Section Six – Policy against Bullying and Harassment

Sarasota Academy of the Arts follows the Sarasota County Public Schools policy regarding bullying and harassment as defined in the student and Family Handbook. To expand, it is the policy of SAA that all of its students, employees, and volunteers learn and work in an environment that is safe, secure, and free

from harassment and bullying of any kind. SAA will not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

6.1 Definition of Bullying and Definition of Harassment

Bullying means intentionally and repetitively inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees but is not limited to:

- Teasing
- Social exclusion
- Threat
- Intimidation
- Stalking, including cyber stalking
- Physical violence
- Theft
- Sexual, religious, racial, or gender orientation harassment
- Public humiliation
- Destruction of property

Harassment means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct directed against a student or employee that:

- Places a student or employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying and harassment also encompass:

- Retaliation against a student or employee by another student or employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.
- Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
    - Incitement or coercion
    - Accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the school
    - Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment.
- Cyber stalking, which is defined as engaging in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose. See s.784.048(1)(d), F.S.

6.2 Expected Behavior

SAA expects students to conduct themselves as appropriate for their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.

SAA believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents/legal guardians, staff, and community members producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of the atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members. Since students learn by example, school administration, faculty, staff, and volunteers will demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate harassment or bullying. SAA upholds that bullying of any student or employee is prohibited:

- During any educational program or activity conducted by the school
- During any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity
- On a school bus
- Through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system.

6.3 Consequences for an Act of Bullying or Harassment

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or reassignment, as outlines in school's policies. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for an employee found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment may be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures, and agreements. Additionally, egregious acts of harassment by certified educators may results in a sanction against an educator's state issued certificate (See State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.006, FAC, The Principals of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida). Consequences legal guardian or other persons who promptly repots in good faith an act of bullying of harassment to the appropriate school official and who makes this repot in compliance with the procedures set forth in the school policy is immune from cause of action for damages arising out of the reporting itself or any failure to remedy the reported incident. Submission of good faith complaint or repot for bullying or harassment will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, learning or working environment, or work assignments. Written and oral reports shall be considered official reports. Reports may be made anonymously but formal discipline shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials. Accusations made in good faith, even though subsequently determined to be false, shall not be subject to discipline consequences or remedial action called for by this section.

6.4 Consequences for Intentional Misreporting

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or reassignment, as outlined in school policies. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for an employee found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment may be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures, and agreements. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the mature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

6.5 Reporting an Act of Bullying or Harassment

The Principal (or designee) is responsible for receiving alleged violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the Principal (or designee). All other members of the school community, including students, parents/legal guardians, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy anonymously or in person to the Principal (or designee). In order to report incidents of bullying, individuals may meet with the Principal (or designee) to make the report. Any report in person should be followed within one day with a written report or a written explanation to the school's office. Should the Principal wish, other forms of reporting may be created. The methods of reporting bullying will be prominently publicized to students, staff, volunteers, and parents/legal guardians, as well as how the report will be acted upon. The victim of bullying, anyone who witnessed the bullying, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying has taken place may file a report of bullying. An employee, school volunteer, students, parent/legal guardian or other persons who promptly reports in good faith an act of bullying or harassment to the appropriate school official and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures set forth in the school policy is immune from cause of action for damages arising out of the reporting itself or any failure to remedy the reported incident. Submission of good faith complaint or report for bullying or harassment will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, learning or working environment, or work assignments. Written and oral reports shall be considered official reports. Reports may be made anonymously but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

6.6 Investigation of Whether a Reported Act is Within the Scope of the School

The Principal (or designee) will follow investigative procedures to initiate an investigation of whether an act of bullying or harassment is within the scope of the school. The trained designee(s) will provide a report on results of the investigation with recommendations for the Principal to make a determination if an act of bullying or harassment falls within the scope of the school and will act according to the following protocols:

- If it is within the scope of the school, further investigation will commence in accordance with the procedure defined below.
- If it is outside the scope of the school, and determined a criminal act, it will be referred to appropriate law enforcement.
- If it is outside the scope of the school, and determined not a criminal act, the parents/legal guardians of all students involved will be informed.

6.7 Prompt Investigation of a Report of Bullying or Harassment

The investigation of a reported act of bullying or harassment is deemed to be a school-related activity and begins with a report of such an act.

The Procedures for Investigating Bullying and/or Harassment include:

- The Principal (or designee employed by the school) will be assigned to initiate the investigation. The designee may not be the accused perpetrator (harasser or bully) or victim.
- Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses) will be interviewed separately.
- The investigator shall collect and evaluate the facts including, but not limited to:
    - Description of incident including nature of the behavior, context in which the alleged incident occurred, etc.
    - How often the conduct occurred
    - Whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior
    - The relationship between the parties involved
    - The characteristics of the parties involved (i.e. grade, age, etc.)
    - The identity of the perpetrator, including whether the perpetrator was in a position of power over the student allegedly subjected to bullying or harassment
    - The number of alleged bullies/harassers
    - The age(s) of the alleged bullies/harassers
    - Where the bullying and/or harassment occurred
    - Whether the conduct adversely affected the student's education or educational environment.
- Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances and include:
    - Recommended remedial steps necessary to stop the bullying and/or harassing behavior
    - A written final report to the Principal

Where the victim is a student, according to the severity of the infraction, the Principal (or designee) shall promptly notify the parent/legal guardian of the victim via telephone or personal conference of any actions being taken to protect the victim. The frequency of notification will depend on the severity of the bullying incident. The maximum of 10 school days shall be the limit for the initial filing of incidents and completion of the investigative procedural steps.

6.8 Determination of Consequences and Due Processes of a Perpetrator

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances, followed by the determination of disciplinary sanctions appropriate to the perpetrator's position within the school.

1. Consequences and appropriate interventions for students who commit acts of bullying

may range from positive behavioral interventions up to, but not limited to suspension, or reassignment as outlined in SAA's policies and Sarasota County School District's Code of Conduct.

2. Consequences and appropriate interventions for an employee found to have committed an act of bullying will be instituted in accordance with school policy. Additionally, egregious acts of bullying by certified educators may result in a sanction against the educator's state issued certificate (Rule 6B-1.006 F.A.C.)
3. Consequences and appropriate intervention for a visitor or volunteer, found to have committed an act of bullying shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.
4. These same actions will apply to persons, whether they are students, school employees, or visitors/volunteers/independent contractors, who are found to have made wrongful and intentional accusations of another as a means of bullying.
5. If a complaint of bullying or harassment is made by the alleged victim during or after the commencement of an investigation into employee or student misconduct, it shall not be a defense to the allegations of employee or student misconduct but may be considered as a mitigating factor under school policy, if appropriate.

6.9 Providing Immediate Notification to the Parents/Legal Guardians of a Student Victim

The Principal (or designee) shall by telephone and in writing, report the occurrence of any incident of bullying as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation determines an act of bullying has occurred. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

If the bullying incident results in the perpetrator being charged with a crime, the Principal (or designee) shall by telephone or in writing by first class mail, inform parents/legal guardian of the victim(s) involved in the bullying incident. Once the investigation has been completed, appropriate local law enforcement agencies will be notified by telephone and/or in writing to determine whether to pursue criminal charges.

6.10 Referral of Victims and Perpetrators of Bullying or Harassment to Counseling

After an investigation has determined that an act of bullying has occurred, as defined herein, the school shall discuss with both the victim's and perpetrator's parents/legal guardians options available for counseling. This may include referrals to community agencies or partner agencies the school has relationships with. Parents/legal guardians will be notified that the school does not have a counselor or mental health specialists on staff.

The Principal (or designee) shall also refer the perpetrator to SAA's MSDS-b team in an attempt to develop strategies to be used within the school to prevent the bullying behavior from

continuing. The Principal (or designee) shall decide if a similar recommendation would be prudent for the victim.

6.11 Providing Instruction Regarding Bullying and/or Harassment

SAA seeks to ensure that schools sustain healthy, positive, and safe learning environments for all students. It is important to change the social climate of the school and the social norms with regards to bullying. This requires the efforts of everyone in the school environment including all school staff, parents/legal guardians, students, and school volunteers.

Students, parents/legal guardians, all school staff, and school volunteers shall be offered instruction at a minimum on an annual basis on the school's Policy Regulations against bullying and harassment. This instruction shall include evidence-based methods of preventing bullying and harassment, as well as hos to effectively identify and respond to bullying in schools.

6.12 Regularly Reporting of Actions Taken to Protect the Victim

The Principal (or designee) shall be telephone and/or in writing report the occurrence of any incidence of bullying as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation of the incident has determined an act of bullying has occurred. According to the level of the infraction, parents/legal guardians will be notified by telephone and/or writing of actions being taken to protect the child; the frequency of notification will depend on the seriousness of the bullying or harassment incident. Notification must be consistent with the student rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

6.13 Publication of the Policy

At the beginning of each school year, the Principal shall, in writing, inform school staff, parents/legal guardians, or other persons responsible for the welfare of a student of this policy. The Principal shall also make all contractors working with students aware of the policy.

The Principal shall ensure the development of an annual process for discussing the policy on bullying and harassment with students in a student assembly or other reasonable format.

Section Seven – Computer, E-Mail, and Cell Phone Usage

7.1 School Telephones/Cell Phones

Use of school telephones should be kept to a minimum or for emergency use. Staff members shall refrain from making or receiving outside calls while they are responsible for the supervision or education of students.

Student use of cell phones is not allowed within the school building without the expressed permission of the teacher in charge. Teachers are allowed to permit cell phone/smart phone usage for education purposes as outlined in the Sarasota County Parent and Family Handbook. Staff members' use of personal cell phones/smart phones are prohibited while responsible for the supervision or education of students. Staff may use personal cell phones/smart phones during scheduled breaks, planning time, in-class contact with the office, or to access the internet during a class lesson.

7.2 Social Media Policy

SAA realizes that part of the 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of teachers, students, and parents engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing n these digital environments is a part of 21st century learning. To this aim, SAA has developed the following guidelines to provide direction for instructional employees, students, and the school community while participating in online social media activities. Whether or not an employee chooses to participate in a blog, wiki, online social network, or any other form of online publishing or discussion, it is his/her own decision. Free speech protects educators who want to participate in social media, but the laws and courts have ruled that schools can discipline teachers if their speech, including online postings, disrupts school operations. SAA's social media guidelines encourage employees to participate in online social activities. But it is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability; keeping in mind that information produced by SAA teachers and students is a reflection on the entire school and is subject to SAA's Acceptable Use Policy. By accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, or other social media for classroom or district use, you agree to abide by these guidelines. Please read them carefully before posting or commenting on any blog or creating any classroom blog, wiki, and/or podcast.

7.3 Guidelines for Faculty and Staff (Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, Digital Images, & Videos)

7.3.1 Personal Responsibility

- SAA employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time – protect your privacy.
- Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face.
- When posting to your blog, be sure you say that the information is representative of your views and opinions and not necessarily the views and opinions of SAA (See Blogging Rules).
- Remember that blogs, wikis, and podcasts are an extension of your classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.
- The lines between public and private, personal and professional, are blurred in the digital world. By virtue of identifying yourself as an SAA employee online, you are connected to colleagues,

students, parents, and the school community. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at SAA.

- When contributing online do not post confidential student information. As a rule of thumb, post only the first name with a photo. Do not post a last name.

7.3.2 Copyright and Fair Use

- Respect copyright and fair use guidelines. See U.S. Copyright Office – Fair Use (http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html)
- A hyperlink to outside sources is recommended. Be sure not to plagiarize and give credit where it is due. When using a hyperlink, be sure that the content is appropriate and adheres to SAA's acceptable use policy.
- It is recommended that blogs be licensed under a Creative Common Attribution 3.0 United States License.

7.3.3 Profiles and Identity

- Remember your association and responsibility with SAA in online social environments. If you identify yourself as an SAA employee, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues, parents, and students. How you represent yourself online should be comparable to how you represent yourself in person.
- Be cautious how you set up your profile, bio, avatar, etc.
- When uploading digital pictures or avatars that represent yourself, make sure you select a school appropriate image. Also remember not to utilize protected images. Images should be available under Creative commons or your own.

7.3.4 Personal Use of Social Media (Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc.)

- SAA's employees are personally responsible for all comments/information they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a very long time – protect your privacy.
- Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you would use face-to-face, and be in accordance with the highest professional standards.
- By posting your comments, having online conversations, etc., on social media sites, you are broadcasting to the world and should be aware that even with the strictest privacy settings, what you "say" online should be within the bounds of professional discretion. Comments expressed via social networking pages under the impression of a "private conversation" may still end up being shared into a more public domain, even with privacy settings on maximum.
- Comments related to the school should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion. When posting, even on the strictest settings, staff should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain.
- Before posting photographs and videos, permission should be sought from the subject when possible. This is especially the case where photographs of professional colleagues are concerned.
- Before posting personal photographs, thought should be given as to how the images reflect on your professionalism.