



WEST WING ACADEMY

Employee Handbook

WHERE KNOWLEDGE MEETS COMMON SENSE

West Wing Academy Employee Handbook

Purpose of This Handbook

Welcome to West Wing Academy. This Employee Handbook is intended to provide employees with a clear statement of the employment practices, professional expectations, workplace standards, and school-specific compliance obligations that apply to service at a Florida K-8 private school participating in state scholarship programs.

This Handbook is designed for a private school that participates in scholarship programs funded through Step Up For Students and therefore incorporates school obligations connected to sections 1002.42, 1002.421, 1002.394, and 1002.395, Florida Statutes, as summarized by the Florida Department of Education. It also incorporates personnel standards tied to ethics, background screening, reporting obligations, health and safety compliance, and student welfare protections published by the Florida Department of Education and Florida School Choice guidance.

This Handbook is a management guide and statement of school policy. It is not a contract of employment, does not create contractual rights, and does not alter the at-will nature of employment except where a written agreement signed by the Head of School expressly provides otherwise.

Employment Relationship

Employment with West Wing Academy is at will to the fullest extent permitted by Florida law. This means either the employee or the school may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, and with or without advance notice, unless a written employment agreement approved by the school expressly provides otherwise.

No supervisor, administrator, or representative of the school has authority to enter into an agreement contrary to this at-will relationship unless the agreement is in writing and signed by the Principal or Owner or other duly authorized governing authority. Oral statements, past practices, or handbook language do not create a guarantee of continued employment.

Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination

West Wing Academy is committed to providing equal employment opportunities in accordance with applicable federal and state law. Employment decisions will be based on legitimate business and school-related considerations, including qualifications, experience, performance, conduct, student safety, and mission alignment.

As a participating private school in Florida's scholarship programs, the school must comply with the anti-discrimination provisions of 42 U.S.C. section 2000d as part of scholarship participation requirements.

Professional Conduct and School Mission

West Wing Academy serves students and families in a school setting that requires employees to demonstrate professionalism, sound judgment, emotional self-control, confidentiality, and a consistent commitment to student welfare. Every employee is expected to act in a manner that protects the health, safety, education, dignity, and emotional well-being of students.

Employees must maintain professional boundaries with students and families, use school property and technology responsibly, avoid conduct that discredits the school, and follow all lawful directives of school leadership. Conduct that undermines school operations, student safety, financial integrity, regulatory compliance, or the school's reputation may result in discipline up to and including termination.

Standards of Ethical Conduct

West Wing Academy adopts and incorporates the standards of ethical conduct required for Florida private schools participating in scholarship programs. Each employee has an affirmative obligation to maintain honesty in all professional dealings, protect students from conditions harmful to learning or to mental or physical health and safety, maintain appropriate relationships with students, keep education records and personally identifiable information confidential as required by law, and refrain from exploiting professional relationships for personal or financial gain.

Employees may not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement, use institutional privileges for personal advantage in a manner inconsistent with school duties, falsify records, misrepresent qualifications, knowingly withhold material information related to student welfare, or engage in conduct that would impair the employee's effectiveness in serving students.

All employees are required to review and acknowledge the school's ethical conduct expectations as a condition of employment. Training on ethical conduct and employee misconduct reporting will be provided in the manner required for participating private schools.

Employee Misconduct Affecting Student Welfare

West Wing Academy prohibits employee misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. For purposes of school policy, misconduct includes conduct that results in abuse, abandonment, neglect, exploitation, inappropriate boundaries, immoral conduct, violent or threatening behavior toward a student, or any act or omission that places a student at unreasonable risk of harm.

Any employee who knows or has reason to suspect that another employee, contracted provider, or agent of the school has engaged in conduct affecting student welfare must immediately report the concern in accordance with this Handbook. Reports involving suspected abuse, abandonment, or neglect must be made directly to the Florida Abuse Hotline as required by law, and internal reporting to a supervisor does not satisfy the employee's statutory duty to report.

The school prohibits confidentiality agreements or employment practices that unlawfully suppress reporting of employee misconduct affecting student welfare. The school will cooperate with lawful investigations and maintain records and notices in the manner required by Florida guidance for participating private schools.

Mandatory Child Abuse, Abandonment, and Neglect Reporting

All employees are mandatory reporters under Florida law when they know, or have reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare. A report must be made immediately to the central abuse hotline operated by the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Employees must not delay making a report in order to conduct an internal investigation, obtain approval from a supervisor, or gather additional proof. Notification to the Head of School or another administrator may be required by internal procedure, but such internal notice is separate from and cannot replace the employee's direct legal duty to report to the hotline.

An employee who knowingly and willfully fails to report known or suspected abuse, abandonment, or neglect may be subject to criminal penalties under Florida law, in addition to school discipline up to and including termination.

Background Screening and Continued Eligibility

Because West Wing Academy participates in Florida state scholarship programs, the school must comply with criminal background screening requirements for owners, chief administrative officers, operators, employees, and contracted personnel in accordance with state law and Department guidance. The school will register and remain in compliance with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Volunteer & Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) and will maintain screening records and fingerprint retention requirements as required for participating private schools.

All employees and contracted personnel who have unsupervised access to a scholarship student for whom the school is responsible must complete the required state and national background screening before beginning employment or service in any covered role. Instructional personnel and school administrators in positions requiring direct student contact must also satisfy the ineligibility standards referenced in section 1012.315, Florida Statutes, in addition to the disqualifying offense standards under section 435.04, Florida Statutes.

The school may deny employment, remove direct student contact, or terminate employment based on screening results, arrest notifications, failure to disclose relevant criminal history, loss of required certification status where applicable, or failure to complete rescreening and fingerprint retention requirements. Participating private schools must deny employment to or terminate individuals who fail to meet statutory screening standards, and failure to comply may result in suspension of scholarship payments or other state sanctions against the school.

Qualifications for Instructional Staff

West Wing Academy employs or contracts only with teachers who meet scholarship participation standards. Teachers must hold a baccalaureate or higher degree, have at least three years of teaching experience in public or private schools, or possess special skills, knowledge, or expertise sufficient to provide instruction in the subjects taught.

Employees must provide truthful and complete information about degrees, credentials, work history, teaching experience, licensure, certification, and specialized qualifications. Material misrepresentation in hiring or continued employment documents may result in withdrawal of an offer, reassignment, or termination.

Employment Categories and Work Schedules

Employees may be classified by the school as full-time, part-time, exempt, nonexempt, temporary, seasonal, instructional, administrative, support, or otherwise as determined by school operations and wage-and-hour law. These classifications are used for payroll administration, scheduling, overtime eligibility, benefits eligibility, and operational assignment purposes.

The school reserves the right to establish, modify, and assign work schedules based on student supervision needs, instructional programming, before-school or after-school programming, meetings, parent conferences, professional development, school events, and operational requirements.

Employees are expected to arrive on time, remain on duty as assigned, and obtain approval for schedule deviations when required.

Attendance, Punctuality, and Absence Reporting

Reliable attendance is an essential function of positions at West Wing Academy because safe school operations depend on active supervision, continuity of instruction, and adequate staffing ratios.

Employees must report to work on time and prepared to perform all assigned duties.

An employee who will be late or absent must notify the designated administrator as early as possible and follow call-out procedures established by the school. Excessive absenteeism, repeated tardiness, failure to follow absence reporting procedures, or unauthorized departure from duty may result in discipline.

Compensation and Timekeeping

West Wing Academy will establish pay practices consistent with applicable wage-and-hour law.

Nonexempt employees are required to accurately record all hours worked, meal periods if required by school procedure, and any overtime worked.

No employee may work off the clock, falsify time records, or work overtime without required authorization. Unauthorized overtime must still be recorded and paid when legally required, but working unauthorized overtime or falsifying time records may result in discipline.

Meal Periods and Breaks

Meal periods and rest breaks will be administered in accordance with school operations, staffing needs, and applicable law. Employees must remain attentive to student supervision obligations and may not leave assigned students or duty areas unattended.

Nonexempt employees must accurately record unpaid meal periods when applicable. Employees who are not completely relieved of duty during a meal period must promptly report the time worked for payroll purposes.

Benefits and Leave Policies

The school may offer benefits and leave programs as described in separate plan documents, benefit summaries, board-approved policies, or written employment materials. If any conflict exists between this Handbook and a governing insurance contract, plan document, or formal leave policy, the governing document controls.

Employees may be eligible for legally required leave or employer-provided leave depending on classification, length of service, hours worked, and school policy. Employees must comply with notice, certification, and documentation requirements applicable to any leave request.

Reasonable Accommodation

West Wing Academy will consider reasonable accommodations required by applicable law for qualified applicants and employees with disabilities and for sincerely held religious observances, unless doing so would create an undue hardship or direct threat that cannot be reasonably mitigated. Employees requesting accommodation should notify school administration promptly and participate in the interactive process.

The school may request appropriate supporting documentation where permitted by law and may implement temporary measures while evaluating a request. Employees are expected to cooperate in identifying an effective accommodation that allows performance of essential job functions while maintaining student safety and school operations.

Employee Records and Reporting Changes

Employees must provide accurate and current personal information, including legal name, address, phone number, emergency contacts, tax withholding information, and credential status. Any change

in name, address, contact information, certification status, arrest status where reporting is required, or other material employment information must be reported promptly to school administration.

West Wing Academy will maintain personnel and compliance records as required for employment administration and scholarship program participation. Employees may be required to complete forms, acknowledgments, and periodic updates to maintain the school's compliance posture.

Confidentiality and Student Records

Employees are expected to protect confidential information learned through employment, including student records, health information, discipline information, assessment information, family information, personnel information, investigative materials, and internal school business records. Confidential information may be accessed, used, or disclosed only for legitimate school purposes and only in a manner permitted by law and school policy.

School records must be accurate, timely, and complete. Altering, concealing, destroying, or improperly disclosing records may result in discipline and may expose the employee and school to legal liability.

Technology, Communications, and Social Media

School technology systems, devices, email, internet access, learning platforms, communication tools, and stored electronic information are provided primarily for school business. Employees must use school technology in a lawful, professional, secure, and educationally appropriate manner.

Employees may not use school technology to harass others, access inappropriate material, violate confidentiality, infringe intellectual property rights, bypass security controls, or engage in activity that disrupts school operations. The school reserves the right to monitor, access, review, and retain information on school-owned systems to the extent permitted by law.

Employees who reference the school, students, families, coworkers, or school operations on social media must maintain professionalism, confidentiality, and clear boundaries. Online conduct that harms students, compromises confidentiality, or materially disrupts school operations may result in discipline.

Workplace Safety and Health

West Wing Academy is committed to compliance with applicable state and local health, safety, and welfare laws, codes, and rules, as required for scholarship-participating private schools. Employees must follow all safety procedures, participate in required drills and training, report hazards promptly, and cooperate with corrective actions, inspections, and emergency procedures.

Employees must immediately report work-related injuries, unsafe conditions, threats, weapons, suspected exposure incidents, building hazards, and security concerns to administration. No employee may ignore or override a safety rule that exists to protect students, staff, or visitors.

Student Supervision and Campus Security

Direct supervision of students is a core duty in a K-8 school environment. Employees must remain alert, maintain visibility of assigned students, follow check-in and check-out procedures, supervise transitions, and comply with all arrival, dismissal, recess, lunch, restroom, playground, and emergency supervision assignments.

Employees must follow visitor management procedures, release students only to authorized individuals, secure instructional and student-use spaces as directed, and report any missing student, unauthorized person, or campus security concern immediately. Failure to supervise students appropriately is a serious violation of school policy.

Health Services, Medication, and Student Welfare

Only authorized personnel may administer medication, provide health-related services, or carry out student health procedures in accordance with school policy and applicable law. Employees must not exceed their training, licensure, role authority, or written authorization when responding to student health issues.

Employees must promptly report student illness, injury, behavioral crisis, suspected abuse, self-harm concerns, threats, or other welfare concerns through the school's emergency and reporting procedures. Documentation of incidents involving student health or safety must be timely, accurate, and complete.

Harassment, Bullying, and Unlawful Conduct

West Wing Academy prohibits unlawful harassment, discrimination, bullying, retaliation, threats, intimidation, and workplace violence. This policy applies to conduct involving employees, applicants,

students, parents, volunteers, vendors, visitors, and any other person interacting with the school community.

Employees who experience, witness, or receive a complaint about prohibited conduct must promptly report it to administration. The school will review complaints as appropriate, take corrective action when warranted, and prohibit retaliation against individuals who make good-faith reports or participate in investigations.

Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace

Employees must report to work fit for duty and free from the unlawful influence of drugs, alcohol, or any substance that impairs safe and effective performance. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, use, sale, or transfer of illegal drugs or alcohol on school property, during working time, while supervising students, or during school-sponsored activities is prohibited.

The lawful use of prescription or over-the-counter medication does not excuse unsafe performance. Employees must notify administration when a medication or medical condition may impair judgment, alertness, driving, supervision, or the safe performance of essential job duties.

Searches and School Property

Desks, classrooms, cabinets, workspaces, keys, records, electronic devices owned by the school, and other school property remain the property of West Wing Academy. To the extent permitted by law, the school reserves the right to inspect school property and investigate misuse of school resources, misconduct, safety concerns, or policy violations.

Employees are expected to return all school property immediately upon request or upon separation from employment. This includes keys, badges, devices, records, curriculum materials, student information, financial records, and any other property belonging to the school.

Outside Employment and Conflicts of Interest

Employees must avoid outside employment, financial interests, or personal relationships that interfere with job performance, compromise student welfare, misuse confidential information, or create an actual or apparent conflict with the school's interests. Employees may be required to disclose outside activities that could affect scheduling, safety, ethics, or compliance.

No employee may use the employee's position at the school for improper personal gain, solicit families for unauthorized private business in a way that conflicts with school policy, or accept benefits

that could improperly influence professional judgment. Professional boundaries and ethical decision-making are required at all times.

Investigations and Cooperation

Employees must cooperate fully, honestly, and promptly in school investigations, compliance reviews, audits, screening follow-up, and child-safety inquiries. This includes preserving records, providing truthful information, maintaining confidentiality as directed, and following lawful instructions from school leadership.

The school may place an employee on investigatory leave, reassign duties, restrict campus access, or implement interim protective measures when necessary to protect students, preserve evidence, or maintain school operations. Such action is not necessarily disciplinary and may occur while a matter is under review.

Discipline and Corrective Action

West Wing Academy reserves discretion to use counseling, verbal warning, written warning, performance improvement plan, reassignment, suspension, final warning, demotion, or termination, depending on the nature of the issue and the school's assessment of risk and operational needs. Certain conduct may warrant immediate termination without prior progressive discipline, especially when student safety, dishonesty, abuse reporting failures, screening disqualification, gross misconduct, theft, violence, or serious policy violations are involved.

Nothing in this Handbook requires the school to use progressive discipline in every situation. The school retains the right to determine the appropriate response to misconduct, performance deficiencies, safety concerns, policy violations, or failure to meet school standards.

Complaint Reporting and Open-Door Process

Employees are encouraged to raise work-related concerns promptly so issues can be addressed early and appropriately. Concerns may involve supervision, resources, safety, scheduling, payroll, employee relations, student welfare, unethical conduct, discrimination, harassment, retaliation, compliance issues, or policy questions.

Unless a policy or law requires a different reporting path, employees should normally raise concerns with their immediate supervisor first, then the Principal, and then the Owner or designated

compliance contact when needed. Nothing in this procedure limits any employee's right or duty to make a report to an outside agency when required or protected by law.

Scholarship Program Compliance Responsibilities

As a participating private school serving scholarship students through programs administered with Step Up For Students, West Wing Academy must maintain records, deadlines, and compliance documentation required by the Florida Department of Education and the applicable scholarship program rules. Employees must support accurate enrollment, attendance, student withdrawal reporting, teacher qualification verification, site visit readiness, and other compliance functions assigned by administration.

The school must annually submit a signed and notarized Scholarship Compliance Form and maintain evidence of compliance. The school must also respond timely to Department requests for information, maintain current school contact information, return funds for services not provided, and keep documentation demonstrating compliance with scholarship program requirements.

Employees whose duties affect scholarship compliance must complete assigned tasks accurately and on time. Falsification, delay, omission, or careless recordkeeping in matters affecting scholarship funding may result in discipline and may expose the school to repayment obligations, sanctions, or loss of scholarship participation eligibility.

Testing, Attendance, and Academic Accountability

For scholarship students in grades 3 through 10, participating private schools must annually administer a Department-approved nationally norm-referenced test or the statewide assessment pursuant to Florida law. Employees involved in instruction, testing coordination, attendance, and records management must comply with school procedures that support these obligations.

Attendance and enrollment records must be accurate because scholarship funding and compliance responsibilities depend in part on correct reporting, including student withdrawal dates and services actually provided. Employees must complete attendance and records duties carefully and by deadline.

Separation from Employment

Employment may end by resignation, retirement, nonrenewal, completion of assignment, layoff, or termination initiated by the employee or the school. Employees are expected to provide written notice

of resignation whenever practicable, though advance notice is not required to preserve the school's at-will rights unless a written agreement states otherwise.

Upon separation, the employee must immediately return all school property, passwords, records, confidential information, student materials, keys, and equipment, and must complete any required offboarding steps. Final pay will be provided in accordance with applicable law and school policy.

Handbook Administration and Policy Changes

West Wing Academy reserves the right to interpret, revise, suspend, rescind, supplement, or deviate from this Handbook, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice, to the extent permitted by law. Operational practices may also be supplemented by separate policies, procedures, forms, benefit documents, emergency protocols, compliance directives, and board actions.

If any provision of this Handbook is determined to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions will remain in effect to the fullest extent permitted by law. This Handbook should be read together with signed employment agreements, job descriptions, compliance forms, and school operating procedures.

Employee Acknowledgment

Each employee will be required to sign an acknowledgment confirming receipt of this Handbook, understanding of the policies contained in it, agreement to comply with school expectations, and understanding that the Handbook does not create a contract of employment. Employees may also be required to sign separate acknowledgments for child abuse reporting, ethical conduct, background screening, confidentiality, technology use, and scholarship compliance responsibilities.

Administrator Name: Rachel Robinson

Administrator Signature: _____

Date: _____

Employee Name (Printed): _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____