

Odyssey Academy Charter School

2017 - 2018 Employee Handbook



THE ROBERT A. MOSBACHER, SR. ODYSSEY ACADEMY

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Disclaimer

This handbook does not create an employment contract. Employees are terminable at-will by the school. Similarly, employees may resign their positions without penalty. No individual board member or employee has the authority to alter any employee's at-will status, or guarantee an employee's employment for a specific period of time, unless it is approved by the board of directors, is in writing, and is signed by both the employee and the chair of the board of directors.

Odyssey Academy reserves the right to amend or withdraw any or all provisions of the personnel handbook at any time with or without notice.

Introduction

Welcome to Odyssey Academy

Welcome to Odyssey Academy and to what we hope will be a long, productive, and satisfying career at one of Texas' finest public charter schools. OA strives to create an exciting, challenging, and rewarding work environment. We want you to build a successful relationship with OA and be a happy and productive member of our school community.

This employee manual was prepared to help you become familiar with OA and its personnel standards and procedures. Please read it carefully and if you have questions or concerns, speak with your supervisor. If you need further information or assistance, please contact OA's Human Resources Department.

On behalf of our OA extended family, thank you for joining us. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Goodman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Goodman
Superintendent

About this Personnel Handbook

The purpose of this personnel handbook is to provide employees with a source of information about Odyssey Academy's procedures and policies. The policies and procedures in this handbook are to serve as guidelines. Although OA has tried to be comprehensive, the handbook does not, and cannot, include procedures and policies which address every situation that may arise.

Odyssey Academy has, and reserves, the right to adopt new procedures and policies, or modify, alter, change or cancel existing policies and procedures at any time. Violation of any provision within this handbook may lead to disciplinary action up to and including discharge from employment.

Questions regarding this handbook or any of the policies/procedures should be directed to your supervisor or to the Human Resources Department.

About Odyssey Academy

In 1995 the Texas Education Code was revised to create a new type of public school, known as a charter school. Charter schools are subject to fewer state laws than other public schools with the idea of ensuring fiscal and academic accountability without undue regulation of instructional methods or pedagogical innovation. Like school districts, charter schools are monitored and accredited under the statewide testing and accountability system.

Charter schools were created because law makers felt that schools that had less laws and restrictions imposed on them may have an advantage over traditional public schools. A charter school's purpose is to improve student learning, increase the choice of learning opportunities within the public school system, create professional opportunities that will attract new teachers to the public school system, establish a new form of accountability for public schools, and encourage different and innovative learning methods.

Odyssey Academy, established in 1999, is a multi-campus, open enrollment public charter school that serves students aged Prekindergarten through High School in the Galveston/Houston area.

Odyssey Academy exists to inspire and develop the highest potential in every one of our students. OA employees behave by building **relationships** with those around us through caring for the whole person and supporting each other, setting **high expectations** for ourselves and those around us, and showing **passion** by being fanatical about our craft.

Odyssey Academy will succeed by providing diverse academic and life experiences for students, being involved in community groups and activities, and providing resources to ensure staff effectiveness.

About the Odyssey Academy Board of Trustees

Odyssey Academy's board of trustees meets at least four times each year. All meetings are open to the public and employees are encouraged to attend if they have an interest in the topics of a particular meeting. Agendas are posted at the school and on the website no later than 72-hours prior to the meeting date and time. Odyssey Academy's Board of Trustees is made up of the following members:

- Mr. Robert Mosbacher, Sr. (1927-2010) – *Founder and President Emeritus of the Board*
 - President, Mosbacher Energy; Former U.S. Secretary of Commerce
- Dr. Judy Wern-Kiester – *Board Member Emeritus*
 - Former Director of Sea Camp and Outreach Department at Texas A & M University at Galveston
- Mr. George W. S. Abbey – *President of the Board*
 - Baker Botts Senior Fellow in Space Policy at the Baker Institute, Rice University; Former Director of the Johnson Space Center
- Neil G. Matlock – *Vice President & Secretary of the Board*
 - Attorney, Retired
- Mr. George Liberato – *Board Member*
 - Owner, Liberato Properties
- Dr. Cissy Matthews – *Board Member*
 - Vice President of Instruction, Galveston College
- Mr. Douglas W. Matthews – *Board Member*
 - Assistant Vice President, Government Relations, The University of Texas Medical Branch – Galveston
- Ms. Lauren Suderman Millo – *Board Member*
 - Marketing Director, Moody National Bank

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Personnel Handbook

The information contained in this personnel handbook is important and I should consult with my campus administrator if I have a question that is not answered in this handbook.

I acknowledge that the Odyssey Academy personnel handbook does not create an employment contract or otherwise modify my at-will employment status. I understand that no one has the authority to alter an employee's at-will status, or guarantee an employee's employment for a specific period of time, unless it is approved by the board of directors, is in writing, and is signed by both myself and the chair of the board of directors.

I understand that Odyssey Academy may amend or withdraw any or all portions of this handbook at any time. I understand that it is my responsibility to comply with the provisions in this handbook, including any revisions, and that failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action. I further acknowledge that any revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing provisions within this handbook. By remaining employed by Odyssey Academy following any modifications to this handbook I thereby accept and agree to such changes.

I acknowledge that I have read this handbook and agree to read any amendments of the handbook. I understand that I am required to sign and date this Acknowledgement of Receipt and return it to my campus administrator. I understand that a copy of this form will be retained in my personnel file.

Signature of Employee

Date

Printed Employee Name

Starting Your Job

Accuracy of Information

Odyssey Academy relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other information presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Employees are expected to provide truthful and accurate information in connection with their employment at Odyssey Academy.

Any falsification or misrepresentation in connection with application materials, or during the course of employment, is a serious offense and may lead to discharge from employment or non-selection of an applicant.

Certification and Licenses

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

Employment may be terminated if an individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. Employment may also be terminated if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact Human Resources if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

Employment Application & Other Forms

New employees are asked to complete the following forms:

- a. Employment Application
- b. W-4 Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate
- c. I-9 Employment Eligibility Form
- d. Employee Election Form to Withhold Certain Information from Public Access
- e. Wage Deduction Authorization Agreement
- f. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Personnel Handbook
- g. Authorization for Direct Deposit
- h. Applicable Healthcare/Benefit Forms
- i. Employee Agreement

Current employees may be required to update or execute any of the above forms. Any employee who fails or refuses to complete the above forms or to provide Odyssey Academy with requested documentation may be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge from employment.

Criminal History Background Checks

A person may not be employed or serve as a teacher, substitute teacher, librarian, educational aide, administrator, or counselor unless the person has been approved by the Texas Education Agency

following a review of the person's National Criminal History Record Information. Each individual serving or expected to serve in the aforementioned roles will be expected to comply and submit the necessary information for the background check. Additionally, other employees and contractors subject to criminal background checks will be required to comply and submit the necessary information for the background check.

New Employee Orientation

During the first few weeks of employment, an employee must attend an orientation that will include the following subject areas:

- a. A review of this personnel manual;
- b. A tour of the campus;
- c. Receipt of credentials necessary for facility, access, keys, and other materials as appropriate;
- d. Prevention techniques for, and recognition of, sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children;
- e. System logins and technology equipment.

Hiring Retirees

Odyssey Academy recognizes the wealth of experience of retired teachers and other employees and provides them with the opportunity for reemployment.

Defining Retiree Employment

Odyssey Academy defines retiree as an individual who retired from TRS and is eligible for reemployment. During employment after retirement, a retiree will not earn additional service credit, and TRS contributions will not be due on amounts earned.

Half-time retiree employment is working less than one-half of the time required for a similar full-time (FTE) position. For TRS retiree surcharge purposes, one must work for OA in a 0.49 (or less) FTE position or an hourly position working one hour less than half-time for a particular calendar month.

Teacher Retirement System Rules

A one-month separation period is required of a person retiring from TRS if the retiree plans to return to work for Odyssey Academy. A retiree may not return to work or volunteer his or her services during this separation period or at any time during employment. The following guidelines will apply:

1. If the retiree retired before January 1, 2011, the employee may work in any capacity without losing his or her annuity; however, retiree surcharges will apply to any retiree who retired after September 1, 2005, who is working half-time or more. [See the TRS Website (www.trs.state.tx.us/) for additional information]
2. If the retiree retired on or after January 1, 2011, the employee may work one hour less than half-time, as a substitute, or as a combination of substitute and half-time without forfeiting his or her annuity.
3. If the retiree retired on or after January 1, 2011, the employee must wait 12 consecutive months before accepting full-time TRS eligible employment. However, the following will apply:

- a. TRS retiree surcharges will still apply to any retiree working half-time or more, for which OA will be responsible for paying.
- b. Failure to observe the 12-month break in service period will result in forfeiture of the employee's monthly annuity for each month in which that work occurs.

Salary

Retirees working full-time who retired on or after January 1, 2011 will be compensated according to the initial placement of a new employee on the Odyssey Academy pay scale. Retirees who retired prior to January 1, 2011, or retirees who are working less than half-time (49% or less), may be compensated according to the Odyssey Academy pay scale.

Medical Benefits

Medical leave and benefits are as follows:

1. The rehired TRS retiree will be eligible for medical insurance based on OA's eligibility policy.
2. Leave time will be advanced and accrued at the same rate as a new hire.

Compensation

The guidelines regarding compensation are as follows:

1. The rehired TRS retiree will pay Medicare taxes according to federal guidelines
2. Rehired TRS retired employees will no longer receive career ladder compensation.

Reporting to Work

Official Odyssey Academy Office Hours

Standard hours of operation in the administrative office areas are from 7:15 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. on Monday through Thursday and 7:15 a.m. until 3:45 p.m. on Friday. Students are in session from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Regular Work Schedules

Odyssey Academy has a standard workweek of 41-hours per week, excluding time off for lunch or other personal breaks. Scheduled hours for employees may vary from department to department.

All full-time, non-exempt employees generally work a Monday through Friday schedule of 41-hours divided into four 8.25-hour workdays and one 8-hour workday, unless a different schedule is approved in writing by the employee's supervisor.

Exempt employees are expected to work the hours necessary to complete their assigned work to the satisfaction of their supervisor without regard to scheduled hours and without expectation of additional compensation.

All employees are expected to be at work during Odyssey Academy's official office hours unless otherwise required or approved by the employee's supervisor.

Attendance

Odyssey Academy employees are expected to be reliable and punctual in reporting for work each scheduled day. If an employee will be late to work or is unable to work as scheduled, the employee should notify their supervisor in advance as soon as possible.

Odyssey Academy recognizes there will be occasions when an illness or other personal event may result in an unscheduled absence. As such, Odyssey Academy has a leave policy.

Poor attendance and/or repeated tardiness is disruptive to the operations of Odyssey Academy and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from employment.

Time Away from Work

Punctual and consistent attendance at work is a fundamental requirement of your employment at Odyssey Academy. It is important that employees attend work as scheduled. Dependability, attendance, punctuality, and a commitment to do the job right are essential at all times. As such, employees are expected at work on all scheduled work days and during all scheduled work hours, and to report to work on time. Moreover, an employee must notify their administrator as far in advance as possible, but not later than one hour before their scheduled starting time if they expect to be late or absent. They must also enter the absence into the AESOP system as soon as possible so the system can begin a search for a substitute. This process must be completed every time an employee is absent or late unless they have provided the Human Resources Department with more specific long-term information from their treating health care provider. An employee who fails to contact their administrator and enter the absence into AESOP may be considered as having voluntarily resigned. A careful record of absenteeism and tardiness is kept by the Human Resources Department and becomes part of an employee's personnel record. To the extent permitted by law, absenteeism and tardiness lessens an employee's chance for advancement and may result in dismissal.

Holidays & School Breaks

Odyssey Academy will be closed during the following recognized holidays:

- Labor Day: September 4, 2017
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: January 15, 2018

Additionally, during the following dates, Odyssey Academy will be closed for school break:

- Thanksgiving Break: November 20, 2017 – November 24, 2017
- Winter Break: December 25, 2017 – January 5, 2018
- Spring Break: March 12, 2018 – March 16, 2018
- Independence Day: July 2, 2018 – July 6, 2018

Attendance and Absences

All full-time employees receive seven days of leave each year, this is to cover personal and sick-days. Part-time employees or those who work less than a full year receive a pro-rated number of days. You can always use accumulated time for your personal illness or injury or the illness or injury of an immediate family member. Days of leave left from one school year carry over into the next school year.

If an employee reaches a balance of less than two days during the school year, the employee will receive a Notice of Personal Leave Balance letter. If an employee is absent in excess of their accumulated personal leave balance, the employee will receive a Letter of Attendance Standard Expectations. Continued violation of attendance standards and excessive absenteeism could result in termination of employment. "Excessive" absences are any that are not in compliance with school policies and procedures for taking available leave. Three unexcused days of absence in a row leads to voluntary termination. In the event of an extended absence, employees must submit an Extended Leave Request Form to the Human Resources Department for approval.

Odyssey Academy does not have a category of leave called “leave without pay.” If an employee is absent in excess of the number of days of leave available under district policy, they are simply absent and will not be paid for those days. Employees who are paid on a salary basis will have appropriate deductions made from their regular salary payment for days of absence in excess of accumulated leave. If you do not comply with school policies and procedures for absence notification or for leave requests, you will not be paid for those days of absence even if you have leave available.

Employees may not use personal leave on the first day or last day of school, the day immediately before or after a holiday, during professional development days, or during state or local testing periods. An employee will be docked the daily rate of pay for leave taken on these days. Any and all exceptions to this rule must be submitted in writing and approved by the Superintendent.

Personal leave may not last more than three consecutive workdays. Any days above three will be docked at the employee’s daily rate of pay except in extenuating circumstances as determined by the superintendent.

Guest Teacher Folder

Each teacher must prepare a guest teacher folder to be kept in the clear safety box in each room. These folders should include detailed guest teacher lesson plans, a class roster, an attendance sheet, a class schedule, a classroom management plan, the special operations schedule (don’t forget your aide’s schedule), the safety drill procedures, class seating assignments, hall passes, discipline referrals, and a guest teacher debrief form. It is imperative these folders are available in order to provide guest teachers with all needed information to adequately perform their job.

Medical Certification

School administration has the right to, and will ask for periodic information from an employee’s treating doctor to verify the need for medical absences and to give an indication of when an employee will be able to return to duty. Employees may be asked for a note from their doctor for absences the day before or following a weekend and holiday. Failure to provide the necessary information can affect employee eligibility for leave and will be treated as a failure to follow district policy and procedures.

Medical Examinations

School administration has the right to, and will ask for a medical or psychological examination, paid for by the district, if we believe an employee’s condition is interfering with the performance of their regular duties. Failure to cooperate will be treated as a failure to follow district policy and comply with directives.

On-the-Job Injuries

In the event of employee injury, even a slight injury, while performing job duties for Odyssey Academy, an incident report must be completed with the nurse. The incident report should immediately be delivered to the Human Resources Department to allow the school to stay in compliance with workers’ compensation laws. Odyssey Academy provides workers’ compensation coverage for all employees. If an injury at work causes an employee to be absent, it is their responsibility to inform school administration whether they wish to use accumulated leave in order to receive full pay during an

absence, to the extent of available accumulated leave, or whether they wish to save accumulated leave and receive only the temporary income benefits that are available under the workers' compensation laws. If you do not inform school administration of your choice, absences will NOT be charged to accumulated leave and the employee will receive only temporary income benefits.

Disability

Full-time employees are eligible for disability leave due to non-occupational illness, injuries, or pregnancy. Employees requesting leave must provide written notice of the disability and an expected date of return to work to the Human Resources Department.

Family Medical Leave Act

Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave in a 12-month period for specified family and medical reasons. Employees are eligible if they have worked for at least 1,250 hours in the past 12 months for the school. Employees may take this leave for the following reasons: birth of a child, placement or care of a foster child, care for child, spouse, or parent with a serious medical condition, or for your own serious health condition that prohibits you to perform your duties at Odyssey Academy. Leave is unpaid, but an employee may use remaining paid leave days that are available at the time of request. Employees may request intermittent leave or reduced schedule to care for a family member or their own serious health condition. Please provide thirty days advanced notice, or as much notice as possible. Medical certification is required before employee leave begins; periodic reports and statements of intent to return to work may be requested by school administration as well as a medical certification to return to work after the leave has been completed. Benefits will remain the same up to twelve weeks, after which, employees may purchase continuing coverage through the COBRA rules.

Leave Types

Sick Leave

Sick leave is part of the seven days of leave earned each year. It can only be used in half day and full day increments. Sick leave may be used for the following reasons:

- Employee and immediate family sickness
- Employee and immediate family doctor appointments

Enter the absence in AESOP and select leave type "Sick." This leave will be charged to an employee's paid time off.

Personal Leave

Days taken as "personal leave" must be requested a minimum of three days in advance. Employees may not use personal leave immediately before or after a holiday, during professional development days, or during state or local testing periods. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of guest teachers, will be considered by the principal or supervisor. School administration will always try to honor timely requests for personal leave that comply with policy requirements, but an employee's principal or supervisor may withdraw approval

if unforeseeable absences among other staff (bad weather, professional development, illness) would affect the efficient and effective operation of the campus or department.

Enter the absence in AESOP and select leave type "Personal." This leave will be charged to an employee's paid time off.

Two Hour Leave

This leave type is to be used on an infrequent, exception only basis. It can only be used in two hours or less timeframes. This leave requires an employee to find a replacement for any of their duties and prior approval from their principal. Additionally, it requires an employee to enter in the Notes to Administration field in AESOP a reason, and who will be covering their duties. School administration has the right to charge a half day or full day leave if an employee uses the Two Hour Leave in excess.

Enter the absence in AESOP and select leave type "2HR Leave." This leave will not be charged against employee paid time off. Receive supervisor approval prior to entering leave in AESOP.

Jury Duty

In the event of a jury duty summons, an employee will be paid at their regular rate of pay and will not be charged for leave. For a jury duty summons, enter the absence into AESOP and select reason code "Jury Duty". Upon return to Odyssey Academy it will be necessary to show proof of serving at jury duty.

Enter the absence into AESOP and select leave type "Jury." This leave will not be charged to an employee's paid time off days.

Bereavement

For an immediate family member, employees will receive up to three days of paid leave. This absence does not count against paid time off days.

Immediate family member is defined as: spouse, son, daughter, son-or daughter-in-law, stepchild, legal ward or child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis, parent, step-parent, parent-in-law, or other individual who stands in loco parentis to the employee, sibling, stepsibling, sibling-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, or any person who may be residing in the employee's household at that time.

An employee may be permitted to use a bereavement day to attend a funeral for the immediate family member of an Odyssey Academy student. This leave must be preapproved by the superintendent or principal.

Enter the absence into AESOP and select reason code "Bereavement." This time does not count against an employee's paid time off.

Maternity

Maternity leave is for those employees that will be out for an extended time due to the birth or adoption of a child. Employees can receive up to six weeks of non-paid maternity leave, unless they opt to use any accumulated paid time off days.

Enter the absence into AESOP and select reason code “Maternity.” This time may count against an employee’s paid time off.

Staff Development

Employees requiring leave to attend training must have been approved in advance.

Enter the absence into AESOP and select reason code “Professional Development.” This time does not count against an employee’s paid time off.

Military Service

Regular employees requiring leave to serve in the uniformed services will be granted. A Leave of Absence Form with a written notice is required. The length of leave is determined by the Uniform Services. Military Service is not a paid leave category, but employees may keep benefits for up to 18-months, as long as employees continue paying insurance. Reinstatement of employment will occur on return from duty. An administrator will select leave type as “Other” in AESOP.

Administrative

The superintendent can order any employee to be placed on administrative leave, usually with pay, if it is determined that it is in the district’s best interest to do so. The administrator will select leave type as “Other” in AESOP.

Benefits

Health Insurance

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

- Employees who are active, contributing TRS members
- Employees who are not contributing TRS members and who are regularly scheduled to work at least 10-hours per week

TRS retirees who are enrolled in TRS-Care (retiree health insurance program) and employees who are not contributing TRS members who are regularly scheduled to work less than 10-hours per week are not eligible to participate in TRS-ActiveCare.

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each fall. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet.

Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)

Employees may be eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) and, under IRS regulations, must either accept or reject this benefit. This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pretax basis (i.e., disability, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer, dental, and additional term life insurance). A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts.

New employees must accept or reject this benefit during their first month of employment. All employees must accept or reject this benefit on an annual basis during the school's open enrollment period.

Supplemental

Teacher Retirement

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify Human Resources as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement

System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web (www.trs.state.tx.us).

Other Retirement Plans (403b)

Odyssey Academy offers a voluntary pre-tax salary reduction retirement plan in which eligible employees may elect to participate in.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months if they have employment contracts or reasonable assurance of returning to service.

Worker's Compensation Insurance

Odyssey Academy, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. OA has workers' compensation coverage from Texas Mutual.

Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case.

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to your campus administrator. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code.

Wages & Expenses

Paychecks

Odyssey Academy pays its employees on a semimonthly basis on the 5th and 20th of each month unless adjusted for weekends or holidays. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check without the employee's written authorization.

An employee's payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information, and the amount of leave accumulated. Statements can be retrieved from the school's Employee Portal. Contact Payroll if you have questions about your payroll statement.

Direct Deposit

Direct deposit is Odyssey Academy's preferred method of payment for all employees paid by Odyssey Academy. Direct deposit enables Odyssey Academy to facilitate the distribution of pay to employees in a safe, secure, and timely manner. To enroll in direct deposit an employee may complete the direct deposit enrollment form and submit the form to Human Resources. A notification period of 30 days is necessary to activate this service.

Mistake in Payroll or Expense Reimbursement

Employees are required to immediately notify their supervisor in the event of a suspected mistake in their payroll or expense reimbursement. Failure to report an overpayment in payroll or in an expense reimbursement may result in disciplinary action.

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

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

Employees should contact Human Resources for more information about the school's pay schedules.

Hours Worked: Exempt Employees

All exempt employees who are compensated on a salary rather than hourly basis are paid their salary for all hours worked during the work week, regardless of the actual number of hours worked.

Hours Worked: Non-Exempt Employees

Only non-exempt employees (hourly employees and paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. Overtime is never at the employee's discretion. Non-exempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor. Working overtime without prior authorization may result in disciplinary action.

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Non-exempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. Monday and ends at 12:00 midnight Sunday.

Non-exempt employees may be compensated for overtime at time-and-a-half rate with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay. The following applies to all non-exempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 60 hours of comp time.
- Comp time must be used in the duty year that it is earned.
- Use of comp time may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval, as workload permits, or at the supervisor's direction.
- An employee may be required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time records will be maintained on all non-exempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.

A non-exempt employee is never permitted to work "off the clock." While all hours will be compensated appropriately, an employee's failure to report hours accurately whether too low or too high is cause for disciplinary action. Employees should immediately report to Human Resources any effort by a supervisor to participate, encourage, or even permit an employee to work "off the clock" in violation of this overtime provision.

Travel Expense Reimbursement

Before an employee incurs travel expenses related to Odyssey Academy business, the employee must submit a travel request form for approval to their supervisor. Employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule established by the administration.

Travel expenses from approved travel must be itemized and detailed on the Odyssey Academy travel reimbursement form. To be reimbursed, all original receipts for travel expenses must be included with the reimbursement form and submitted to the employee's supervisor.

Payroll Deductions

Odyssey Academy only will deduct wages from an employee's pay under circumstances that are allowable under state and federal law. Additionally, any wages that an employee has requested and authorized in writing will be deducted. If there is a deduction that has been made that the employee believes is in error, the employee should immediately contact Payroll.

Non-Discrimination & Anti-Harassment

Non-Discrimination

Odyssey Academy is committed to honor the laws that prohibit discrimination based upon an applicant or employee's race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, or other protected class recognized by applicable law. Employees are prohibited from discriminating against other employees, against applicants, or against students based upon the aforementioned protected classes.

Reasonable Accommodation

In the event an employee needs to request a reasonable accommodation or a variance in Odyssey Academy's stated policies and/or procedures due to the employee's disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, or the employee's sincerely held religious belief, the employee should notify his or her supervisor and/or Human Resources.

Anti-Harassment

Odyssey Academy is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment free of all forms of unlawful harassment. Employees are prohibited from engaging in all forms of unlawful harassment, including harassment based on race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, and any other protected class status.

Harassment based on any of the aforementioned protected classes may include, but is not limited to, many different types of actions: verbal (e.g. derogatory comment), physical (e.g. assault), or visual (e.g. internet materials). Sexual harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person's sex. Both victim and harasser can be either a woman or a man, and the victim and harasser can be the same sex. The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer.

Reporting Discrimination and/or Harassment

This section applies to both incidents of harassment and discrimination.

Employees should promptly report an incident of discrimination or harassment to their supervisor, campus dean, human resources, or superintendent. The employee should not assume that witnesses to the incident will know the conduct is unwelcomed; an employee should not rely on a witness to report the conduct for the employee. Informing the harasser that the conduct is unwelcomed is not a report of harassment since the harasser may not self-report the violation to management or Human Resources.

If the alleged harasser is the employee's supervisor, a manager, or even one of the individuals designated to receive harassment reports, the employee does not have to directly report the incident to that individual, but instead must notify Human Resources in order to ensure that the matter is promptly and appropriately addressed.

Any supervisor/manager who receives information indicating a concern about harassment or discrimination must report it to Human Resources, even if the information comes from someone other

than the target of the harassment or discrimination, or even if the person expressing the concern indicates that they do not wish to have the harassment or discrimination reported.

Odyssey Academy will promptly investigate any report and take appropriate remedial action. If the harassment or discrimination continues, the employee must immediately report the incident so that the matter can be reopened and addressed.

Retaliation for reporting what an employee believes to be harassing or discriminatory conduct or for participating in an investigation of alleged harassment or discrimination is prohibited. Any retaliation should be reported according to the same procedures as reporting discrimination or harassment.

Any employee engaging in any type of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Any supervisor who has knowledge of such behavior, yet takes no action to report it is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Employment Standards

Expected Employee Conduct

All employees are expected to:

- Meet established expectations of job performance;
- Comply with attendance policies;
- Be responsible in the performance of job duties;
- Be efficient;
- Respect the personal and property rights of all individuals one comes in contact with during the course of Odyssey Academy business;
- Follow job instructions;
- Maintain a courteous and professional demeanor;

Employees who do not adhere to these standards are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Performance Evaluation

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

Violence in the Workplace

Odyssey Academy is committed to providing a safe workplace that is free from violence or threats of violence. Any and all acts of violence in the workplace are prohibited and subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Additionally, any and all threats of violence, direct or indirect, serious or said in jest, are prohibited. All threats will be taken seriously and are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Employees concerned about family violence being brought to the workplace or onto the work parking lot are encouraged to notify their supervisor or Human Resources.

Any employee who receives a protective or restraining order that lists Odyssey Academy as a protected area is required to provide the Superintendent with a copy of the order and information requested by Odyssey Academy to identify the individual subject to the order.

Drug-Free Workplace

Odyssey Academy is committed to maintaining a drug-free work environment and each employee is responsible for the maintenance of such an environment. The unlawful manufacture, distribution,

possession, or use of a controlled substance (i.e. drugs) and/or the use of alcohol or tobacco in the workplace, or while conducting Odyssey Academy business, are prohibited.

Additionally, an employee must notify Odyssey Academy of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace, or while conducting Odyssey Academy business, no later than five days after such conviction. A report of a conviction must be made to Human Resources.

Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Odyssey Academy may ask an employee to submit to a drug or alcohol test whenever it reasonably believes that the employee may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the work place in violation of the Drug-Free Workplace policy, including, but not limited to the following circumstances: evidence of drugs or alcohol on or about the employee's person or in the employee's vicinity; unusual, bizarre or erratic conduct that suggests the employee is impaired by, or under the influence of, drugs or alcohol; or an on-the-job accident or injury under circumstances that suggest the possible use or influence of drugs or alcohol in the injury.

Nothing in this policy prohibits, or in any way limits, the lawful use of prescription or non-prescription drugs. However, an employee must inform his/her immediate supervisor if he/she is using a prescription or non-prescription drug which could impair work performance or pose a risk of harm to the employee, to others, or to property. It is the employee's responsibility to determine from his or her physician(s) if the medication can impair work performance or pose such a risk. If the lawful use of lawful prescription or non-prescription drugs does limit or otherwise impair the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of his or her position or otherwise creates a safety risk, Human Resources will meet with the employee to determine whether a reasonable accommodation is available.

Suspicious Behavior

Employees are encouraged to report any suspicious behavior observed at school or at any school-related or school-sponsored activity. Strangers or former employees walking unaccompanied in areas not generally open to the public should be pointed out to a supervisor.

Former Employees

Former employees may not enter areas that are not open to the public after they are no longer employed by Odyssey Academy.

Employee Dress Code

Employee dress should be neat and clean and appropriate for a professional appearance. Closed-toe shoes must be worn at all times, house shoes (e.g. slippers) and flip-flops are not allowed. Denim jeans are allowed on Fridays so long as the jeans are free from holes and frays. Jeans should only be worn with an Odyssey Academy shirt. If an employee is unsure of the appropriateness of a particular item of clothing, the employee should choose not to wear it.

An administrator may require an employee to cover tattoos and/or remove facial jewelry. Additionally, because it is difficult to establish a specific dress standard, an Odyssey Academy administrator may require an employee to change their dress if in their best judgment the dress is inappropriate.

Exceptions to the dress code may be considered in order to make reasonable accommodations for an employee's disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, or an employee's sincerely held religious belief.

Outside Employment

Employees of Odyssey Academy are expected to work solely for Odyssey Academy. Any outside employment, whether self-employment or working for another employer, should be immediately disclosed to and approved by the Superintendent. In some circumstances such outside employment may be permitted by Odyssey Academy, however, Odyssey Academy retains the right to review and evaluate each situation on an individual basis.

Employee Monitoring

Employees do not have an expectation of privacy in any work areas (e.g. offices, desks, file cabinets, etc.) or in any Odyssey Academy property, either owned or leased. Work areas and Odyssey Academy property are subject to search at any time. Any of the following may be monitored if they occur during business hours and/or on school property: phone calls, voicemail, email (work and personal), and internet activity.

Audio & Video Recordings

An employee is prohibited from making any audio or video recording while acting in the course and scope of their employment or while on school property without the written consent of all parties subject to the recording. School functions such as athletic activities or performances are exempt from this prohibition.

Office Dating

Employees who are in administration/management/supervisory roles are prohibited from dating any employee over whom they have direct or indirect supervision. Also, individuals who work within the human resources department are prohibited from dating any Odyssey Academy employee.

If two employees are involved in a dating relationship it will be presumed by Odyssey Academy that the relationship is welcomed by both parties unless one or the other notifies Odyssey Academy to the contrary. Public displays of affection and favoritism in the course of employment are prohibited.

Conduct that occurs during a disagreement or following a termination of the relationship must not violate Odyssey Academy's harassment policy.

Workplace Investigations

There are instances when Odyssey Academy may wish to investigate personnel matters. Employees are required to cooperate in any investigation. Refusal to participate, or actions taken to compromise the effectiveness of any investigation, may result in termination. If the employee is instructed not to discuss

the matter being investigated, failure to abide by this instruction may also result in termination. This restriction excludes the employee's privileged communications with his or her own private legal counsel.

Updated/Current Employee Information

Employees are required to regularly update:

- A change in home address or telephone number;
- A change in marital status or in the number of dependents;
- A change of insurance beneficiary;
- A change in the number of exemptions claimed for income tax purposes;
- The driving record or status of an employee's driver's license, if the employee operates any Odyssey Academy vehicle or operates his or her own vehicle for work-related duties, not including driving to and from work.
- A legal change of name.
- The Public Information Act form indicating whether certain personal information may be released to the public.

Updates should be made by notifying Human Resources.

Allowable Use of Odyssey Academy Property

Employees may use Odyssey Academy property only for a purpose that is consistent with applicable law and to implement a program that is described in Odyssey Academy's charter.

Employees of Odyssey Academy may use local telephone service, cellular phones, electronic mail, Internet connections, or other technology and network resources for incidental personal use under the following conditions:

- Such incidental personal use must not result in any direct cost paid with state funds. If this does happen, the employee who caused the direct cost to be incurred by Odyssey Academy must reimburse Odyssey Academy;
- Such incidental personal use must not impede the functions of Odyssey Academy;
- The use of Odyssey Academy property for private commercial purposes is strictly prohibited; and
- Only incidental amounts of an employee's time for personal matters, comparable to reasonable coffee breaks during the day, are authorized under this section.

An employee may be required to compensate Odyssey Academy for any damage and/or destruction the employee causes to Odyssey Academy property.

A violation of this section may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Computer & Internet Use

With the exception of the incidental personal use described in "*Allowable Use of Odyssey Academy Property*," access and use of Odyssey Academy's computers, computer networks, electronic mail, and

the Internet is only for educational and administrative purposes. The access of material that is obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors is prohibited. Employees should review the Odyssey Academy Computer & Internet Acceptable Use Policy for more detailed information.

Failure to comply with this section and Odyssey Academy's Computer & Internet Acceptable Use Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Administration of Medication to Students

The administration of medication to students must be done in accordance with Odyssey Academy board policy. All employees, agents, and volunteers are prohibited from administering any medication to a student unless expressly authorized by Odyssey Academy.

Reporting Child Abuse/Child Neglect

An employee, volunteer, or agent that believes a child has been adversely affected by physical, sexual, or mental abuse or neglect must make a report within 48 hours of first suspecting such abuse or neglect. The report must be made to law enforcement or the Department of Family and Protective Services, Child Protective Services.

Traffic Violations

If an employee, during the course of Odyssey Academy business, receives a traffic violation, the employee will be personally liable for any expenses incurred from that violation. If during the course of transporting a student an employee receives a traffic violation, that employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Grievance Procedures

Employees who have a complaint about their terms or conditions of work are encouraged to resolve their concerns informally with their co-workers and/or supervisors at the lowest level possible. If the employee is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal resolution, then the employee may file a formal complaint according to the procedures below.

With the exception of a complaint against the Executive Director, each complaint must initially be brought at the lowest level of review, at the Campus Dean Review level. If the complaint is against the dean, then the complaint may be initially brought at the Executive Director level.

Campus Dean Review of Complaint

Where an employee has a complaint or concern regarding their terms or conditions of work, the individual shall first bring their complaint or concern in writing to the appropriate campus dean or to the employee's direct supervisor. The complaint must be brought within 15 school days of the date that the complainant knew or should have known of the alleged harm. The complaint must be specific and where possible suggest a resolution. The dean/supervisor must hear the complaint, attempt to remedy the complaint in the best interest of the affected parties, and document the outcome. The dean/supervisor

must respond to the complainant and issue a final decision in writing within 10 days of the dean/supervisor's receipt of the complaint.

Executive Director Review of Complaint

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final decision of the campus dean/supervisor, then the individual may file a written appeal to the Executive Director. This written appeal shall be filed with the Executive Director's office within 10 days of the individual's receipt of the final decision from the campus dean/supervisor. The complaint shall include a copy of the prior written complaint along with a copy of the final decision of the campus dean/supervisor. A copy of the appeal shall also be delivered to the campus principal/supervisor.

The appeal must be specific and where possible suggest a resolution. The complaint shall not include any new issues or complaints unrelated in the original complaint.

The Executive Director, or the Executive Director's designee, shall respond to the complaint and issue a final decision in writing within 15 days of receipt of the written appeal.

Board of Directors Review of Complaint

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Executive Director's final decision, then the individual may appeal their complaint in writing to the Board of Directors within 10 days of receiving the Executive Director's final decision. The complaint shall be directed to the President of the Board, and shall include a copy of the written complaint to the Executive Director along with a copy of the Executive Director's final decision. A copy of this appeal shall also be delivered to the Executive Director.

The President of the Board, at the next regular meeting of the Board, shall provide a copy of the complaint record to all board members. The Board's decision shall be decided on a review of the record developed at the Executive Director's level. Any action of the Board of Directors regarding the complaint shall be taken in compliance with the Texas Open Meeting Act.

Discipline

In an effort to correct employee misconduct at the earliest stage possible, Odyssey Academy administration may implement a stair-step disciplinary procedure. Such procedure may begin first with a verbal warning. The next offense would proceed to a written warning; the next step is suspension; followed by termination of employment.

Though Odyssey Academy may utilize such stair-step disciplinary procedures, Odyssey Academy reserves the right to skip any or all steps and immediately discharge the employee.

The stair-step disciplinary procedure does not forfeit the at-will status of its employees and Odyssey Academy preserves the at-will nature of the employment relationship. Accordingly, discharge may be initiated by Odyssey Academy at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice.

Separation from Employment

Resignation

An employee is expected, but not required, to give as much advance notice as possible regarding their resignation from Odyssey Academy. Typically, two weeks (10 business days) is considered sufficient notice time. Odyssey Academy requests that employees submit their resignation in writing to their supervisor; the writing should include the employee's anticipated last work day.

Odyssey Academy reserves the right to require the employee to resign immediately rather than work during the notice period.

Discharge

In an effort to reduce the risk of employee violence or vandalism, upon an employee's discharge from employment, Odyssey Academy administration may request that an employee leave the facility immediately upon separation from employment. If accompanied by an Odyssey Academy administrator, the employee will be permitted to gather his/her personal belongings before being escorted to the exit.

The exiting employee is prohibited from taking any Odyssey Academy property or information with him/her; the employee is not to retain in hard copy or soft copy any Odyssey Academy information. Odyssey Academy reserves the right to examine any boxes, briefcases, or other receptacle of an exiting employee to ensure these rules are being followed.

An exiting employee who has been discharged is not to return to the premises of Odyssey Academy without prior written approval from Human Resources or the dean of the school campus.