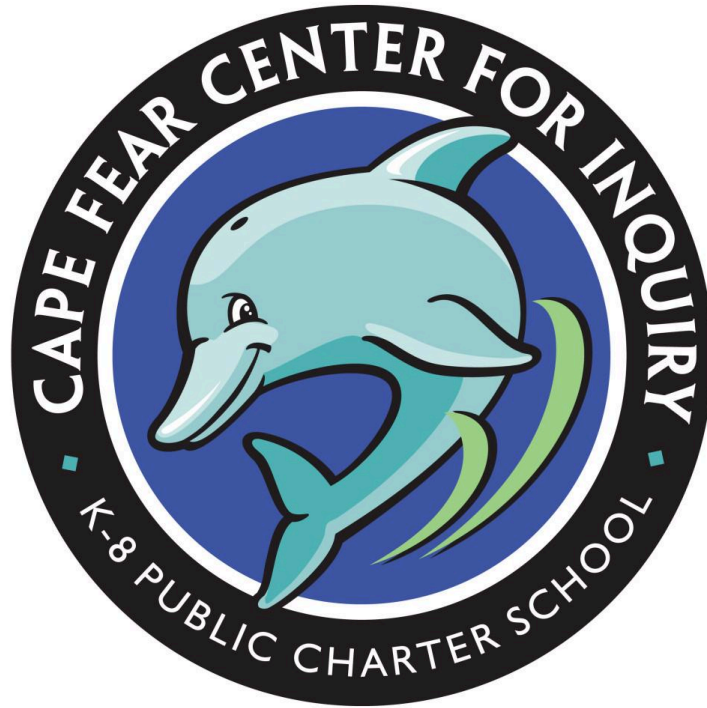


Cape Fear Center for Inquiry



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**SECTION: 1000 - GOVERNING PRINCIPLES: ORGANIZATION, Policy Code:1010,
Approved: 05.03.2024**

Name: The name of the corporation is Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (the “Corporation”). The charter school shall operate under the corporation as: Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI).

The Corporation’s principal office, known place of business and place where its records shall be kept is 2525 Wonder Way Wilmington, North Carolina 28401. The Corporation may change its principal office, or adopt other and additional offices, as the Board may designate from time to time.

Corporate Seal: No instrument executed by or on behalf of the Corporation shall require a corporate seal for validity, but if a corporate seal is used, the Board shall approve its form.

Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of July and end on the last day of June next succeeding.

SECTION:1000 - GOVERNING PRINCIPLES: BOARD COMMITTEE EXPECTATIONS, Policy Code: 1150, Approved: 05.03.2024

The following expectations are established in order to facilitate more effective committee activity.

1. Committee members shall make every effort to attend all meetings. If unable to attend, the member should inform the committee chairperson in advance by email. It is the obligation of the loop level representative on the committee to inform their loop of information discussed during the committee meeting.
2. Committee members should come to meetings prepared. This includes reading any material sent ahead of the meeting, completing any agreed upon tasks from the previous meeting and being ready to discuss items on the agenda. This will facilitate active and effective participation by all members.
3. Committee members should be open-minded about issues, topics, and agenda items. The primary consideration should be what is best for CFCI, taking into account the mission, needs, and resources of the students, staff, parents/guardians, and community. Personal agendas are not appropriate for committee discussion.
4. Comments, conversations, and interactions should be positive, respectful, and topic-focused. Complaints and concerns regarding individual staff members or board members should not be a part of committee discussions.

SECTION:1000 - GOVERNING PRINCIPLES: CONFLICT OF INTEREST, Policy Code: 1800, Approved 04.28.2026

Purpose

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect CFCI's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an Officer, Director, or Board Member of CFCI or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement, but not replace, any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Definitions

1. Interested Person

Any Director, principal officer, or Board Member who has direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

2. Financial Interest

A person has financial interest in the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment or family:

- a. An ownership or investment interest, other than de minimis (too trivial or minor to merit consideration), in any entity with which CFCI has a transaction or agreement;
- b. A compensation arrangement with CFCI or with any entity or individual with which CFCI has a transaction or arrangement;
- c. A potential ownership or investment interest, or than de minimis, in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which CFCI is negotiating a transaction or arrangement. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial;
- d. If they are a teacher or employee of CFCI and there is any Board vote related to Series 7000 Personnel Policies;
- e. If they are a teacher or employee of CFCI and there is any Board vote related to leave requests;
- f. If they are a teacher or employee of CFCI and there is any Board vote related to recommendations to hire or offer contract to hire;
- g. If they are a teacher or employee of CFCI and there is any Board closed sessions for the purpose of discussion or action regarding an individual employee's performance, evaluation, and/or employment action such as corrective action plan, suspension termination, hiring, or contract renewal;
- h. If they are a teacher or employee of CFCI and there is any Board vote related to salary and wage changes to employees

3. Duty to Disclose

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of a financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the

directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed translation or arrangement.

4. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall move to the public seating area while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

5. Procedures for Addressing a Conflict of Interest

- a. An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board, but after the presentation, he or she shall move to the public seating area during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
- b. The chairperson of the governing board shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- c. After exercising due diligence, the governing board shall determine whether CFCI can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in CFCI's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

6. Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy

- a. If the governing board has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

7. Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the governing board shall contain:

- a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the

nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing board's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.

- b. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

8. Compensation

- a. A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from CFCI for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- b. A voting member of the governing board whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from CFCI, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

9. Annual Statements

Each Director and Principal Officer shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

- a. Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy;
- b. Has read and understands the policy;
- c. Has agreed to comply with the policy; and
- d. Understands CFCI is charitable and, in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

10. Periodic Reviews

To ensure CFCI operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities which could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to CFCI's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes, and do not result in inurement (to be less affected by something unpleasant), impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

11. Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in this policy, CFCI may, but need not use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

12. Board Members and Conflict of Interest

A person shall not be disqualified from serving as a member of a charter school's Board of Directors because of the existence of a conflict of interest, so long as the person's actions comply with the school's conflict of interest policy as provided in G.S. 115C-218.15(b)(3) and applicable law. Reference § 115C-218.15.

SECTION:1000 - GOVERNING PRINCIPLES: NEPOTISM, Policy Code: 1900,
Approved: 04.28.2026

The Board of Directors recognizes the need to avoid nepotism relative to the hiring, placement, duties, and evaluation of all employees of Cape Fear Center for Inquiry.

Assignment of Personnel

It is the policy of the Board to recruit and employ the most qualified individuals for all positions. Apparent nepotism or the assignment of immediate family members to either supervise or evaluate the performance of another immediate family member is prohibited. This restriction on the assignment of family members serves to discourage favoritism and to prevent a conflict of interest in the completion of evaluations, disciplinary actions, extra-duty assignments, and possible promotions.

Definition of Immediate Family

For the purpose of this Policy, members of the immediate family include spouses, domestic partners, children, stepchildren, wards, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, in-laws, uncles and aunts. Nothing in this Policy shall prevent the employment by CFCI of members of the same family, provided their job assignments are made in accordance with this Policy.

Restrictions

No immediate family member may have direct supervision over the progress, performance, pay, or welfare of another and together they may not be involved with the financial controls or physical inventories of CFCI properties.

Whenever two (2) employees at CFCI are in a supervisory-subordinate relationship and either get married or become domestic partners, one of the employees shall resign immediately. If an employee is promoted, assigned or transferred to a supervisory position over a member of his or her immediate family, the subordinate employee shall resign immediately.

No voting members of the governing board shall be an employee of a for profit company that provides substantial services to the charter school for a fee.

No employee of the charter school, whether hired by the Board of Directors or a management company, shall be a voting member of the Board of Directors.

No teacher or staff member that is immediate family of the chief administrator shall be hired without the Board of Directors evaluating their credentials, establishing a structure to prevent conflicts of interest, and notifying the Department, with evidence, that this process has occurred.

No member of the Board may be related to a Co-Director.

Public Disclosure

Before any immediate family of any member of the CFCI Board of Directors or CFCI employee with a supervisory authority shall be employed or engaged as an employee, independent contractor, or otherwise by the Board of Directors in any capacity, such proposed employment or engagement shall be:

1. Disclosed to the Board of Directors; and
2. The Board of Directors must approve the hiring or contract in a duly called open session meeting.

Assignment of Students

It is the policy of CFCI to establish and maintain a classroom environment of fairness and equity for all students. The assignment of a student to a class taught by a member of the student's immediate family creates the appearance of favoritism and places undue pressure on both the student and the teacher. As a general rule, no student should be assigned to or placed in a class taught by a member of the student's immediate family, as defined in this Policy. Teachers shall not be placed in a position of having to evaluate or grade the academic performance of a member of their immediate family.

Exceptions

The School Director(s) of CFCI may decide to implement an exception to either the assignment of personnel or students for up to three years for core classroom teachers in order to meet an identified school need or special circumstance. The School Director(s) shall provide specific name(s) and reason(s) for the exception to the Board at the August board meeting. Teachers of specialized instruction (e.g. art, music, PE, technology, middle school electives, Exceptional Children services, related services) are excluded from the Assignment of Students section of this Policy.

2000 Board Operations

[2000 - Board Member Development](#)

[2110/2110P - Student and Parent/Guardian Grievance Policy Procedure](#)

[2335 - Advance Delivery of Meeting Materials](#)

[2400 - Public Comment Policy](#)

SECTION: 2000 - BOARD OPERATIONS: BOARD MEMBER DEVELOPMENT,
POLICY Code: 2000, Approved: 05.03.2024

OBJECTIVE: The Board of Directors has been charged with developing a proposed policy aimed at recruiting talented, service-oriented Board members to serve on the Cape Fear Center of Inquiry Board (CFCI) of Directors.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE: The ideal candidate to assume the position of Director on the CFCI Board of Directors should be able to demonstrate:

1. A sincere interest in serving on the Board of Directors
2. A connection with and commitment to the mission of CFCI
3. A willingness to undergo necessary training and continuing development related to their service on the Board.
4. An understanding that a Director must be a servant-first, not a leader-first
5. A history of having served faithfully and constructively on other community boards
6. The ability to contribute unique talents to the governance process
7. A respect for the boundary that exists between management and governance
8. An acknowledgment that service on the Board of Directors is service to the whole, rather than to any individual or advocacy group
9. A personal history of responsibility, respect for the rule of law and good stewardship
10. An amiable, collaborative and diplomatic nature

SECTION: 2000 - BOARD OPERATIONS: STUDENT, FAMILY AND EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE POLICY/PROCEDURE, Policy Code: 2110/2110P - 4400/4400P,
Approved: 04.28.26

I. Purpose

This policy establishes procedures for addressing complaints and grievances filed by currently enrolled students, their parents/guardians, and staff members at Cape Fear Center for Inquiry. This policy is designed to provide a fair, consistent, and expeditious process for resolving grievances in accordance with North Carolina charter school laws and regulations.

II. Definitions

1. **Grievance:** A formal written complaint alleging a violation of school policy, state or federal law, or expressing dissatisfaction with decisions, actions, or inactions by school personnel.
2. **Grievant:** Any student, parent/guardian, or staff member who files a grievance.
3. **Respondent:** The person or entity against whom the grievance is filed.
4. **School Day and/or School Events:** Any day when school is in session according to the school calendar, including any sanctioned school sponsored events.
5. **Time Limits:** A grievance will only be heard if the grievance has been filed within 15 calendar days of the meeting with an Administrator/Coordinator. The 15-day deadline may be extended at the discretion of the Administrator.

III. Informal Resolution

Prior to filing a formal grievance, the grievant is encouraged to seek informal resolution by discussing the concern directly with the individual(s) involved. Employees are encouraged to use open, professional communication.

If a parent/guardian/student feels that their issue is still a concern after meeting with the teacher or individual(s) involved and the issue meets the definition of a grievance, the parent/guardian/student may initiate the grievance procedures as described below in the Formal Grievance Process. Many issues that a parent/guardian/student has with the classroom, teacher or school will not rise to the level of a grievance and appropriate resolution will be found with the teacher and/or Administrator. Many grievances can be resolved through open, respectful communication.

IV. Parent / Guardian / Student Formal Grievance Process

Step 1:

1. If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, the grievant shall submit a written grievance to an Administrator/Coordinator on the Leadership team within ten (10) school days of the event or action that is the subject of the grievance.
2. The written grievance must include:
 - The grievant's name and contact information
 - Date of submission
 - A detailed description of the grievance, including dates, times, and specific facts
 - Names of any witnesses
 - Reference to any relevant policies, laws, or regulations
 - Description of prior attempts at resolution
 - The specific remedy or action requested

3. The Administrator/Coordinator shall acknowledge receipt of the grievance within three (3) school days.
4. The Administrator/Coordinator shall investigate the grievance, which may include meetings with the grievant, respondent, and any witnesses.
5. The Administrator/Coordinator shall provide a written decision within ten (10) school days of receiving the grievance, unless additional time is necessary and communicated to the grievant.

Step 2:

1. If the grievant is not satisfied with the Administrator/Coordinator's decision, the grievant may appeal to the Board of Directors within five (5) school days of receiving the Administrator's and/or Director's decision.
2. The appeal must be in writing and include:
 - A copy of the original grievance
 - A copy of the Administrator's and/or Director's decision
 - A statement explaining why the grievant disagrees with the Administrator's and/or Director's decision
3. The Board Chair shall acknowledge receipt of the appeal within three (3) school days.
4. The Board Chair may designate a committee to review the grievance or place it on the agenda for the next regular Board meeting, or at the discretion of the Board and/or Committee a special meeting can be called as long as it occurs within the thirty (30) days of the appeal.
5. The Board or designated committee shall review the grievance record and may, at its discretion, hear additional information from the grievant, respondent, or other relevant parties.
6. The Board shall issue a written decision within ten (10) school days after the Board meeting where the grievance was considered.
7. The Board's decision is final except in cases where:
 - The grievance involves a claimed violation of state or federal law
 - The grievance involves a claimed violation of the charter agreement with the NC State Board of Education
 - The grievance involves a claimed violation of the school's bylaws

V. Employee Formal Grievance Process

Step 1. Immediate Supervisor

1. The employee must submit a written grievance to their immediate supervisor/Coordinator within ten (10) working days of the incident or issue.
2. The written grievance must include:
 - Description of the grievance and relevant facts
 - Date(s) of the incident(s)
 - Explanation of prior attempts to resolve the issue
 - Specific policy, procedure, or rule allegedly violated (if applicable)
 - Desired resolution
3. The supervisor shall meet with the employee within five (5) working days of receiving the grievance.
4. The supervisor shall provide a written response within five (5) working days after the meeting.

Step 2: Alternative Administrator/Coordinator

1. If the grievance is not resolved at Step 1, the employee may appeal to an alternative Administrator/Coordinator on the Leadership team that is not the employee's direct supervisor within five (5) working days of receiving the supervisor's response.

2. The appeal must include the original grievance, the supervisor's response, and an explanation of why the response was unsatisfactory.
3. The Administrator/Coordinator shall meet with the employee within five (5) working days of receiving the appeal.
4. The Administrator/Coordinator shall provide a written response within ten (10) working days after the meeting.

Step 3: The Board

1. If the grievance remains unresolved after Step 2, the employee may appeal to the Board within five (5) working days of receiving the Administrator/Coordinator's response.
2. The appeal must include all previous documentation and responses, and an explanation of why the response at Step 1 was unsatisfactory.
3. The Board shall appoint a Grievance Committee and it shall review the grievance and may, at its discretion:
 - Request additional information from any party
 - Meet with the parties involved
 - Conduct an investigation
4. The Committee shall provide a written recommendation to the full Board of Directors within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the appeal.

Step 4. The Board of Director's

1. The Board of Directors shall consider the Committee's recommendation at its next regularly scheduled meeting, or at a special meeting if warranted.
2. The Board may:
 - Accept the Committee's recommendation
 - Modify recommendation
 - Reject the recommendation and provide an alternative resolution
 - Return the matter to the Committee for further investigation
3. The decision of the Board shall be final and binding.
4. The employee shall receive written notification of the Board's decision within five (5) working days after the Board meeting.

VI. General Provisions

1. **Confidentiality:** All grievances shall be handled with appropriate confidentiality. However, information may be shared as necessary to conduct a thorough investigation.
2. **Non-Retaliation:** Cape Fear Center for Inquiry prohibits retaliation against any individual who files a grievance or participates in the grievance process. Any instances of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be addressed promptly.
3. **Representation:** Grievants may be accompanied by a representative of their choice during meetings related to the grievance.
4. **Timelines:**
 - All time limits may be extended by mutual agreement of the parties involved.
 - If the grievant fails to appeal a decision within the specified time limits, the grievance shall be considered resolved.
 - If the school fails to respond within the specified time limits, the grievant may proceed to the next level.
5. **Record Keeping:** Records related to grievances shall be maintained for a minimum of three (3) years in accordance with state requirements (20 USC 1232g - FERPA).

6. **Annual Review:** This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors.

VII. Special Circumstances

Staff Grievances

1. Staff members shall follow the same procedure outlined above, except:
 - a. Grievances related to employment matters should first be addressed through the school's human resources department, if applicable.
 - b. Certain employment matters may be subject to separate policies as outlined in the staff handbook.

Student Disciplinary Appeals

1. Appeals of student disciplinary actions shall follow the procedures outlined in the CFCI Student and Family Handbook.
2. Long-term suspensions and expulsions have specific appeal procedures that comply with North Carolina law [\(Chapter 115C - Article 27\)](#).

Special Education Concerns

1. Grievances related to special education services shall follow this policy, but grievants are advised that additional rights and procedures exist under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
2. Parents/guardians may request mediation or file a complaint with the NC Department of Public Instruction's Exceptional Children Division.

VIII. Annual Notification

This grievance policy shall be published in the Student and Family Handbook and CFCI website.

IX. Annual Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the CFCI Board of Directors and any recommended changes shall be presented to the full Board for consideration.

SECTION: 2000 - BOARD OPERATIONS: ADVANCE DELIVERY OF MEETING MATERIALS, Policy Code: 2335, Approved: 05.03.2024

At least five (5) calendar days prior to each regular Cape Fear Center of Inquiry Board meeting, each Board of Directors member shall receive meeting materials, which shall include:

1. The proposed agenda
2. Minutes of previous meetings that have not been approved
3. School Director's Reports
4. Committee Meeting Minutes/Reports

SECTION: 2000 - BOARD OPERATIONS: PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY, Policy Code: 2400, Approved: 06.18.2024

Purpose: To define the process by which the public may make comments or provide feedback at a board meeting.

The School Board of Directors complies with the NC Open Meetings Law, which allows public comments at board meetings at the discretion of the School's Board of Directors. The School Board of Directors welcomes public comments during open board meetings. This policy outlines the process for how public comments will be handled at open board meetings.

The School Board generally allows public comments for a total of 15 minutes at a designated time for each open board meeting. Each person may speak for 2 minutes on either non-agenda or agenda items. Each speaker must sign up in advance by emailing the Board Secretary more than 24 hours in advance of the board meeting by submitting their name, organization, and topic to be discussed. Speakers will be assigned spots on a first come first serve basis. The Board may allow for a walk-in speaker comment at their sole discretion. Notwithstanding the above, the Board reserves the right to modify or eliminate time for public comment at any open board meeting.

Speakers shall present themselves in a professional manner while speaking at the open board meetings, and shall act in a courteous and responsible manner. If the speaker failed to abide as such, the speaker will be asked to leave the meeting. Under North Carolina Law (General Statute, N.C.G.S. § 143-318.17), there can be legal consequences for individuals who do not adhere to public meeting protocol. *"A person who willfully interrupts, disturbs, or disrupts an official meeting and who, upon being directed to leave the meeting by the presiding officer, willfully refuses to leave the meeting is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor."* (1979, c.655, s.1; 1993, c.539, s.1028; 1994, Ex. Sess., c.24, s.14(c).) *Adopted April 16, 2013.* Speakers may not specifically speak about any individual student, teacher, staff member or board member and they may not engage in any personal attacks. Generally, the Board does not respond to any public comments.

Speakers may request special permission to conduct a presentation to the board if they would like to have an extended time to speak. The speaker must email the Board Secretary and request the specific amount of time needed and the topic to be presented. The request shall be considered by the Board Chair, and shall either be approved or denied in the discretion of the Chair.

3000 Curriculum and Instruction

[3560 – Title 1 Parent/Guardian and Family Engagement Policy](#)

[3800 – Teaching Standards](#)

[3810 – Placement](#)

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SECTION: 3000 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: TITLE 1 PARENT/GUARDIAN AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY, Policy Code: 3560, Approved: 05.03.2024

Decades of research have shown that when schools work together with families to support learning, children are inclined to succeed, not just in school, but throughout life. Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI) believes that learning can best take place when there is shared effort, interest, and commitment among students, parents/guardians, extended family members, community members and staff. The goal of this parent/guardian and family engagement plan is to support in a more consistent and effective manner those things already in practice as well as to generate new ways of strengthening the partnership between school and home.

At Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI), the partnership between school and home will be supported by:

- a. Convening an annual meeting in the school to provide information to parents/guardians, family members, and community members about the school and available programs and maintaining on file at the school, at a minimum:
 - i. a copy of the agenda from the meeting highlighting that Title I programming was discussed;
 - ii. documentation of parent/guardian feedback and/or evaluation in the form of sign-in sheets and minutes from the presentation/ meetings;
 - iii. if relevant, a copy of any presentation, and flyers, website announcements, message recordings and/or other advertisements for the meeting
- b. Notifying parents/guardians of and clearly posting on the School's website NC School Report Card Data
- c. Offering a flexible number of meetings, workshops, and parent/guardian conferences that assist parents/guardians, family members, and community members in improving the achievement of all children
- d. Providing opportunities for all parents/guardians, family members, and community members to participate in school activities, including persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency
- e. Involving parents/guardians, family members, and community members in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in consultation for the improvement of the School and its' programs, specifically including these critical stakeholders in the planning, review, and evaluation of programs and improve programs based on the results
- f. Having all parties involved sign a School/Family Student Compact stating how each will contribute to ensuring the student's achievement
- g. Assisting parents/guardians, family members, and community members in understanding State academic content, the North Carolina Accountability Model, State and Local assessments, and student performance standards
- h. Communicating clearly and frequently with parents/guardians, family members, and community members about school policies, programs, and their own children;
- i. Educating school personnel in the value of contributions of parents/guardians, family members, and community members and in how to communicate with and build ties between these critical stakeholders and the school in order to build school capacity
- j. Annually conducting an evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this policy with parents/guardians, family members, and community members and maintaining on file at the school, at a minimum, a copy of the agenda from the meeting highlighting that this policy was discussed, reviewed and revised; a copy of this policy with latest revision date; proof that this policy was distributed in multiple ways (i.e., newsletter, student and family handbook, website, etc.); documentation of parent/guardian feedback and/or evaluation in

the form of sign-in sheets and minutes from policy meetings, and flyers, website announcements, message recordings and/or meeting advertisements.

SECTION: 3000 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: TEACHING STANDARDS

Policy Code: 3800, Approved: 05.03.2024

Content and Pedagogy

The CFCI teacher understands the curriculum and how to create a learning environment which enables an inquiry environment for students to learn.

CFCI Teachers are committed to:

- a. Using the North Carolina Standard Course of Study as a curriculum framework.
- b. Creating long and short range plans to organize and integrate curriculum areas.
- c. Implementing classroom design and structures that facilitate students' development as independent learners and that promote inquiry
- d. Using a variety of instructional strategies, including technology, to promote students' active participation in their own learning and in the CFCI community.
- e. Helping students learn to pose and solve their own problems by using appropriate methods of inquiry such as:
 - i. Scientific process
 - ii. Free exploration
 - iii. Guided discovery
 - iv. Seeking patterns and making generalizations
- f. Involving students in planning, as appropriate
- g. Helping students see connections between what they already know and new content
- h. Sharing with students a love of learning

Child Development and Diverse Learners

The CFCI teacher knows his or her students well enough to provide individualized instruction.

CFCI Teachers are committed to:

- a. Creating a welcoming classroom climate by using strategies appropriate to students' physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development
- b. Designing instructional products that reflect learning differences and needs
- c. Accessing appropriate services and technology to meet learning differences such as:
 - i. Learning styles
 - ii. Habits of mind
 - iii. Multiple Intelligences
 - iv. Time differentials
 - v. Cultural diversity

Assessment and Data Collection

The CFCI teacher understands and uses assessment strategies which can inform classroom practice.

CFCI Teachers are committed to:

- a. Recognizing, honoring, and celebrating success
- b. Gathering and using information about students and their learning from a variety of formal and informal sources
- c. Interpreting this information to make initial and ongoing instructional decisions
- d. Organizing and maintaining accurate records of student work and performance

- e. Establishing and communicating learning expectations for students
- f. Developing and using tools and guidelines that help students assess their own work

Classroom Management

The CFCI teacher understands social interaction and individual and group motivation.

CFCI Teachers are committed to

- a. Creating a learning environment that encourages behaviors such as:
 - i. Positive social interaction
 - ii. Engagement in learning
 - iii. Respect for others
 - iv. Responsibility for actions
 - v. Self-control
 - vi. Courtesy
 - vii. Positive risk taking and creativity
- b. Establishing and consistently maintaining equitable standards for behavior that reflect student developmental and personal needs
- c. Involving students in class rule-making and problem-solving
- d. Helping students become respectful of differences and value diverse perspectives

Reflective Practice, Collaboration and Professional Responsibility

The CFCI teacher continually reflects on current practice and seeks out opportunities for professional growth.

CFCI Teachers are committed to:

- a. Contributing regularly to the effectiveness of CFCI by working collaboratively with faculty, including specialists, the Board, and other professional educators
- b. Formulating a professional inquiry project that is based on reflection and analysis
- c. Engaging in relevant professional development and implementing new learning
- d. Engaging in thoughtful dialogue and reflection with colleagues, including specialists, to improve professional practice
- e. Completing a self evaluation based on the CFCI teaching standards
- f. Collecting and reporting appropriate data for re-chartering to the Board
- g. Exhibiting productive leadership and team membership skills
- h. Supporting the induction of new teachers to CFCI
- i. Demonstrating high ethical and professional standards
- j. Continually evaluating the effects of his or her choices and actions in and out of the classroom

Parent/Guardian Communication and Community Resources

The CFCI teacher seeks to establish respectful and productive partnerships with parents or guardians to support student learning.

CFCI Teachers are committed to:

- a. Regularly communicating through conferences, progress reports, and other means, the learning expectations and results of assessment to parents/guardians
- b. Providing regular communication from the teacher that describe classroom learning

- activities, upcoming events and other items of interest
- c. Collaborating with community members and agencies to support students' learning and well-being by planning field trips, hosting guest speakers and soliciting resources for in-class discovery
 - d. Helping parents/guardians understand how students learn to pose and solve their own problems by using appropriate methods of inquiry
 - e. Finding ways to engage parents/guardians as a productive part of the school community
 - f. Respecting diversity by listening and interacting effectively with parents/guardians
 - g. Designing quality professional written communication with specific audiences and purposes in mind

**SECTION: 3000 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: PLACEMENT
POLICY, Policy Code: 3810, Approved: 05.03.2024**

CFCI Teachers and Support Staff decide on class placement for all students. All information available will be considered in making classroom placements for each Student.

Parents/Guardians who wish to have input regarding their Student's placement should discuss concerns with their student's teacher; however, requests specifically for a certain teacher may not be honored and are at the discretion of the School. Written requests to address specific educational needs should be submitted in writing to the Director of Education or Designee. Final determination of class placement is made by the CFCI Director of Education or Designee.

SECTION: 3000 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: PROMOTION AND RETENTION, Policy Code: 3815, Approved: 05.03.2024

Below are some of the CFCI strategies and interventions that teachers **may** utilize in order to consider and/or support the decision to retain a student, or not promote them to the following grade level. Retention decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and include families, teachers, support staff, and leadership. The Director of Education or designee is responsible for finalizing decisions regarding promotion and retention. These standards and processes will incorporate all applicable State law and policy requirements.

When considering retention, teachers and families look at the whole child, which may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Class performance in all academic areas, portfolios, and formal and informal assessments
- b. Social maturity and interactions with peers and adults
- c. Progress reports from classroom teachers and specialists
- d. Completion of assigned work, homework, projects
- e. Information provided by the student's parents/guardians, counselors, therapists, social workers, other professionals
- f. Information gained in the child's permanent record, health information, prior retentions, and performance at other schools
- g. Attendance and tardies
- h. Student support plans, including IEP and 504 identification
- i. Conferences with the teachers in the upcoming loop-level or grade level

The following strategies shall be implemented prior to consideration for retention:

- a. **Regular** parent/guardian conferences and communication regarding the area(s) of concern
- b. Small group, differentiated, academic, behavioral and/or social-emotional intervention plans to address areas of concern
- c. Monthly problem-solving discussions with all of the students' teachers and support staff and experts in area(s) of concern
- d. Consistent, frequent monitoring of progress through the use of informal and/or formal assessments
- e. Teacher(s) may complete the Light's Retention Scale to offer insight into a child's likelihood to find success in retention.

All concerns regarding promotion and retention shall be communicated to the Director of Education and parents/guardians by the end of January.

SECTION: 3000 CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: FIELD STUDIES/FIELD TRIPS, Policy Code: 3820, Approved: 05.03.2024

At CFCI, we believe that our students learn best through experience. Field study is an excellent way to provide these experiences. Each teacher will arrange for appropriate field studies that support and expand learning at each grade level.

Students should attend all field study events/field trips if at all possible, as field studies serve as valuable foundations for inquiry-based learning.

If a student does not go on a field trip, he/she will complete work related to the field study in another classroom at the school.

Permission Slips

All Students must have a signed permission form and the appropriate funds to participate in a field trip by the designated deadline.

Transportation

In the event that school transportation is not available, parent/guardian volunteer drivers or charter buses may provide transportation for field studies. If the field trip is over 100 miles away, teachers and school leadership shall arrange a meeting with parents/guardians for the purpose of disseminating pertinent information.

When parent/guardian drivers are providing transportation for a field study, drivers must adhere to the chaperone expectations as communicated by CFCI.

Expectations

Students and chaperones are expected to follow our Code of Conduct and school policies during any field studies. Any violations of those expectations will be addressed by designated school personnel through the School's Code of Conduct and policies.

Overnight Field Studies

Any overnight field study must be presented to and approved by the CFCI Board of Directors within 90 days of the scheduled trip unless the Board decides otherwise.

SECTION: 3000 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: MATERIALS SELECTION, Policy Code: 3825, Approved: 05.03.2024

Objectives of Materials Selection

- A. To provide instructional materials necessary to implement, enrich, and support the educational programs of the schools.
- B. To provide a wide range of materials with diversity of appeal and which incorporate different points of view.
- C. To provide materials which have varying degrees of difficulty to accommodate the range of student abilities.
- D. To provide materials representative of American heritage and the various religious, ethnic, cultural, and political groups which have influenced its development.

Responsibility for Selection of Materials

- A. The CFCI Board of Directors is legally responsible for all materials used in the educational programs of the school.
- B. The responsibility for selection of instructional materials is delegated to CFCI Leadership and teachers.
- C. The School Director(s) is authorized to form such review committees, criteria, and procedural rules as may be necessary to carry out this delegation of authority in a manner consistent with the policy of the Board.

Request for Supplementary Materials

Any student, with his/her parents'/guardians' consent, may request an alternate supplementary material when the assigned supplementary material is substantially objectionable to the student on sincerely held religious grounds. The teacher may provide an equitable alternate supplementary material or, if it is not available, to excuse the student from the assignment.

SECTION: 3000 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND SAFETY EDUCATION, Policy Code: 3830, Approved: 05.03.2024

The Board of Directors believes that the parent or guardian should make decisions concerning the student's participation in a Reproductive Health and Safety Education program. In accordance with § 115C-81.30, a focused program of Reproductive Health and Safety Education will be offered to students in select grades 5-8. Parents or guardians may review the instructional materials, discuss the goals/objectives with the teachers/school counselor/school leadership, and obtain other information to assist them in deciding whether to consent to their child's participation in the program.

Prior to the implementation of the program, parents and guardians shall be contacted and informed about the content of the program and the dates of program delivery. Parents and guardians must opt their student out of the program through the communication method designated by the School if they wish to forgo program participation for their student through written communication to the staff member teaching the content and/or the Director of Education.

SECTION: 3000 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: PATRIOTIC EXERCISES, Policy Code: 3840, Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry shall:

1. Display the United States and North Carolina flags in each classroom, when available.
2. Require the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance on a daily basis.
3. Provide instruction on the meaning and historical origins of the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance.

The school shall not compel any person to stand, salute the flag, or recite the Pledge of Allegiance. If flags are donated or are otherwise available, flags shall be displayed in each classroom.

Legal Reference: NC Statute 115 - 47 (29-A) & 115C-36; (2006-137, s. 3.)

SECTION: 3000 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT, Policy Code: 3915,
Approved: 05.03.2024

The CFCI Board of Directors prohibits the use of corporal punishment in any form. For the purpose of this policy, corporal punishment shall be defined as any kind of physical punishment inflicted upon the body of the student. Any employee shall be responsible for notifying the CFCI School Director(s) of any observed or suspected incidence of corporal punishment.

Seclusion and Restraint House Bill 1032 Policy

THE SCHOOL complies with all applicable laws governing seclusion and restraint. The School has established guidelines for the use of restraint and provisions for training the staff in the management of student behavior in accordance with North Carolina General Statute, 115C-391.1, also known as House Bill 1032 – Deborah Greenblatt Act. This law took effect July 1, 2006; and requires the School to inform parents of the existence of the law, the definitions for the following terms and how the School will use these forms:

- a. Physical Restraint is the use of physical force to restrict the freedom of movement of all or a portion of a student's body. The School will use a trained crisis team to physically restrain a child only as the last resort to protect the health and safety of the child and others in the area.
- b. Mechanical Restraint is the use of any device or material attached or adjacent to a student's body that restricts the freedom of movement. The School will use a trained crisis team to mechanically restrain a student only as a last resort to protect the health and safety of the student and others in the area. The School will also contact the proper authorities (law enforcement) to assist when needed.
- c. Seclusion is the confinement of a student alone in an enclosed space from which the student is prevented from or not capable of leaving. The School will use a trained crisis team to seclude a student only as a last resort to protect the health and safety of the student and others in the area. The School will also contact the proper authorities (law enforcement) to assist when needed.
- d. Isolation is a behavior management technique in which a student is placed alone in an enclosed space from which the student is not prevented from leaving. The School will use isolation to help a child get their behavior back under control before allowing them to rejoin their classmates. This space will follow the guidelines set forth in the law.
- e. Time-out is a behavior management technique in which a student is separated from others for a limited time in a monitored setting. The School uses the time out system to manage student behavior. The new law does not regulate the use of time out.

Aversive Procedures are a systematic physical or sensory intervention program for modifying the behavior of a student, which causes physical harm and long-term psychological impairment. The School will at no time use aversive procedures to modify a student's behavior.

SECTION: 3000 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAM/CHILD FIND, Policy Code: 3920, Approved: 05.03.2024

As required by IDEA 2004, Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will ensure that all children with disabilities within the boundaries of the public agency, including children with disabilities who are homeless or wards of the State, and children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated. This will be fulfilled by the Exceptional Children's program. The Exceptional Children's Program at CFCI is served by certified Exceptional Children's staff.

The EC Coordinator acts as the liaison between the Department of Public Instruction and the school to maintain compliance with all federal and state law.

The Exceptional Children department provides a full continuum of services which are available to all identified or suspected exceptional children, with the input and support of general education classroom teachers. Information to address student progress toward mastery or non-mastery of goals, as outlined in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), is provided at the same time student's general education classroom progress reports are sent.

The Exceptional Children program is driven by the students' Individual Education Plans as well as the team recommendations as to what is in the best interest for each particular child. CFCI follows the practice of maintaining students in the least restrictive environment appropriate for each child's needs.

The Board encourages parents, guardians, surrogate parents, custodians, and school personnel to work cooperatively to ensure that the special needs of students are met.

Legal Reference: § 1412 (a)(5) of U.S. Code Title 20

SECTION: 3000 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: STUDENT SUPPORT INFORMATION, Policy Code: 3925, Approved: 05.03.2024

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS)

To ensure that all students receive high quality, research-based general education core instruction and, as appropriate, strategic and/or intensive intervention and extension support matched to student needs, CFCI utilizes the core principles of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. This process utilizes a team-based approach, using data-driven problem solving to analyze how all students are responding to instruction and maximize growth for all students by combining systematic assessment, decision-making, and a multilayered services delivery model. Under this model, students receive support through differentiation in core classroom instruction, small group instruction in class, and/or during additional intervention time. Each tier consists of an increase in support for the individual student based on data collected throughout the instructional process.

The following is a basic description of methods to implement each tier:

Core Instruction/Tier I

All students receive core academic and behavioral instruction, differentiated to meet their basic instructional and environmental needs, presented by the classroom teacher.

Supplemental Support/Tier II

Data-driven academic and behavioral interventions and/or extensions are provided and documented in the general education setting along with scheduled measures of the student's response to intervention. This layer of support is in addition to continued Core/Tier I support and differentiation.

Intensive Support/Tier III

Additional data-driven academic and behavioral interventions and/or extensions are provided and documented in an intervention classroom. This includes continued analysis by the problem solving team of all scientific, research-based intervention(s) and documented modifications, with a focus on progress towards established goals using scheduled measures of the student's response to the intervention(s), or discontinuation of the intervention(s) and the implementation of another scientific research-based intervention. This layer of support is in addition to continued Tier I and Tier II layers of support and differentiation.

Parent/Guardian Involvement in the MTSS Process

The school will inform parents/guardians regarding the use of scientific, research-based interventions, including the strategies used to increase the student's rate of learning.

SECTION: 3000 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: SECTION 504 PROCEDURES, Policy Code: 3930, Approved: 05.03.2024

Some students' needs are not best met through an IEP, but through the designation known as a Section 504 Plan. Students who are identified as needing a 504 Plan usually have health-related issues which impact their academic progress, but which do not warrant an IEP. Some examples of these health-related issues are (but are not limited to): Attention Deficit Disorder; Diabetes, severe food allergies, physical handicaps or disabilities such as CP, sickle-cell anemia, hearing or vision-impairment, asthma, and other chronic illnesses.

A teacher who has a student with one or more of the above-mentioned conditions may feel it would be advantageous for the student to utilize a 504 plan in order to receive special modifications and accommodations to be successful in the school environment.

Section 504 is a Civil Rights statute, and comes under the auspices of the Office of Civil Rights. The federal government does NOT provide additional funding to assist schools in serving students who are identified as 504.

At the beginning of each school year, the 504 Coordinator reviews all of the students' files that are identified as having a 504 and ensures all teachers associated with the student have access to the plan. This teacher then provides copies of the 504 accommodation plans to all regular education teachers designated to teach these students for the current academic year.

When time for annual review, the 504 Coordinator, in conjunction with the classroom teacher, will initiate a parent/guardian meeting to review the modifications and accommodations in place for that student and determine if the strategies/modifications are working well or whether there should be changes made to the plan.

Parents/guardians or teachers may also request a meeting to review and/or revise the 504 plan at any time, but must be reviewed annually, and eligibility to be reestablished every 3 years, for the school to remain in compliance with Section 504 guidelines.

Parents/guardians or teachers may file a Section 504 grievance with the 504 Coordinator if they believe the school has been non-compliant.

The process is as follows:

1. A written grievance should be submitted to the 504 Coordinator within 30 days of the most recent meeting or discussion of the 504 issues in question. The written grievance should include names of the student, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators and any others involved. It should include details of meetings, phone conversations, copies of emails and all other communications of the 504 issues in question. The written grievance should include the specific nature of the grievance and the desired resolution of the issues.
2. The 504 Coordinator will acknowledge receipt of the grievance in writing to all named parties in the grievance. The acknowledgement will also include a plan to address the grievance.
3. The 504 Coordinator will investigate the grievance in an adequate, reliable and impartial manner. If the 504 Coordinator is a named party in the grievance, another administrator who is not named will handle the investigation. The investigator will provide the person

filing the grievance the opportunity to present witnesses or other evidence. The investigator will interview the named parties in the grievance as deemed appropriate. The investigation will conclude within 30 days of the date the grievance was filed.

4. After careful consideration of the grievance, the investigator will make a written determination of resolution. A copy of the resolution will be provided to all parties named in the grievance as well as the School Director(s).
5. If there is any finding of discrimination by the investigator, a written plan to correct that discrimination will be a part of the resolution.
6. The investigator is responsible to ensure that there will be no harassment or retaliation of or by any parties named in the grievance.
7. All details, written documents, and communications regarding the grievance are confidential and should not be discussed or shared with anyone not named in the grievance. The only exception to this is that the investigator will share all materials with the School Director(s).

A grievance under this policy is not appealable to the Board of Directors.

SECTION: 3000 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS BY STUDENTS, Policy Code: 3940, Approved: 05.03.2024

Students and the educational program must be the focus of schools. It is, therefore, the policy of Cape Fear Center for Inquiry to create a non-public forum for distributing materials from outside organizations to be taken home by students.

Staff shall be required to distribute only four types of materials to students to be taken home:

1. Materials from the Cape Fear Center for Inquiry
2. Materials from agencies/departments with the towns, county, state or federal government and the state university system
3. Materials from CFCI's Partnership
4. Nonprofit organizations providing programs for youth that are primarily designed to promote fitness, cultural arts or academics consistent with the N. C. Standard Course of Study. Materials that primarily promote fund-raising activities by these nonprofit groups will not be approved

Materials distributed through students shall contain no commercial advertising unless sponsored by groups identified in numbers 1-4 above. No other organizations may require school staff to distribute materials to be taken home by students. The distribution of non-school materials should not interfere with instructional time. The School Director(s) or the Director's designee shall approve materials from all other school-related groups, as well as agencies, government branches and nonprofit organizations before distribution.

Staff members may share information with individual students to inform them about community resources to supplement the education provided by the school. Other than as authorized above, no materials shall be distributed or made available to students on CFCI grounds or using any mode of communication operated by the CFCI, except materials as may be allowed under Policy 467 Distribution of Materials By Students. This Policy shall not be construed as creating a limited public forum or a public forum. The decision of the School Director to disallow or restrict distribution of materials is final and is not appealable to the Board.

4000 Students and Parents/Guardians

[4000 - Dress Code Policy](#)

[4001 - Admission Lottery Policy](#)

[4010 - Confidentiality of Student Records \(FERPA\)](#)

[4100 - Medication Administration](#)

[4110 - Anaphylaxis and Epinephrine](#)

[4115 - Concussions and Return to Learn](#)

[4120 - Individual Diabetes Care Plans and Diabetes Education](#)

[4125 - Homeless Students](#)

[4170 - Acceleration Policy](#)

[4200 - Attendance](#)

[4205 - Head Lice](#)

[4310 - Animals on School Property](#)

[4315 - Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, Cyberbullying, Abuse or Molestation](#)

[4325 - Title IX Policy](#)

[4335 - Animals in the Classroom](#)

[4800 - Inclement Weather Policy](#)

[4900 - Educational Leave](#)

[4910 - Remote Learning Protocol](#)

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: DRESS CODE POLICY, Policy Code: 4015, Approved: 05.03.2024

The CFCI Dress Code, a part of our student code of conduct, is an important aspect of our school's culture.

Students should be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for the school day including learning and active play. This includes safe and comfortable clothes that are suitable for the weather and a variety of settings (outside, the playground, the classrooms - whether sitting in chairs or on the carpet, and other work spaces).

Students should be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for the school day including learning and active play.

- Apparel or jewelry should not advertise violence, tobacco or alcohol use, nor contain sexual content or profanity
- Midriffs should not be exposed
- No flip flops are allowed for active play
- Undergarments should not be shown at any time
- Hats, hoods, and sunglasses are not permitted in common spaces (e.g. hallways, bathrooms, office spaces).

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: ADMISSION/ LOTTERY POLICY, Policy Code: 4001, Approved: 11.18.25

290 Board Admissions and Enrollment Policy

PURPOSE

This policy is in place to address the process for handling admissions at Cape Fear Center for Inquiry. The goal of this admissions policy is to declare the process and methods that will be used to admit students in a fair and consistent way that does not offer priority to any student except those specifically noted as required by North Carolina law.

Students will be admitted to Cape Fear Center for Inquiry as described below.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry is a K-8 tuition free public school. Any child who is qualified under the laws of North Carolina for admission to a public school is qualified for admission into a charter school. To qualify to attend a North Carolina public school, a student must be a resident of North Carolina. Cape Fear Center for Inquiry does not limit admission to students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race or ethnicity, creed, gender or gender identity, national origin, religion or ancestry.

Length of the open enrollment period (may not be less than 30 consecutive days per CHTR-003) Cape Fear Center for Inquiry application period will be open for a minimum of 30 days. Applications will be available online or can be filled out in our front office beginning the first Monday in December.

During the month of January, CFCI will conduct Prospective Parent/Guardian Education meetings which give parents/guardians the opportunity to tour the school, meet the faculty, and learn about our school.

The lottery date, time, and location will be published on the school's website by January 1st each year. The lottery date will be the third Wednesday of February. All applications, once received, are reviewed by the front office staff for necessary information.

Application Content

No criteria for admission will be used except the completed application. The application may be completed online and accessed through our website, www.cfc.net. In the case that a family is unable to access the site, parents/guardians are welcome to come to the school for assistance in applying. The application will include the student's name, parent/guardian names, current address of student, phone number of parent/guardian, email of parent/guardian, county of residence, current grade level, their grade level for the coming year, student's date of birth, the name of any siblings already enrolled at the school, or any priorities that would apply, declaration of the student's residence in the state of North Carolina.

Grade Level for the Lottery Application

Parents/Guardians will be asked to confirm both their student's current grade as well as the grade for the coming year. Parents/Guardians may not choose which grade they would like their child enrolled in for the coming year, they must enter the actual current grade and the next year's grade as confirmation. If a student's current school recommends retention or promotion after acceptance, the parent/guardian must notify CFCI immediately to determine appropriate placement and availability of seats.

Lottery Process

On the Lottery Day, the third Wednesday of February, all applicants will either receive notification of a spot in the grade level they applied for or, they will receive notification of their number on the waitlist.

Maximum class size limits are 20 students in each K and 1st grade class, 22 in each 2nd and 3rd grade class, and 24 in each 4th-8th grade class. A waitlist will be established using the lottery system whenever capacity is exceeded. Students on the waitlist will be contacted up to the last student day before CFCI's Fall Break.

Lottery priorities and a rank in order of priority being used Cape Fear Center for Inquiry may give priority in the Lottery in certain instances as stated in G.S. 115C-238.29F(g). The Board offers the following priorities and will implement them in the order and manner described below:

PRIORITY #1, Currently enrolled students. Current students at Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will not be required to re-enroll. In order to properly plan, the school will routinely inquire with parents through a letter of intent to ascertain if students will return to Cape Fear Center for Inquiry the following year.

PRIORITY #2, Children of fulltime CFCI faculty/staff members so long as that total does not exceed 15% of the school's enrollment (unless a waiver is sought from the State Board of Education). Full time faculty/staff that are hired after the lottery may have their children added to the top of the waiting list or administratively enrolled, up to the last student day before Fall Break.

PRIORITY #3, Siblings of currently enrolled students. Siblings are defined as brother or sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepbrother, stepsister or foster child who resides in the same household as the currently enrolled student.

PRIORITY #4, Siblings of students who have completed eighth grade at CFCI and who were enrolled in at least four grade levels.

PRIORITY #5, Students who were enrolled in CFCI within the two previous school years but left the school to participate in an academic study abroad program or a competitive admission residential program or because of the vocational opportunities of the student's parent/guardian (must have documentation of the program).

Siblings

It is the intent of Cape Fear Center for Inquiry to support families and create a school community. All families with new siblings of currently enrolled students must submit an application. Siblings of enrolled students will receive priority for admission during the lottery process if their applications are received by the designated deadline.

If multiple birth siblings apply for admission under G.S.115C-238.29(g), they will be considered one application and all multiple birth siblings will be given spots.

Waitlist

The waitlist does not roll over to the following school year. A new application must be completed each school year to be included in the following year's lottery. Lottery procedures will comply with the North Carolina Open Meetings Law provided in G.S.143-218.10(a). The school will publicize the date, time, and location of the lottery and allow anyone to apply.

After the lottery process is complete, parents/guardians of all applicants will be contacted via email or phone and notified if their child(ren) is eligible for admission and enrollment, or what number they are on the waitlist(s). Families who are eligible for admission will have 24 hours to provide CFCI with confirmation (verbal or written) of their intent to accept the spot for which they are eligible. If there is no confirmation of acceptance or paperwork completed within the timeline described below, CFCI will move to the next person(s) on the waitlist until there is acceptance of the spot. See timeline procedures below for additional details.

Timeline and Procedures for Collecting Enrollment Documents

Formal Enrollment

Once a student has accepted a spot to attend CFCI, formal enrollment is required to finalize the student's space in the school. The enrollment procedures will ensure that the school has information necessary to acquire student cumulative records which are needed to meet State Board of Education records requirements for charter schools. Required information includes, but is not limited to, a completed enrollment form and a copy of the student's birth certificate. Additionally, all students who are new to North Carolina public schools—including most kindergarten students—must provide a completed Home Language Survey along with a copy of their birth certificate. In addition, immunization records & transfer records from previous schools (public, private or home schools) including grades, test scores, IEP/504 records, discipline, and attendance records are required prior to the start of school. These records are not needed during the enrollment period, but we must receive all enrollment paperwork to reserve the space. Once the enrollment packet is complete, Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will submit a records request to the previous school.

Applicants drawn during the lottery process and before May 1st must accept or decline the offer for admission to Cape Fear Center for Inquiry within 24 hours (1 day). All enrollment paperwork must be completed within 48 hours (2 days) of acceptance of the spot. If a student is admitted after

May 1st but before August 1st, they will have 24 hours (1 day) to accept or decline admission to Cape Fear Center for Inquiry and an additional 24 hours (1 day) from time of acceptance to complete all enrollment paperwork. Beginning on August 1st, parents/guardians will have 24 total hours to accept or decline admission *and* complete all enrollment paperwork. Should a parent/guardian decline the enrollment offer, not respond, and/or not complete all enrollment paperwork within the above timelines, the school may offer admission to the next name on that specific grade's waiting list.

Waiting lists will be maintained from the time of the lottery through the last student day before fall break. If and when an opening in any grade should occur, the next child on the waitlist will be offered a spot. No new students will be admitted after the last student day before fall break.

Applicant Eligibility (reference G.S. 115C-218.45) including provision around expulsion or suspension

Students are entitled to admission to Cape Fear Center for Inquiry if they meet the following requirements:

- The student meets legal age requirements and has not completed the prescribed course of study for graduation from high school.
- The student has satisfied North Carolina immunization requirements
- The student is domiciled within North Carolina.
- The student is not presently under suspension or expulsion from a private or public school in North Carolina or any other state.

The admission of a student who meets the qualifications of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act will not be denied or delayed due to the absence of required records or documents.

Verification of Age

The parent/guardian of a child who is making initial entrance into school must furnish a valid copy of the child's birth certificate or other acceptable proof of age. CFCI follows state law regarding kindergarten age as follows: If the child reaches the age of five years on or before August 31st of the year presented for enrollment, the child is eligible to apply. If the fifth birth date falls on or after September 1st, the child is not eligible to enroll.

North Carolina State Board of Education has a clearly defined process for early entry to kindergarten that CFCI adheres to (GS 16 NCAC 6E.0105). Children who will reach their 4th birthday by April 16th may enter kindergarten if they demonstrate extraordinary academic ability and maturity. CFCI applicants must also follow all CFCI lottery procedures for the school year in which they wish to enroll their young child into kindergarten. Families must apply and participate in lottery deadlines, and if a seat is offered, meet all CFCI enrollment requirements in addition to the process outlined by NC DPI. This process and the required steps are outlined here: [NC Early Entry to Kindergarten Process](#).

Verification of Permanent Residency

The parent/guardian of a child who is enrolled in school must furnish proof of permanent residency documentation that can be examined to determine domiciliary. Documentation can include, but is not limited to the following: 1) Copy of deed or record of most recent mortgage payment; 2) Copy of lease agreement; 3) A utility bill dated within the past 30-days, including: gas, water, electric, landline phone, cable, or satellite; 4) A valid North Carolina driver's license or North Carolina photo identification card; 5) A vehicle or property tax bill (dated within the past year) and 6) A bank or credit card statement with a North Carolina address (dated within the past 60-days).

School's Right to Refuse Enrollment

The school reserves the right to refuse to enroll any student currently under a term of expulsion or suspension by his or her school until that term is over. The school reserves the right to refuse to enroll a student if a parent/guardian willingly and knowingly provided incorrect information on the enrollment application.

The school will make adjustments for students that are classified as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act.

Handling of Errors

School Errors

If any mistake is made by CFCI in administering the lottery (or if any discrepancy occurs in the lottery process as a result of the actions of Cape Fear Center for Inquiry that is not corrected during the lottery), such mistake or discrepancy will not invalidate the lottery and the lottery results will stand with respect to all applicants who were admitted at the appropriate grade level through the lottery. The mistake or discrepancy will be corrected at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors (after recognition of the mistake).

Parent/Guardian Errors

If a student name is duplicated in the lottery and school administration determines that the student was intentionally registered more than one time, the student will be assigned the lowest priority placement number assigned to the student in the lottery.

If an applicant has been incorrectly placed in a grade because a parent/guardian wishes to have their student retained, the applicant will not be admitted but may submit a corrected application, which will be subject to the process followed for students applying after the enrollment period.

Applicants After Open Enrollment Period Students

Applying After the Open Enrollment Period

Any students applying after the open enrollment period will be placed in their respective grade if there is space available. Otherwise, they will be placed directly after any waitlisted students from the lottery in order that the application was received.

***YOUR CHILD MUST BE IN ATTENDANCE THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. It is important**

that students who have been enrolled be present on the first day of school. If your child is not in school on the first day of school or the first day following their enrollment, the school will make reasonable efforts to contact the student's family via phone call and email. If the school has not heard from the family within 48 hours, the seat will be offered to the next student on the waitlist, and the student will be withdrawn from enrollment.

Records Requests During Open Enrollment Period

Any records requests received from other schools during the open enrollment period for currently enrolled or newly enrolled students will be treated as a signed withdrawal form. The school will make reasonable efforts to contact the student's family via phone and email to inform them that due to enrollment in another school, their child will be withdrawn from CFCI and their seat will be offered to the next student on the waitlist. At the discretion of the Director or designee, the family will be given 48 hours to make a final decision prior to withdrawal from CFCI.

**SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS:
CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS (FERPA),** Policy Code: 4010,
Approved: 05.03.2024

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. CFCI complies with the requirements of FERPA in its management of education records.

FERPA gives parents/guardians certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents/Guardians or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Written requests to review records should be submitted to the CFCI School Director(s) or designee. Arrangements will be made for access and notification will be provided regarding the time and place where the records may be inspected. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents/guardians or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents/guardians or eligible students have the right to request the amendment of records which they believe to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Written requests for amendments should be submitted to the CFCI School Director(s) or designee, clearly identifying the part of the record to be amended and why it should be amended. If CFCI decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian or eligible student then has the right to a hearing. Additional information about the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent/guardian or eligible student in order to release personally identifiable information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools where the student seeks or intends to enroll;
 - Specified state or federal officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

CFCI may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However,

CFCI shall notify parents/guardians and eligible students when directory information may be released and provide ample notice for parents/guardians and eligible students to decline release of directory information.

Parents/guardians or eligible students also have the right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education concerning a school's compliance with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

At CFCI, access to student education records is limited to CFCI staff who have a legitimate reason to access the information in order to properly serve the student (e.g. the student's teacher, case manager, school counselor, school nurse, coordinator, director). All CFCI staff members are required to sign out physical copies of student education records (e.g. cumulative folders) from the designated locked storage area. Student education records must be returned to the same locked storage, accompanied by a signature verifying return of the record.

Digital copies of student education records include: photographs, video recordings, and digital files. Digital copies of student education records shall not be created or stored on personal electronic devices. Digital copies of student education records shall not be shared with any person who does not have a legitimate reason to access the student's education records.

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION, Policy Code: 4100, Approved: 05.03.2024

The Board recognizes that students may need to take medication during school hours. School personnel may administer medication prescribed by a health care practitioner upon the written request of a student's parent/guardian. In limited circumstances, a student may be authorized to self-administer medications. To minimize disruptions to the school day, students should take medications at home rather than at school whenever feasible. School officials may deny a request to administer any medication that could be taken at home or when, in the opinion of the School Director(s) or designee in consultation with school nursing personnel, the administration of the medication by school personnel would pose a substantial risk of harm to the student or others.

For purposes of this policy, all references to "parent" include parents, legal guardians, and legal custodians. In addition, for purposes of this policy, the term "health care practitioner" is limited to licensed medical professionals who are legally authorized to prescribe medications under North Carolina law, such as doctors of medicine, doctors of osteopathic medicine, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners.

Medication Administration by School Employees

1. Conditions for Administering Medication

Authorized school employees may administer medication to students when all of the following conditions are met. These conditions apply to all medications, including those available over-the-counter without a prescription.

a. Medication Authorization/Order: A health care practitioner must prescribe the medication for use by the student and complete a CFCI Physician's Authorization for Medication at School Form in which the health care practitioner provides explicit written instructions for administering the medication. Instructions must include the name of medication, medication dosage, time of administration at school, route of administration, reason for the drug or medication to be given, and any potential side effects or reactions of the medications.

b. Proper Container/Labeling: If the medication to be administered is available by prescription only, the parent must provide the medication in a pharmacy-labeled container with directions for how and when the medicine is to be given, student's name and birthdate. If the medication is available over-the-counter, it must be provided in the original sealed container or packaging, labeled with the student's name. The directions must be consistent with the information contained in the CFCI Physician's Authorization for Medication at School Form.

c. Proper Administration: The employee must administer the medication pursuant to the healthcare practitioner's written instructions provided to the school by the student's parent and in accordance with professional standards. The parent will sign the CFCI Physician's Authorization for Medication at School Form to indicate permission to administer the medication as set forth on the form. The Board of Directors and its employees assume no liability for complications or side effects of medication when administered in accordance with the instructions

provided by the parent and health care practitioner.

2. Procedures for Administering Medications

The School Director(s) shall develop procedures for the implementation of this policy. The procedures and a copy of this policy must be made available to all students and parents each school year. The School Directors' procedures should be developed according to the guidelines listed below.

- a. The health and welfare of the student must be of paramount concern in all decisions regarding the administration of medication.
- b. Procedures for medication administration must be consistent with recommendations of the School Health Unit of the Children & Youth Branch of the N.C. Division of Public Health, as described in the North Carolina School Health Program Manual.
- c. Students with special needs are to be afforded all rights provided by federal and state law as enumerated in the Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities. Students with disabilities also are to be afforded all rights provided by anti-discrimination laws, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- d. The Board generally encourages school personnel to administer medication from a centralized location. However, in all instances, whether administered from a centralized location or multiple locations, any medications kept at school for a student must be kept in a locked and secure place. An exception to the requirement for locked storage may be made for emergency medications that must be immediately accessible.
- e. All school personnel who will be administering medications must receive appropriate training.
- f. Only medications clearly prescribed for the student may be administered by school personnel. At the time a parent brings a medication to school for administration, if school personnel have concerns regarding the appropriateness of the medication or dosage for a student, a confirmation should be obtained from the student's health care practitioner or another health care practitioner prior to administering the medication or allowing a student to self-administer the medication.
- g. Although efforts should be made not to disrupt instructional time, a parent has the right to administer medication to his or her child at any time while the child is on school property.
- h. Written information maintained by school personnel regarding a student's medicinal and health needs is confidential. Parents and students must be accorded all rights provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and state confidentiality laws. Any employee who violates the confidentiality of the records may be subject to disciplinary action.

Emergency Medication

Students who are at risk for medical emergencies, such as those with diabetes, asthma, or severe allergies, must have an emergency health care plan developed for them and updated each school year to address emergency administration of medication. Students must meet the requirements of subsection A.1, above, including providing authorization and instructions from the health care practitioner and written consent of the parent, in order for emergency medication to be administered by school personnel while the student is at school, at a school sponsored activity, and/or while in transit to or from school or a school-sponsored event.

Student Self-Administering Medications

The Board recognizes that students with certain health conditions like diabetes or asthma, or an allergy that could result in an anaphylactic reaction, may need to possess and self-administer medication on school property in accordance with their individualized health care plan or emergency health care plan. As used in this section of the policy, “medication” refers to a medicine prescribed for the treatment of diabetes, asthma, or anaphylactic reactions and includes insulin or a source of glucose, a prescribed asthma inhaler, or a prescribed epinephrine auto-injector. The School Director(s) shall develop procedures for the possession and self-administration of such medication by students on school property, during the school day, at school-sponsored activities, and/or while in transit to or from school or school-sponsored events. Students may not self-administer any medications that are classified as controlled substances, including stimulant medications and narcotics.

1. Authorization to Self-Administer Medication

Before a student will be allowed to self-administer medication pursuant to this section, the student’s parent must provide to the School Director(s) or designee all of the documents listed below:

- a. written authorization from the student’s parent for the student to possess and self-administer the medication;
 - b. a written statement from the student’s health care practitioner verifying that:
 - i. the student has diabetes or asthma, or an allergy that could result in anaphylactic reaction;
 - ii. the health care practitioner prescribed the medication for use on school property during the school day, at school-sponsored activities, or while in transit to or from school or school-sponsored events; and
 - iii. the student understands, has been instructed in self-administration of the medication, and has demonstrated the skill level necessary to use the medication and any accompanying device;
 - c. a written treatment plan and written emergency protocol formulated by the prescribing health care practitioner for managing the student’s diabetes, asthma, or anaphylaxis episodes and for medication use by the student;
 - d. a statement provided by the school system and signed by the student’s parent acknowledging that the board of education and its agents are not liable for injury arising from the student’s possession and self administration of the medication;
 - e. any other documents or items necessary to comply with state and federal laws.
- Prior to being permitted to self-administer medication at school, the student also must demonstrate to the school nurse, or the nurse’s designee, the skill level necessary to use the medication and any accompanying device. The student’s parent must provide to the school backup medication that school personnel are to keep in a location to which the student has immediate access in the event the student does not have the required medication. All information provided to the school by the student’s parent must be reviewed by the school nurse and kept on file at the school in an easily accessible location. Any permission granted by the School Director(s) or designee for a student to possess and self-administer medication will be effective only for the same school year for 365 calendar days. Such permission must be renewed each school year.

2. Responsibilities of the Student

A student who is authorized in accordance with this policy to carry medication for self-administration must carry the medication in the original labeled container with the student’s name on the label.

3. Consequences for Improper Use

A student who uses his or her medication in a manner other than as prescribed or who permits another person to use the medication may be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the school disciplinary policy. However, school officials shall not impose disciplinary action on the student that limits or restricts the student's immediate access to the diabetes, asthma, or anaphylactic medication. The board does not assume any responsibility for the administration of medication to a student by the student, the student's parent, or any other person who is not authorized by this policy to administer medications to students.

Legal References: Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12134, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq., 34 C.F.R. pt. 300; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; G.S. 115C-36, -307(c), -375.1, -375.2, -375.2A, -375.3; Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities, State Board of Education Policy EXCP-000

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: ANAPHYLAXIS AND EPINEPHRINE, Policy Code: 4110, Approved: 05.03.2024

A strong collaboration among the healthcare community, school nurses, first responders, administrators, school staff, parents/legal guardians, students, and the community at large is crucial to establish and abide by the anaphylaxis policy and protocol and to maintain a safe school learning environment. Successful management of students with a life threatening health issue requires a team approach with involvement of parents/legal guardians, school nurses and designated school staff, healthcare providers, and students. CFCI shall develop and maintain an anaphylaxis and epinephrine protocol. Staff shall be trained on the protocol annually.

Staff and parents/legal guardians need to be made aware that it is not possible to achieve a completely allergen free environment in any school that is open to the general community. Parents/guardians and staff should not have a false sense of security that an allergen has been totally eliminated from the environment. The school recognizes the need to adopt a range of procedures and risk minimization strategies to reduce the risk for a child having an anaphylactic reaction, including strategies to minimize the presence of the allergen in the school. Successful management of anaphylaxis in schools also requires having epinephrine auto-injectors available for immediate access in situations of severe allergic reaction to unknown allergens.

Non-patient specific epinephrine auto-injectors will be stocked and readily accessible at CFCI. First responders and other identified staff will be trained by the school nurse or designee to recognize the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and administer epinephrine via auto-injection.

Student-specific emergency medications shall be kept in a location that provides easy and immediate access and is never locked or accessible to other students. Medication storage shall be handled carefully, based on the student's individualized medical needs as well as the physical layout of the school.

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: CONCUSSIONS AND RETURN TO LEARN, Policy Code: 4115, Approved: 05.03.2024

The Board recognizes that concussions and other head injuries may be serious and potentially life threatening and that such injuries may result in serious consequences later in life if managed improperly. The Board is committed to practices that reduce the potential for short-term or long-term effects from such injuries. In support of this commitment, the Board directs school employees to comply with the concussion safety requirements for all students as set forth in this policy. The School Director(s) or designee shall develop a plan consistent with state requirements and shall implement and monitor compliance with this policy.

A. Definition of Concussion

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a direct or indirect impact to the head that results in disruption of normal brain function, which may or may not result in a loss of consciousness.

B. Removal from and Return to Learn

Any student who is exhibiting signs or symptoms consistent with a concussion must be removed from the learning environment immediately. The student will not be allowed to return to the learning environment until the student has been evaluated and has received written clearance for participating in the learning environment that complies with the requirements of any applicable law or State Board policy. School staff shall comply with the student's health plan upon return from a head injury.

C. Record Keeping

The School Director(s) shall require the school nurse or designee to maintain complete and accurate records of actions taken in his or her school to comply with this policy and applicable legal authority. Records shall include accounts of any education or training as may be required by law or State Board of Education policy.

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: INDIVIDUAL DIABETES CARE PLANS AND DIABETES EDUCATION, Policy Code: 4120, Approved: 05.03.2024

The Board of Directors recognizes the importance of creating a safe learning environment for all students. In compliance with State Board of Education policy, the Board of Directors shall ensure that individual diabetes care plans and diabetes education guidelines are adopted.

The guidelines adopted shall include:

- a. Procedures for the development of an individual diabetes care plan at the written request of the student's parent or guardian, and involving the parent or guardian, the student's health care provider, the student's classroom teacher, the student if appropriate, the school nurse if available, and other appropriate school personnel.
- b. Procedures for regular review of an individual care plan.
- c. Information to be included in a diabetes care plan, including the responsibilities and appropriate staff development for teachers and other school personnel, an emergency care plan, the identification of allowable actions to be taken, the extent to which the student is able to participate in the student's diabetes care and management, and other information necessary for teachers and other school personnel in order to offer appropriate assistance and support to the student. The Board of Directors shall ensure that the information and allowable actions included in a diabetes care plan meet or exceed the American Diabetes Association's recommendations for the management of children with diabetes in the school.
- d. Information and staff development shall be made available to teachers and other school personnel in order to appropriately support and assist students with diabetes.
- e. The school nurse or designee shall ensure that all compliance reporting requirements are met.

**SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS:
HOMELESS STUDENTS, Policy Code: 4125, Approved: 05.03.2024**

As required by the North Carolina Constitution and North Carolina law, Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI) is committed to providing a free public school education to all children who are legally entitled to enroll in the school system. In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the North Carolina State Plan for Educating Homeless Children, CFCI will make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children and school-aged youth located within the area served by the school system, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate barriers to their receiving an education that may exist in school system policies or practices. Based on individual need, homeless students will be provided services available to all students, such as free or reduced price school meals, services for English learners, special education, and before- and after-school care.

The provisions of this policy will supersede any and all conflicting provisions in Board policies that address the areas discussed in this policy.

A. DEFINITION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

Homeless students are children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term “homeless student” will also be deemed to include the term “unaccompanied youth,” which includes a youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Homeless children and youth include those students who are as follows:

1. Sharing the house of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
2. Living in motels, hotels, transient trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Abandoned in hospitals;
5. Living in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
- 7.
8. Living in a migratory situation that qualifies as homeless because the child lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

B. HOMELESS LIAISON

The School Director(s) or designee shall appoint and train a school employee to serve as the homeless liaison. The homeless liaison duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Ensuring that school personnel identify homeless children and youth;
2. Ensuring school/preschool enrollment of and opportunities for academic success for homeless children and youth;
3. Ensuring that homeless families and children have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible;
4. Ensuring that homeless families and children receive referrals to healthcare, dental, mental health and substance abuse, housing, and other appropriate services;

5. Informing parents or guardians and any unaccompanied youth of available transportation services and helping to coordinate such services;
6. Ensuring that public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians and unaccompanied youth;
7. Informing parents or guardians of educational and related opportunities available to their children and ensuring that parents or guardians have meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's educations;
8. Helping to mediate enrollment disputes, including ensuring that a homeless child or youth is enrolled immediately pending final resolution of the dispute;
9. Informing unaccompanied youth of their status as independent students and assisting in verifying such status for the purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid;
10. Ensuring that school personnel providing services to homeless students receive professional development and other support;
11. Working with school personnel, the student, parents or guardians, and/or other agencies to obtain critical enrollment records, including immunization and medical records, in a timely manner; and
12. Working with the School Director(s) or designee to identify board policies or procedures that might serve as a barrier to enrollment of homeless students, including those related to immunization records, medical records, uniforms or dress codes, school fees, and school admission.

The employee serving as the homeless liaison is located on the school's website.

C. ACCESS TO STUDENTS' RECORDS

Homeless students transferring into the school system may provide cumulative and other records directly to school system personnel. The School Director(s) or designee shall not require that such records be forwarded from another school system before the student may enroll. However, school personnel shall immediately request the official records from the previous school.

School personnel shall immediately enroll homeless students according to NC Charter School Law, even if they do not have proof of residency, school and immunization records, birth certificates, or other documents; have missed application or enrollment deadlines during a period of homelessness; have outstanding fees; or are not accompanied by an adult. The homeless liaison shall assist the students and parents or guardians in securing appropriate records or otherwise meeting enrollment requirements.

Information regarding a child or youth's homeless situation must be treated as a student record and protected accordingly.

D. ENROLLMENT

A homeless student (or the student's parent or guardian) may request to attend his or her school of origin or any public school that other students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend. The school of origin is defined as the school the student attended before losing permanent housing or the school in which the student was last enrolled, including a preschool. When a student completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin includes the designated receiving school at the next grade

level for all feeder schools. Unless not in the student's best interest, a homeless student who continues attending the school of origin will remain enrolled in the school of origin for the entire time the student is homeless and until the end of any academic year in which the student moves into permanent housing.

The School Director(s) shall designate the appropriate personnel to decide, in consultation with the homeless liaison, which school a homeless student will attend. The decision will be based upon the student's best interest. The School Director's designee must presume that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest, unless contradicted by the student's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth. The School Director's designee must consider student-centered factors related to the student's best interest, including factors concerning the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless students, giving priority to the request of the student's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth.

If the School Director's designee determines that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth, he or she must provide a written explanation of the reasons for the determination to the parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth, along with information regarding the right to appeal the placement decision.

E. ENROLLMENT DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The school system will implement an enrollment dispute resolution process that is consistent with the process required by the State Board of Education in the North Carolina Administrative Code, 16 N.C.A.C. 6H .0112.

1. Initiation of the Dispute and Stay Put

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school for a homeless student, the following must occur:

- A. The homeless student will be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, will receive all services for which he or she is eligible, and will be allowed to participate fully in school activities, pending resolution of the dispute.
- B. The unaccompanied youth or parent or guardian of the student will be provided a written explanation of the school's decision regarding the enrollment, including the right to appeal the decision. Such information must be provided in a language that the parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth can understand.

The information must contain:

1. Contact information, including telephone number and address of the homeless liaison and of the State coordinator for homeless education, with a brief description of their roles;
2. The right to initiate the dispute resolution process either orally or in writing;
3. A simple form that parents or guardians or unaccompanied youth can complete and submit to the homeless liaison to initiate the dispute resolution process;

4. A step-by-step description of how to dispute the school's decision;
 5. Notice of the right to enroll immediately in the school of choice or remain in the school of origin with transportation provided pending resolution of the dispute;
 6. Notice that immediate enrollment includes full participation in all school activities; and
 7. Notice of the right to obtain assistance of advocates or attorneys.
- C. The student or parent or guardian will be referred to the system's homeless liaison, who shall carry out the appeal process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute.

2. Homeless Liaison Review

- A. Any parent or guardian or student initiating an enrollment dispute (hereinafter "complainant") is encouraged to attempt to resolve the dispute informally through discussion with the homeless liaison. If the dispute cannot be resolved informally, the complainant may present a formal complaint orally or in writing to the homeless liaison either directly or through the School Director(s) of the school at which enrollment is sought.
- B. The complaint should include the date of the filing, a description of the disputed enrollment action, the name of the person(s) involved, and a description of the relief requested. The complainant must be informed of the right to provide supporting written or oral documentation and to seek the assistance of an advocate or attorney.
- C. Within five school days after receiving the complaint, the homeless liaison shall provide a written decision, including the reasons for the decision, to the complainant and the School Director(s).

3. Appeal to the School Director(s) of the Liaison's Decision

- A. Within five school days of receiving the liaison's decision, the complainant may appeal the decision to the School Director(s) in writing. The homeless liaison shall ensure that the School Director(s) receives copies of the written complaint and the response.
- B. The School Director(s) or designee shall schedule a conference with the complainant to discuss the complaint.
- C. Within five school days of receiving the appeal, the School Director(s) or designee shall provide a written decision to the complainant including a statement of the reasons for the decision.

4. Appeal to the Board of the Director's Decision

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the School Director's decision, he or she may file a written appeal with the Board of Directors. The Board will provide the complainant with a written decision within 30 days of receiving the appeal. The Board's decision will constitute the final decision of the school system. The written statement of the Board's opinion will include the name and contact information of

the State coordinator for homeless education and will describe the appeal rights to the State coordinator.

5. Appeal to the State Coordinator of the Board's Decision

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the action taken by the Board of Directors, he or she may file an appeal with the State coordinator for homeless education, who will issue a final decision on the complaint. Within five school days following a request from the State coordinator, the homeless liaison shall provide the record of complaint and a copy of the Board's decision along with any other information requested regarding issues in the appeal.

F. TRANSPORTATION

The school will provide homeless students with transportation services comparable to those of other students. In addition, at the parent or guardian's request (or at the request of the homeless liaison for unaccompanied youth), the Board will provide transportation services to/from the school of origin. The School Director(s) or designee and the homeless liaison shall coordinate homeless students' transportation needs, based on the child's best interest. In situations in which a student attends school in this system but his or her temporary housing is in another system (or vice versa), the School Director(s) or designee shall work with the other system to share the cost and/or responsibility for transportation. If an agreement cannot be reached between the systems, the cost of such transportation will be divided evenly.

If a homeless student becomes permanently housed and chooses to remain in his or her school of origin, the Board will provide transportation to the student for the remainder of the school year.

G. TITLE I

Homeless students are automatically eligible for Title I services. The homeless liaison and the Curriculum Coordinator shall collaborate to identify the needs of homeless students.

Legal References: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431, et seq.; Non Regulatory Guidance on Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program, U.S. Department of Education (July 2016); G.S. 115C-366(a2); 16 N.C.A.C. 6H .0112; State Board of Education Policy SPLN-000

**SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS:
ACCELERATION POLICY, Policy Code: 4170, Approved: Approved:
05.03.2024**

If a parent/guardian or teacher recommends a child for acceleration (skipping a grade) the following procedure will be followed:

1. Parent(s)/Guardian(s), Teacher(s), and Administrator(s) will meet to discuss the rationale for the request. Current and past teachers, as well as a representative from the next grade and the support team, should be included. The staff member responsible for AIG coordination may also be consulted if the child has been tested for gifted services and may administer the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) if additional data is needed for decision-making.
2. All student data will be reviewed, including mClass (if applicable), MAP and EOG scores, as well as classroom grades and data.
3. The School Counselor, or other appropriate social-emotional support staff, will informally review the student's emotional ability to thrive in an accelerated grade with above age level peers.
4. The appointed team will meet again to discuss/review results and make a recommendation to the School Director(s). The School Director(s) will make the final placement decision, which is not appealable.

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: ATTENDANCE - TRUANCY, MAKE UP WORK, TARDIES, Policy Code: 4200, Approved: 05.03.2024

Truancy Policy

North Carolina Compulsory Attendance law requires that every person from seven (7) to sixteen (16) years of age attend school every day unless otherwise excused by statute or other legitimate authority. Attendance plays a vital role in education. Students who attend school on a regular basis are better able to keep up with their classes and complete assignments in a timely manner. Being absent from school for one day, or even from one class period, without acceptable cause is truancy. Acceptable cause may include, with appropriate documentation, but is not limited to: service as a page in the North Carolina General Assembly, service on a precinct election board on an election day, subpoena to appear in court, incarceration, in-school or out of school suspension, required religious observations, hospitalization, doctor's written order for home stay, death in the immediate family.

Evidence of habitual truancy includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Failure of parent/guardian to ensure that his/her child attends school or classes as required by law
- Five (5) or more unexcused absences from classes in one grading period
- Ten (10) or more unexcused absences from school during one school year

When children are not in the classroom, consistent and sustainable learning is impeded. CFCI staff and administration have made intentional attempts in bringing the importance of regular attendance to your attention. Our policy is as follows:

- When a child has accumulated three (3) or more unexcused absences in a school year, parents/guardians receive an attendance letter.
- When a child has accumulated six (6) or more unexcused absences in a school year, parents/guardians receive a phone call and attendance letter.
- At the discretion of the School Director(s), when a child has accumulated ten (10) or more unexcused absences and/or tardies in a school year, an attendance letter will be sent home and an attendance meeting will be scheduled.

When your child returns to school, a note signed by the parent/guardian must be sent with your child stating the reason and dates for the absence to ensure your child's absences are recorded appropriately. The note should be turned into the front office.

If your child is tardy, a parent/guardian should walk him/her to the front office and sign in. The student will then be given a pass for admittance into class.

Early release from school is only approved in the event of your child's illness, a medical appointment or a family emergency. Students will not be released early from school after 2:45 p.m.

If a student is habitually late or absent, a conference with the parent/guardian will be scheduled with the appropriate member(s) of the administrative team to resolve the attendance problem.

An excused absence or tardy is one for which no negative consequence is assessed against the student. Students who are absent from or late to school for a valid reason (medical or other emergency) are required to provide documentation from the doctor's office and/or parent note. Supporting documents may be required by the school and requested from the parent/guardian. Students must bring to the school a written excuse on the day that he or she returns to school. The note must include the date or time and a legitimate reason for the absence. Approval of excused absences is made by the administration, but the student's record is marked as absent per North Carolina law.

Students can be excused for the following reasons:

- Injury or Illness*
- Local or state board of health orders child to stay home from school (i.e. Lice, etc.)
- Death of immediate family member
- Medical or Dental appointment
- Witness in the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal
- Educational leave (this can be used once per academic year and must be approved by administration)

Make-up Work

Students are expected to complete all work before leaving or immediately upon their return from an absence. In the case of illness or other unexpected absence, students or their families should contact their teachers as soon as they return to school to obtain their missed assignments. It is the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian to ensure make-up work is completed.

Tardies

All students arriving after 8:05 a.m. must enter the main entrance and are listed as tardy as of 8:05 a.m. Parents/Guardians must park and sign children in at the main office after 8:05 am. Students will receive a late pass at the office.

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS HEAD LICE,
Policy Code: 4205, Approved: 05.03.2024

No student shall be denied an education solely by reason of head lice infestation and his/her educational program shall be restricted only to the extent necessary to expedite treatment and minimize the risk of transmitting the infestation. It shall be the responsibility of the school nurse or designee to notify the parent/legal guardian in the event a child has live lice. Picking-up the child from school and expedited treatment will be recommended. The parent/guardian will also receive information about head lice resources. Siblings of the student with live head lice will also be checked by a school nurse/designee.

Procedure for a Student Suspected of Having Head Lice

1. The scalp of a student suspected of having an active head lice infestation will be inspected by a school nurse/trained designee.
2. If live (crawling) lice are noted:
 - a. The school nurse/staff designee will contact parent/legal guardian at time of discovery, discuss treatment measures, and recommend the student be picked-up so that removal of live head lice may be expedited.
 - b. A parent notification letter will be sent home with the student.
3. If nits found but no live lice are noted:
 - a. The school nurse/staff designee will contact the parent/guardian to discuss treatment measures and importance of manually removing nits within 1/4" of scalp in stopping head lice reinfestation.
 - b. The school nurse/trained designee will assess the need for head lice educational material and send home literature about head lice treatment and control measures, if necessary.
4. Siblings of a student with an active head lice infestation will be identified and will be checked for live lice.
5. The parent/legal guardian is responsible for abiding by the head lice protocol, following recommendations of the school nurse, and carrying out treatment measures to remove live lice and nits.

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIAN: ANIMALS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY, Policy Code: 4310, Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center of Inquiry is dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of our community. In the interests of safety and health, family pets of any kind are not allowed in school buildings, property, or in school vehicles. Pets are not allowed at school sponsored events.

Exemptions:

1. While serving as a certified service or guide dog under ADA guidelines.
2. While assisting a Law Enforcement Officer engaged in law enforcement duties.
3. Animals brought into the classroom for instructional purposes. These must be approved by the School Director(s) or designee and adhere to CFCI Policy 4330 Animals in the Classroom.

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING, ABUSE OR MOLESTATION, Policy Code: 4315, Approved: 05.03.2024

The Board acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. The board prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or age and will provide equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups as required by law. The Board will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying in any of its educational or employment activities or programs. Any violation of this policy will be considered serious and school officials shall promptly take appropriate action to address the violation.

A. PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

Students, school system employees, volunteers, and visitors are expected to behave in a civil and respectful manner. The Board expressly prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment, and bullying by students, employees, board members, volunteers, or visitors. “Visitors” includes parents and other family members and individuals from the community, as well as vendors, contractors, and other persons doing business with or performing services for the school system.

Students are expected to comply with the behavior standards established by Board policy, the Code of Student Conduct, and school and classroom rules. Employees are expected to comply with Board policy, school system regulations, and school rules. Volunteers and visitors on school property also are expected to comply with board policy, school system regulations, and school rules and procedures.

This policy applies to behavior that takes place: (1) in any school building or on any school premises before, during or after school hours; (2) on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity; (3) during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity; (4) at any time or place when the individual is subject to the authority of school personnel; or (5) at any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools.

B. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

1. **Discrimination:** Discrimination means any act or failure to act, whether intentional or unintentional, that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a socially distinct group or category, such as race, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
2. **Harassment and Bullying**
 - a. Harassment or bullying behavior is deliberate conduct intended to harm another person or group of persons. Such conduct violates this policy when any pattern of

gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication:

- i. places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
- ii. creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits or by adversely altering the conditions of an employee's employment.

"Hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as harassment or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is harassment or bullying. A hostile environment may be created through pervasive or persistent misbehavior or a single incident, if sufficiently severe.

Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, behavior described above that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic or motivated by an individual's association with a person who has or is perceived to have a differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability. Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassment include, but are not limited to, acts of disrespect, intimidation, or threats, such as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, lewd propositions, exclusion from peer groups, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching, or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Harassment and bullying may occur through electronic means ("cyberbullying"), such as through the Internet, emailing, or text messaging, or by use of personal websites to support deliberate and repeated behavior intended to cause harm to persons or groups. Legitimate age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment or bullying.

Harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment, as described below, is not limited to specific situations or relationships. It may occur between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or between non-employees, including visitors, and employees or students. Harassment may occur between members of the opposite sex or the same sex.

- b. Sexual harassment is a form of harassment that violates this policy. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:
 - i. submission to the conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment, academic progress, or completion of a school-related activity;

- ii. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual, or in the case of a student, submission to or rejection of such conduct is used in evaluating the student's performance within a course of study or other school-related activity; or
- iii. such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of (a) unreasonably interfering with an employee's work or performance or a student's educational performance, (b) limiting a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or environment, or (c) creating an abusive, intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.

Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, deliberate, unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature, suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats, pressure for sexual activity, continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual, sexual assault, sexual violence, or the display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures, or written materials. Acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex, but not involving sexual activity or language, may be combined with incidents of sexually harassing conduct to determine if the incidents of sexually harassing conduct are sufficiently serious to create a sexually hostile environment.

Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship with any student enrolled in the school system, whether or not the relationship is consensual. Such conduct is prohibited whether or not it constitutes sexual harassment.

- c. Gender-based harassment is also a type of harassment that violates this policy. Gender-based harassment may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping, sexual orientation, or gender identity but not involving conduct of a sexual nature.

C. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, OR BULLYING

Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against, harassed, or bullied in violation of this policy by any student, employee, or other person under the supervision and control of the school system, or any third person who knows or suspects conduct that may constitute discrimination, harassment, or bullying, should inform a school official designated to receive such complaints.

Any employee who has witnessed, or who has reliable information that another person may have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or bullying in violation of this policy has a duty to report such conduct. Employees who observe an incident of harassment or bullying are expected to intervene to stop the conduct in situations in which they have supervisory control over the perpetrator and it is safe to do so. If an employee knows of an incident

involving discrimination, harassment, or bullying and the employee fails to report the conduct or take proper action or knowingly provides false information in regard to the incident, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal.

Reports, except mandatory employee reports, may be made anonymously, and all reports will be investigated.

D. RESPONDING TO OCCURRENCES OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, OR BULLYING

1. Consequences for the Perpetrator

a. Disciplinary Consequences for Students

Students will be disciplined in accordance with the school's student behavior management plan. Based on the nature and severity of the offense and the circumstances surrounding the incident, the student will be subject to appropriate consequences and remedial actions ranging from positive behavioral interventions up to, and including, expulsion. In addition, the violation may also be reported to law enforcement, as appropriate.

Incidents of misbehavior that do not rise to the level of discriminatory harassment or bullying may violate acceptable standards of student behavior, including, but not limited to, the expectation that students will demonstrate civility and integrity in their actions and interactions with others. The consequences for such behavior will be consistent with applicable board policy and the Code of Student Conduct.

This policy will not be construed to allow school officials to punish student expression or speech based on undifferentiated fear or apprehension of a disturbance or out of a desire to avoid the discomfort and unpleasantness that may accompany an unpopular viewpoint.

b. Disciplinary Consequences for Employees

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal. In addition, the violation may also be reported to law enforcement, as appropriate. Nothing in this policy will preclude the school system from taking disciplinary action against an employee when the evidence does not establish unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying, but the conduct otherwise violates board policy or expected standards of employee behavior.

c. Consequences for Other Perpetrators

Volunteers and visitors who violate this policy will be directed to leave school property and/or reported to law enforcement, as appropriate. A third party under the supervision and control of the school system will be subject to termination of

contracts/agreements, restricted from school property, and/or subject to other consequences, as appropriate.

2. Consideration of Need for More Extensive Response

School administrators shall consider whether the misconduct warrants more than just a response at the individual level. Given the nature and severity of the misconduct, the administrators may determine that a classroom, school-wide, or school system-wide response is necessary. Such classroom, school-wide, or school system-wide responses may include additional staff training, harassment and bullying prevention programs, and other measures deemed appropriate by the School Director(s) or designee to address the behavior. The actions taken must be reasonably calculated to end the behavior, eliminate a hostile environment and its effects if one has been created, and prevent recurrence of the behavior.

3. Retaliation Prohibited

The Board prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person for (a) reporting or intending to report violations of this policy, (b) supporting someone for reporting or intending to report a violation of this policy, or (c) participating in the investigation of reported violations of this policy.

After consideration of the nature and circumstances of the reprisal or retaliation and in accordance with applicable federal, state, or local laws, policies, and regulations, the School Director(s) or designee shall determine the consequences and remedial action for a person found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation.

E. TRAINING AND PROGRAMS

The Board directs the School Director(s) to establish training and other programs that are designed to prevent discrimination, harassment, and bullying and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all members of the school community. Information about this policy and the related complaint procedure must be included in the training plan.

As funds are available, the Board will provide additional training for students, employees, and volunteers who have significant contact with students regarding the Board's efforts to address discrimination, harassment, and bullying and will create programs to address these issues. The training or programs should (1) provide examples of behavior that constitutes discrimination, harassment, or bullying; (2) teach employees to identify groups that may be the target of discrimination, harassment, or bullying; and (3) train school employees to be alert to locations where such behavior may occur, including locations within school buildings, at school bus stops, on cell phones, and on the Internet.

F. NOTICE

The School Director(s) or designee is responsible for providing effective notice to students, parents, and employees of this policy and of the procedures for reporting and investigating complaints of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. The School Director(s) or designee must ensure that each principal provides a copy of this policy to students, employees, and

parents or other responsible caregivers at the beginning of each school year. In addition, both policies must be posted on the school system website, and copies of the policies must be readily available at each school and worksite. Notice of the policies must appear in all student and employee handbooks and in any school or school system publication that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for students and employees.

G. COORDINATORS

The School Director(s) have appointed individuals to coordinate the school system's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under federal non-discrimination laws. These responsibilities include investigating any complaints communicated to school officials alleging noncompliance with Title VI or Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Age Discrimination Act, and/or the Boy Scouts Act, or alleging actions which would be prohibited by those laws. These individuals will be posted on the school's website.

H. RECORDS AND REPORTING

The School Director(s) or designee shall maintain confidential records of complaints or reports of discrimination, harassment, or bullying. The records must identify the names of all individuals accused of such offenses and the resolution of such complaints or reports. The School Director(s) or designee also shall maintain records of training conducted and corrective action(s) or other steps taken by the school system to provide an environment free of discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

The School Director(s) or designee shall report to the State Board of Education all verified cases of discrimination, harassment, or bullying. The report must be made through the Discipline Data Collection Report or through other means required by the State Board.

I. EVALUATION

The School Director(s) or designee shall evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to correct or prevent discrimination, harassment, and bullying and shall share these evaluations periodically with the board.

Legal References: Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, 29 U.S.C. 621 et seq., 34 C.F.R. pt. 110; Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq., 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq., 34 C.F.R. pt. 100; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq., 29 C.F.R. pt. 1604; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq., 34 C.F.R. pt. 106; Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. 7905, 34 C.F.R. pt. 108; *Racial Incidents and Harassment Against Students at Educational Institutions; Investigative Guidance*, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (1994); *Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties*, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2001); *Notice of Non-Discrimination*, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2010); *Dear Colleague*

Letter (Bullying), U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2010), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf>; *Dear Colleague Letter (Sexual Harassment)*, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2006), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/sexhar-2006.html>; *Q&A on Campus Sexual Misconduct*, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2017), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/qa-title-ix-201709.pdf>; *Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services*, 523 U.S. 75 (1998); G.S. 115C-335.5, -407.15 through -407.18; 126-16; State Board of Education Policy SSCH-000

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: TITLE IX POLICY, Policy Code: 4325, Approved: 02.18.25

A. OVERVIEW

Title IX provides that “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

It is the policy of Cape Fear Center for Inquiry that students should not be subjected to forms of unlawful discrimination or harassment, while at school or school-sponsored activities. Furthermore, the policy’s intent is to address the issue in a proactive manner through the establishment of a system for educating students and staff at the School regarding the identification, prevention, intervention, and reporting of such antisocial acts. The School acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. The School strives to model an inclusive environment and prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender or sex, including sexual orientation and LGBTQ+ identification. The School will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination or harassment in any of its educational or employment activities or programs based on such protected classifications.

B. PURPOSE

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender, including any form of sexual harassment as that term is defined under Title IX, in any education program or activity of the School. The School takes seriously all reports and Formal Complaints of sexual harassment. The School does not discriminate on the basis of sex and gender in its education programs or activities, including admission and employment, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and federal regulations.

Any person with questions about this policy should contact the School’s Title IX Coordinator whose information is listed at www.cfc.net.

C. REASON FOR POLICY

The United States Department of Education has adopted formal rules related to sexual harassment as prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (May 2020). These new regulations require additional procedures and policies related to programs using federal funds. The new law focuses on procedures for reporting, investigating and finding illegal sexual harassment as the term is defined by the rule. The School has always prohibited discrimination based on sex/gender and sexual harassment in educational programs and activities implemented by it. This policy is intended to comply with the mandates of 34 C.F.R. § 106 and other provisions of Title IX.

D. PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS

Students, employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors are expected to behave in a civil and respectful manner. In accordance with Title IX, the School expressly prohibits discrimination or

harassment, based on sex or gender and prohibits sexual harassment (including sexual violence) and gender-based harassment. Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. It includes unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex, requests for sexual favors in exchange for benefits (quid pro quo), and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment. Sexual violence refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent. A number of different acts fall into the category of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual abuse, and sexual coercion. In accordance with Title IX, the School also prohibits gender-based harassment, which is unwelcome conduct based on a student's sex, harassing conduct based on a student's failure to conform to sex stereotypes.

Sex-based harassment can be carried out by school employees, other students, and third parties. All students can experience sex-based harassment, including male and female students, LGBTQ+ students, students with disabilities, and students of different races, national origins, and ages. Title IX protects all students from sex-based harassment, regardless of the sex of the parties, including when they are members of the same sex.

E. RETALIATION PROHIBITED

The School prohibits intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under Title IX. Intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, constitutes retaliation. As such, the School prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person for reporting or intending to report violations of this policy, supporting someone for reporting or intending to report a violation of this policy, or participating in the investigation of reported violations of this policy. After consideration of the nature and circumstances of the reprisal or retaliation and in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and regulations, the Head of School or designee shall determine the consequences and remedial action for a person found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation.

The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation. Charging an individual with a code of conduct violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a grievance proceeding under Title IX does not constitute retaliation prohibited under this policy, provided, however, that a determination regarding responsibility, alone, is not sufficient to conclude that any party made a materially false statement in bad faith.

F. APPLICATION OF POLICY

This policy prohibits unlawful discrimination or harassment by students, employees, volunteers, contractors, and visitors. This policy is intended to apply to students vis a vis other students, faculty, staff, volunteers/visitors, or contractors. This policy also applies to employees, volunteers/visitors,

and contractors. This policy applies to behavior that takes place within the School's "education program or activity," which includes, but is not necessarily limited to, behavior:

1. in any school building or on any school premises before, during or after school hours;
2. on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity;
3. at any bus stop;
4. during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity;
5. at any time or place when the individual is subject to the oversight and authority of school personnel;
6. at any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools; and
7. while using school or personal electronic communications, including employee and student emails, text messaging, instant messaging, chat rooms, blogging, websites and social networking websites (i.e., Snapchat or Instagram).

G. TITLE IX COORDINATOR

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the overall implementation of Title IX for Cape Fear Center for Inquiry and coordinating the institution's compliance with Title IX in all areas covered by the implementing regulations. The major responsibility is the prevention of sexual harassment and discrimination. Other major monitoring duties include, but are not limited to, the following recruitment and admissions, educational programs and activities, hiring and employment.

Other areas of consideration include:

- Participating in the development and implementation of Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's sexual harassment policy.
- Assisting faculty, counselors and administrators in complying with Title IX, and when a need arises, planning remedial actions.
- Making your presence known in the community by disseminating civil rights information or by speaking at parent-teacher group meetings, social or professional organization meetings, and other community functions.
- Serving as a resource on Title IX/gender issues.
- Monitoring and evaluating Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's Title IX compliance efforts and making recommendations for any appropriate changes.
- Providing updated information to the school on Title IX implementation and issues.
- Identifying and disseminating information about Title IX educational resources (organizations, individuals, print, internet, and audio-visual).

H. NOTICE

The designated Title IX Coordinator is responsible for providing effective notice to job applicants, student applicants, students, parents, and employees of the procedures for reporting and investigating complaints of unlawful sex/gender discrimination and harassment. This policy will be posted on the School's website, and copies of the policy are available at the front office. Notice of this policy will appear in all job applicant information, admissions information, student and

employee handbooks, and in any School publication that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for students and employees.

I. DEFINITIONS

As used in this and all other Title IX related policies, the following definitions shall apply.

1. Sexual Harassment: Sexual Harassment prohibited under Title IX and by this policy is conduct on the basis of sex occurring in a School education program or activity that satisfies one or more of the following:
 - a. an employee of the School conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the School on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
 - b. unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the School's education program or activities. This determination requires consideration of all the facts and circumstances, including, but not limited to, the ages and disability statuses of the harasser and the victim and the number of individuals involved and their authority;
 - c. sexual assault including rape, statutory rape, fondling, and incest;
 - d. dating violence;
 - e. domestic violence; or
 - f. stalking

Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking will be defined in accordance with applicable law and the definitions will be incorporated into an Administrative Regulation developed by the Director(s).

Conduct that satisfies this standard is not sexual harassment for purposes of this policy if the conduct occurred (1) outside the United States or (2) under circumstances in which the School did not have substantial control over both the harasser and the context in which the harassment occurred.

Examples of conduct on the basis of sex that would be considered sexual harassment if the conduct satisfies the criteria above include, but are not limited to: unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as deliberate, unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature; suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats; pressure for sexual activity; continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body; sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual; sexual assault; sexual violence; the display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures, or written materials; posting sexually suggestive pictures of a person without the person's consent; and forwarding pornographic material to a

classmate or other member of the School community. Acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping may also constitute sexual harassment. Harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment, is not limited to specific situations or relationships. It may occur between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or between non-employees, including visitors, and employees or students. Harassment may occur between members of the opposite sex or the same sex. Gender-based harassment is also a type of harassment. Gender-based harassment may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, as well as intimidation or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping but not involving conduct of a sexual nature.

Legitimate age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment.

Conduct that is determined not to meet the definition above may violate other School policies or established standards of conduct and will be treated accordingly. For example, conduct that does not meet the definition of Title IX sexual harassment above may nevertheless violate other School policies.

2. Report

A report is an oral or written notification that an individual is an alleged or suspected perpetrator or victim of sexual harassment.

Making a report initiates the interactive process with the Complainant described below. No disciplinary action will be taken against a Respondent for sexual harassment based on a report alone.

3. Formal Complaint

A Formal Complaint is a document signed and filed with the Title IX Coordinator by a Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a Respondent and requesting that School officials investigate the allegation(s). Filing a Formal Complaint initiates the Complaint process. The Formal Complaint must demonstrate that at the time of filing a formal complaint, Complainant was participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the School with which the formal complaint is filed.

4. Complainant

The Complainant is the individual(s) who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment, regardless of whether a Formal Complaint is filed. While parents and guardians do not become complainants (or respondents),

parents and guardians have a right to act on behalf of parties (including by filing formal complaints) in Title IX matters.

5. Respondent

The Respondent is the individual(s) who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

6. Formal Complaint Process

Complaint process means the process for investigating and reaching a final determination of responsibility for a Formal Complaint of sexual harassment. The sexual harassment complaint process is set forth in the School's Title IX Complaint Process adopted by the Director(s), which shall comply with all Title IX requirements.

7. Title IX Coordinator

The Title IX Coordinator is a School official who is designated to coordinate the School's response to sexual harassment and allegations of sexual harassment. Contact information for the Title IX Coordinator is posted on the School's website.

8. Supportive Measures

Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the Complainant or the Respondent before or after the filing of a Formal Complaint or where no Formal Complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the School's education program and activities without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the School's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. The School's selection of supportive measures and remedies shall be based on what is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

The School determines which measures are appropriate for a particular complainant on a case-by-case basis. Not all of the measures listed below will be necessary in every case to keep the Complainant safe and ensure their equal access to educational programs and activities. If the Complainant or advocate identifies an interim measure that is not already provided by the School, the School will consider whether the request can be granted. In those instances where interim measures affect both a Complainant and the Respondent, the School will minimize the burden on the Complainant wherever appropriate while ensuring that the measures are non-disciplinary and non-punitive prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility.

Supportive measures available to the parties include, but are not limited to, counseling, mental health services referral, extensions of deadlines or other

course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring, and other similar measures determined by School officials to be necessary to protect the safety or educational or employment activities of a party.

9. Days

Days are school days unless specified otherwise.

10. Student(s)

“Student(s)” means the Student and/or the Student’s parent or legal guardian unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. When the Complainant or Respondent is a Student, references to those terms also include the Student’s parent or legal guardian unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

11. Actual Knowledge

“Actual knowledge” means a School employee has notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment.

J. CONFIDENTIALITY

The recipient, whether a School employee, staff member, contractor, or the Title IX Coordinator, must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex/gender discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by the FERPA or as required by law, or to carry out the purposes of Title IX, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising thereunder. Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the Title IX grievance procedures.

The Title IX Coordinator shall maintain confidential records of complaints or reports of unlawful discrimination or harassment. The records will identify the names of all individuals accused of such offenses and the resolution of such complaints or reports. The Title IX Coordinator also shall maintain records of training conducted and corrective action(s) or other steps taken by the School to provide an environment free of unlawful discrimination or harassment. The Director(s) shall report to the Board all verified cases of unlawful discrimination or harassment under the School’s Title IX Policy.

K. EVALUATION

The Director(s) or designee shall evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to correct or prevent unlawful sex/gender discrimination and harassment and shall share these evaluations periodically with the School’s Board.

L. CONFIDENTIALITY

The recipient, whether a School employee, staff member, contractor, or the Title IX Coordinator, must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex/gender discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by the FERPA or as required by law, or to carry out the purposes of Title IX, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising thereunder. Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the Title IX grievance procedures.

The Title IX Coordinator shall maintain confidential records of complaints or reports of unlawful discrimination or harassment. The records will identify the names of all individuals accused of such offenses and the resolution of such complaints or reports. The Title IX Coordinator also shall maintain records of training conducted and corrective action(s) or other steps taken by the School to provide an environment free of unlawful discrimination or harassment. The Director(s) shall report to the Board all verified cases of unlawful discrimination or harassment under the School's Title IX Policy.

M. EVALUATION

The Director(s) or designee shall evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to correct or prevent unlawful sex/gender discrimination and harassment and shall share these evaluations periodically with the School's Board.

N. REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. Students

Any Student who believes he or she is a victim of discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment/misconduct based on sex and/or gender occurring during or as part of the School's educational programs or activities may report the matter to a trusted teacher or advisor, the Director(s), the Title IX Coordinator, or to any teacher, counselor, or other School employee. Likewise, a Student who has witnessed conduct amounting to sexual harassment may report such conduct.

2. School Employees and Board Members

Employees and Board members are required to immediately report any actual or suspected discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment/misconduct based on sex and/or gender. Such report must be made to the Title IX Coordinator, grade-level Principal, or Director(s), as soon as possible and within 24 hours. If the Director(s) is involved in the allegation, then another administrator will immediately inform the Chair of the Board of Directors.

Actual knowledge includes but is not limited to:

- a. a report of sexual harassment/discrimination from a Student, an employee or other person;
- b. the employee or Board member witnesses conduct that is or reasonably could be sexual harassment; or

- c. the employee or Board member discovers evidence of sexual harassment, such as sexualized graffiti on School property, or otherwise has reliable information or reason to believe that a Student, employee, or other individual may have been sexually harassed in violation of this policy, even if no one has reported the sexual harassment.

Employees who observe an incident of harassment are expected to intervene to stop the conduct in situations in which they have supervisory control over the perpetrator, and it is safe to do so. An employee with actual knowledge of possible sexual harassment in violation of this policy who does not promptly report the conduct and/or take proper action as required by this subsection, or who knowingly provides false information about the incident, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Any doubt about whether particular conduct is possible sexual harassment must be resolved in favor of reporting the conduct.

The mandatory reporting requirements of this Policy are in addition to required reporting under other policies, under State law, and pursuant to applicable State Board of Education Policies. In addition, School officials should report incidents to law enforcement as appropriate.

3. Reporting By Others

Students, parents, volunteers, visitors or others are also strongly encouraged to report any actual or suspected incidents of discrimination or harassment based on sex/gender under this policy to the Director(s), or the Title IX Coordinator. Reports may be made anonymously, and all reports shall be investigated in accordance with that policy.

4. Content of the Report

To the extent possible, reports should be sufficient to put School officials on notice of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. Employees making mandatory reports should provide as much detail about the alleged sexual harassment as is known, unless such disclosure would violate law or standards of professional ethics. Reports, other than mandatory reports by employees, may be made anonymously, but anonymous reports may limit the School's ability to respond fully if the alleged victim is not identified.

5. Methods of Reporting

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by e-mail, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Reporting may be made at any time, including during non-school hours.

6. Time Period for Reporting

- a. Students and others may make a report at any time, preferably as soon as possible after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the report.

- b. School employees and Board members with actual knowledge of sexual harassment must report that information immediately, but in any event no later than 24 hours.

O. RESPONSE BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS WITH ACTUAL KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. Generally

School officials must respond promptly and impartially to actual knowledge of sexual harassment and do so in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. Such response will include an interactive process and supportive measures.

2. Interactive Process

Upon receiving a report of alleged sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator shall promptly contact the Complainant (and the Complainant's parent or guardian if appropriate). This contact must occur within three school days, excluding weekends, absent extenuating circumstances. The Title IX Coordinator shall also notify the Director(s) of the report and, if an employee is the Complainant or Respondent, the human resources official.

When contacting the Complainant, the Title IX Coordinator shall do all of the following during the contact and shall document the same:

- a. Offer supportive measures;
- b. Consider the Complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures;
- c. Explain that supportive measures are available with or without the filing of a Formal Complaint; and
- d. Explain the process for filing a Formal Complaint with the Title IX Coordinator and the response required of the School when a Complaint is filed, including all the following:
 - 1) The filing of a Formal Complaint will initiate the Formal Complaint process;
 - 2) The Formal Complaint may be filed in person, by mail, or by electronic mail and must be filed with the Title IX Coordinator;
 - 3) The steps of the formal process include: notice to the Respondent; investigation during which both parties may present evidence and ask questions; a decision by an objective Decision-Maker; and the right to appeal the Decision;
 - 4) The approximate time frame for concluding the Complaint process;
 - 5) That School officials will treat both parties equitably;
 - 6) The possibility that Formal Complaints may be consolidated; and
 - 7) The requirement that, under some circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator may be required to file a Formal Complaint should the Complainant not choose to do so.

3. Supportive Measures

After considering the Complainant's wishes, the Title IX Coordinator shall arrange the effective implementation of appropriate supportive measures unless, in the exercise of good judgment, the Title IX Coordinator determines that supportive measures should not be provided. If supportive measures are not provided to the Complainant, the Title IX Coordinator shall document why

supportive measures were not provided and why not providing supportive measures is not deliberately indifferent to known sexual harassment.

The supportive measures available to the Complainant and the Respondent are set forth above.

4. Title IX Coordinator Decision to File Formal Complaint

- a. Complainant declines to file a Formal Complaint;
- b. Coordinator decides on case-by-case basis;
- c. Standard is based upon the obligation for School not to be deliberately indifferent;
- d. Decision must not be based upon the credibility or merit of the Complaint;
- e. Filing of Formal Complaint by Title IX Coordinator does not signify agreement or disagreement with the allegations; nor does the filing render the Title IX Coordinator a party to the Complaint; and
- f. The Coordinator must document the decision whether to file a Formal Complaint and the reasons therefor.

5. Presumption of Non-Responsibility

A Respondent identified in any report under this Policy is presumed not responsible until responsibility has been established by a preponderance of evidence in accordance with the Formal Complaint Procedures set forth in Administrative Regulation.

6. Constitutional Rights.

The School will not restrict rights protected under the U.S. Constitution, including the First Amendment, Fifth Amendment, and Fourteenth Amendment, when complying with Title IX.

7. Due Process

No discipline may be imposed upon an employee or Student without following applicable due process procedures, unless the individual agrees to disciplinary action pursuant to a settlement or mediation process; provided, however, that a Respondent may be subject to removal, suspension, or leave in accordance with State law and School Policy, including the School's Code of Conduct.

8. Conflicts of Interest and Impartiality

All Title IX personnel (Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, people who facilitate any informal resolution process) shall be free from conflicts of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents.

9. Privileged Information

The School's complaint process shall not use, rely on, or seek disclosure of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

10. Equal Application and Standard of Evidence

Any provisions, rules, or practices that a school adopts as part of its complaint process for handling formal complaints of sexual harassment must apply equally to both parties (complainant and respondent).

The standard of evidence to determine responsibility is the preponderance of the evidence standard for all formal complaints of sexual harassment, whether the respondent is a student or an employee (including faculty member).

11. Dismissal

If the allegations in a formal complaint do not meet the definition of sexual harassment as defined in the School's Title IX policy, or the alleged conduct did not occur in the School's education program or activity, against a person in the United States, the School must dismiss such allegations for purposes of Title IX. However, the School may still address the allegations in any manner the School deems appropriate under the School's code of conduct or other policies.

12. Remedies and Disciplinary Sanctions

When a Respondent is found responsible for sexual harassment, the School will offer all remedies needed to eliminate the harm to the Complainant and the school community and prevent the recurrence of sexual harassment. Simply sanctioning a Respondent found responsible, in some cases, may be insufficient to eliminate a hostile environment. Rather, in addition to sanctions, the School may consider offering appropriate remedies for the broader student/staff population after the final outcome, including the following:

- Training or retraining school employees on the school's responsibilities to address allegations of sexual violence and how to conduct Title IX investigations;
- Developing materials on sexual harassment, which should be distributed to all staff and students;
- Conducting bystander intervention and sexual harassment prevention programs with students and/or staff;
- Issuing policy statements or taking other steps that clearly communicate that the school does not tolerate sexual harassment and will respond to any incidents and to any student who reports such incidents;
- Conducting, in conjunction with student leaders, a School climate check to assess the effectiveness of efforts to ensure that the school is free from sexual violence, and using that information to inform future proactive steps that the school will take;
- Targeted training for a group of students if, for example, the sexual harassment created a hostile environment (i.e., on an athletic team);
- When a school is unable to conduct a full investigation into a particular incident (i.e., when it received a general report of sexual violence without any personally identifying information), it should consider remedies for the broader student population in response.
- Disciplinary sanctions include:
- For Students found responsible: verbal warning, written warning, interim suspension, restitution, suspension, required participation in appropriate training, counseling, required

completion of a probationary period without additional infractions, or requiring the respondent to stay away from the complainant for a period of time.

- For Employees found responsible: sanctions for violations of Title IX vary depending on severity from formal written warning to dismissal.

P. FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

The Director(s) will publish notice of and adopt procedures consistent with Title IX Regulations to ensure a prompt and equitable resolution of Student and employee Formal Complaints alleging sexual harassment under Title IX.

Q. RECORD

The Title IX Coordinator shall create and maintain for a period of seven years records of all reports and Formal Complaints of sexual harassment. For each report or Formal Complaint, the

Coordinator shall document the following:

1. Any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to the report or Formal Complaint;
2. That School officials have taken measures that are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the School's education program and activities;
3. Why School officials believe their response to the report or Complaint was not deliberately indifferent; and
4. If supportive measures were not provided to the Complainant, why that was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

In conjunction with the Director(s), the Title IX Coordinator shall also maintain for seven years all materials used to train the Title IX Coordinator, Investigators, Decision-Makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process. These materials will be made publicly available on the School's website.

R. POLICY APPLICATION

This policy shall remain in effect as long as required by law.

FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

The School shall investigate the allegations in any formal complaint and send written notice to both parties (complainants and respondents) of the allegations upon receipt of a formal complaint.

- A. Investigator. The School, through the Title IX Coordinator or other authorized School official, shall designate an impartial individual to serve as the Investigator and conduct an investigation. The Investigator may be the Title IX Coordinator. However, the Investigator shall not be someone with a conflict of interest or bias. The School may choose an outside investigator, School employee or contractor to conduct the investigation. During the complaint process and when investigating, the Investigator shall comply with the following:

1. The burden of gathering evidence and the burden of proof must remain on the School, not on the parties.
2. The Investigator must provide equal opportunity for the parties to present fact and expert witnesses and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
3. The Investigator and School must not restrict the ability of the parties to discuss the allegations or gather evidence (e.g., no “gag orders”).
4. Parties must have the same opportunity to select an advisor of the party’s choice who may be, but need not be, an attorney.
5. The Investigator shall send the parties, and their advisors, evidence directly related to the allegations, in electronic format or hard copy, with at least 10 days for the parties to inspect, review, and respond to the evidence.
6. The Investigator shall send the parties, and their advisors, a draft investigative report, that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, in electronic format or hard copy, with at least 10 days for the parties to respond. Thereafter, the Investigator shall issue a final report to the parties and the Decision-maker.
7. The Title IX Coordinator, Investigator or Decision-Maker shall dismiss allegations of conduct that do not meet the definition of sexual harassment set forth in the School’s Title IX policy or did not occur in a school’s education program or activity against a person in the U.S. Such dismissal is only for Title IX purposes and does not preclude the School from addressing the conduct in any manner the school deems appropriate.
8. The School may, in its discretion, dismiss a formal complaint or allegations therein if the complainant informs the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant desires to withdraw the formal complaint or allegations therein, if the respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the school, or if specific circumstances prevent the school from gathering sufficient evidence to reach a determination.
9. The School shall give the parties written notice of a dismissal (mandatory or discretionary) and the reasons for the dismissal.
10. The School may, in its discretion, consolidate formal complaints where the allegations arise out of the same facts.
11. The School shall protect the privacy of a party’s medical, psychological, and similar treatment records and shall not access or use such records unless the School obtains the party’s voluntary, written consent to do so.

B. DECISION-MAKER

The School, through the Title IX Coordinator or other authorized School official, shall designate a Decision-maker with regard to a Title IX complaint. The Decision-maker shall not be the Title IX Coordinator or Investigator, and shall not be someone with a conflict of interest or bias. The Decision-maker shall comply with the following rules:

1. Start with the presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the complaint process.

2. All Complainants are afforded rape shield protections, deeming questions and evidence about a complainant's prior sexual behavior irrelevant, unless offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged misconduct or offered to prove consent.
3. Use the preponderance of the evidence standard in reaching her/his decision.
4. Require objective evaluation of all relevant evidence, inculpatory and exculpatory, and avoid credibility determinations based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
5. After the Investigator has sent the investigative report to the parties and before reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the decision-maker(s) must afford each party five (5) business days to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party.
6. Issue a written determination regarding responsibility with findings of fact, conclusions about whether the alleged conduct occurred, rationale for the result as to each allegation, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, and whether remedies will be provided to the complainant.
7. The written determination must be sent simultaneously to the parties along with information about how to file an appeal.

S. GRIEVANCE PROCESS

1. Prompt Filing.

The Complainant must file a formal complaint within a reasonable time, ideally within 10 days of the alleged incident. A complaint will not be disallowed solely because of the passage of time. The Title IX coordinator is charged with ensuring that all such complaints are timely, impartially, and appropriately investigated in accordance with applicable law.

2. Confidentiality. Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of the complainant. There may be times where confidentiality may not be possible for the School to conduct a thorough investigation. There may also be instances where the School has a legal obligation to report certain information it receives to state or local authorities or to protect the School community.

3. Timeline. While the timeframe for completing an investigation into individual complaints may vary depending on the circumstances, the Title IX coordinator will ensure that timeframes are reasonable and endeavor to complete any investigation, including any decision, within sixty (60) days of the filing of a complaint. The timeline may be extended where appropriate at the discretion of the School. Include reasonably prompt time frames for conclusion of the grievance process, including appeals and informal resolutions, with allowance for short-term, good cause delays or extensions of the time frames.

4. Investigation. The Title IX coordinator or other School official shall designate an impartial Investigator to conduct the investigation. The Investigator shall have full authority to investigate,

including the authority to interview witnesses. The Investigator shall follow the guidance/mandates set forth above in this policy in conducting the investigation.

5. Decision-Maker. The Decision-maker shall follow the guidance/mandates set forth above in this policy and shall use the preponderance of the evidence standard in reaching her/his decision. The Decision-maker shall timely provide written notice of the outcome of the complaint to the relevant parties.

6. Appeal. Either party may appeal the Decision-maker's decision to the Board of Directors within 14 days after a decision is made or the School dismisses a formal complaint in a Title IX proceeding, on the following bases:

- a. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter,
- b. Newly discovered evidence that could affect the outcome of the matter, and/or
- c. Title IX personnel had a conflict of interest or bias that affected the outcome of the matter.

7. The Board of Directors will appoint a panel of three board members to serve as the impartial review panel. The review will be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws and the panel may, but is not required to, request information directly from the parties. The three-member review panel will make a decision and will provide written notice of the outcome of the appeal to the parties within fourteen (14) school days, unless circumstances require more time.

T. INFORMAL RESOLUTION PROCESS FOR STUDENTS

After a formal Complaint is filed, the School may, in its discretion, offer and facilitate informal resolution options, such as mediation or restorative justice, so long as both parties give voluntary, informed, written consent to attempt informal resolution. The School will not require participation in an informal process. And, at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint.

The School does not require as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continuing employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to a formal investigation and adjudication of formal complaints of sexual harassment. Any person who facilitates an informal resolution must be well-trained. The School will not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student. Finally, the School may not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed.

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM, Policy Code: 4335, Approved: 05.03.2024

At Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI) animals may be brought into the classroom for educational purposes. However, they must be appropriately and humanely cared for, and properly handled. No staff member shall bring any animal (for this purpose animal shall include insects or any living thing such as a butterfly larvae or viable egg but not plants) onto school grounds or to a school sponsored activity or authorize any other individual to do so without the permission of the School Director(s) or his/her designee.

Since animals can also be a source of allergens, asthma triggers, and microorganisms that can cause infectious diseases, appropriate guidelines for the use, handling and care of such animals shall be followed. CFCI also recognized the North Carolina Division of Public Health Guidelines Animals in Schools – November 2008 when granting permission.

Animals classified as "service animals" may be permitted in the school/on school property as provided in Policy 4320 Service Animals. Cross Reference Policy 4310 Animals on School Property.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of establishing guidelines for animals in the classroom is:

1. To minimize susceptible students' exposure to potentially harmful allergens;
2. To inform staff about precautions and necessary conditions regarding animals;
3. To establish guidelines for communication with parents/guardians regarding animals in the classrooms.

GUIDELINES:

Guidelines for the use of animals in schools/classrooms:

1. Cats and dogs other than service animals in the classroom should be limited to very brief and infrequent visits, if at all, and tied to student instruction. They can be triggers for many children with asthma and allergies.
2. Sanitation
 - a. Hand washing with soap and water is mandatory for school staff after handling animals, cage debris, or animal supplies.
 - b. Students should not be allowed to clean up any excretory waste from the animals or handle unclean cages or equipment used by animals without appropriate supervision, safety equipment, and training. Proper hand washing should always follow such activities.
 - c. The area for cleaning cages and all animal care equipment must be maintained separate from any food preparation, food storage, or eating area for students.
 - d. Staff will use appropriate disinfecting methods to clean up all excretory waste and cages. This should be done while students are not present and with proper

ventilation. A solution of 1:10 bleach water is recommended and should be well marked and stored out of the reach of children.

- e. Urine from rodents is a trigger for many students with asthma and allergies. Student exposure should be limited.
3. Indoor Air Quality
 - a. Animals should be located away from air supply and return vents to avoid circulating allergens.
 - b. The areas near where the animals are housed must be kept sanitary and clean to minimize pollutants from becoming airborne. Animal cages must be located on a hard surface floor (not carpet).
 4. Containment:
 - a. Safe and appropriate cages must be used for all animals visiting the classroom. Generally, aquariums make excellent cages and are easy to keep clean and maintain. Teachers with limited or no experience working with animals in the classroom should check with a veterinarian or another teacher with successful animal experience.
 - b. Animals should be kept away from carpeted areas in order to minimize the transfer of allergens to the carpets, and eliminate the possibility of soiling the carpet.
 - c. A teacher or supervisor familiar with proper animal handling MUST be present when animals are taken out of a cage and handled by students.
 - d. Any animal that displays aggressive behavior must be removed from the classroom immediately.
 5. Communication:
 - a. Parents/Guardians need to be informed in advance of any animals living in their child's classroom. This is especially important for the elementary level, since the children are in the same room most of the day. Many students have allergies/asthma that could be worsened by exposure to animals. If any parent/guardian objects to the presence of an animal in their child's classroom, appropriate measures will be taken to help ensure the health and well-being of the child.
 - b. Teachers must convey rules regarding animal interaction and children must be taught to gently interact or handle them.
 - c. Specific types of animals will be restricted if a concern is expressed by staff, students or parents/guardians.
 - d. CFCI reserves the right to ban certain animals if they pose a threat to the safety or comfort of staff and students at the discretion of the School Director(s).
 6. Animal Health:
 - a. Animals must be in good health and have appropriate up-to-date immunizations and examinations by a veterinarian, as needed. A copy of a document verifying the animal's up to date immunizations must be kept on file in the school office. Outside groups or organizations should also be asked to provide similar verification if bringing animals into the school for presentations.
 - b. Animals brought to the school should be socialized to a classroom setting.

- c. Careful arrangements for holiday and weekend care must be developed and comprehensive written care guidelines provided to those responsible for the well being of the animals.

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY, Policy Code: 4800, Approved: 05.03.2024

In case of inclement weather, CFCI will announce delays or closure when deemed necessary by the School Director(s) or his/her designee. Information regarding school closings or delays will be sent directly to all families via the school's communication phone and email service, and will also be posted on the CFCI website.

NOTE: CFCI does not follow Hanover County School announced closings and delays; thus, it is essential that all contact information is kept up to date for families to receive timely information. Parents/guardians are responsible for informing the school of any changes to contact information.

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: EDUCATIONAL LEAVE, Policy Code: 4900, Approved: 05.03.2024

Family vacations should be planned around the school calendar. Travel that has an educational value may be counted as an excused absence. To qualify, parents/guardians need to request an excused absence at least ten (10) school days in advance of the trip. The request should be written to the Coordinator and the classroom teacher via the Educational Leave Request Form. The request must include the date of the trip, location of the trip, daily plan of learning experiences, and the date of return to school. In addition, assignments missed during the trip must be completed in a timely manner upon return.

Students are required to submit agreed upon assignments within the specified timeframe, as indicated by the student's teacher(s). Failure to submit assignments within the designated timeframe may result in denial of educational leave.

Families may request educational leave only one time per school year. The school can only excuse up to five (5) days per year for educational leave.

Educational leave will not be granted during the first twenty (20) days of school or during state testing windows.

SECTION: 4000 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS: REMOTE LEARNING PROTOCOL, Policy Code: 4910, Approved: 05.03.2024

In the event that circumstances beyond the school's control force the closure of the school during regular student attendance (ex. severe weather, widespread illness, etc.), the school will be able to implement a remote learning plan in order to support student learning. While there is no substitute for uninterrupted personal contact between teachers and students in the classroom, scheduled student attendance is not always possible.

In an effort to provide additional flexibility for school staff and community members when making up instructional time for teachers and students due to unforeseen circumstances, school staff may create a specific plan to use in order to increase instructional time without causing unnecessary strain on community resources.

A remote learning protocol will include the following components:

1. Specific date(s) to count towards instructional time to take place after regular classes have resumed
2. Teacher assigned work for each student to complete during the remote learning date/time
3. Not to be used until students have missed two regularly scheduled attendance days
4. Work should equate to a minimum of 300 instructional minutes for each date identified

It will be the responsibility of the School Director(s) to determine when a remote learning protocol day would be appropriate and inform the appropriate stakeholders.

6000 Technology

[6210 - Cellular Phones and Other Wireless Communication Devices](#)

[6220 – Employee Computer and Internet Use](#)

[6230 – Student Internet and Email](#)

[6240 – Remote Access](#)

[6270 – Internet Safety](#)

[6330 – Hardware and Software Procurement](#)

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SECTION: 6000 – TECHNOLOGY: CELLULAR PHONES AND OTHER WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES, Policy Code: 6210, Approved: 01.20.2026

Overview

North Carolina recently joined more than 20 other states and the District of Columbia by passing a law that restricts the use of cellular phones and other wireless communication devices during instructional time. The law and this policy recognize that such devices can disrupt the learning environment and should therefore only be permitted by students in limited and clearly defined circumstances.

A Wireless Communication Device is a wireless, portable device that can provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more parties. The following is a non-exhaustive list of wireless communication devices prohibited by this policy: cellular phones, laptops, gaming devices, smart watches, and any personal technology device.

Exceptions

Wireless Communication Devices are not allowed during instructional time except for the following situations:

1. When expressly authorized by a teacher for educational purposes.
 - a. A teacher must clearly state the intended educational purpose to students and shall have documentation available to support the use (e.g., lesson plans detailing why devices would be needed).
 - b. The teacher shall only allow devices for the duration and purpose allowed.
2. When expressly authorized for a teacher for use in an emergency.
3. When required by the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan;
4. As required to manage a student's health care, in accordance with a documented medical condition.
 - a. Students who need wireless communication device to manage health care must request access from the school and as part of that request, must provide documentation from a licensed medical professional outlining the necessity of access to the device.
 - b. If approved by administration, students with documented medical condition shall be granted permission to use the wireless communication device only as necessary for their condition.
 - c. The school shall make accommodations as needed to ensure the student has access to their device but without compromising the educational environment.

Procedures

Students in grades K-8 are discouraged from bringing any wireless communication device to school, as such devices often lead to unnecessary classroom disruptions. If students do bring such devices, however, school policy requires that they are not used during instructional time, except as allowed under the exceptions in Section 2. Any device on a person during instructional time must

be turned off and put away. Having the device on airplane or silent mode is not sufficient and could subject the student to discipline.

Any student found to have a wireless communication device on their person during instructional time, notwithstanding the exceptions allowed under Section 2 of this policy, shall be subject to discipline in accordance with the Community Discipline Guide.

Consequences

The first violation of this policy is a violation under the Community Discipline Guide. Disciplinary measures can include parent/guardian notification; confiscation of the device; permanent ban of wireless communication device on campus; and/or ISS. Repeated violations of this policy will lead to more serious consequences in accordance with the school's Community Discipline Guide.

Implementation and Training

The Leadership Team shall develop procedures to implement this policy, including how to confiscate wireless communication devices if necessary. The school is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen devices. All staff members shall receive training annually on this policy and its enforcement.

Communication

This policy shall be communicated to students, parents/guardians, and staff members through appropriate channels, including but not limited to student handbooks, parent newsletters, and staff meetings. The policy shall also be submitted to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) as required by law; DPI shall also receive the revised version of this policy any time it is modified.

Section 7. Legal Authority This policy aligns with North Carolina General Statute § 115C-76.100.

SECTION: 6000 – TECHNOLOGY: EMPLOYEE COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE, Policy Code: 6220, Approved: 05.03.2024

The intent of these guidelines is to provide employees with general requirements for utilizing CFCI's computers, networks, and Internet services. These guidelines may be supplemented by more specific administrative procedures and guidelines governing day-to-day management and operation of the computer system.

These guidelines provide general rules and examples of prohibited uses for illustrative purposes, but do not attempt to state all required or prohibited activities by users. Employees who have questions regarding whether a particular activity or use is acceptable should seek further guidance from the appropriate school administrator.

Failure to comply with this policy and/or the established procedures or rules governing computer use may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Illegal use of CFCI computers will also result in referral to law enforcement authorities.

A. Access to School Computers, Networks and Internet Services

The level of access that employees have to CFCI computers, networks and Internet services is based upon specific employee requirements and needs.

B. Acceptable Use

Employees are to utilize CFCI computers, networks, and internet services for school-related purposes and performance of job duties. Incidental personal use of school computers is permitted, as long as such use does not interfere with the employee's job duties and performance. "Incidental personal use" is defined as use by an individual employee for occasional personal communications. Employees are reminded that such personal use must comply with this policy and all other applicable policies, procedures and rules. **All communications pertaining to any type of school business via e-mail must be performed on the cfi.net account assigned to the employee.**

C. Prohibited Use

The employee is responsible for his/her actions and activities involving CFCI's computer, networks and internet services and for his/her computer files, passwords and accounts. General examples of unacceptable uses which are expressly prohibited include, but are not limited to the following:

- Any use that is illegal or in violation of other Board policies, including harassing, discriminatory or threatening communications and behavior, violations of copyright laws, etc.;
- Any use involving materials that are obscene, pornographic, sexually explicit or sexually suggestive;
- Any inappropriate communications with students or minors;

- Any use for private financial gain, or commercial, advertising or solicitation purpose;
- Any use as a forum for communicating by e-mail or any other medium with other school users or outside parties to solicit, proselytize, advocate or communicate the views of an individual or non-school sponsored organization; to solicit membership in or support of any non-school-sponsored organization; or to raise funds for any non-school-sponsored purpose, whether for profit or not-for-profit. No employee shall knowingly provide school email addresses to outside parties whose intent is to communicate with school employees, students, and/or their families for non-school purposes. Employees who are uncertain as to whether particular activities are acceptable should seek guidance from the Director or other appropriate administrator;
- Any communication that represents personal views as those of CFCI or that could be misinterpreted as such;
- Downloading or uploading software or applications without permission from the appropriate administrator;
- Opening or forwarding any email attachment (executable files) from unknown sources and/or that may contain viruses;
- Any malicious use or disruption of CFCI computers, networks, and Internet services or breach of security features;
- Any misuse or intentional damage to CFCI computer equipment;
- Misuse of the computer passwords or accounts (employees or other users);
- Any communications that are in violation of generally accepted rules of network etiquette and/or professional conduct;
- Any attempt to access prohibited sites;
- Failure to report a known breach of computer security to the appropriate administrator;
- Using school computers, networks, and Internet services after such access had been denied or revoked;
- Any attempt to delete, erase or otherwise conceal any information stored on a school computer that violates these rules; and
- Use of CFCI equipment by any non-staff member, with the exception of CFCI students who are engaged in appropriate CFCI school related activities.

D. No Expectation of Privacy

CFCI retains control, custody and supervision of all computers, networks and Internet services owned or leased by CFCI. CFCI reserves the right to monitor all computer and Internet activity by employees and other system users. Employees have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers, including email messaging and stored files.

E. Confidentiality of Information

Employees are expected to use appropriate judgment and caution in communications concerning students and staff to ensure that personally identifiable information remains confidential.

F. Staff Responsibilities to Students

All staff are to monitor all student computer use. Students are not to use staff computers unless closely monitored by the staff member. The staff member is ultimately responsible for inappropriate use of their assigned computer.

G. Assumption of Responsibility

CFCI assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges made by employees including but not limited to credit card charges, subscriptions, long distance telephone charges, equipment and line costs, or any illegal use of its computers such as copyright violations.

H. Employee acknowledgement required

Each employee authorized to access CFCI computers, networks and internet services is required to sign an acknowledgment form stating that they have read this policy and these guidelines. The acknowledgment form will be retained in the employee's personnel file.

SECTION: 6000 – TECHNOLOGY: STUDENT INTERNET AND EMAIL, Policy Code: 6230, Approved: 05.03.2024

Internet access and email are available to students and teachers in CFCI. The CFCI Board of Directors believes the internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources to both students and teachers. The goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence in school by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. To gain access to the internet, all students under the age of 18 must obtain parental permission and must sign and return the designated user agreement.

Access to the Internet will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with internet users throughout the world. Families should be warned that some material accessible via the internet could contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people.

While CFCI's intent is to make internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. Ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

CFCI Internet and Email Rules

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply.

The network is provided for students to conduct research and communicate with others. Access to network service is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Parent permission is required.

Individual users of the CFCI computer networks are responsible for their behavior and communications over those networks. It is presumed that users will comply with CFCI standards and will honor the agreements they have signed.

Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on CFCI servers will be private.

SECTION: 6000 – TECHNOLOGY: REMOTE ACCESS, Policy Code: 6240,
Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's systems must be protected against unauthorized access, malicious access, and disruption of service.

The purpose of this policy is to define the rules and requirements for connecting to Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's network from any host (cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc.). These rules and requirements are designed to minimize the potential exposure from damages which may result from unauthorized use of CFCI's resources. Damages include the loss of sensitive or organization confidential data, intellectual property, damage to public image, damage to critical internal systems, and fines or other financial liabilities incurred as a result of those losses.

It is the responsibility of CFCI employees and other Authorized Users with remote access privileges to our network to ensure that their remote access connection is given the same consideration as the user's on-site connection. When accessing CFCI's network from a personal computer, Authorized Users are responsible for preventing access to any company computer resources or data by non-Authorized Users. Performance of illegal activities through CFCI's company network by any user (Authorized or otherwise) is prohibited. The Authorized User bears responsibility for and consequences of misuse of the Authorized User's access.

Secure remote access will be strictly controlled with encryption through our Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) and pass-phrases. CFCI employees and authorized users shall protect their login and password. While using the CFCI-owned computer to remotely connect to the CFCI network, Authorized Users shall ensure the remote host is not connected to any other network at the same time, with the exception of personal networks that are under their complete control or under the complete control of an Authorized User or Third Party. Use of external resources to conduct company business must be approved in advance by the Business Operations Coordinator. All hosts that are connected to CFCI's internal networks via remote access technologies must use the most up-to-date anti-virus software, this includes personal computers.

Personal equipment used to access CFCI's networks must meet the requirements of CFCI owned equipment for remote access - and be approved by the Director(s) or designee. CFCI's Network Engineer/IT Specialist will verify compliance to this policy through various methods, including but not limited to, business tool reports, internal and external audits, and/or inspection. An employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Any exception to the policy must be approved by the Director(s).

This policy applies to all CFCI employees and Authorized Users with a company owned or personally-owned computer or workstation used to connect to our network. This policy applies to remote access connections used to do work on behalf of CFCI, including reading or sending email

accessing the internet. This policy covers any and all technical implementations of remote access used to connect to CFCI's networks.

SECTION: 6000 – TECHNOLOGY: INTERNET SAFETY, Policy Code: 6270,
Approved: 01.20.2026

Introduction

It is the policy of the CFCI board to: (a) prevent user access via its technological resources to, or transmission of, inappropriate material on the Internet or through electronic mail or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access to the Internet and devices or programs connected to or accessible through the Internet; (c) prevent other unlawful online activity; (d) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (e) comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act.

Definitions:

1. Technology Protection Measure

The term “technology protection measure” means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors.

2. Harmful to Minors

The term “harmful to minors” means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that:

- a. taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
- b. depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
- c. taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

3. Child Pornography

The term “child pornography” means any visual depiction, including any photograph, film, video picture, or computer or computer-generated image or picture, whether made or produced by electronic, mechanical, or other means, of sexually explicit conduct, where:

- a. the production of such visual depiction involves the use of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct;
- b. such visual depiction is a digital image, computer image, or computer-generated image that is, or is indistinguishable from, that of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct; or
- c. such visual depiction has been created, adapted, or modified to appear that an identifiable minor is engaging in sexually explicit conduct.

4. Sexual Act; Sexual Contact

The terms “sexual act” and “sexual contact” have the meanings given such terms in section 2246 of title 18, United States Code.

5. Minor

For purposes of this policy, the term “minor” means any individual who has not attained the age of 17.

Inappropriate Network Usage

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or “Internet filters”) will be used to limit access to age-appropriate subject matter and materials. The school shall block or filter access to inappropriate information on the Internet and World Wide Web. Specifically, blocking will be applied to audio and visual depictions deemed obscene or to be child pornography or harmful to minors. Student access to other materials that are inappropriate for minors will also be restricted. The board has determined that audio or visual materials that depict violence, nudity, or graphic language that do not serve a legitimate pedagogical purpose are inappropriate for minors. The Leadership Team, in conjunction with a school technology and media advisory committee shall make a determination regarding what other matter or materials are inappropriate for minors. School system personnel may not restrict Internet access to ideas, perspectives, or viewpoints if the restriction is motivated solely by disapproval of the views involved.

In accordance with state law, students shall not access social media platforms on school devices or networks except when expressly directed to do so by a teacher for educational purposes.

A student or employee must immediately notify the appropriate school official if the student or employee believes that a website or web content that is available to students through the school system’s Internet access is obscene, constitutes child pornography, is “harmful to minors” as defined by CIPA, or is otherwise inappropriate for students. Students must notify a teacher or the Leadership; employees must notify the Leadership.

Due to the dynamic nature of the Internet, sometimes Internet websites and web material that should not be restricted are blocked by the Internet filter. A student or employee who believes that a website or web content has been improperly blocked by the school system’s filter should bring the website to the attention of Leadership. The Leadership Team shall confer with the technology lead to determine whether the site or content should be unblocked. The Leadership Team shall notify the student or teacher promptly of the decision. The decision may be appealed through the school system’s grievance procedure.

Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled during use by an adult for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

All users of the school system's technological resources are expected to comply with the requirements established in the student technology acceptable use policy. Users are prohibited from: (a) attempting to gain unauthorized access, including “hacking” and engaging in other similar unlawful activities; and (b) engaging in the unauthorized disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identifying information regarding minors.

Education, Supervision, and Monitoring

To the extent practical, steps will be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the school system's online computer network, especially when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. The school will also take all reasonable measures to prevent access to websites, web applications, and/or software that do not protect the disclosure, use, or dissemination of a student's personal information. It is the responsibility of all school personnel to educate, supervise, and monitor usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

Procedures for disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures are the responsibility of the technology director or designated representatives.

The Technology Lead or designated representatives shall provide age-appropriate training for students who use the school system's Internet services. The training provided will be designed to promote the school system's commitment to educating students in digital literacy and citizenship, including:

1. The standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in the student technology acceptable use policy.
2. Student safety with regard to safety on the Internet, appropriate behavior while online, including behavior on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response; and
3. Compliance with the E-rate requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Following this training, the student must acknowledge that he or she received the training, understood it, and will follow the provisions of Technology Responsible Use.

Instruction on Social Media Effects

Additionally, the school's standard course of study shall include instruction on social media and its effects on health, including social, emotional, and physical health. Instruction shall be provided at least once during elementary and middle school and at least twice during high school. The topics must include, but not be limited to, all of the following topics:

1. Negative effects of social media on mental health, including addiction.
2. The distribution of misinformation on social media.
3. Methods of manipulating behavior using social media.
4. The permanency of information shared online.
5. How to maintain personal security.
6. How to identify cyberbullying, predatory behavior, and human trafficking on the Internet.
7. How to report suspicious behavior on the internet.
8. Personal and interpersonal skills or character education that enhances individual level protective factors and mitigates or reduces risk-taking or harmful behavior.

The Leadership Team shall develop any regulations needed to implement this policy and shall submit any certifications necessary to demonstrate compliance with this policy.

**SECTION: 6000 – TECHNOLOGY: HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE
PROCUREMENT, Policy Code: 6330, Approved: 05.03.2024**

Hardware

All hardware devices acquired by CFCI or developed by it (through its own employees or through those hired by the CFCI to develop the hardware devices) is and at all times shall remain CFCI property. All such hardware devices must be used in compliance with applicable licenses, notices, contracts, and agreements.

All purchasing of CFCI computer hardware devices shall be centralized within the IT/ Operations team or designee to ensure that all equipment conforms to CFCI hardware standards and is purchased or leased at the best possible price. All requests for CFCI computing hardware devices must be in the annual CFCI budget document and have the approval of the Director(s). The request must then be presented to the Network Engineer/IT Specialist or contracted designee, who will review the requested hardware and provide further assistance if the Network Engineer/IT Specialist or contracted designee determines that such hardware is needed.

Hardware configurations are reviewed with each new lease in order to determine what equipment will best meet the needs of the end user. The Network Engineer/IT Specialist or contracted designee makes every effort to provide the most suitable desktop or laptop while maintaining company cost effectiveness. Employees will be given access to appropriate network printers.

Software

All software acquired for or on behalf of CFCI or developed by CFCI employees or contract personnel on behalf of CFCI is and at all times shall remain company property. All such software must be used in compliance with applicable licenses, notices, contracts, and agreements.

Purchasing of company software shall be centralized within the IT/Operations team or designee to ensure that all applications conform to corporate software standards and are purchased at the best possible price. All requests for software must be submitted to the IT/Operations team or designee for approval.

Each employee is individually responsible for reading, understanding, and following all applicable licenses, notices, contracts, and agreements for software that he or she uses or seeks to use on CFCI computers. If an employee needs help in interpreting the meaning/application of any such licenses, notices, contracts and agreements, he/she will contact the designated technology contact for assistance. Unless otherwise provided in the applicable license, notice, contract, or agreement, any duplication of copyrighted software, except for backup and archival purposes, may be a violation of federal and state law. In addition to violating such laws, unauthorized duplication of software is a violation of CFCI's Hardware/Software Policy.

SECTION: 6000 – TECHNOLOGY: INVENTORY CONTROL, Policy Code: 6350,
Approved: 05.03.2024

As part of the year-end procedures, the Operations Team and IT/Contracted Technology Service will perform an inventory of all computers and media equipment.

1. The serial number, name and location of each piece of equipment are recorded in a database.
2. Each year, the information in the database will be checked for accuracy. Any changes in location will be updated. The equipment will also be checked to make sure it is in operative condition.
3. Any equipment unaccounted for will be reported to the Director.

SECTION: 6000 – TECHNOLOGY: EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR,
Policy Code: 6360, Approved: 05.03.2024

The Operations Team and IT/Contracted Technology Service shall develop and implement a procedure for equipment maintenance and repair. This procedure will include a service request form to be completed, if equipment needs to be serviced or repaired. Completed service request forms are to be collected by the Technology Committee for service history on the equipment.

7000 Personnel

- [7005 - Equal Employment Opportunity](#)
- [7010 - I-9 ImBookmarkmigration Reform Policy](#)
- [7011 - Disciplinary Action Policy](#)
- [7012 - Standards of Professional Conduct](#)
- [7013 - Code of Ethics](#)
- [7020 - Employment References](#)
- [7021 - Hiring Policy](#)
- [7023 - Job Descriptions](#)
- [7024 - Employee Pay](#)
- [7025 - Mileage Reimbursement](#)
- [7090 - Criminal Record History Check](#)
- [7110 - Electronic and Telephonic Communications](#)
- [7190 - Harassment](#)
- [7210-7210P - Employee Grievance Policy Procedure](#)
- [7270 - Conflicts of Interest](#)
- [7300 - Social Media Policy](#)
- [7391 - Family Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\) and Other Leave Required by Law](#)
- [7405 - Notification of Absence](#)
- [7420 - Assignment of Staff](#)
- [7600 - Drug Free Workplace](#)
- [7800 - Leave General Information](#)
- [7810 - Annual Vacation Leave](#)
- [7811 - Sick Leave](#)
- [7812 - Personal Leave](#)
- [7813 - Holiday Leave](#)
- [7830 - Child Involvement Leave](#)
- [7840 - Negative Leave Balances](#)
- [7850 - Professional Licensure and Certification](#)
- [7860 - Initial Licensure Program \(ILP\) – North Carolina Beginning Teacher Induction Program](#)
- [7870 - Professional Development](#)

7880 - Administrative Leave with Pay and Suspension Without Pay

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY,
Policy Code: 7005, Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry, (CFCI), is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any applicant, contractor or employee on the basis of age, natural hairstyle, race, color, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, genetic information, veteran status, disability, genetic information or other legally protected status. This policy extends to all terms, conditions and privileges of employment as well as the use of the school's facilities and participation in all activities sponsored by the school. It is also Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's policy to ensure that all employees are treated equally on the basis of merit and performance competence with regard to any and all terms of conditions of employment, including recruitment, hiring, compensation, promotions, demotions, assignments, trainings, layoffs, and terminations.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: I-9 IMMIGRATION REFORM, Policy Code: 7010,
Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry, (CFCI), complies with the Immigration Reform and Control Act, employing only those persons who are legally eligible to work in the United States.

Federal law requires both new employees and re-hires to provide documentation of eligibility to work in the United States plus proper identity. A properly submitted form I-9 is required for employment and will be submitted to E-Verify.

SECTION: 7000 - PERSONNEL DISCIPLINARY ACTION POLICY, Policy Code: 7011, Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry, (CFCI), reserves the right to terminate an employee at any time for any lawful reason with or without prior disciplinary counseling or notice. Nothing in this manual or any other Cape Fear Center for Inquiry document is intended to:

- Modify this “at-will” employment,
- Promise progressive discipline or disciplinary counseling,
- Promise notice in circumstances, where Cape Fear Center for Inquiry considers immediate termination or discipline to be appropriate.

Disciplinary actions may entail verbal, written, final warnings, suspension, or termination. All of these actions may not be followed in some instances. Cape Fear Center for Inquiry reserves the right to exercise discretion in discipline. Prior warning is not a requirement for termination. If an employee is disciplined in writing, copies of these communications are placed in the employee’s personnel file.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry reserves the right to take any disciplinary action it considers appropriate, including termination, at any time. In addition to those situations discussed elsewhere in this Manual, listed below are some other examples where immediate termination could result. This list is general in nature and is not intended to be exhaustive:

- Discourtesy to a student, parent/guardian, colleague, outside provider, or the general public resulting in a complaint or loss of goodwill.
- Refusal or failure to follow directives from a Supervisor, Director, or Cape Fear Center for Inquiry Officer.
- Breach of confidentiality relating to employer, employee, and student, or provider information.
- Altering, damaging, or destroying School property or records, or another employee’s property.
- Providing false or misleading information to any CFCI representative or on any CFCI records including the employment application, benefit forms, time cards, expense reimbursement forms, etc.
- Fighting or engaging in disorderly conduct on CFCI’s premises or school-related event.
- Violations of any of CFCI’s employment policies including, but not limited to, confidentiality, security, solicitation, conflict of interest, and employee handbook.
- Conduct that is in direct opposition to the school’s mission, vision, and/or school’s strategic values.
- Conduct or performance issues of a serious nature.
- Failure of a drug or alcohol test.
- Conviction of any criminal acts while in the employ of CFCI.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry recognizes that personal issues can sometimes affect an employee's performance. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to employees and their families to provide confidential help with a wide variety of personal problems, issues, and concerns.

SECTION: 7000 - STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT, Policy Code: 7012, Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry employees hold positions of public trust and serve as role models for students. Through ethical behavior, employees promote a vision of high expectations and continuous improvement for themselves, as well as for students. Employees' conduct should be as such to protect their integrity and consequences of their own actions. Employees engaging in any activity concerning the school, particularly in relationships with students, parents/guardians, other employees, the public, vendors, and suppliers must exhibit the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and fairness. All employees shall perform their jobs in a competent and ethical manner without violating public trust, applicable law, policies, and regulations. They shall not knowingly be a party to or condone any illegal or improper activity. See Policy 7013 for other expectations regarding ethical behavior.

It is neither practice nor possible to delineate all of the situations that could fall within the guidelines of this Policy; however, all employees shall follow the standards of professional conduct listed in both The Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators and The Standards of Professional Conduct for North Carolina Educators. The absence of law, policy, regulation, or practice does not relieve an employee from the responsibility to exercise the highest ethical standards at all times.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: CODE OF ETHICS, Policy Code: 7013, Approved: 05.03.2024

Purpose: Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI) hereby adopts this ethics policy in the belief that a shared statement of ethical values will strengthen the overall quality of the CFCI professional community.

A. General Policy

CFCI is committed to maintain the highest professional standards in all of its academic and administrative operations; promoting ethical practices among its administrators, faculty, staff, parents/guardians, and students; and ensuring a level of accountability appropriate for a public institution. Individuals are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws including, but not limited to, those pertaining to equal opportunity, nondiscrimination, harassment, ethics, and lobbying.

B. Intellectual Honesty

Personal interactions among CFCI community members should be characterized by truthfulness, openness to new ideas, civility, and consideration for the rights of others. Each member of the professional community should respect the right of others to freedom of thought, opinion, speech, and association.

C. Professional Conduct

Teachers, staff members, administrators, and Board Members of CFCI shall:

1. Adhere to all CFCI policies and uphold the mission and vision of CFCI.
2. Annually sign and adhere to the community Communication Agreement.
3. Follow the steps of the Resolution Policy if there is a concern about a community member's conduct.
4. Use professional language when addressing any member of the CFCI community.
5. Annually sign the CFCI Confidentiality Agreement in order to protect student confidentiality.
6. Dress professionally. All Board Members, Faculty, Staff, and Employees of CFCI serve as role models for the students with whom they work and as leaders in the community. Consistent with these roles, they shall dress in a manner and have an appearance that is appropriate and professional, in light of the environment in which they work, the duties of their jobs, and the impressionable youth they serve. The administrative team is authorized to interpret professional dress, keeping in mind the style of learning and teaching at CFCI.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: EMPLOYMENT REFERENCES, Policy Code: 7020, Approved: 05.03.2024

To ensure that individuals who join Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI) are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, it is the policy of the School to check the employment references of all applicants.

Only appropriate personnel are authorized to provide requested reference check(s) on CFCI employees (past or present). Responses to such inquiries will only confirm dates of employment and position(s) held unless information is requested in writing pursuant to statute. No further employment data will be released without a written authorization and release signed by the individual who is subject of the inquiry

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: JOB DESCRIPTIONS, Policy Code: 7023,
Approved: 05.03.2024

Job descriptions must be developed for all positions. A job description must identify the essential functions of the position and should stress expected working relationships with other employees and whatever duties are directly or indirectly related to student performance, where applicable.

Job descriptions will be used as a criterion in screening applicants and evaluating employees. Job descriptions will also be used in organizational planning, budgeting, and personnel administration. Job descriptions will be on file and available to employees and applicants upon request. Job descriptions may be updated from time to time at the discretion of the School.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: EMPLOYEE PAY, Policy Code: 7024, Approved: 05.03.2024

All CFCI employees are subject to the terms of employment and compensation contained in their individual employment contract. Unless otherwise noted, the employees will be paid on a twelve-month basis with checks being disbursed on the designated pay date. Teachers starting employment after the beginning of the school year will be paid on a pro-rata basis. It is the mission of CFCI to recruit, hire and retain the most talented employees in order to meet the vision set forth by the Board of Directors.

In order to meet this goal, employees look to be compensated at a competitive rate when compared with others in their field.

Living Wage

All employees at CFCI are paid a living wage as defined by Just Economics of WNC.

Definition of Pay Category:

1. Full-Time Teaching Staff

Teachers at CFCI are paid according to the North Carolina Certified Teacher Salary Schedule, plus a supplement of 8%. In the event that local supplement funding is available, teacher pay may be increased beyond the North Carolina Teacher Salary Schedule plus the 8% supplement. Mentor or other supplementary pay is designated by the Board each year.

2. Part-Time Employees

Part-time Employees are paid a set hourly rate or prorated salary amount, based on job description.

3. Hourly Employees

Hourly Employees are paid a set hourly rate as negotiated.

4. Staff

Staff is paid according to the corresponding North Carolina Salary Schedule, or as negotiated.

5. Substitutes

CFCI pays substitutes according to the daily rate, as approved by the Board each school year.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT, Policy Code: 7025, Approved: 05.03.2024

1. If an administrator, staff, or faculty member represents CFCI at a state-sponsored meeting pre-approved by the School Director(s) or designee, mileage will be reimbursed at the rate as determined by the current IRS mileage reimbursement rate. Mileage logs/information will be turned into the Director of Operations or designee for reimbursement, and will not go through the Lifelong Learning committee.
2. If an administrator, staff, or faculty member attends a professional development session, mileage reimbursement estimates and requests will need to be included on the proposal form that is submitted to Lifelong Learning for approval.

Except as set forth herein, mileage will not be reimbursed.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK
POLICY, Policy Code: 7090, Approved: 04.28.2026

I. Purpose

This policy establishes procedures for conducting criminal background checks on all employees, volunteers, and contractors who may have direct contact with students at Cape Fear Center for Inquiry in accordance with North Carolina law, the charter agreement, and best practices for ensuring student safety.

II. Legal Authority

This policy is established pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 115C-218.90(b)(1), which requires charter schools to adopt written policies requiring criminal background checks for all staff members.

III. Scope

This policy applies to:

1. All potential employees, including full-time, part-time, and substitute teachers
2. Volunteers who will have direct contact with students
3. Contractors and vendors who will have direct contact with students or regular access to school grounds during school hours

IV. Policy Requirements

A. Pre-Employment Background Checks

1. All offers of employment shall be conditioned upon completion of a criminal background check.
2. Background checks shall be completed prior to the first day of employment.
3. The applicant shall be responsible for the cost of the background check, unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors.

B. Background Check and Sex Offender Registry Check Components (Prior to the first day of employment.)

1. State and national criminal record checks through the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
2. Mandatory Fingerprinting through the New Hanover County Sheriff's Dept.
3. Social Security number verification
4. Check Sex Offender Registry
5. County criminal records check for each county of residence **7-10 years**
6. Education verification for all stated educational credentials
7. Employment verification for all prior employment positions listed on application

C. Disqualifying Offenses

The following offenses shall automatically disqualify an individual from employment or volunteer service:

1. Any felony conviction
2. Any conviction involving violence, sexual misconduct, or crimes against children

3. Drug-related convictions
4. Multiple misdemeanor convictions indicating a pattern of behavior that may pose a risk to students
5. Applicant's or Volunteer's name appears on the NC Department of Public Instruction [Revoked License List](#).

D. Review Process

1. The Administrator/Coordinator or designated Human Resources representative shall review all background check results.
2. Applicants with criminal records not listed as automatically disqualifying may be considered on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to:
 - The nature and gravity of the offense
 - The time elapsed since the offense or completion of sentence
 - The nature of the position sought
 - Rehabilitation efforts and subsequent work history

E. Confidentiality

1. All information obtained through background checks shall be maintained in confidential files separate from personnel files.
2. Access to background check information shall be limited to the Administrator/Coordinator and/or Human Resources personnel, and Board members on a need-to-know basis.

F. Ongoing Requirements

1. All employees, volunteers, and contractors shall be required to self-report any criminal charges or convictions that occur after their initial background check. HR officer or designee shall report to the State Board of Directors any licensed individual who is found to have a criminal history, as required by State Board policy.
2. The school reserves the right to conduct periodic background checks on current employees and volunteers.
3. Each employee is required to notify their immediate supervisor within 5 (five) calendar days after any felony or misdemeanor criminal conviction, guilty plea or plea of no contest. Any employee who is aware of any criminal conviction, guilty plea or plea of no contest of another employee should notify their supervisor or an administrator.
4. Failure to disclose criminal history or providing false information may result in termination of employment or volunteer service.

G. Volunteer Background Checks

1. All volunteers who will have direct contact with students must complete a volunteer application and consent to a background check.
2. The level of background check required for volunteers shall be determined based on:
 - Frequency of volunteer activity
 - Level of direct student contact
 - Level of supervision during volunteer activities

V. Compliance and Record Keeping

1. The Administrator and/or Director or designated Human Resource personnel shall maintain records of all completed background checks.

2. Documentation shall include:
 - a. Consent forms
 - b. Background check results
 - c. Determinations made regarding suitability for employment
 - d. Any waivers or exceptions granted

VI. Annual Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the CFCI Board of Directors and any recommended changes shall be presented to the full Board for consideration.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: ELECTRONIC AND TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATIONS, Policy Code: 7110, Approved: 05.03.2024

The School provides computers, electronic data storage, Internet services, email, and voicemail communications systems (referred to throughout this policy as “the School’s communication systems”) as important tools to support the School’s business and assist employees in performing their job responsibilities. It is the responsibility of every employee to ensure the School’s communication systems are used for authorized school purposes only and in a fashion that does not improperly disclose confidential, sensitive or proprietary information to unauthorized individuals.

Any communications in which the School’s communications systems are used including correspondence such as e-mail, constitute School property. The School’s communication systems are to be used for business-related purposes only during all working hours. Personal use is permissible on a reasonable basis, provided it occurs during non-working hours and does not violate any School policy or local, state or federal law. Any unauthorized use of the School’s communication systems is strictly prohibited. Unauthorized use includes, but is not limited to:

- Any communications or use which violates the School’s non-solicitation, equal employment opportunity, harassment, or non-retaliation policies or any other School policy or procedure.
- Utilizing or accessing the School’s communication systems without proper authorization.
- Utilizing, accessing or sharing school information including parent/guardian and/or student email address for any purpose other than communicating academic or safety information about the School or the specific student.
- Disabling or otherwise interfering with the School’s communication security or data protections systems.
- Using the School’s communication system to disclose confidential, sensitive, proprietary information, or personnel information to unauthorized individuals.
- Using the School’s student lists to communicate personal matters to parents/guardians or students.

The School expressly prohibits the use of the School’s communication system for communicating with or sending emails to parents/guardians or students regarding personnel matters or to solicit parents/guardians/students on matters unrelated to CFCI without the express written consent of the Director of Operations or the Chair of the Board of Directors. The School reserves the right to monitor, audit, access, disclose and/or review any use of its communication system in its sole discretion, in the ordinary course of business. Employees should not consider the School’s communications systems as private. Please note, the use of a password or delete function does not restrict or in any way alter the School’s right and ability to monitor, audit, access, disclose and/or review the use of its communication systems at the School’s discretion in the ordinary course of business. Employees should also be aware that the School may, under certain circumstances, be compelled to monitor, audit, access, disclose and/or review the use of its communication systems. During employment with the School, employees may be provided with passwords, entry codes

and/or access to the School's communication systems. Employees are strictly prohibited from disclosing these passwords, or entry codes to any person without prior written authorization. Employees are required to disclose all passwords and entry code when requested by the School.

Employees are also prohibited from providing any unauthorized individuals with access to the School's communication systems. Additionally, employees are prohibited from accessing the School's communication systems without proper authorization. Employees are also prohibited from establishing intranet, Internet or other data connections without prior written authorization. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including discharge/termination.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: HARASSMENT, Policy Code: 7190, Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry is committed to having a community in which every individual is treated with sensitivity and respect, and in which each student and teacher has an equal opportunity to work, learn, and develop to his or her full potential in an atmosphere free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. To that end, the School prohibits any form of harassment or discrimination (including sexual harassment) on the basis of age, natural hairstyle, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation or other protected characteristic, whether by a supervisor, administrator, co-worker, volunteer, contractor, student, or non-employee. The purpose of this policy is not to regulate our employees' personal morality. It is to assure that in the workplace, each employee is able to accomplish his or her job without being subjected to harassment.

While it is not easy to define precisely what harassment or discrimination is, it certainly includes verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct that denigrates, belittles, or puts down an individual or shows hostility, distaste, or aversion toward that individual based on that individual's age, natural hairstyle, race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, genetic information, disability, veteran status, any other protected class or participation in a protected activity.

Discrimination involves intentionally treating anyone in an unequal or disparate manner because of that person's inherent or natural personal characteristics, including age, natural hairstyle, genetic information, race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, any other protected class or participation in a protected activity, when such treatment causes the victim to suffer adverse educational, employment, or other school-related consequences.

Harassment is any unwelcome offensive verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive as to significantly affect the conditions of one's employment or a student's learning. Harassment includes, but is not limited to the following: slurs, epithets, threats, derogatory comments, unwelcome or abusive jokes, insults, name calling, threats, bullying or intimidation, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct such as uninvited touching or sexually-related comments or the exchange of benefits for performance of sexual or other favors.

Other conduct that can be unlawful harassment includes verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct that shows aversion, denigration, or hostility because of age, natural hairstyle race, genetic information, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other protected classification and that:

- Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment;
- Unreasonably interferes with an individual's work; or
- Adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Sexual Harassment

Of the various types of harassment, sexual harassment is worthy of special considerations beyond those applicable under the School's general Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy. No employee, student, volunteer or contractor shall engage in sexual harassment against any other student, employee, or another person in the School community.

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination involving unwelcome sexual, or sex-based conduct that interferes with the employment of others. Sexual harassment is any unwanted or unwelcomed verbal or physical advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements, requests for sexual favors, or sexually discriminatory remarks made by someone in the workplace which is offensive or objectionable to the recipient or which causes the recipient discomfort or humiliation, or which interferes with the recipient's job performance. Harassing behaviors can be verbal, non-verbal, or physical, range from subtle innuendo of a sexual nature to coerced sexual activity, and other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that usually takes place under the following circumstances:

- When submission to such conduct is made, explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of instruction, participation in school activities, or employment;
- When submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions or benefits; or
- When such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic, extracurricular, or work performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment or working environment.

Examples of Sexual Harassment

Workplace behavior that is sexually harassing includes but is not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual remarks or inferences;
- Offensive comments about sex or gender-specific traits;
- Unwelcome sexual propositions, threats, bribes, written notes, or phone calls;
- Unwelcome gestures or sounds or the display of sexually suggestive objects, signals, or pictures;
- Unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature (e.g. touching, pinching, kissing, holding);
- Promise of promotion, favorable performance evaluations, etc. in return for sexual favors, known as "quid pro quo" or "this for that";
- Threatening or insinuating, whether explicitly or implicitly, that an employee's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the employee's employment, evaluation, wages, advancement, assigned duties, shifts or any other condition of employment;
- Pressure for sexual activity, continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions;
- Continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body; or
- Sexually degrading words used toward, or in the presence of, an individual or to describe an individual.

A hostile environment exists if the conduct of a sexual nature is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program or creates a hostile or abusive educational or work environment.

Romantic or sexual advances toward students by employees or romantic or sexual relationships between school employees and students are always prohibited in all circumstances. School employees are prohibited from engaging in romantic or other inappropriate relationships with students and are required to report such relationships or reasonable suspicions thereof, to the School Director(s) or other administrator. Procedures established by the School for reporting suspected sexual harassment shall be followed in any instances involving such conduct.

Application

People of any gender can be sexually harassed by someone of any gender, and the law protects both sexes equally from this discrimination. This policy applies to sexual harassment by staff, students, volunteers, vendors, and service providers of any gender against someone of the same or different gender.

Retaliation

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of discrimination or harassment or who participates in an investigation as a witness or in any other capacity. Employees should report any such retaliation to the School Director(s). This policy, however, shall not be used to bring frivolous or malicious complaints.

Procedure for Complaints of Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation under all local, state and federal laws except Title IX:

- Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation should immediately discuss and report to: The School Director(s), or any other employee with a supervisory position with whom the person feels comfortable. While the person should report sexual harassment to a supervisor or the School Director(s), there is no requirement that the person report sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation to a particular supervisor.
- Any employee that operates in a supervisory capacity receiving a complaint of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation shall report such complaint to the School Director(s). If the School Director(s) is the subject of such complaint, then the supervisor shall report to the School Director(s) and the Chair of the Board of Directors or to any other Board member that the supervisor believes is appropriate.
- Any complaint made under this policy will be investigated thoroughly and promptly. To the maximum extent possible, the School will protect the privacy of the parties involved.
- Any attempt to interfere with or influence the investigation of a harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation complaint is strictly prohibited, and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.
- There will be no adverse action against an employee who acts in good faith and reports an incident, or who participates in or cooperates with an investigation of an alleged incident.

Disciplinary Action

Any individual found to have engaged in harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. In addition, some forms of sexual harassment, such as sexual relations between an adult and minor, may violate criminal laws. The School will cooperate with local authorities in the investigation of any alleged criminal activity.

Confidentiality of Records

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of the parties involved in the investigation of a sexual harassment, discrimination and retaliation complaint. All written materials related to the investigation of allegations of harassment will be placed in confidential files, which are separate from student and personnel records. Reasonable efforts will be taken to ensure that access to these records is limited to those persons with a need to know.

Sexual and Other Types of Unlawful Harassment/Discrimination on School Grounds by Contractors, Volunteers or Individuals Who Are Not School Employees

The policies contained in this section, including the reporting procedures and no retaliation policy, regarding harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination, shall also apply to contractors, volunteers or individuals who are not employees of the School when such individuals are on School property or during School events.

Implementation: Information and Education/Training

- This policy will be distributed to all employees and will be discussed as part of the staff orientation at the beginning of each school year.
- The School Director(s) is authorized and expected to establish training and administrative procedures to help eliminate discrimination and harassment, and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all individuals.
- This policy will be included in the School's Operation and Board Policy Manual and a summary policy included in the Parent or Guardian/Student Handbook, which is sent to parents/guardians and students at the beginning of each school year.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI) is committed to providing a work environment in which its employees and students are treated with courtesy, respect and dignity, and are free of harassment, whether sexual, threatening or discriminatory in nature. It is illegal and against School policy for any employee to make unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, teasing, jokes, or physical conduct of a sexual nature; to use foul or offensive language; or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment through physical or verbal conduct relative to an employee's gender, religion, age, national origin, or disability.

Any employee engaging in harassing activity will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and/or termination. Employees who believe that they are being subjected to harassment must immediately report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator who will conduct a

thorough investigation and determine what action will be taken. The identity of the employee making a report will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible. Any administrator who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly advise the Chair of the Board of Directors.

This policy has been established to ensure employees that the issue of harassment will be dealt with in a prompt and confidential manner. Employees will not be penalized for reporting an incident or for participating in the investigation.

Any information provided shall be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible or practical. However, depending on the nature and/or criminal investigation, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE
POLICY/PROCEDURE, Policy Code: 7210/7210P - 2100/2100P, Approved:
05.03.2024

This policy is in place to respond to a grievance by an employee or volunteer (herein after “employee”). It is expected that any employee with an issue should try to resolve the issue by using open communication with their supervisor. If an employee feels that their issue is still a concern after speaking to their supervisor and that the issue has risen to the level of a grievance then the employee may initiate the grievance procedures as described below. The goal of filing a formal grievance would be to use the process to come to an equitable solution.

1. Definition of a grievance: a grievance is defined as a formal written complaint by an employee stating that a specific action has violated a School policy, board policy, law or regulation. Complaints that do not raise an alleged violation of a School policy, board policy, law or regulation do not raise grievance issue and are not subject to these procedures. In addition, a grievance does not include: the non-renewal or termination of employment, disagreements on day to day operation issue, employee discipline or employee reviews unless they violate a specific policy, law or regulation. And, a grievance does not include a complaint covered by another policy including complaints under Title VII, Title IX, the ADA/ADAA, the PUMP Act, the PWFA and the School’s non-Title VII and non-Title IX harassment and bullying policy which shall be handled in accordance with those policies.
2. Time Limits: A grievance will only be heard if the complaint has been filed within fifteen calendar days of the act that is being reported or fifteen days from the date the issue was brought to the attention of a supervisor, whichever is shorter. The fifteen-day deadline may be extended at the discretion of the Head of School..
3. The grievance process is as follows:

Step 1: To file a grievance, an employee must submit a letter in writing (email accepted) stating The School policy, board policy or law/regulation that was violated including details of the actions and the place, date and time of the violation. The employee should make all efforts to include any details about the event that may be helpful in the decision making process. The written letter should be submitted to the Head of School. If the Head of School is implicated in the grievance, the grievance should be submitted to the President of the Board of Directors or to any other Board member with whom the individual(s) feel comfortable disclosing the information.

Step 2: In response to the formal grievance, the Head of School shall have up to five business days from the time they receive the formal grievance to respond to the grievance in writing. If the employee is satisfied with the decision after they receive the response from the Head of School, the issue is considered resolved. The employee shall submit their satisfaction to the Head of School in written form such as email.

Step 3: If the employee is not satisfied with the response from the Head of School, the employee may file an appeal by submitting a letter in writing (email accepted) stating The School policy, board policy or law that was violated including details of the actions and the place, date and time of the violation. The employee should make all efforts to include any details about the event that may be helpful in the decision making process to the Board of Directors. This must be done within five business days of the initial response from the Head of School.

Step 4: Where the grievance is filed directly with the Board as set forth above or after receiving the appeal letter, the appeal shall be considered by the Board at its next regularly scheduled board meeting provided such meeting is more than seven days after the filing, or the Chair of the Board of Directors may call a special meeting of the Board to consider the appeal in accordance with The School's bylaws. The Board will consider and discuss the grievance at the meeting in accordance with Open Meetings laws. At that meeting the Board of Directors will make a decision on how to handle the grievance. If the board decides that it needs additional time to consider the grievance or gather information or conduct an investigation, it may defer its decision until another regularly scheduled board meeting or schedule a special meeting. At the Board's sole discretion, the Board may conduct an investigation or gather additional information regarding the grievance, including interviews or engagement of an investigator, if needed. At the meeting where the board makes a decision on the grievance, the board will give the individual filing the grievance or appeal the opportunity to attend the meeting. Once the board reaches a decision, the Board will communicate that decision to the individual who filed the grievance within five The School days. The Board's decision concerning the grievance is final. The Board reserves the right to appoint a Board Panel to address the grievance. In such cases, the Board Panel's decision is final and there is no appeal rights to the Board.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, Policy Code: 7270,
Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI) has established itself as a reputable Charter School of high ethical standards. This reputation has been earned by the demonstration of the personal integrity of its people and the School's policy that all actions taken on its behalf will be based on sound ethical principles. Since the actions of employees either enhance or detract from this reputation, it is essential that all personnel act appropriately professional when dealing with others.

Employment with CFCI imposes a responsibility to act in its best interest. Transactions with individuals or organizations outside of CFCI must be conducted within a framework established and controlled by the Board of Directors of the School.

As an employee of the School, it is imperative that any dealings with outside firms or individuals will not result in unusual gains or personal gains for the employee, the individual or the said firm. Unusual gain refers to bribes, product bonuses, special fringe benefits, unusual price breaks, and other windfalls designed to ultimately benefit either party, or both. Personal gain may result not only in cases where an employee or relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which CFCI does business, but also when an employee or relative receives any kickback, bribe, substantial gift, or special consideration as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving CFCI promotional plans that could be interpreted to involve unusual or personal gain require specific approval from the Board of Directors of the School.

For the purpose of this policy, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

No "presumption of guilt" is created by the mere existence of a relationship with outside firms. However, if employees have any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts, or leases, it is imperative that they disclose to an officer of CFCI as soon as possible the existence of any actual or potential conflict of interest so that safeguards can be established to protect all parties.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY, Policy
Code: 7300, Approved: 05.17.2022

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry understands that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to connect with family, friends, and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. The School has established the following guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

This policy applies to all persons who work or volunteer for Cape Fear Center for Inquiry.

Guidelines

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including personal web logs or blogs, journals or diaries, personal websites, social networking or affinity Website, Web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the School, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in the School policies and these basic beliefs apply to employee activities online. Ultimately, employees are solely responsible for what they post online. Employees should consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved in creating online content. Any conduct that adversely affects job performance, the performance of fellow workers, or otherwise adversely affects students, parents/guardians, suppliers, volunteers, people who work on behalf of School or School's legitimate business/education interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Know and Follow the Rules

Employees should carefully read these guidelines, the School's Employee Handbook, including the communications policy, confidentiality policy, the School's non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, and ensure postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Be Respectful

Employees should always be fair and courteous to fellow teachers or staff, volunteers, students, parents/guardians, suppliers or people who work on behalf of the School. Employees should also keep in mind that they are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with their co-workers than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if they decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage students, parents/guardians, volunteers, staff, or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's

reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or School policy.

Be Honest and Accurate

Employees should always be honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if mistakes are made, correct them quickly. Employees should be open about any previous posts altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Employees should never post any information or rumors known to be false about the School, fellow workers, students, parents/guardians, volunteers, suppliers, and people working on behalf of the School.

Post Only Appropriate and Respectful Content

Employees should maintain the confidentiality of School private or confidential information. Such information may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, know-how and technology. Employees should not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business/school-related confidential communications. Employees should not post information about individual students or families and be sure to maintain confidentiality, as is protected and required under state or federal law.

Employees should not create a link from a personal blog, website, or other social networking site to the School website without identifying as an employee or volunteer of the School.

Employees should express only personal opinions. Employees should never represent themselves as a spokesperson for the School. If the School is a subject of the content they are creating, they should be clear and open about the fact that they are an employee or volunteer and make it clear that their views do not represent those of the School, fellow workers, parents/guardians, students, suppliers, or people working on behalf of the School. If they do publish a blog or post online related to the work they do, or subjects associated with the School, they should make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the School. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the School."

Using Social Media at Work

Employees should refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment provided by the School unless it is work related as authorized by the School Director(s) or consistent with the School Communication Policy. Employees should not use School email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use.

Student Pictures and Information

The School reserves the right to post pictures and images of current and former students on its website, official Facebook page, or any other forms of media. Parents/guardians who do not wish to allow Cape Fear Center for Inquiry to use their child's picture or image must submit in writing a letter requesting that their student's image not be used.

Retaliation is Prohibited

The School prohibits taking negative action against any employee or volunteer for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee or volunteer who retaliates against another employee or volunteer for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

While recognizing the benefits of these media outlets for opportunities for communication, this policy sets forth the principles that Cape Fear Center for Inquiry staff are expected to follow when using social media.

It is crucial that students, parents/guardians, and the public have confidence in the school's decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly to protect the confidentiality of students and staff.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Cape Fear Center for Inquiry employees, board members, external contractors providing services on behalf of the school, volunteers, and other individuals who work for or provide a service on behalf of the school. These individuals will collectively be referred to as "staff members" in this policy.

This policy applies to personal webspace, such as social networking sites (ex. Facebook), blogs, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias (ex. Wikipedia), social bookmarking sites (ex. del.icio.us), content sharing sites (ex. youtube), microblogs (ex. twitter). The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media – the principles set forth in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the social media for official school purposes.

Confidential information includes but is not limited to:

- a. Person-identifiable information
- b. Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality

Staff members should be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment, and copyright may apply to information posted on social media.

General Guidelines:

- 1a. Staff members must not discuss personal information about students, staff, or other professionals they interact with as part of their job on social media.
- 1b. Staff members may not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame students, their family members, colleagues, or other professionals.

1c. Staff members must not engage in activities involving social media that might bring CFCI into disrepute.

1d. Staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep personal and professional lives separate. Staff members should not put themselves in any position where there is a conflict between their work for CFCI and their personal interests.

Personal Use of Social Media:

2a. Staff members must not have contact through any personal social medium with any CFCI student, unless the student is a family member. Staff members must decline any “friend requests” from students in their personal social media accounts.

2b. CFCI does not expect staff members to discontinue contact with family members/close friends via personal social media once the school starts providing services for them. However, any information staff members obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor passed on to others who may use it in such a way.

2c. Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about students and their family members, colleagues, and school information must not be discussed on their personal webspace.

2d. Photographs, videos or any other types of images of students or images of staff wearing CFCI identifiable clothing, outside of school events, should not be published on personal webspace. Employees are expected to use their professional judgment on these types of postings.

2e. Staff members must not edit open access online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia for personal capacity at work. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as CFCI’s IP address and therefore appear as if it comes from CFCI.

2f. CFCI does not expect staff to use social media for personal use during the work day. Staff members are expected to utilize their contracted hours of work for their professional duties.

Using Social Media on Behalf of CFCI:

3a. Staff members may only use official school sites for communicating with students, parents/guardians and other groups interested in the life of the school.

3b. Staff must not create sites/posts which could expose the school to unwelcome publicity or cause reputational damage.

3c. The CFCI logo or brand must not be used on any personal webspace or social media.

3d. Staff members must, at all times, act in the best interest of children when creating, participating in or contributing content to social media sites.

Monitoring of Internet Use:

4a. CFCI monitors usage of its internet and email services without prior notification or authorization from users.

4b. Users of CFCI email and internet services should understand that anything that is created, stored, sent, or received using the school system cannot be treated as private information.

Creating Social Media Sites on behalf of CFCI:

5a. Staff members participating in social media for work purposes are expected to demonstrate the same high standards of behavior as when using other media or giving public presentations on behalf of CFCI.

5b. Prior to creating a site, careful consideration must be given to the purpose for using social media and approval must be sought from the administration.

Breaches of the Policy:

Any breach in this policy may result in disciplinary action. In addition, any breach in confidentiality, defamation, or damage to the reputation of CFCI, or any illegal acts that render CFCI liable to a 3rd party may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT AND OTHER LEAVE REQUIRED BY LAW, Policy Code: 7391, Approved: 05.03.2024

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

School complies with all applicable provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and provides up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave of absence within any twelve month period to employees who have been employed by Cape Fear Center for Inquiry for at least twelve months, (not necessarily consecutive) and have worked at least 1,250 hours within the previous twelve-month period. Because of the requirement to work a minimum of 1,250 hours in a twelve-month period to become eligible for FMLA, when an employee has used the twelve-week leave, s/he must work 1,250 hours within the next twelve-month period to become eligible for FMLA again.

Employees on leave under FMLA provisions must use all accrued annual vacation leave, and any other available paid time off during leave. Any remaining time off under FMLA will be unpaid.

Guidelines

Reasons for Leave

This leave is available to eligible employees under the following circumstances:

- The birth of a child within the first twelve months of the birth
- The placement of a child for adoption or other legal placement within the first twelve months of the adoption or placement
- The employee’s own serious health condition, which means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee’s job.
- The need to care for a spouse, parent, son or daughter (or individual to whom employee is otherwise in loco parentis) who has a serious health condition.

Additional leave is available in special circumstances for family members of military members as set forth below. Where both spouses are employed by Cape Fear Center for Inquiry, they are limited in the amount of family leave they may take for the birth and care of a newborn child, placement of a child for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent who has a serious health condition to a combined total of 12 workweeks (or 26 workweeks if leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness is also used as set forth below). Leave for birth and care, or placement for adoption or foster care, must conclude within 12 months of the birth or placement.

Military Caregiver Leave

Eligible employees may take up to 26 workweeks of unpaid leave during a single 12- month period to care for a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin who is a covered service member with a serious injury or illness. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment,

recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status or on the temporary disability retired list. A serious injury or illness is one that was incurred by a service member in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank or rating.

Qualifying Exigency Leave

Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during a single 12-month period for qualifying exigencies arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on active duty, or has been notified of an impending call to active duty, in support of a contingency operation. Qualifying exigency leave is available to a family member of a military member in the National Guard or Reserves; it does not extend to family members of military members in the Regular Armed Forces.

Qualifying exigencies include:

- Issues arising from a covered military member's short notice deployment (i.e., deployment on seven or less days of notice) for a period of seven days from the date of notification;
- Military events and related activities, such as official ceremonies, programs, or events sponsored by the military or family support or assistance programs and informational briefings sponsored or promoted by the military, military service organizations, or the American Red Cross that are related to the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member;
- Certain childcare and related activities arising from the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member, such as arranging for alternative childcare, providing childcare on a non-routine, urgent, immediate need basis, enrolling or transferring a child in a new school or day care facility, and attending certain meetings at a school or a day care facility if they are necessary due to circumstances arising from the active duty or call to active duty of the covered military member;
- Making or updating financial and legal arrangements to address a covered military member's absence;
- Attending counseling provided by someone other than a health care provider for oneself, the covered military member, or the child of the covered military member, the need for which arises from the active duty or call to active duty status of the covered military member;
- Taking up to five days of leave to spend time with a covered military member who is on short-term temporary, rest and recuperation leave during deployment;
- Attending to certain post-deployment activities, including attending arrival ceremonies, reintegration briefings and events, and other official ceremonies or programs sponsored by the military for a period of 90 days following the termination of the covered military member's active duty status, and addressing issues arising from the death of a covered military member;
- Any other event that the employee and employer agree is a qualifying exigency.

An eligible employee is limited to a combined total of 26 workweeks of leave for any FMLA-qualifying reason, including military caregiver leave or leave for qualifying exigencies,

during a single 12-month period, and only 12 of the 26 weeks total may be for a FMLA-qualifying reason other than to care for a covered service member.

Notice of Leave

Employees must notify the Director of Operations (or their designee) to request leave under this policy. Employees must provide 30 days' advance notice of the need for leave if the need is foreseeable, and must otherwise provide notice as soon as practicable for emergency or unforeseeable needs (within 1 to 2 business days of learning of their need for leave, except in extraordinary circumstances). Failure to provide such notice may be grounds for delay of leave. Employees must consult with the Director of Operations (or their designee) regarding scheduling of any planned medical treatment or supervision as to minimize disruption to the operation of Cape Fear Center for Inquiry. Entitlement to FMLA coverage may not be invoked retroactively for previous absences from work. Family Medical Leave forms are available from Director of Operations (or their designee). These forms must be used when employees request leave.

Medical Certification

If employees are requesting leave because of their own or a covered relation's serious health condition, the employee and the relevant health care provider must supply sufficient and appropriate medical certification for Cape Fear Center for Inquiry to reasonably determine whether the FMLA may apply to the leave request. Depending on the situation, such information may include that the employee is incapacitated due to pregnancy, has been hospitalized overnight, is unable to perform the functions of the job, and/or that the employee or employee's qualifying family member is under the continuing care of a healthcare provider. Employees seeking leave for their own or their family members' serious health conditions will be provided a certification form, which must be completed by a qualified healthcare provider. Failure to submit the proper certification within fifteen (15) calendar days may revoke an employee's entitlement to continued leave or may result in denial of leave until it is provided.

The School has the right to request second or third medical opinions, at its expense. Medical Certification Forms are available from the Director of Operations (or their designee). When an employee requests leave, the School will notify them of the requirement for medical certification and when it is due (at least 15 calendar days after the employee requests leave). The School may require subsequent medical recertification on a reasonable basis.

Employees requesting leave for a qualifying exigency related to a service member must provide a copy of the covered military member's active duty orders and certification providing the appropriate facts related to the particular qualifying exigency for which leave is sought, including contact information if the leave involves meeting with a third party. Employees requesting leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury may provide certification by an authorized health care provider or a copy of an Invitational Travel Order (ITO) or Invitational Travel Authorization (ITA) issued to any member of the covered service member's family. During the leave, employees are required to notify their supervisor/manager at least monthly, more frequently if requested, of the status of the leave.

Intermittent and Reduced Schedule Leave

Intermittent or reduced schedule leave may be taken when a serious health condition, either the employee's or that of a child, spouse, or parent or covered service member, or for qualifying exigencies, makes this schedule necessary. When medically necessary, an employee may take "intermittent" leave (two or more separate leave periods) or "reduced" leave (where an employee continues to work, but for fewer hours per day or per week). In such cases, the total number of hours or days of leave by the employee is limited to the equivalent of twelve (12) workweeks. Cape Fear Center for Inquiry may transfer the employee temporarily to an available alternative position if that position better accommodates recurring periods of leave. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule intermittent absences for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's operations. Cape Fear Center for Inquiry may make a deduction from an exempt employee's salary for any hours/time taken as intermittent or reduced FMLA leave within a pay period without affecting the employee's exempt status.

Reporting While on Leave

If an employee takes FMLA leave because of their own serious health condition or to care for a covered relation, the employee must contact the Director of Operations (or their designee) with updates regarding the status of the condition, and their intent to return to work.

Returning from Leave

A certification from a health care provider may be required at the conclusion of any leave for the employee's own serious health condition that the employee is able to resume his or her duties.

At the conclusion of leave covered by FMLA, employees will be reinstated to their former or an equivalent position with the same rights, benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment to the extent that they would be entitled to such continued employment without the FMLA leave. Benefits established on an accrual basis such as leave time will not accrue during unpaid FMLA leave. Benefits, which accrued prior to the leave, however, will not be lost.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry reserves the right to deny leave reinstatement to key employees, defined as salaried employees among the highest-paid 10 percent of all Cape Fear Center for Inquiry employees, where such denial is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous injury to the organization's operation. These employees will be notified of this decision as soon as it is determined such injury would occur, and will be given a reasonable opportunity to choose to return to work at that point. In the event the employee decides not to return to work when there is no guarantee of the same or equivalent position, s/he may remain on leave for the balance of the FMLA period and then may be terminated.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry reserves the right to update and amend this policy consistent with state and federal law at any time. This policy should be construed to comply with the most current FMLA rules, regulations and statutes in effect.

Other Leave Required by Law

The School provides employees with any other leave as required by state or federal law, including leave to exercise voting privileges, attend school conferences, or for jury duty.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry encourages employees to accept and fulfill their civic duty in their community. Employees should notify the Director of Operations (or their designee) upon receiving a notice of jury duty so that staffing provisions can be made. Employee should provide a copy of the summons to the principal. Employees are encouraged to try to reschedule jury duty for months when school is not in session. Court leave for jury duty shall be granted to an eligible employee for absence during the employee's regularly scheduled hours including regularly scheduled overtime, to perform jury duty. An eligible employee who is under proper summons from a court to serve on a jury shall be granted court leave for the entire period of such service. The period of court leave extends from the date on which the employee is required to report to the court until the time they are discharged by the court. The employee must return to work for any reasonable time the court is closed during normal work hours. No adverse employment action will be taken against employees or applicants due to their service as a juror in state or federal courts. The School will pay the employee's regular salary for a maximum of 5 days of jury duty.

Military Leave

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry employees who serve in the National Guard or the Reserves will be granted flexibility to drill on the weekends. When mobilized on active duty with the military, they are afforded all rights and privileges pursuant to USERRA 38 USC 4301-4335, The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994. The employee will be given credit for the period of military service towards their employment with the school.

Witness Duty

An employee may be required by law to appear in court as a witness. The employee may be allowed to take unpaid time off for this purpose, but is expected to give Cape Fear Center for Inquiry reasonable advance notice of the absence and to provide evidence of the required appearance. Witness duty leave is available to all employees.

Jury Duty

All School employees are responsible for complying with the laws pertaining to jury duty. The employee who has been notified of jury duty must report the dates of that duty to the Director of Operations (or their designee) and will be paid their regular compensation during their service as a juror. Notify your supervisor as soon as you receive a notice of jury duty so that staffing provisions can be made. Your supervisor must also be provided a copy of your summons. Employees are encouraged to try and reschedule jury duty for months when school is not in session. Court leave for jury duty shall be granted to an eligible employee for absence during the employee's regularly scheduled hours including regularly scheduled overtime, to perform jury duty. An eligible employee who is under proper summons from a court to serve on a jury shall be granted court leave for the entire period of such service. The period of court leave extends from the date on which the employee is required to report to the court until the time he/she is discharged by the court. The

employee must return to work for any reasonable time the court is closed during normal work hours. No adverse employment action will be taken against employees or applicants due to their service as a juror in state or federal courts. The school will pay the employee's regular salary for a maximum of 5 days of jury duty.

Parental School Leave

In accordance with the North Carolina Parental Leave Law, the School will grant up to four (4) hours of unpaid leave per year to any employee who is a parent, guardian, or person standing in loco parentis of any school age child so that the employee may attend or otherwise be involved in activities at the child's school, preschool or child care facility as defined by G.S. 110-86(3). This leave must be scheduled in advance at a mutually convenient time. The School reserves the right to request written verification from the school of the employee's attendance.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry complies with any other leave required by law.

Benefits During FMLA or Other Approved Leave

Group medical, dental, vision, short term disability, and long term disability benefits as well as retirement plan contributions will continue for all qualifying employees during authorized leave on the same terms as if the employee continued to work. Employees whose group medical and/or dental insurance deductions are made through payroll on a pre-tax basis will continue to be responsible for payment of their premiums while on FMLA or unpaid leave, and employees must contact the Director of Operations (or their designee) to make arrangements for premium payments.

If paid leave is substituted for unpaid family/medical leave, Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will deduct the employee's portion of the health plan premium as a regular payroll deduction. If the employee's leave is unpaid, the employee must pay their portion of the premium by the 1st of the month directly to the school. The employee's health care coverage will cease if the premium payment is more than 30 days late. An employee that is out on FMLA will continue to receive all of their other benefits while they are out on FMLA leave.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry may discontinue the employee's benefits if and when an employee informs Cape Fear Center for Inquiry of an intent not to return to work at the end of the leave period, or if the employee fails to return to work when the authorized leave is exhausted. Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's obligation to maintain benefits will also stop if the employee's premium payment is more than 30 days late. Cape Fear Center for Inquiry shall require reimbursement of the employer-paid share of any premiums if the employee fails to return to work at the expiration of approved leave. In the event that an employee provides at least 30 days' notice of his/her intent not to return to work at the end of FMLA leave, Cape Fear Center for Inquiry may waive this repayment obligation in its sole discretion.

Accrual of paid time off during leave - During any period of leave, accrual of paid time off will discontinue during such leave period including FMLA unless otherwise required by law.

Other Leaves of Absence:

All other requests for leaves of absence for personal reasons will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and the granting of such leave and its terms will be entirely within the discretion of the Director(s) or designee. Requests for other leaves of absence should be limited to unusual circumstances requiring an absence of longer than two (2) weeks. Requests for other leaves of absence should be made in writing and include an explanation of why the time is needed and the dates requested. An employee granted a leave of absence under this policy may not work for another employer without Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's written permission. An employee who accepts such employment without Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's permission will be deemed to have resigned from employment at Cape Fear Center for Inquiry.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: STAFF NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE, Policy Code: 7405, Approved: 05.03.2024

A staff member that needs to be absent from school will contact the designated Supervising Coordinator by 6:30 a.m. the morning of the absence, but preferably, the previous evening.

Teachers who know that they will be absent from school for any reason must complete a leave request at least 5 days prior to the scheduled date, if possible. These requests will be received and tracked by the Director of Operations or designee.

For scheduled absences, teachers shall be certain that lesson plans and other essential documents (e.g. class lists) are available for the substitute. In the case of an emergency absence, a minimum of three day's worth of lesson plans **MUST** be kept with the Supervising Coordinators in the Classroom Emergency Binder. The Classroom Emergency Binder must also include any special information (special health needs, behaviors, etc).

All arrangements to secure a substitute shall be made through the Coordinator or designee. At no time should a teacher make his/her own arrangements for a substitute.

Any staff member may be called on at any time to substitute for an absent teacher.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: ASSIGNMENT OF STAFF, Policy Code: 7420,
Approved: 05.03.2024

Lateral transfer of employees to positions or departments for the School's convenience may be made as needed at the discretion of administration. Lateral transfer is defined as the same job classification.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: DRUG FREE WORKPLACE, Policy Code: 7600,
Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center of Inquiry is dedicated to maintaining a safe educational environment. Thus, Cape Fear Center of Inquiry has implemented a drug and alcohol-free work environment policy. Alcoholic beverages are never to be consumed on school grounds, during field trips or School events (whether on or off campus). Alcoholic beverages are never to be consumed in vehicles of transportation owned or operated on behalf of the school, or by their drivers while they are responsible for the operation of such vehicles.

No employee shall report to work while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The use, sale, transfer or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, hallucinogens, stimulants, sedatives, controlled substances, or drug paraphernalia on School property or at any School event is prohibited. This includes the misuse of prescription drugs, including medical marijuana, or any mood-altering substances while on Cape Fear Center of Inquiry property, paid time (i.e. conferences, training sessions), at any School event or in circumstances the school believes will adversely affect Cape Fear Center of Inquiry's operation or safety.

If the School has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or impairment, Cape Fear Center of Inquiry can and will take immediate action, up to and including drug testing, suspension of the employee, with or without pay, termination of employment, or other adverse employment actions. "Impairment" means symptoms that a prospective employee or employee while working may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol that may decrease or lessen the employee's performance of the duties or tasks of the employee's job position, including symptoms of the employee's speech, walking, standing, physical dexterity, agility, coordination, actions, movement, demeanor, appearance, clothing, odor, irrational or unusual behavior, negligence or carelessness in operating equipment, disregard for the safety of the employee or others, involvement in an accident that results in serious damage to property, any injury to the employee or others or other symptoms causing a reasonable suspicion of the use of drugs or alcohol. Employees who refuse to submit to a drug/alcohol test will be terminated. Likewise, employees who try to alter the results of a test will be terminated. Employees who have a positive drug test will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and/or notification of law enforcement authorities. The transferring, offering, selling or arranging for sale of any alcohol, narcotic, hallucinogen, stimulant, sedative, drug or prescription drug or any other mood-altering substance while on Cape Fear Center of Inquiry property, at a School event, or during Cape Fear Center of Inquiry's time will lead to immediate termination.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI) is committed to providing a safe, efficient, and productive work environment that is free from illegal drug use, sale, possession or distribution. To accomplish this goal, a confidential drug screening may be conducted not only during the pre-employment

process, but also when reasonable cause exists to suspect an employee of being under the influence of illegal drugs and for accidents that occur at work.

Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited, as is the use, sale, manufacture, possession or distribution of alcohol or illegal drugs. Violations will result in termination of employment with Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI) and may have legal consequences.

To enforce this policy, Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI) reserves the right to request employees to participate in random, periodic tests for illegal substances and alcohol abuse.

PURSUANT TO THE DRUG FREE WORKPLACE ACT OF 1988, THE SCHOOL SPECIFICALLY MAKES COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY A CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT. AN EMPLOYEE WHO VIOLATES THIS POLICY WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION UP TO AND INCLUDING DISCHARGE.

Employees who believe they may have a drug or alcohol abuse problem are urged to request confidential assistance from the School Director(s) or designee. The School Director(s) or designee will provide assistance on a strictly confidential basis and will refer the employee to the appropriate treatment and counseling services.

THE COSTS OF SUCH SERVICES ARE STRICTLY THOSE OF THE EMPLOYEE. EMPLOYEES WHO VOLUNTARILY REQUEST ASSISTANCE WILL NOT PREVENT DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR VIOLATION OF THE SCHOOL'S POLICY. EMPLOYEES WHO UNDERGO VOLUNTARY COUNSELING OR TREATMENT PURSUANT TO REFERRAL BY THE ADMINISTRATION AND WHO CONTINUE TO WORK MUST MEET ALL ESTABLISHED STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND JOB PERFORMANCE.

The School has a continuing objective to provide the highest quality performance and service to our students.

Possessing, using, purchasing, distributing, selling, or being under the influence of controlled substances without a prescription is strictly prohibited. Self-administering prescribed drugs in improper dosages or consuming alcohol during the workday on School property or while conducting School business is prohibited. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

As used in this policy, the term "controlled substance" includes illegal drugs that are not authorized for sale, possession, or distribution under either Federal or State Law, legal substances, either prescribed or over-the-counter, taken in a dosage or combination that results in mental/physical impairment.

Whenever the School administration through its School Director(s) or the person authorized to act on behalf of the School Director(s) reasonably suspects that an employee's work performance or on

the job behavior may have been affected in any way by illegal drugs or alcohol, or that an employee has otherwise violated the school's drug free workplace substance abuse policy, the employee may be required to submit to a breath and/or urine sample for drug and alcohol testing. When an employee is observed exhibiting behavior that leads fellow employees and/or administration to reasonably conclude that the employee is in violation of the substance abuse policy, the employee may be required to submit to the testing based upon reasonable suspicion.

If the employee refuses to submit to the testing, the employee will be charged with insubordination and subject to disciplinary sanctions up to and including termination.

Further, an employee testing positive on a reasonable suspicion test will be found to be in violation of the policy and such a violation will constitute grounds for termination. Only a quorum of the Board of Directors, the School Director(s) or a person authorized by the School Director are authorized to make a determination that reasonable suspicion or cause exists and to subsequently order a drug screening of the employee.

The two types of cases for which reasonable suspicion procedures may be invoked:

1. Chronic case – Deteriorating job performance or changes in personal traits, characteristics, where the use of alcohol or drugs may be reasonably suspected as the cause. These cases may develop over a fairly long period of time.
2. Acute case – The appearance, in a specific incident or observation, of being under the present influence of alcohol and/or drugs regardless of previous history.

Circumstances under which substance screening may be considered, which include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Observed use, possession or sale of illegal drugs and/or use, possession, sale or abuse of alcohol and/or the illegal use or sale of prescription drugs.
2. Apparent physical state of impairment of motor functions.
3. Marked changes in personal behavior not attributable to other factors.
4. Employee involvement in or contribution to an accident where the use of alcohol or drugs is reasonably suspected or employee involvement in a pattern of repetitive accidents, whether or not they involve actual or potential injury.
5. Employee involvement or contribution to a crime involving alcohol or drugs where civil and/or criminal charges have been filed.
6. Violations of civil and criminal laws applying to the use, distribution, selling, trafficking or possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, or non-prescribed drugs.

The school reserves the right to discipline or terminate employees convicted of an offense that involves the use, distribution, sale, trafficking or possession of illegal drugs. Further, the school reserves the right to search any areas on school premises for illegal, illicit, controlled and/or prohibited substances including lockers, desks, lunch boxes, briefcases, pocketbooks, cars, trucks and any other areas as part of this policy.

This policy also applies to volunteers conducting school business.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: LEAVE GENERAL INFORMATION, Policy Code: 7800, Approved: 05.03.2024

Definitions:

1. Full-time Employee

A full-time employee is one whose regular work-week is the number of hours set as full time in his or her class of work, but not less than 30 hours per week. Full-time employees earn leave at the rates indicated below.

2. Part-time Employee

A part-time employee is one whose regular work-week is the number of hours indicated for his or her class of work, but not more than 29 hours per week. Leave options will not be made available to part-time employees.

3. Teacher Interns

Student teachers are not employees of CFCI and therefore, leave options are not made available to them.

4. Recording Leave Units

Leave may be recorded in one half days or whole days. A leave record for each employee will be maintained in the Human Resources Coordinator office.

5. Eligibility and Rate of Earning

All full-time employees who work or are paid leave (including paid holidays and workers' compensation) for one half or more of the workdays in a monthly pay period are entitled to earn annual vacation leave at the same rate provided for State employees.

The rate of earning is based on the length of State service as follows:

Years of State Service	Days Per Month Earned
Less than 5 years	1.17
5 but less than 10 years	1.42
10 but less than 15 years	1.67
15 but less than 20 years	1.92
20 years or more	2.17

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: ANNUAL VACATION LEAVE, Policy Code: 7810,
Approved: 05.03.2024

Purpose

The purpose of paid annual vacation leave is to allow and encourage all employees to renew their physical and mental capabilities and to remain fully productive.

Use of Annual Vacation Leave

- A. All annual vacation leave taken must have advance notice via a leave request form. This request must be approved by the School Director(s).
- B. Annual vacation leave may be used in one half days or whole days.
- C. Classroom teachers may take up to two annual leave days per school year during the time that students are scheduled to be in attendance without incurring the personal cost of a substitute. Additional days may be incurred in the event of catastrophic illness of the employee or leave for new parents – under the respective leave categories. Instructional personnel who do not require a substitute may, with prior approval, take annual vacation leave on any day school is in session.
- D. Annual vacation leave may be used in lieu of sick leave. Instructional personnel who require substitutes are subject to the restrictions set forth in paragraph C above.
- E. Employees may elect to use annual vacation leave for absences due to adverse weather conditions only on days when students are not required to attend school due to the adverse weather conditions.

Accumulation/Conversion to Sick Leave

Annual vacation leave may be accumulated without any applicable maximum until June 30 of each calendar year. On June 30 accumulated annual vacation leave in excess of 30 days will be converted to sick leave so that only 30 workdays of annual vacation leave are carried forward to July 1 of each year.

Transfer of Annual Vacation Leave

Employees transferring from other LEAs or state agencies should request a lump sum payout of all accumulated Annual Leave from that LEA or agency. CFCI will not accept, credit or transfer in any Annual Leave.

Separation from Employment

- A. Lump Sum Payment: An employee shall only be paid in a lump sum for accumulated annual vacation leave earned while an employee of CFCI, not to exceed a maximum of 10 days or 80 hours, upon separation from service from CFCI provided employee was not terminated or non-renewed. In the event an employee is terminated or non-renewed, they will not receive any lump sum payment.
- B. Leave deficit: If an employee separating from service is overdrawn with respect to annual vacation leave, a deduction in the appropriate amount must be made from the employee's final paycheck.

C. Retirement: A deduction for retirement must be made from all lump sum payments of annual vacation leave. Receipt of lump sum leave payment and retirement benefits is not considered to be dual compensation.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: SICK LEAVE, Policy Code: 7811, Approved:
05.03.2024

Eligibility and Rate of Earning

1. All permanent, full-time employees working or on paid leave (including paid holidays and workers' compensation) for one half or more of the workdays in any monthly pay period earn one sick day per month or the number of hours worked daily by a full-time employee in that class of work up to a maximum of eight hours.
2. Sick leave must be used in one half days or whole days. Only sick leave taken on an employee's workday shall be deducted from the employee's sick leave balance.
3. Sick leave may be accumulated indefinitely.

Purposes for Which Sick Leave May Be Used

Sick Leave may be used for:

- a. Any actual period of temporary disability caused by or contributed to by personal illness or injury which prevents an employee from performing his or her usual duties. Sick leave due to pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, childbirth, or postnatal recovery must be treated in the same manner as any other temporary disability. Sick leave may be used during the 60 day waiting period for short-term disability or in lieu of short-term disability benefits.
- b. Medical appointments of the employee.
- c. Illness in the immediate family and medical appointments related to the illness that necessitates the employee's attendance. Immediate family defined for using sick leave includes the employee's spouse; children; parents; and dependents living in the employee's household. Also included are brothers, sisters, grandparents and grandchildren and step relationships.
- d. Death in the immediate family, which is defined for this purpose as the employee's spouse; children; parents; brother; sister; grandparents; and grandchildren. Also included are step, half and in-law relationships.
- e. The length of leave granted for illness or death in the immediate family is determined by the local administrative unit based on individual employee need.
- f. Whenever possible, employees should give 30 days advance notice of plans to take sick leave for elective medical or surgical procedures or for childbirth.

Limitations on Sick Leave

Sick leave may not be used while on leave without pay or on holidays and annual vacation leave days scheduled in the school calendar. An absence covered by workers' compensation is not considered to be a leave without pay.

Sick leave may be used on any workday or student day, including the first day employees in permanent positions report to work.

Advancement of Sick Leave

An employee may have advanced to his or her credit during the school year the number of days of sick leave to which he or she is entitled for that school year.

Sick Leave and Personal Leave Upon Separation

- a. In the event an employee separates from service before earning sick leave or personal leave that has been advanced, a deduction will be made from the final salary check for the total unearned sick leave and personal leave used.
- b. Accumulated sick leave and personal leave earned while at CFCI CANNOT BE transferred to other LEAs or state agencies.
- c. Accumulated sick leave earned while at CFCI does count as creditable service towards retirement. The retiring employee must request CFCI to provide the verification of accumulated sick days to the state retirement system. One month of credit is allowed for each 20 days of unused sick leave upon retirement. One more month is allowed for any part of 20 days left over. The maximum number of sick days that can be added at retirement is 12 days for each year of membership service. Sick leave converted from excess annual vacation leave is also creditable, subject to the maximum of 12 days for each year of service.
- d. At separation, accumulated sick leave and personal leave earned while at CFCI will be held by CFCI for a period of 60 months from the date of separation. If a teacher returns to service at CFCI during the 60 months, the sick leave and personal leave balances will be reinstated. If a teacher retires during the 60 months, the accumulated sick leave can count as creditable service. The retiring employee must request CFCI to provide the verification of accumulated sick days to the state retirement system.
- e. After 60 months from separation from CFCI, the sick leave and personal leave balances cease to exist.

Payout of Sick Leave

Unused sick leave will not be paid out for any reason. At retirement, unused sick leave is credited to retirement service.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: PERSONAL LEAVE, Policy Code: 7812, Approved: 05.03.2024

Personal Leave Earned

Classroom teachers and school specialists classified as permanent full-time employees earn Personal Leave. All such permanent full-time instructional personnel earn personal leave at the rate of .20 days for each full month of employment, not to exceed two (2) days per year.

Limitations on Personal Leave

- a. Personal leave shall not be allowed in excess of the number of days earned and should be used with due and proper consideration given to the welfare of the students and teachers alike and shall not be advanced.
- b. When an employee resigns or separates from service, personal leave will not be paid out.
- c. Personal leave may be used only upon the authorization of the School Director(s) or designee. A teacher shall not take personal leave on the first day the teacher is required to report for the school year, on a required teacher workday, or on days scheduled for State testing, unless the request is approved by the School Director(s). On all other days, if the request is made at least five days in advance, the request shall be automatically granted, subject to the availability of a substitute teacher. The teacher cannot be required to provide a reason for the request.

Personal Leave Increments

Leave is to be used in one half or whole day units.

Accumulation

Personal leave may be accumulated for a maximum of five days. Thereafter, earnings will cease to be accumulated until the employee reduces the leave balance through use.

Deduction for Substitute

When used on a pupil attendance day, employees receive full salary less the appropriate substitute pay. However, if the teacher chooses to provide a reason for the absence, no substitute deduction will be taken from the teacher's pay. If no substitute is hired for the teacher, no substitute deduction will be taken from the teacher's pay. When used on a non pupil attendance day, such as a teacher workday, no deduction for a substitute will occur.

Transfer of Personal Leave and Impact of Separation of Service

See sections in Sick Leave for explanation of policies regarding this.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: HOLIDAY LEAVE, Policy Code: 7813, Approved: 05.03.2024

Paid Legal Holidays

Permanent full-time employees will receive pay for the same number of legal holidays occurring within the period of employment as those designated by the Personnel Commission for State Employees. Paid holidays are granted only to employees who are in the position on the day on which the holiday is scheduled.

Note: This includes Independence Day for summer month's employment.

The Board of Directors determines when holidays are scheduled in the school calendar. The State Personnel Commission designates the following holidays for State Employees:

New Years Day

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Veteran's Day

Thanksgiving Day – Two Days

Christmas – Two days when Christmas falls on Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Monday. Three days when Christmas falls on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.

Observance of Bona Fide Religious Holidays

Absence from school for bona fide religious holidays may be allowed for a maximum of two days within any one school year with prior approval from the Board of Directors. Days designated may not be already scheduled as vacation or other holidays in the school calendar. Absence for these religious holidays will be with full pay.

The employee must agree to make up the amount of time for which her or her absence has been excused. The time must be made up at a time agreed upon by the employee and the School Director(s).

When a substitute is employed on these holidays, payment must be made from the same source of funds as the employee's salary.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: CHILD INVOLVEMENT LEAVE, Policy
Code: 7830, Approved: 05.03.2024

Any full-time employee who is a parent, legal guardian or custodian or who has a school-aged child may take up to four hours of paid leave per fiscal year to attend or otherwise be involved in that child's school.

The employee must use child involvement leave in one of the following settings:
A public school , a private church school, church or religious charter, or nonpublic school described in Parts 1 and 2 of Article 39 of Chapter 1 15C of the General Statutes that regularly provide a course of grade school instruction Preschool Child day care facility as defined in G.S. 110-86(3).

Leave for involvement in child's school shall be granted under the following conditions:

- a. That leave should be requested 48 hours in advance, if possible, of the time that the employee wishes to take the leave.
- b. The School Director(s) must approve the leave.
- c. Each employee shall be entitled to a maximum of four hours of leave, regardless of the number of school-aged children.
- d. The employee may be requested to furnish written verification from the child's school for the time they attended or were otherwise involved at the school during the time of the leave.
- e. Child involvement leave not taken within the fiscal year of employment shall be forfeited.
- f. The employee shall not be entitled to payment for unused child involvement leave upon separation from the school.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: NEGATIVE LEAVE BALANCES, Policy Code: 7840, Approved: 05.03.2024

Leave balance refers to an employee's total accrued leave days, minus leave used for various reasons. A negative leave balance occurs when an employee has used more leave than he or she earned through the course of a year.

If a negative leave balance is obtained through no fault of the faculty member (i.e. based on start date, or a medical emergency for the employee or an immediate family member), CFCI will work with the individual regarding his or her balance. For negative balances due to the start date, an adjustment will be made so that the negative leave balance does not exist.

However, if a balance is negative due to excess use of days, a payroll deduction will be made for each day's leave taken over that which is earned. This correction will be made at the end of the school year.

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION POLICY, Policy Code: 7850, Approved: 04.28.2026

The purpose of this policy is to set clear expectations regarding staff licensing and credentialing. The School requires all instructional faculty to pursue and maintain appropriate licensure or certification related to their assignment.

A. Expectations

Teachers who have residency licensure or are teaching outside their certification area are not appropriately licensed or certified at the time of hire are expected to make good faith and reasonable efforts to obtain relevant licensure or certification.

BTs (Beginning Teachers) are permitted 3 years from the date of hire to complete the North Carolina State BT Program.

Except in unusual circumstances, as described in Section B below, teachers are generally expected to demonstrate meaningful progress towards appropriate licensure within three (3) years of the date of their hire.

Meaningful progress shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Enrollment in an approved teacher preparation program
- Enrollment in an alternative certification or residency program

B. Flexibility and Consideration

The School recognizes that a variety of factors may affect an employee's ability to complete the license or certification requirements, described in Section A above. The School may, in its sole discretion, extend timelines, modify expectations, or waive licensure or certification expectations when appropriate, for reasons included but not limited to the following:

- Hardship or personal circumstances
- Changes in staffing or programmatic need of the School
- Changes in licensure or certification requirements

C. Documentation

To enact the policy, the CFCI requires reasonable documentation demonstrating progress toward license or certification. Employees are expected to cooperate with these reasonable requests. Failure to provide requested documentation, absent a reasonable explanation, may be considered by the School when evaluating compliance with this policy and when making employment decisions, including assignment and contract renewal.

Nothing in this policy changes the at-will nature of employment. The School retains the right to make employment decisions at any time, with or without cause or notice, consistent with applicable law.

D. Employment Status

Licensure or certification progress is one of many factors that the School may consider in employment decisions, including hiring, assignment, contract renewal, and retention.

Nothing in this policy creates a contract of employment, guarantees continued employment, or requires the School to take any specific employment action.

**SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: INITIAL LICENSURE PROGRAM (ILP)
NORTH CAROLINA BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM, Policy
Code: 7860, Approved: 05.03.2024**

Introduction and Management of the Program

The Beginning Teacher Support Program/Initial Licensure Plan (ILP) is a formalized support program and an assessment of novice teachers as required for professional licensure per NC State Board Policy QP-A-004. At the end of this initial licensure period, the beginning teacher is granted or denied a professional/continuing license based on performance. If a continuing license is granted, it is issued with a five year dating cycle. The fundamental purpose of the ILP is to offer support for the individual's professional growth during the first three years of employment at CFCI.

Teachers with fewer than three years of experience (normally considered to be public school experience) are issued an initial licensure and must participate in the ILP. Teachers from states not included in North Carolina reciprocity agreements must participate in an ILP, regardless of their length of experience.

Each BT (Beginning Teacher) at CFCI is evaluated through four (4) formal observations. Below is a listing of the components of the CFCI Beginning Teacher Support Program/Initial Licensure Plan (ILP). A more detailed explanation and sample forms can be found in the CFCI Staff Handbook or by consulting the School Director(s) or designee.

Eligibility

Formal Orientation

Compliance with Optimal Working Conditions for BTs

Mentor Selection Criteria

Observations/Evaluation

Services and Technical Assistance

Plan Evaluation

SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, Policy
Code: 7870, Approved: 05.03.2024

Professional Development at CFCI has many different components. These components work together for the improvement of each individual teacher as well as the learning community as a whole. Teachers are respected as professional, reflective decision-makers and are encouraged to continue their education as life-long learners. Teachers attend workshops and conferences, conduct workshops, participate in studies of professional literature, write about their teaching and take part in professional discussions with colleagues.

The Lifelong Learning committee accepts the responsibility to review and endorse opportunity proposals to forward to the Director of Operations or designee for funding. In order to receive funding and credit for these activities, staff members must complete the Professional Development Opportunity Proposal Form and give it to the Lifelong Learning Committee in advance.

Professional Development Activities may include:

- a. Professional Inquiry Project (PIP)
- b. Personal Initiatives, such as workshops
- c. Licensure completion including ILT and BT activities
- d. Professional Development System activities with UNCW
- e. Self Evaluations and Peer Observations
- f. Literature Studies
- g. Training provided at staff meetings and during workdays

**SECTION: 7000 – PERSONNEL: ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE WITH PAY AND
SUSPENSION WITHOUT PAY, Policy Code: 7880, Approved: 05.03.2024**

There are times in the operation of CFCI that immediate action needs to be taken to protect the safety, security and orderly functioning of the school. In order to effectively respond to such situations, the Board grants authority to the School Director(s) or Designee to place an employee on administrative leave with or without pay.

8000 Fiscal Management

[8000 - Fiscal Goals Management](#)

[8020 - Basis of Accounting](#)

[8040 - Lines of Financial Authority](#)

[8050 - Segregation of Duties](#)

[8100 - Budget Planning, Adoption and Procedure](#)

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[8120 - Internal Financial Reports](#)

[8130 - Annual Independent Audit](#)

[8150 - Quarterly Annual Payroll Reports](#)

[8220 - Record Retention Policy](#)

[8240 - Federal Grant Administration](#)

[8250 - Federal Funds Allowable Cost](#)

[8260 - Procurement with Federal Funds](#)

[8270 - Federal Funds Equipment Policy](#)

[8310 - Deposits](#)

[8320 - Handling Cash](#)

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: FISCAL GOALS/ MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

Policy Code: 8000 Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI) is a free public charter school committed to obtaining, managing, and using financial resources responsibly and transparently in the pursuit of student education. All decisions regarding the use of financial resources will be consistent with CFCI's Mission/Vision and will follow all Local, State and Federal Laws.

In recognition of the trust and responsibility placed with the board to manage financial resources for the local educational program, the Board establishes the following standards:

1. The CFCI Board of Directors and all employees of the school will manage and use available funds efficiently and effectively;
2. Accounting, financial reporting and management control systems will be designed and maintained to enable the CFCI Board of Directors and the school to have access to accurate, reliable and relevant data, and to permit audits and periodic reports adequate to show that those in charge have handled funds within legal requirements and in accordance with Board policy;
3. The School Director(s), Finance Committee, and contracted accounting firm will keep the CFCI Board of Directors sufficiently informed regarding the budget through periodic reports contained in the explanation of the necessity of budget amendments and any other appropriate means so that the Board can deliberate upon and evaluate the budget (refer to Policy 8120);
4. No monies will be expended, regardless of the source (including monies derived from Federal, State, Local or private sources), except in accordance with the approved annual budget or approved amendments to the budget.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

Policy Code: 8020/8020P Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI) uses the accrual-basis of accounting at year-end, meaning that revenues are recorded when earned, and expenses are recorded when a liability is incurred, regardless of when the receipt or payment of cash takes place.

Procedures:

1. Throughout the fiscal year, revenue is recorded in the month in which it is received and expenses are recorded in the month in which they occur.
2. At the close of the fiscal year, all revenue earned in the fiscal year, but not received is accrued. All expenses that have been incurred but not paid are also accrued. This ensures that the year-end financial statements reflect all revenue earned and all expenses incurred during the fiscal year.
3. Year-end books, exclusive of adjusting journal entries, are closed by June 30.
4. Year-end books for the previous fiscal year, inclusive of adjusting journal entries, are closed by December 15, the date by which the audit report must be submitted to the State controller and respective reporting agencies.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: LINES OF FINANCIAL AUTHORITY
Policy Code: 8040/8040P Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI) enlists the below lines of financial authority to ensure responsible financial controls.

The CFCI Board of Directors:

- a. Approves the fiscal policies and procedures and delegates administration of the policies and procedures to the School Director.
- b. Ensures that the fiscal policies and procedures are current, meaning that they have been reviewed and updated annually.
- c. Approves the opening and closing of bank accounts and the list of authorized signers and the organization address on record.
- d. Approves all third-party loans.
- e. Approves the opening of business credit cards.
- f. Reviews and approves the annual budget.
- g. Reviews annual and monthly financial statements, including the monthly check register and the contracted accounting firm-prepared financial documents and budget-to-actual variance analysis.
- h. Reviews the School Directors' performance annually and establishes the salary.
- i. Reviews and approves all contracts.
- j. Commissions the annual financial audit by an independent third party auditor approved by the State of North Carolina.
- k. Approves the annual financial audit by December 15.
- l. Appoints someone else to perform the duties of the School Director in the case of absence.

The CFCI Director of Operations:

- a. Is responsible for all operations and activities related to financial management.
- b. Develops the annual budget with contracted accounting firm and Finance Committee.
- c. Reviews and approve all budgeted expenditures.
- d. Notifies the Board of Directors of any expenditure over \$5,000, except as included in the annually approved budget.
- e. Oversees the adherence to all internal controls.
- f. Appoints someone else to perform his/her duties in case of absence.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: SEGREGATION OF DUTIES Policy
Code: 8050/8050P Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center of Inquiry's (CFCI) financial duties shall be distributed among multiple people to help ensure protection from fraud and error. The distribution of duties aims for maximum protection of the organization's assets while also considering efficiency of operations.

Cross Reference CFCI policies: Cash Receipts (8300); Deposits (8310); Payroll (8500); Cash Disbursements (8450); Petty Cash (8460); Bank Reconciliations (8030)

Procedures:

1. Procedures for each above referenced policies of this document will identify the position responsible for carrying out each function so that no single person or entity has sole control over cash receipts, disbursements, payrolls, and reconciliation of bank accounts.
2. During absence, responsibilities shall shift to another employee who has been cross-trained in those responsibilities.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: BUDGET PLANNING, ADOPTION AND PROCEDURE

Policy Code: 8100/8100P Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI) will develop an annual budget that ensures the fulfillment of the School's Mission/Vision, adherence to the Strategic Plan and allows for smooth operation of the School's daily operations. The School Directors, Finance Committee, and contracted accounting firm will prepare the annual budget for approval by the Board of Directors. The budget is to be approved by the Board of Directors prior to the start of each fiscal year.

Elements of Budget Planning

The budget planning for the Board and administration will include:

- a. Establishing, the priorities of the School, recognizing that providing students the opportunity to receive a sound basic education and improving student success will always be of paramount concern;
- b. Considering long-range facilities plans, goals, and objectives, as established by the Board of Directors and school staff when assessing the needs of the School;
- c. Integrating budget planning into program planning so that the budget may effectively support and implement all programs and activities of the School;
- d. Exploring all practical and legal sources of income;
- e. Continually assessing the needs, revenues, and expenses of the School; and
- f. Identifying the most cost-effective means of meeting the School's needs.

Procedures:

1. The School Directors will work together with the Finance Committee and additional Board committees to ensure that the annual budget is an accurate reflection of programmatic and infrastructure goals for the coming year.
2. The contracted accounting firm will ensure that the budget is developed using the organization's standard revenue recognition and cost allocation procedures.
3. The contracted Accounting Firm, in consultation with the School Directors and Finance Committee, will set a target net income goal to meet strategic goals and/or comply with existing loan covenants.
4. The contracted accounting firm and the School Directors will present a draft budget to the Finance Committee prior to the end of the fiscal year.
5. The Finance Committee shall review and approve a recommended fiscal year budget and submit it for approval to the Board of Directors.
6. The Board of Directors will review and approve the budget no later than its last meeting prior to the start of the fiscal year.
7. The contracted accounting firm will prepare financial statements displaying the budget against the up-to-date budget to the Board of Directors at each Board meeting.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: BUDGET AMENDMENTS AND

TRANSFERS

Policy Code: 8110/8110P Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI) will adhere to the following, pertaining to amendments and transfers to the approved annual budget. The School Operations Director, Finance Committee, and contracted accounting firm will monitor expenses and revenues, suggesting adjustments to the budget, as needed, to the CFCI Board of Directors.

Budget Amendments

A budget amendment is a transfer of funds across different fund line items or an increase or decrease to a budget fund line.

All necessary budget amendments must be formally adopted by the CFCI Board of Directors and recorded in the board minutes indicating the following:

- a. the original budget amount by fund line and function;
- b. the amount of the amendment by fund line and function;
- c. and the amended budget amount by fund line and function.

Mid-year budget amendments are required to certify the following:

- a. The request for a budget amendment is of such strategic or operational necessity that it cannot or should not wait until the next annual budget process.
- b. The budget amendment will not put the overall financial health of the School at undue financial risk.

Transfers

The CFCI Board of Directors authorizes the School Director(s) to make budget transfers under the following conditions:

- a. He/she may make transfers up to \$2,500 between budget functions within the same fund line. These transfers must subsequently be reported at the next regular meeting of the CFCI Board of Directors.
- b. The CFCI Board of Directors must approve all other budget transfers before they become valid.

Procedures

1. Requests for budget amendments and/or transfers should be submitted in accordance with agenda deadlines
2. If a purchase order is pending the outcome of a budget amendment, the purchase order will not be processed until after the CFCI Board of Directors has approved the request.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: INTERNAL FINANCIAL REPORTS
Policy Code: 8120/8120P Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI) Board of Directors and School Director reviews regular financial reports on a monthly basis.

Procedures:

1. The contracted accounting firm is responsible for producing the following year-to-date reports within 10 days of the end of each month (in August through June): Income Statement including budget to actual variances, Balance Sheet, Financial Analysis, and Cash Flow Projection.
2. The School Directors and Board Finance Committee will review financial reports each month.
3. The contracted accounting firm and/or the Finance Committee will present the financial reports to the Board of Directors at each meeting.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: ANNUAL INDEPENDENT AUDIT
Policy Code: 8130/8130P Approved: Approved: 05.03.2024

The accounts of Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI) will be audited as soon as possible after the close of each fiscal year by an independent, qualified auditor. The CFCI Board of Directors will contract annually with a qualified independent, qualified auditor to conduct an audit of the organization's financial statements in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and, if applicable, the U.S Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-133. The selected audit firm must be familiar with these standards and related State of North Carolina and Charter School regulations, in order to properly conduct the audit engagement. The auditor will report directly to the CFCI Board of Directors.

All employees and agents (i.e. contracted accounting firm) of the school having custody of public money or responsibility for keeping records of public financial or fiscal affairs shall produce all books and records requested by the auditor and provide any information relating to fiscal affairs requested by the auditor. Any employee who fails to cooperate may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, and also may be found guilty of criminal conduct.

Procedures:

1. The Board of Directors will be responsible for contracting with an audit firm by March 1 of each year, unless the existing contract is a multi-year contract.
2. The Board of Directors will ensure that the MD&A (Management Discussion and Analysis) document is completed by an outside contractor.
3. The Board of Directors will review and approve the audit no later than October 31st of each year.
4. The audit firm will be responsible for submitting the audit to all reporting agencies no later than October 31st of each year.
5. The Board of Directors, School Directors, and audit committee members will be responsible for reviewing the results of the annual audit and developing a corrective action plan to address all relevant weaknesses noted by the auditor.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: QUARTERLY/ ANNUAL PAYROLL REPORTS Policy Code: 8150/8150P Approved: Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI's) contracted accounting firm will prepare the State and Federal quarterly and annual payroll tax forms and will submit the forms to the respective agencies within established deadlines.

Procedures:

1. The contracted accounting firm will prepare employee W-2 documents by January 31 each year.
2. The contracted accounting firm will prepare and submit the NC3 by the filing deadline.
3. The contracted accounting firm will file all required quarterly payroll tax reports by the filing deadline.
4. An officer of the Board of Directors or designee will approve for submission.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: RECORD RETENTION POLICY
Policy Code: 8220/4220 Approved: 05.03.2024

CFCI shall retain records based on guidelines set forth by State and Federal agencies, as applicable and required.

Policy Code: 8240/8240P Approved: 05.03.2024

The Board intends to administer federal grant awards efficiently, effectively, and in compliance with all requirements imposed by law, the awarding agency, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction or other applicable pass-through entity.

A. Financial Management Systems and Internal Controls

The Director of Operations and Director of Education shall be responsible to the Board of Directors to develop, monitor, and enforce effective financial management systems and other internal controls over federal awards that provide reasonable assurance that the school system is managing the awards in compliance with all requirements for federal grants and awards. Systems and controls must meet all terms and conditions of the awards as well as all requirements of the U.S. Constitution and federal law and regulation, including the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (“Uniform Guidance”) issued by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (except to the extent that an exception to the Uniform Guidance has been authorized by the relevant federal agency), and any applicable state requirements, and shall be based on best practices.

The financial management and internal controls must provide for (1) identification of all federal funds received and expended and their program source; (2) accurate, current, and complete disclosure of financial data in accordance with federal requirements; (3) records sufficient to track the receipt and use of funds; (4) effective control and accountability over assets to assure they are used only for authorized purposes; and (5) comparison of expenditures against budget. In addition, written procedures must be established for cash management and for determining the allowability of costs, as required by the Uniform Guidance.

At a minimum, the systems and controls shall address the following areas.

1. Allowability

Costs charged by the school system to a federal grant must be allowed under the individual program and be in accordance with the cost principles established in the Uniform Guidance, including how charges made to the grant for personnel are to be determined. Costs will be charged to a federal grant only when the cost is incurred during the approved budget period and is (1) reasonable and necessary for the program; (2) in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and grant terms; (3) allocable to the grant; (4) adequately documented; and (5) consistent with school system policies and administrative regulations that apply to both federally-funded and non-federally funded activities. Internal controls shall be sufficient to provide reasonable assurance that charges to federal awards for personnel expenses are accurate, allowable, and properly allocated and documented. Prior written approval for certain cost charges must be obtained as required by the awarding agency in order to avoid subsequent disallowances.

2. Cash Management and Fund Control

Payment methods must be established in writing that minimize the time elapsed between the draw of federal funds and the disbursement of those funds. Standards for funds control and accountability must be met as required by the Uniform Guidance for advance payments. It is the responsibility of the Director of Operations and Director of Education to work with the contracted accounting

service to ensure compliance.

3. Procurement

All purchases for property and services made using federal funds must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition and in accordance with the Uniform Guidance, all other applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and the school system's written policies and procedures. The Shall shall avoid situations that unnecessarily restrict competition, as defined in 2 C.F.R. 200.319, and shall avoid acquisition of unnecessary or duplicative items.

Noncompetitive procurement will be used only in the circumstances allowed by 2 C.F.R. 200.320(c). School officials are encouraged to maximize the purchase and use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States to the extent consistent with law.

Individuals or organizations that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, and/or invitations for bids, requests for proposals, or invitations to negotiate, must be excluded from competing for such purchases.

Contracts are to be awarded only to responsible contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement. Consideration will be given to such matters as contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources. No contract shall be awarded to a contractor who is suspended or debarred from eligibility for participation in federal assistance programs or activities. Contracts shall contain all provisions required by 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

Purchasing records must be sufficiently maintained to detail the history of all procurements and must include at least the rationale for the method of procurement, selection of contract type, and contractor selection or rejection; the basis for the contract price; and when applicable, verification that the contractor is not suspended or debarred.

The requirements for conflicts of interest established below in subsection A.4 are applicable to all procurements.

4. Conflict of Interest

In addition to the prohibitions against self-benefitting from a public contract under G.S. 14-234 and accepting gifts and favors from vendors under G.S. 133-32, the following standards of conduct apply when an employee, board member, or agent of the school system engages in the procurement of goods, services, or construction or repair projects funded in whole or part with federal financial assistance.

a. No employee, board member, or agent of the school system may participate directly or indirectly in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal grant or award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest.

A real or apparent conflict of interest exists when (1) the employee, board member, or agent of the school system, (2) any member of his or her immediate family, (3) his or her partner, or (4) an organization which employs or is about to employ any of those parties, has a financial or other interest in or receives a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract. For purposes of this paragraph, "financial interest" means a financial interest which comprises more

than five percent of the equity of the firm or business or more than five percent of the assets of the economic interest in indebtedness. "Financial interest" does not include an ownership interest held through a fiduciary, such as a mutual fund or blind trust, where the individual or individual's employer has no control over the selection of holdings.

Any employee, board member, or agent of the school system who has a potential conflict of interest shall disclose that conflict in writing to the Director of Operations. The Director of Operations shall disclose in writing the potential conflict of interest to the federal awarding agency in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.112.

b. No employee, board member, or agent of the school system may solicit or accept any trips, meals, gratuities, favors, gifts, or other items of monetary value from a contractor, supplier, or a party to a subcontract except that (1) a single unsolicited item with a nominal value (\$50 or less) or (2) multiple unsolicited items from a single contractor or subcontractor having an aggregate monetary value of \$100 or less in a 12-month period may be accepted. Violations of this rule are subject to disciplinary action.

5. Mandatory Disclosures

The Director of Operations shall disclose in writing to the federal awarding agency in a timely manner all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuities potentially affecting any federal award. The Director of Operations shall fully address any such violations promptly and shall notify the board accordingly. The board may request the Director of Operations to develop a plan of correction for board approval in appropriate situations as determined by the board.

6. Equipment and Supplies Purchased with Federal Funds

Equipment and supplies acquired with federal funds will be used, managed, and disposed of in accordance with applicable state and federal requirements. Property records and inventory systems shall be sufficiently maintained to account for and track equipment that has been acquired with federal funds.

7. Accountability and Certifications

All fiscal transactions must be approved by the Director of Operations and by the program manager or other person who can attest that the expenditure is allowable and approved under the federal program.

The Director of Operations shall submit all required certifications and is authorized to sign them on behalf of the board.

8. Monitoring and Reporting Performance

The Director of Operations shall establish sufficient oversight of the operations of federally supported activities to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements and to ensure that program objectives established by the awarding agency are being achieved. Financial and performance reports, including reports of significant developments that arise between scheduled performance reporting dates and final closeout reports, must be submitted as required by federal or

state authorities.

B. Reporting Mismanagement of Federal Funds

Any employee who reasonably believes that federal funds have been misused or that the school system is otherwise in violation of any requirement applicable to the receipt and use of federal funds should report the matter immediately.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: FEDERAL FUNDS ALLOWABLE COST
Policy Code: 8250 Approved: 05.03.2024

Per §200.302(b)(7), Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI) will maintain written procedures for determining allowability of costs. When determining how the CFCI will spend grant funds, the School Director(s) or Designee will review the proposed cost to determine whether it is an allowable use of Federal Grant Funds before obligating and spending those funds on the proposed goods or services. All expenditures made with Federal Education Funds must meet the standards outlined in EDGAR, 2 CFR Part 3474, and 2 CFR Part 200.

The School Director or Designee must consider the following factors when making an allowability determination:

- §200.403(a) - Be necessary and reasonable for the performance of the Federal award and be allocable thereto under these principles.
- §200.403(b) - Conform to any limitations or exclusions set forth in these principles or in the Federal award as to types or amount of cost items.
- §200.403(c) - Be consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both federally-financed and other activities of CFCI.
- §200.403(d) - Be accorded consistent treatment. A cost may not be assigned to a Federal award as a direct cost if any other cost incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances has been allocated to the Federal award as an indirect cost.
- §200.403(e) - Be determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), except, for state and local governments and Indian tribes only, as otherwise provided for in this part.
- §200.403(f) - Not be included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements of any other federally-financed program in either the current or a prior period.
- §200.403(g) - Be adequately documented.

Necessary Costs:

Necessary is determined based on the needs of the program. Specifically, the expenditure must be necessary to achieve an important program objective. It means it is vital or required in order to meet the objectives of the grant or for the grant to be successful.

A key aspect in determining whether a cost is necessary is whether CFCI can demonstrate that the cost addresses an existing need and can prove it.

When determining whether a cost is necessary, CFCI considers:

- a. Whether the cost is needed for the proper and efficient performance of the grant program;
- b. Whether the cost is identified in the approved budget or application;

- c. Whether there is an educational benefit associated with the cost;
- d. Whether the cost aligns with identified needs based on results and findings from a needs assessment; and
- e. Whether the cost addresses program goals and objectives and is based on program data.

Reasonable Costs §200.404 - A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost.

In determining reasonableness of a given cost, consideration must be given to:

- a. Whether the cost is of a type generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for the operation of CFCI or the proper and efficient performance of the Federal award.
- b. The restraints or requirements imposed by such factors as: sound business practices; arm's-length bargaining; Federal, state, local, tribal, and other laws and regulations; and terms and conditions of the Federal award.
- c. Market prices for comparable goods or services for the geographic area.
- d. Whether the individuals concerned acted with prudence in the circumstances considering their responsibilities to CFCI, its employees, where applicable its students or membership, the public at large, and the Federal Government.
- e. Whether CFCI significantly deviates from its established practices and policies regarding the incurrence of costs, which may unjustifiably increase the Federal award cost.

Allocable Costs §200.405 - A cost is allocable to a particular Federal award or other cost objective if the goods or services involved are chargeable or assignable to that Federal award or cost objective in accordance with relative benefits received.

This standard is met if the cost:

- a. Is incurred specifically for the Federal award;
- b. Benefits both the Federal award and other work of CFCI and can be distributed in proportions that may be approximated using reasonable methods; and
- c. Is necessary to the overall operation of CFCI and is assignable in part to the Federal award.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: PROCUREMENT WITH FEDERAL FUNDS
Policy Code: 8260 Approved: 05.03.2024

Policy Statement

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry is committed to securing goods and services using grant funds from reputable and responsible suppliers in an equitable and competitive manner and in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, regulations and guidance.

Reason for Policy

2 CFR Part 200.317 requires that grantees and subgrantees use their own procurement procedures which reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations if procurements conform to applicable federal law and other standards. In using federal funds for procurements, Cape Fear Center for Inquiry is bound to adhere to all the procurement standards identified in 2 CFR Part 200.317.

If Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's procurement policies and procedures are more restrictive than state or federal laws and regulations, local policies must be followed. 2 CFR Part 200.318 includes but is not limited to:

- Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will use its own procurement procedures which reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable Federal law and regulations.
- Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will have written selection procedures for procurement transactions.
- Any lists of prequalified persons, firms or products to be used by Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will be updated regularly and will ensure open and free competition.
- Only responsible contractors that can successfully complete contract terms will be used.
- If available and applicable, excess federal property and equipment will be used before purchasing new equipment.
- Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will ensure no real or apparent conflicts of interest arise during procurement activities and will adhere to Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's Code of Ethics.
- All transactions will be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition (See 34 CFR 80.36(c) for examples of restrictive procurement situations).
- Unnecessary or duplicative purchases will be avoided.
- Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will perform a cost or price analysis in connection with every procurement action including contract modifications.
- Detailed records to substantiate procurement decisions, rationale and history will be maintained.
- Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will handle and resolve any contract or procurement disputes.
- Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible.
- Cape Fear Center for Inquiry will make available, upon request of the awarding agency, technical specifications on proposed procurements where the awarding agency believes such review is needed to ensure that the item and/or service specified is the one being proposed for purchase.
- Any applicable bonding requirements will be followed.
- Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's contracts will contain provisions of paragraph 2 CFR 200.326.

Policy Requirements

Purchasing procedures using federal and non-federal grant funds will conform to applicable state, local and federal law and any regulations identified in 2 CFR. Procurements may be awarded

through noncompetitive means under certain circumstances such as if the goods/services are only available from a single source, public exigency or emergency necessitates noncompetitive procurement, the awarding agency or pass-through entity expressly authorizes it in response to a written request, or if competition is deemed inadequate. See 2 CFR Part 200.320 for additional guidance on when noncompetitive procurement may be used.

Federal regulations (See 2 CFR Part 200.320) stipulate that procurements under \$250,000 may be conducted via less formal competitive procedures such as price or rate quotations. However, Cape Fear Center for Inquiry requires all purchases of \$90,000 or more to be procured through a formal competitive process. Therefore, federal funds will continue to adhere to the more restrictive threshold. Documentation of procurement processes should be maintained according to Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's Policy 8220 for Record Retention.

SECTION: 8000-FISCAL MANAGEMENT FEDERAL FUNDS EQUIPMENT POLICY
Policy Code: 8240, Approved: 05.03.2024

Equipment Property Records

Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI) will maintain property records for equipment and computing devices/technological items that include §200.313(d)(1):

- A description of the property
- A serial number or other identification number
- The source of funding for the property
- Who holds title
- The acquisition date
- Cost of the property
- Percentage of Federal participation in the project costs for the Federal award under which the property was acquired
- The location
- Use of the property
- Condition of the property, and
- Any ultimate disposition data including the date of disposal and sale price of the property.

The School Operations Director or designee will maintain property records which include all information listed above. The information, including entering property into the fixed asset inventory and making adjustments to the inventory, is accomplished by the Front Office staff. When inventory is received, it is inspected by the Front Office staff person who determines that the inventory is in good condition and that it matches the purchase order, which matches the invoice. No receiving report is produced. The Front Office staff person logs the inventory into the property management system. The inventory control sheet is kept with the Front Office staff person.

All inventoried equipment including Computing devices and other highly desirable mobile devices such as laptops, smart phones, and tablets are to be tagged and tracked. The School Operations Director will be responsible for ensuring equipment is tagged.

Physical Inventory

A physical inventory of the property is taken and the results reconciled with the property records at least once every two years §200.313(d)(2). The School Operations Director or designee assigns the physical inventory to teachers in the classrooms where the equipment is located. The inventory will be performed in May of every school year and signed off on by the teachers when completed. The results of the inventory will be reported to the School Operations Director or designee.

The Front Office staff person reconciles discrepancies between the inventory and the property records by updating the property records as needed and documenting any property that is damaged or missing for identification, repair or replacement as needed. He or She will maintain

documentation of the physical inventory and reconciliation and sign off when the reconciliation is completed.

Safeguarding Property Equipment

The Front Office staff person will set up and manage a control system to ensure adequate safeguards to prevent loss, damage, or theft of the property. Any loss, damage, or theft will be investigated. §200.313(d)(3).

Property may be taken off campus by students or staff. The person taking the property off site must sign and date upon departure and return. The computing devices are tagged with the “Cape Fear Center of Inquiry, (CFCI)”. Equipment that is lost or stolen is reported to the Front Office staff person. The person is then required to report it to the School Director(s), who will then complete an investigation on the lost or stolen property. Interviews will be conducted and/or a police report will be filed under the discretion of the School Director as part of the investigation process. A report regarding lost or stolen property will be completed by the person doing the investigation and filed with the property inventory records as well as with the business office. In addition to possible criminal action, the School Director will determine what, if any, additional action is necessary. Replacement equipment will be obtained through the normal procurement function and must meet all applicable requirements.

Disposition of property will be listed by the School Director in the property records in the event the property is sold, lost or stolen, or cannot be repaired. Property that is sold, identified as lost or stolen, or cannot be repaired will be listed in the property records for three (3) years after the lost/stolen date.

Maintaining Property Equipment

Staff to whom property equipment is assigned will monitor and maintain these items in good condition while in their possession. The Front Office staff person should be contacted if an item is broken or not working properly. Equipment in need of repair is assessed by the School Director or his/her designee to determine whether to repair or salvage. As part of this process the Administrative Assistant will determine if a warranty will apply to the repair; if not, he or she will obtain repair cost estimates. Generally, if the cost of repair exceeds half the cost of the restored value, then the equipment may be salvaged or donated. Other factors, such as availability of the damaged item, can be considered when determining whether a repair is appropriate.

Disposition

§200.313(e) - When original or replacement equipment acquired under a Federal award is no longer needed for the original project or program or for other activities currently or previously supported by a Federal awarding agency, except as otherwise provided in Federal statutes, regulations, or Federal awarding agency disposition instructions, CFCI will dispose of the equipment as follows:

- a. Items of equipment with a current per unit fair market value of \$5,000 or less may be retained, sold or otherwise disposed of with no further obligation to the Federal awarding agency §200.313(e)(1).

- b. Items of equipment with a current per-unit fair-market value in excess of \$5,000 may be retained by CFCI or sold §200.313(e)(2).
- c. The Federal awarding agency is entitled to an amount calculated by multiplying the current market value or proceeds from sale by the Federal awarding agency percentage of participation in the cost of the original purchase.
- d. If the equipment is sold, the Federal awarding agency may permit CFCI to deduct and retain from the Federal share \$500 or ten percent of the proceeds, whichever is less, for its selling and handling expenses.

The School Director or designee is responsible for determining how equipment will be disposed of. Possible sales procedures include on-site and govdeals.com auction. Auctions will be advertised online or in the local newspaper to ensure the highest level of exposure. If not being sold by auction, the sale of the item will also be advertised online or in the local newspaper to ensure the highest level of exposure and there is no limit to the number of purchase offers that will be considered. The highest offer received in a reasonable amount of time will be accepted. All sales procedures will be performed in a manner to ensure the highest possible return §200.313(d)(5).

Definitions

Equipment §200.33 - Tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by CFCI for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000.

Computing Device §200.20 – machines used to acquire, store, analyze, process, and publish data and other information electronically, including accessories (or “peripherals”) for printing, transmitting and receiving, or storing electronic information. A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by CFCI for financial statement purposes or \$5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: DEPOSITS

Policy Code: 8310 Approved: 05.03.2024

The School Operations Director or designee is responsible for making bank deposits. Deposits totaling less than \$2,000 should be made weekly. Deposits totaling more than \$2,000 should be deposited within 72 hours.

Procedures:

1. The Director of Operations will restrictively endorse each check received (i.e. For Deposit Only Cape Fear Center of Inquiry).
2. The Director of Operations will prepare a deposit packet itemizing the amount, source, and purpose of each check or cash payment received. The deposit packet will include a copy of each check and a bank deposit slip.
3. The Director of Operations will make the deposit and attach the deposit receipt to the deposit packet.
4. The Director of Operations or designee will forward the deposit packet to the contracted accounting firm.
5. The contracted accounting firm will reconcile the cash receipts to the deposit slip and the bank statement as part of the monthly close process.

SECTION: 8000 - FISCAL MANAGEMENT: HANDLING CASH

Policy Code: 8320 Approved: 05.03.2024

It is important that the school has a clear policy on handling cash in the interests of protecting all staff involved and allowing audits to be carried out efficiently.

This policy must be followed for any money collected for school field trips, supplies, donations, or instructional activities.

This policy does not apply to funds specified for Partnership, School Photos, or Hot Lunches.

For the purpose of this policy, **“cash” includes coins, currency, checks, and money order transactions**. All persons who accept cash assume the responsibility of following the cash handling procedures outlined below.

1. All checks and money orders accepted by a Cape Fear Center for Inquiry employee must be made payable to Cape Fear Center for Inquiry. CFCI does not accept checks or money orders made payable to an individual or business.
2. No cash is to be left unsecured at any time. Cash should not be kept anywhere in classrooms overnight. Cash should not be taken home. At no time during the school day should money be left lying about, but should be locked away when it is not being handled. Staff should be very discreet about the temporary storage of cash and should not make any pupil aware of where it is being kept. All funds must be turned in to the Business Office daily and a receipt will be issued. The funds received will be kept in a secure place until they are deposited.
3. Faculty/Staff members are authorized to accept cash from students/parents for activities/events for which they are responsible.
 - a. The faculty or staff member will document all cash received. Documentation should include Date Received, Received From, Amount, and Type of Payment.
 - b. No expenditures can be made directly from funds received. Funds are to be deposited in the CFCI bank account.
 - c. The Director of Operations or designee will keep a running total of the amount received for each activity or event.

9000 Facilities

[9220 – Security of Facilities](#)

[9230 – Building Key Control](#)

[9240 – Building and Room Access](#)

[9250 – Community Use of School Property and Facilities](#)

[9260 – Pest Management Program](#)

[9270 – Security Cameras](#)

SECTION: 9000 – FACILITIES: SECURITY OF FACILITIES

Policy Code: 9220, Approved: 05.03.2024

Security of School system facilities is an important part of maintaining a safe learning environment for students and staff and for protecting the investments of Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI). The School Director(s) or his or her designee will develop and implement programs or procedures as necessary to meet, at a minimum, the following board requirements for security of facilities:

- a. The School Director(s) is responsible for ensuring that all CFCI buildings use a security control system that limits access to keys or other building entry devices to authorized personnel and safeguards against unauthorized individuals gaining entry to buildings.
- b. The School Director(s) is responsible for determining the need for and responsibilities of security personnel and shall make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Board for funding security personnel positions or contracts.
- c. The School Director(s) shall ensure that local law enforcement and emergency management agencies have copies of floor plans of all school buildings and site plans showing campus boundaries and access points.
- d. The School Director(s) shall make reasonable efforts to secure buildings and other valuable property on school grounds when the school is closed or vacated.
- e. Teachers are to make reasonable efforts to secure their assigned classrooms or other designated spaces when the school is closed or vacated or when their classrooms or other designated spaces are not in use.
- f. The School Director(s) is encouraged to involve teachers, other school staff, parents, students and law enforcement in identifying the security needs of the school.
- g. The School Director(s) shall implement programs or make recommendations to the Board, as appropriate, to address the security needs of the school.

Other Board policies regarding the maintenance of facilities, school safety, and visitors to the school also are important to maintaining the security of the school environment. All professional employees and other employees with job duties related to the security of the facilities are responsible for being familiar with these policies and carrying out duties specified by Board policies or the School Director(s) or his or her designee.

SECTION: 9000 – FACILITIES: BUILDING KEY CONTROL

Policy Code: 9230, Approved: 05.03.2024

Security of School system facilities is an important part of maintaining a safe learning environment for students and staff and for protecting the investments of Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI). Teachers, staff and administrators receive keys to the School. These recipients are entrusted with keys to the School to carry out the educational objectives of the School. Because possession of a school key gives authorized persons unfettered access to the School grounds, to the students, and to sensitive records, all parties in possession of a key must keep the goals of confidentiality and safety in mind at all times. In furtherance of these goals, the following School Key Policy which must be followed by anyone who is an authorized key holder:

- a. Only authorized persons are allowed to be in possession of a key to the School. Authorized persons are the only persons with documentation of authority to possess or control a key. Authorization is specific to each key issued.
- b. No person may give his or her key to an unauthorized user for any period of time. Any key(s) found to be in the possession of an unauthorized person will be confiscated, and any person found to have provided a key or a copy of a key to an unauthorized user may be disciplined, up to and including termination.
- c. Unauthorized duplication of a key is strictly prohibited. No person may duplicate a key or request the duplication of a key without express, written permission.
- d. Lost or stolen keys must be reported to the School Director immediately. A lost key may require one or more buildings to be rekeyed. This process may cost a substantial amount of money. Where permitted by applicable laws, CFCI may withhold the cost of rekeying the building(s) from a staff member's check or final paycheck, if a violation of this policy resulted in the lost or stolen key.
- e. Key holders agree to refrain from compromising the security of the campus or a building. Key holders are required to report to the School Director(s) any doors that are unsecured or in violation of the CFCI's policies.
- f. Key holders will inventory their keys at the end of the school year.
- g. Employees must return to the School Director(s) immediately, upon request, all keys assigned to them or that are in their possession or control in the event of termination of employment, resignation, or layoff. If the employee does not return the School's keys, as requested, the employee may be subject to a charge being deducted from their last paycheck.

Violation of these requirements may result in the loss of key privileges and may result in discipline up to and including termination.

Key Definitions

- A. **Grand Master Key** - A key that activates all door locks in a building.
- B. **Outer Door Master Key** - Opens all exterior doors, main office door, gym doors, and security door.
- C. **Classroom/Office Key** - A key that activates the lock only to the door to a single room.

D. **Cabinet Key**- A key that activates the locks only to the cabinets in a single room.

E. **Locker Key** - A key that activates the locks to storage lockers.

F. **Bus Keys** - A key that operates a bus.

Key Issuance

Keys shall be issued and controlled by the School Director's Designee. When not in use, the extra keys will be kept in a locked secure location.

Limitations

- a. Grand master keys will not be issued to individuals, except Board Officers, School Director, staff in Public Safety, Environmental Health & Safety, and Facility Operations, when:
 - i. a demonstrated need exists, and
 - ii. the School Director(s) approves the exception.
- b. Outer door master keys will be issued only to persons authorized to be entrusted with such keys by the School Director.
- c. Classroom/Office keys will be issued only to persons who have a continuing need for access to such rooms. Substitutes will be issued keys for the duration of their duties.
- d. Keys will not be issued to contractors working on campus, except as specifically pre-authorized by the School Director(s) following the appropriate policies such as 9220 Security of Facilities, 7090 Criminal Record History Check and note in the contract that key holders must adhere to the building key control policy.

SECTION: 9000 – FACILITIES: BUILDING AND ROOM ACCESS Policy Code: 9240, Approved: 05.03.2024

All exterior doors to the building should remain locked at all times.

Outside doors are NOT to be propped open during the day.

Interior doors must be shut and locked when staff members leave the building. Staff members should ensure all exterior doors lock behind them upon exiting the building.

Access to the building via key should only be granted to faculty, staff, Board Members, and others approved by the Director(s).

Groups needing to meet at the school using a specific classroom should make prior arrangements with the Front Office staff.

The Directors' offices should be kept locked, with only the Directors and designated administrator(s) having a key, as confidential information and secure financial records will be stored there.

SECTION: 9000 – FACILITIES: COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY AND FACILITIES

Policy Code: 9250, Approved, 05.03.2024

The Board of Directors of the Cape Fear Center for Inquiry recognizes that the school facilities can be useful resources for the school community and the broader Wilmington area.

Accordingly, the use of facilities by various organizations and constituencies is encouraged, provided that:

- a. Such use does not interfere or conflict with the mission, vision, educational program or normal operation of the School.
- b. Such use is in accordance with local, state and federal laws and ordinances.
- c. Such use conforms with applicable policies, guidelines, and procedures in effect at the School.
- d. Agreements for ongoing/continuing usage receive Board approval.
- e. The Board of Directors of CFCI will permit the use of school facilities under the following conditions:

I. Eligible Users

The following groups are eligible for the use of school facilities and will be given first preference

- A. CFCI Related Groups and Organizations involving students, teachers and parent support organizations
- B. School Employee Groups
- C. Non School-Related Organizations, Associations, or Individuals from the Wilmington area
- D. Sectarian or religious groups may be permitted to use the facilities for continuous use, if:
 1. A fire or natural disaster has rendered their building unfit for use.
 2. The organization is in the process of organizing and/or constructing a new church or synagogue as a recognized entity.
 3. The organization agrees to a 6-month contract, which may be extended if extenuating circumstances arise.
- E. Other groups, as authorized by the Board of Directors of CFCI, or its designee

II. Guidelines for Obtaining Use of School Facilities

- A. All requests for school facilities use must be made on the Facilities Use Request Form. Forms must be filed together with any applicable fees at least 15 business days in advance of the anticipated use via the Front Office staff.

B. Facilities Use Request Forms will be reviewed by the Director(s) of the School who will approve or deny all requests. The Director(s) reserves the right to cancel or postpone the use of school facilities, if deemed necessary.

C. Conditions, fees, usage requirements, etc. shall be put in writing and signed by the Director(s) or designee and a responsible adult representing the organization using the school facility.

III. Terms and Conditions for the Use of School Facilities

- A. The use of school facilities will not be allowed to interfere with the normal operation of school, even when such activities are scheduled after building use has been approved.
- B. The use of school facilities by outside groups or organizations planning to charge admission for attendance shall be subject to the fee schedule listed on Facilities Use Request Form.
- C. The individual and/or group requesting use of the school facilities shall be directly and solely responsible for the behavior and discipline of persons using the facilities and/or attending activities under their sponsorship.

Minimum expectations for any individual or group using the facilities are as follows:

1. No one is allowed to enter or use school facilities until the adult authorized to supervise the approved activity is present to take charge of the group;
 2. Smoking, use of alcohol or the use of illegal drugs are not permitted at any time in any location within and around the school property;
 3. The consumption of food or drink must have prior approval by the Director(s);
 4. No use of equipment which has potential of being a fire hazard will be allowed;
 5. Electrical fixtures, electrical equipment, decorations, or any changes or modifications to existing school facilities are not permitted, unless authorized in writing by the Director(s);
 6. Use of the facilities is limited to the specific area noted in the Facilities Use Request Form;
 7. No outside agency shall use the school property beyond 10:00 p.m. without prior approval by the Director(s).
 8. The Director(s) shall determine if a representative of the school needs to be present during the use of school facilities;
 9. The Director(s) reserves the right to cancel any approved use of school facilities for violation of the above listed terms and conditions.
- D. Groups using school facilities agree to accept full responsibility for damage, theft, or personal injury occurring during their use of the building by signing the Release of Liability Form.
- E. All activities using school facilities which encourage and/or promote the attendance of students or children outside of normal school hours will be fully responsible for supervision of the same students and/or children. This shall include supervision during

- the event, as well as assuring that all students and/or children have evacuated the facilities under proper supervision at the conclusion of the event.
- F. All uses of school facilities shall be conducted in a manner designed to ensure the safety of those involved. All work and activities associated with such facility use shall be carried out with proper supervision, especially the supervision of children.
 - G. All organizations, groups, or individuals, except the following will be subject to a fee:
 - 1. All school related activities, including support organizations
 - 2. School employee group activities
 - H. The fee structure is established by the Board of Directors of Cape Fear Center for Inquiry.
 - I. Fees may be waived by the Director(s).

All Rental Fees shall be paid by check/money order made payable to the Cape Fear Center for Inquiry.

SECTION: 9000 – FACILITIES: PEST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
Policy Code: 9260, Approved: 05.03.2024

Cape Fear Center For Inquiry supports clean and safe facilities for its students, staff and the public. CFCI will use an Integrated Pest Management Program (IPMP) to prevent and control pest problems in the school buildings and grounds and minimize pesticide use.

The IPMP means a comprehensive approach to pest management that combines biological, physical, chemical and cultural tactics as well as effective, economic, environmentally sound, and socially acceptable methods to prevent and solve pest problems. The IPMP will emphasize pest prevention and provide a decision-making process for determining if, when and where pest suppression is needed and what control tactics and methods are appropriate.

The IPMP will utilize strategies including, but not limited to, training of staff, monitoring and inspecting facilities, communication and notification to staff and parents, and the use of pesticides as a last resort. When a decision is made to use pesticides, the staff will utilize the least toxic pesticide formulation and most targeted application method possible.

SECTION: 9000 – FACILITIES: SECURITY CAMERAS

Policy Code: 9270, Approved: 05.03.2024

CFCI has installed security cameras in our School for the purpose of enhancing school safety and security. Our goal is to enhance the safety of all students, staff, and community members who visit our school, while diminishing the potential for school loss of destruction of property on campus.

The security camera system is installed in public areas only.

Security camera usage is prohibited in any space where there is a reasonable expectation for privacy.

Restrooms and classrooms shall not have camera surveillance.

CFCI community members should be aware of the following:

- a. The CFCI security camera system will be in operation 24 hours a day.
- b. CFCI shall notify all who enter using appropriate signage that security cameras have been installed.
- c. Video recordings used in school buildings and/or on school property shall be the sole property of CFCI.
- d. The administration may use video and the resulting recordings for inquiries and proceedings related to law enforcement, deterrence and student discipline.
- e. Unless expressly required by applicable laws or policies, access to video recordings from security cameras shall be limited to school administrators. Law enforcement officials with prior approval from the School Director shall be granted access to video recordings.