

A PLACE WHERE YOUR CHILD WILL SHINE



Employee Handbook and Policies

SERVING our families with **HEART** to give them the best care for their children! Being **IMAGINATIVE** in our approach and exemplifying **NOBLE** character! We strive for **EXCELLENCE!**

S.H.I.N.E. BRIGHT, BE A LIGHT!

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WELCOME TO SHINING STARS ACADEMY!

Shining Stars Academy gives equal employment opportunities to all qualified applicants without regard to race, religion, sex, marital status, handicap, national origin, or veteran status. All individuals shall be recruited, hired, assigned, advanced, compensated, and retained based on their qualifications and performances. Any questions you might have concerning equal opportunity may be addressed to the Director or the owner.

HOW AND WHY YOU WERE SELECTED

We are proud of the fact that Shining Stars Academy employees represent the best talent available in the childcare profession. Our employees are chosen because we feel they represent our core values, philosophy and have the best personality, patience, and understanding necessary in dealing with children (and that they exhibit an attitude of cooperation towards other employees.) We believe that people make the difference and that your individual talents and abilities will help our team.

You were selected because we believe in you. Through an ongoing program of staff training and development, we will support your continued professional growth.

ORIENTATION PERIOD

At Shining Stars Academy all staff are considered orientation employees for a period of 90 days. It is a period of adjustment and adaptation on both the personal level and the job requirement level. The employee is expected to meet or exceed the initial demands of the position during this time period. The orientation period is designed to determine an individual's suitability for a position and his or her level of competence in performing the duties of their position. A complaint filed by a parent during this period will be automatic grounds for termination.

BENEFITS AND TIME OFF DURING THIS PERIOD.

No time off will be granted to employees in their first 90 days unless the Director is notified of previously made arrangements prior to employment. All employees are expected to work the hours as scheduled. If employee misses work within the first 30 days, they must provide a doctor's note to excuse the absence. New employees who are unable to meet the work schedule requirements will be terminated. Holiday pay benefits will also not go into effect until after the orientation period.

REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS

If you do not already have your CPR/First Aid Certification, Food Handlers Certification, and Fingerprinting done at time of hire, Shining Stars Academy will reimburse you for those costs **AFTER 90 DAYS OF EMPLOYMENT**. It is the employee's responsibility to notify management of this. For current employees, if this needs to be renewed during time of employment, Shining Stars Academy will reimburse you for those costs, however should your employment with Shining Stars Academy be terminated within 90 days of this, you will be required to repay the cost of the certification reimbursement via deduction from your final paycheck.

You will receive t-shirts as required uniform at the start of employment. Should your employment with Shining Stars Academy be terminated before your 90-day Orientation Period is completed, you will be required to repay the cost of t-shirts via deduction from final paycheck if not returned in 7 days.

TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION

STATE LICENSING RULES AND REGULATIONS

All staff are expected to be knowledgeable in State Licensing Rules and Regulations for Child Care and are expected to follow all procedures as outlined in the Rules and Regulations for care of children. Failure may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

Every Shining Stars Academy employee's primary focus is the happiness and well-being of our students. Teachers must come to Shining Stars Academy with a basic knowledge of early childhood development.

The following is a list of the major responsibilities for classroom teachers. The position of "Teacher" includes but is not limited to the following:

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

- Provide a variety of materials and resources for children to explore, manipulate and use, both in learning activities and in imaginative play.
- Attend to children's basic needs by feeding them, dressing them, and changing their diapers.
- Establish and enforce rules for behavior and procedures for maintaining order in a positive manner.
- Prepare materials and classrooms for class activities.
- Teach proper eating habits and personal hygiene.
- Organize and lead activities designed to promote physical, mental and social development, such as games, arts and

crafts, music, storytelling, and field trips.

- Welcome arriving children to the school environment by greeting them, helping them remove outerwear, and selecting activities of interest to them.
- Demonstrate activities to children.
- Arrange indoor and outdoor space to facilitate creative play, motor-skill activities, and safety.
- Organize and label materials, and display students' work in a manner appropriate for their ages and perceptual skills.
- Store, order, and inventory classroom equipment, materials, and supplies.
- Maintain a clean and orderly environment.
- Follow closing procedures.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- Observe and evaluate children's performance, behavior, social development, and physical health.
- Teach basic skills such as color, shape, number and letter recognition, personal hygiene, and social skills.
- Read books to entire classes or to small groups.
- Establish clear objectives for all lessons, units, and projects, and communicate those objectives to children.
- Adapt teaching methods and instructional materials to meet students' varying needs and interests.
- Plan and conduct activities for a balanced program of instruction, demonstration, and work time that provides students with opportunities to observe, question, and investigate.
- Plan and supervise class projects, field trips, visits by guests, or other experiential activities, and guide students in learning from those activities.

COMMUNICATION

- Maintain positive relationships with families and children.
- Prepare reports on students and activities as required by

administration and use tablets to communicate positively with parents.

- Cooperate with team members and administrators.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Confer with other staff members to plan and schedule lessons promoting learning, following approved curriculum.
- Collaborate with other teachers and administrators in the development, evaluation, and revision of preschool programs.
- Staff meetings are ***mandatory*** for all employees.
 - If a staff member is scheduled to work on the day a meeting is held, attendance at the meeting is required. Failure to attend without prior management approval will result in disciplinary action, up to and including a written warning.
 - If a meeting is scheduled on a day an employee is not normally scheduled to work (for example, a Saturday), attendance is still required. If an employee is unable to attend due to illness, a doctor's note may be required. Absences for other reasons must be approved by management in advance.
 - Employees are responsible for ensuring they receive any materials, updates, or training information provided during a missed meeting. Repeated failure to attend required meetings may result in further disciplinary action.
- Maintain a professional demeanor and appearance, as well as a positive reflection of the school.

REQUIRED SKILLS

- Active Listening -- Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not

interrupting at inappropriate times.

- Instructing -- Teaching others how to do something.
- Speaking -- Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- Reading Comprehension -- Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
- Learning Strategies -- Selecting and using training/instructional methods and procedures appropriate for the situation when learning or teaching new things.
- Writing -- Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
- Social Perceptiveness -- Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
- Time Management -- Managing one's own time and the time of others.
- Critical Thinking -- Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems
- Oral Expression -- The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
- Problem Sensitivity -- The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
- Originality -- The ability to come up with unusual or clever ideas about a given topic or situation, or to develop creative ways to solve a problem.
- Creativity -- The ability to come up with a number of ideas about a topic
- Written Comprehension -- The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
- Deductive Reasoning -- The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.

- Cleanliness – The ability to clean and keep an organized, healthy space and teach children to respect and take pride in the classroom and outdoor environment.
- Personal Hygiene – Pride in one’s health, appearance and cleanliness.
- Physical Requirements – Due to the nature of working in a childcare environment, employees must be able to safely lift, carry, and hold children weighing up to thirty-five (35) pounds without assistance. Staff must also be able to:
 - Frequently bend, kneel, squat, and sit on the floor
 - Stand for extended periods of time
 - Move quickly to respond to children’s needs and emergencies
 - Assist children with transitions, including lifting to changing tables, cribs, playground equipment, or evacuation during emergencies
 - Employees are expected to use proper lifting techniques to ensure the safety of both themselves and the children. Reasonable accommodations may be considered in accordance with applicable laws.

EVALUATIONS

All employees will need have a minimum of one evaluation of performance a year. Employer will review the evaluation results with the employee and the employee must sign acknowledging they received it (signatures do not necessarily mean they agree). Employee must receive a copy of the signed evaluation for their records, and employer must keep a copy of signed evaluation in employee record file. Evaluations are not in conjunction with raises.

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION/HOURS OF WORK/ EMPLOYEE HEALTH

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION

There are generally four classifications of employment for Shining Stars Academy employees:

- **Salaried:** Employees at the level of Assistant Director or Director.
- **Full-Time:** Employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least 35 hours per week on a continuous basis.
- **Permanent Part-Time:** Employees who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week and at least 20 hours per week on a continuous basis.
- **Part-Time:** Employees who are schedule to work less than 20 hours per week or who work on an “on call” or “as required” basis.

HOURS OF WORK

The normal work week for all full-time employees consists of five working days of eight hours each, Monday through Friday.

Deviations from the normal work week or normal workday may be required on a regular basis. Adjustment may be made with respect to any employee's schedule by the Director so that the total hours worked per week do not exceed forty. Overtime must be approved by the Director in advance.

Hours of work are subject to change by administration to meet the needs of our families. Any requests for days off must be given in writing two weeks in advance for approval. Requests for special days at the last minute will be honored whenever possible and when coverage is available. If a request for time off is denied for any reason and the staff member then calls in sick, employee will NOT BE PAID for the day they missed, and it will be counted as unexcused.

All Shining Stars Academy employees are expected to adhere to the stated working hours. Frequent unexcused absences shall be grounds for discharge. It is the responsibility of the employee to notify his or her supervisor by phone if he or she will be late or absent and be sure that the supervisor has received the notice. **LEAVING A MESSAGE ONLY OR TEXTING DOES NOT QUALIFY AS CALLING IN, you MUST talk to someone to confirm that they are aware. Subject to write up if text or email sent.** Such notices should be given as early as possible.

OVERTIME/CLOCKING IN AND OUT

Overtime is paid to non-exempt employees for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours per Monday through Friday workweek. Overtime pay is one and one-half times your regular hourly rate of pay **and must be authorized by center management.** Unauthorized overtime will result in disciplinary action.

It is your responsibility to clock in and out properly. It is not the responsibility of management to correct timecards prior to payroll. Any failure to clock in or out properly will result in a delay in payment of wages due, as it will not be paid out until the following paycheck. Disciplinary write ups may occur for repeated incorrect time cards.

TARDY POLICY

Punctuality is essential to maintaining smooth operations and ensuring the safety and care of the children in our programs. Employees are expected to arrive on time for their scheduled shifts.

- **Definition of Tardiness:** Arriving after your scheduled start time without prior approval or proper notification is considered tardy.

- **Notification Requirement:** If you anticipate being late, you must notify your supervisor as soon as possible via phone call.
- **Consequences:**
 - 1–2 instances of tardiness: verbal reminder
 - 3–4 instances of tardiness: written warning
 - 5 or more instances of tardiness, or patterns of repeated lateness: further disciplinary action, up to and including termination

Consistent punctuality is a requirement for all employees. Chronic lateness or failure to follow call-in procedures may jeopardize your employment with the center.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH

Shining Stars Academy teachers and administrators are subject to generally the same wellness guidelines as are its students. Teachers may not participate in Shining Stars Academy activities if they display any of the following symptoms:

- fever over 101°
- flu
- unusual rash
- severe cough
- rapid or labored breathing
- severe cold
- vomiting
- yellowish skin or eyes
- contagious illness

JOB RELATED INJURY

An employee must always advise the Director of the time, place, and cause of an on-the-job injury so that the necessary accident

report can be completed. The accident must be reported immediately, and a written report completed on the day on which it occurs. If the employee is unable to complete the written report, the Director must do so.

An employee absent from work because of any occupational illness or service-related injury shall be entitled to reinstatement at the same rate of pay received immediately prior to the date of such illness or injury; and upon approval of a doctor to return to work. Authorization to return to work when a contract period has ended shall not be binding upon Shining Stars Academy for subsequent hiring consideration.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

LUNCH AND REST BREAKS

Lunch and rest breaks will be scheduled as the demands of the day permit. However, children are not to be left unsupervised under any circumstance. If you find you must leave the room, you need to contact your Director, Assistant Director or another available teacher for assistance.

DETERMINING PAY INCREASES

Periodically staff will be evaluated for pay increases. Factors considered when determining pay increase include:

- Participation in professional development.
- Participation in center events.
- Attendance/tardiness.
- Continuing to grow as a productive team member.
- Continuing to build positive relationships with families and community.
- Adaptability.
- Level of caring and connection with the children in care.
- Ability to adhere to center policies and procedures.

EMPLOYEE CHILDCARE (FULL TIME EMPLOYEES ONLY)

Shining Stars Academy offer childcare services at a discount as a benefit to you and your children. Childcare services are provided at the center in which you work, subject to the availability of space and program for your children's age group. We encourage you to use our services and welcome your patronage. These are the conditions of the program:

- Only full-time employees are eligible.
- Registration is free.
- The fee for your childcare service is determined by age.
- For the infant/toddler program up to three years old the discount is 30%.
- 3 years and older the discount is 50% for the first two years of employment.
- 60% in your third year of employment.
- 70% thereafter.
- For childcare beyond your working hours, you will be charged the full rate.
- ***Fieldtrips and special activity fees will also be charged at the full rate.***

Your own children may be under your direct care. Should you find yourself in the position of needing to discipline your own child at the center, note that positive discipline policies of the school must be followed strictly. No exceptions will be made on this issue.

TIME OFF

Shining Stars Academy adheres to the Family Medical Leave Act guidelines.

EMERGENCY CLOSING/INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION

Any closing of our center due to a natural disaster, severe weather, or other such emergency, will be announced on the major radio and television stations in the Austin area. We observe all closures and late openings declared by the Round Rock Independent School District. The center Director will contact you for specific instructions. You may also call your Director if you are unsure and have not heard from the Director. If the center closes for any of the reasons listed above, hourly staff may be eligible to receive up to two (2) days of pay, at the sole discretion of the owner.

To qualify, employees must:

- Be present for their scheduled shift on the last working day before the closure and the first scheduled day upon reopening
- Have all required trainings completed and up to date
- Be in good standing with the center
- Meet any additional requirements determined by management

Payment is not guaranteed and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

HOLIDAY PAY

Employees are eligible for Holiday pay after their 90-day Orientation Period has ended.

Holiday pay is *only* awarded when the staff member works the day before **AND** the day after the holiday unless written approval has been given prior to the holiday. An authorized vacation day will be considered a working day. Similarly, if the Director does not schedule you to work before or after a holiday

because of low attendance, Holiday Pay will still be authorized.

Full time employees that work 8-hour days will receive 8 hours of holiday pay for holidays where the center is closed for the entire day. Part-time employees will receive 4 hours of holiday pay for the holidays where the center is closed for the entire day, no matter their normal working hours. Seasonal, temporary and substitute employees are NOT eligible for Holiday Pay.

Paid Holidays are as follows:

New Year's Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

The day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve Christmas Day

For partial holidays such as New Years Eve, employees are paid for their hours worked that day.

VACATION POLICY – FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES ONLY

We believe that having time to yourself is one of the most important benefits we can offer. Employees with less than one year of full-time service will not have any paid vacation. No more than five vacation days may be taken at any one time and vacation time can be taken only in increments of half days and full days. Vacation pay in lieu of actual time off will not be allowed except in cases determined by the Director to be in the best interests of Shining Stars Academy. Vacation may be used for an employee's vacation and other paid time off. No employee will be permitted to use vacation time until the time has been earned.

Eligibility:

Full-time employees are eligible for paid vacation time, which begins accruing on their **anniversary date** of employment.

Vacation Accrual:

- **After 1 year of service:** 5 days (40 hours) per year
- **After 2 years of service:** 10 days (80 hours) per year
- **After 5 years of service:** 15 days (120 hours) per year

Vacation is credited in full on the employee's anniversary date each year.

Usage:

- Vacation must be scheduled in advance and approved by management.
- Holidays that fall during vacation do **not** count against vacation days.
- Vacation **may not carry over** from year to year unless approved by management.

Requests to take vacation time must be approved in writing two weeks in advance by the Director. Any unused vacation pay will be forfeited at the end of their year. Any staff leaving employment for any reason will forfeit any unused vacation.

Unused vacation time may not be used for absences that occur within the final seven (7) business days of an employee's employment, whether the separation is voluntary or involuntary. Additionally, any accrued but unused vacation time will not be paid out if the employee's last day of employment falls within seven (7) business days from the date of their vacation time request or notice of separation. This policy applies regardless of whether notice of resignation is given.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Shining Stars Academy respects employees' rights to observe religious holidays or practices. Employees may request time off for religious observances, and the Company will make reasonable accommodations in compliance with federal and state law, as long as it does not cause undue hardship on business operations. Employees must submit requests for religious observance time off at least two (2) weeks in advance of the requested dates. Requests should be submitted in writing to Director. The Company will review each request to ensure staffing needs can be met. Approval is not guaranteed if accommodating the request would cause undue hardship on operations or policy is not followed. Employees may be asked to provide reasonable documentation of the religious observance if necessary. Religious observance leave is unpaid, unless an employee chooses to use accrued PTO or vacation time (if applicable) in accordance with company policy. If multiple employees request the same day(s) off for religious observance, the Company will attempt to accommodate fairly based on seniority, operational needs, and submission date.

FUNERAL LEAVE

Employees who have completed the orientation probationary period may be granted time off with pay upon the death of a member of their immediate family. The amount of time off granted will be 3 days.

For purposes of this section, immediate family is defined as husband, wife, mother, father, son, daughter, grandparents, brother, sister, as well as in-laws, Mother-in-Laws, Father-in-Laws, stepparent, stepchildren, fiancé or fiancée. Special cases may be granted by the Director. Employer reserves the right to request documentation.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Director may approve a leave of absence without pay to any employee because of sickness, disability, or other personal reasons. The application for such leave must be submitted in writing by the employee stating the reason for the request. If the leave of absence request is for personal reasons including extended illness, injury, or pregnancy, it shall be accompanied by a statement from the employee's physician stating the nature of the illness or incapacity that causes the employee to be medically disabled for performance of his or her normal work.

A leave of absence may be granted for a period not exceeding ninety consecutive days.

Time spent on such leave of absence without pay shall not be considered time in service for purposes of determining vacation time. Should the employee decide to return before the expiration of the leave without pay, he or she may do so after giving the owner a minimum of three days' notice, and providing proper certification indicating that he or she is capable of performing the regular job duties without restrictions.

Upon return from leave of absence, reasonable attempts will be made to reinstate the employee in his or her former position, or one of equal status and salary. Employees who do not report back to work or contact the office on the date due back to work will be considered to have resigned.

If an employee requests time off without pay for personal reasons, and approval of the request would burden Shining Stars Academy or unreasonably disrupt Shining Stars Academy functioning, the request may be denied. If the employee takes off despite the denial, the time off will be considered an unauthorized absence.

JURY DUTY

Time away from the job with pay will be permitted when a full-

time, salaried employee is summoned for jury duty. The employee will receive the difference in what he or she receives in pay for jury duty and his or her regular pay. The jury summons must be submitted to the immediate supervisor and documentation of the payment from the court. No employee shall receive pay for any court appearance in which he or she is a defendant, witness, or plaintiff, as this would be considered personal business.

MILITARY LEAVE

Employees who provide documentation that they must report for a military physical examination may use vacation time, in an amount not to exceed eight hours, for that purpose.

Short-term military leave may be granted to employees for a period not to exceed fifteen calendar days per year. To qualify for the benefits provided, employees must provide a copy of military orders to the supervisor prior to complying with the military requirements. Military leave will be without pay.

ABSENCE POLICIES

- **Unexcused Absence:** When a staff does not come to work for a reason that is not approved by the Management Team. This could include, but is not limited to:
 - Oversleeping
 - Uniform isn't clean
 - Headache/toothache
- **Excused Absence:** When a staff has given 2+ weeks' notice to Management Team, and it has been approved that the staff will not come to work. This could include, but is not limited to:
 - Vacations
 - Personal Events
 - Doctor/Dentist Appointments
 - Excused Absence could also be a sick day with a

doctor's note validating said sickness.

- **Short Notice Excused Absence:** When a staff has NOT given the required 2+ weeks notice to Management Team but has still received permission to not come to work.

ILLNESS POLICY

We understand that sickness happens, and we believe that you need to take care of yourself. Unfortunately, due to our nature of work and required state law ratios, we will require you to come into work if you do not have any of the acceptable reasons to miss:

- Fever over 101°
- Diagnosed Flu or Covid
- Unusual rash
- Vomiting or Diarrhea
- Contagious illness

An employee will not be permitted to return to work after an absence of two or more consecutive workdays without an authorization from a doctor.

Whenever possible, in case of illness or medical emergency causing an employee to be absent from work, such circumstances shall be reported to the Director two hours before the scheduled workday begins. Failure to give this notice will result in the employee being charged with an unexcused (unpaid) absence.

Pregnancy will be treated as any other medical condition.

Salaried employees may receive sick pay after 90 days of employment.

PROPER CALL OUT PROCEDURES

If you find yourself in a situation where you will be unable to

attend work, you are required to **CALL** the school to speak to management or call the Director directly. Texting or emailing is not allowed and will result in a write up.

TERMINATION

This policy defines various types of separations from the employ of Shining Stars Academy, LLC.

VOLUNTARY TERMINATION

Voluntary termination occurs when the separation is initiated by the employee. The following are examples of voluntary terminations.

- Written or oral resignation.
- Absence from work without notifying the supervisor.
- Failure to return to work upon recall from leave on the date designated.
- Failure to return from an approved leave of absence at the expiration of the leave.
- Retirement.

VOLUNTARY TERMINATION PROCEDURES & PAY

Receiving and signing this handbook acknowledges that you understand and agree that your pay rate for the final pay period of your employment will be \$10 per hour, unless you satisfy the following conditions:

- 1) give at least two weeks advance written notice of resignation to Shining Stars Academy management if you leave voluntarily
- 2) complete the amount of time given in written notice (i.e. staying the full two weeks).

If you satisfy all of those conditions, the rate of pay for the final pay period will be your usual pay rate.

INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

Involuntary termination occurs when the separation is initiated by the employer. The following are examples of involuntary

termination.

- Reduction in force-when an employee's services are terminated due to program changes and/or budget cutbacks. This might occur at any time and will be dictated by what is in the best interest of Shining Stars Academy without consideration to the employee's work record, length of employment, or personal circumstances.
- Discharge-when an employee, who is suited for and capable of performing the work, is terminated for such reasons as outlined in the Disciplinary Policies: or for other reasons as might be deemed appropriate and/or necessary by the owner.
- Release without fault-when an employee through no fault of his/her own, is unsuited for, or incapable of, performing work assigned, and no appropriate changes of assignment are available.
- Contract ends when an employee works until he or she reaches the contract end date that was specified on the date of hire.
- Disability-when, based on medical evidence, an employee is totally and permanently disabled from performing his/her work assignment.

GROSS MISCONDUCT

Misconduct not specifically described in these policies will be handled as warranted by the circumstances of the case involved. Shining Stars Academy may modify penalties imposed as a result of infractions of the rules when extenuating circumstances are found. Likewise, flagrant infractions of the rules of conduct may result in whatever action is deemed appropriate by the owner.

All employees are expected to conduct themselves according to the highest standards of integrity and ethics. Standards of employee conduct normally expected in any place of

employment will be the standards of employee conduct at Shining Stars Academy, whether or not such are in writing. As a basic standard of justice, employees are informed of the behavior expected of them through such avenues as job descriptions, personnel policies, and instructions of supervisors. Employees and administrators are always expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Complaints by employees should be conducted in the supervisor's office. Administrators should counsel employees in private.

Failure to conform one's conduct to reasonable requirements will result in disciplinary action. Written reports of all disciplinary action will be prepared and placed in the employee's personnel file. Disciplinary action will be taken as soon as the facts are known, and a fair judgment can be made. The following disciplinary actions may be taken, depending on the nature of the offense and circumstances surrounding the particular case. Discipline may or may not be progressive.

Shining Stars Academy may write up an employee for any infraction of policies and procedures laid out in this handbook, as well as discussed in trainings and meetings. An oral warning may be received prior to a written warning, but it is at the discretion of management.

- Tardiness
- Unexcused Absences & Improper Call Out
- Exhibiting unprofessionalism
- Use of phone in classroom
- Incorrect timecard
- Not following procedures laid out in this handbook

After 2 write ups, employee will be placed on a Corrective Action Plan (also know as a Performance Improvement Plan) determined by management and discussed with employee.

Should employee receive a 3rd write up, they are subject to termination at employer's discretion. Should Shining Stars Academy see fit, employer may terminate employee or place on PIP without a write up.

1. **Counseling:** Counseling should be used by the supervisor to explore with an employee the source of any problem and to find constructive ways to overcome any problem. Counseling will be conducted in private. The supervisor will document the counseling session.
2. **Written Reprimand and Warning:** The employee is given written warning that he or she has violated Shining Stars Academy rules, regulations, or procedures, or otherwise exhibited unacceptable and/or inappropriate behavior, or failed to perform job requirements properly. The specific offense will be stated along with required remediation, and further sanctions to be imposed if the infraction is repeated.
3. **Suspension:** An employee may be suspended without pay for a period of up to two weeks.
4. **Discharge:** An employee's association with Shining Stars Academy will be terminated; in which event, the employee shall forfeit all benefits.

Disciplinary actions are normally utilized in accordance with the severity of the infraction. Standards of behavior have been developed pertaining to employee conduct, performance, and responsibilities so that all employees can conduct themselves according to certain rules, good behavior, and conduct. The purpose of these standards is not to restrict the rights of anyone, but to help people work together harmoniously according to the standards that Shining Stars Academy has established.

Some offenses are so serious that they can result in termination without previous warnings. The following examples are listed for the guidance of all. This list is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all prohibited activity. The following actions may result in immediate termination:

- Physically or verbally abusing an enrolled child, staff member, or parent.
- Physically or verbally threatening a child, staff member, or parent.
- Smoking inside the building or on premises.
- Possessing, being under the influence of, or using alcoholic beverages or drugs on company time and/or premises or receiving a DUI while transporting children.
- Possessing dangerous weapons on company premises.
- Hitting a child or any other inappropriate disciplinary action.
- Neglect or physical abuse of a child.
- Withholding of food, nap or other comfort from a child.
- Immoral or indecent conduct, soliciting persons for immoral purposes, or the aiding or abetting of any of the above.
- Theft or misappropriation of customers, employees, or company property, or unauthorized removal of any of the above.
- Fighting or provoking a fight with a customer or an employee.
- Abusing or destroying company property, the property of customers, or the property of other employees.
- Taking or "borrowing" cash.
- Falsification of center records (i.e. employment application, time clock, and your records).
- Failure to report to work without proper notification.
- Conviction of a felony for any offense committed

while employed by the center.

- Leaving a child unattended (inside or outside).
- Allowing a child to leave the center with an unauthorized person.
- Sleeping while supervising children.
- Excessive or habitual absenteeism or tardiness from work.
- Insubordination that shows gross disrespect such as threatening, cussing, or yelling at administrators.

These rules do not represent every conceivable type of offense but reflect those most frequently encountered.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Any employee of Shining Stars Academy who believes that he/she has a justifiable grievance shall take the following steps to resolve the grievance:

Complete the formal grievance form and submit to management within five working days of the incident. If necessary, management will investigate parties involved and a written decision by the supervisor shall be given to the employee within five working days of the meeting.

If a satisfactory solution is not reached, the employee may request in writing a formal meeting with the appropriate administrator within five working days of receipt of the immediate supervisor's decision.

EMPLOYER SLANDER

Receiving and signing this handbook acknowledges that you are prohibited from slandering Shining Stars Academy in any public forum. Any employee, past or present, who slanders or libels Shining Stars Academy may be subject to legal implications. This includes leaving negative reviews/comments

on social media, negatively speaking to parents or future families, and other similar situations.

NON-SOLICITATION AGREEMENT

Receiving and signing this handbook acknowledges the two following aspects of Shining Star Academy’s Non-Solicitation Agreement.

- **Non-Solicitation of Shining Stars Academy families:** During the term of your employment at Shining Stars Academy and for twelve (12) months following the termination of your employment for any reason (the “Family Non-Solicitation Period”), in order to protect Shining Stars Academy’s confidential information, you agree that you will not, either on your own behalf or on behalf of any other person or entity, directly or indirectly, solicit, sell or assist anyone in providing service relating to any of Shining Stars Academy’s services.
- **Non-Solicitation of Shining Star Academy’s Employees:** During the term of your employment at Shining Star Academy and for twenty-four (24) months following the termination of your employment for any reason (the “Employee Non-Solicitation Period”), you agree that you will not, either on your own behalf or on behalf of any other person or entity, directly or indirectly, hire, solicit, retain, or encourage to leave the employ of Shining Star Academy (or assist any other person or entity in hiring, soliciting, retaining or encouraging) any person who is then or was within six (6) months of the date of such hiring, an employee of Shining Star Academy.

ADA/ADAA

PURPOSE

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans

with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA) are federal laws that require employers with 15 or more employees to not discriminate against applicants and individuals with disabilities and, when needed, provide reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees who are qualified for a job—with or without reasonable accommodations—so that they may perform the position’s essential job duties.

It is the policy of Shining Stars Academy to comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of individuals with disabilities and to act in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Furthermore, it is the company policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, compensation, training, discharge, or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

PROCEDURES

When an applicant with a disability requests accommodation and can be reasonably accommodated without creating an undue hardship or causing a direct threat to workplace safety, the employee will be given the same consideration for employment as any other applicant. Applicants who pose a direct threat to the health, safety and well-being of themselves or others in the workplace when the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation will not be hired. Shining Stars Academy will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability so that they can perform the essential job functions unless doing so causes a direct threat to these individuals or others in the workplace and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation or if the accommodation creates an undue hardship to Shining Stars Academy. Contact human resources with any accommodation questions or requests. All accommodations must be requested

in writing and given an interactive ADA accommodations meeting before given approval or denial. Shining Stars Academy reserves the right the request proper documentation, including but not limited to, medical documentation and evaluations.

All employees are required to comply with the company's safety standards. Current employees who pose a direct threat to the health or safety of themselves or other individuals in the workplace will be placed on leave until an organizational decision has been made regarding the employee's immediate employment situation.

Individuals currently using illegal drugs at or outside of work are excluded from coverage under the company ADA policy. Shining Stars Academy ADA policy does not extend protections to individuals who are currently using illegal drugs. However, if an individual is in or has completed a drug rehabilitation program and is not currently using illegal drugs, a reasonable accommodation may be available.

The HR department is responsible for implementing this policy, including resolving reasonable accommodation, safety/direct threat and undue hardship issues.

GENERAL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

TRAINING

Training is a never-ending process at Shining Stars Academy. Training is accomplished through pre-service training, on-the-job training, reading material, audio/visual videos, workshops and employee meetings. Our employees also learn by exchanging ideas with their co-workers. Your Director will work closely with you so that you can learn to perform your job most effectively. You will learn the functions of your center and

acquire an overall picture of our operations and services. Every effort will be made so that you can do your job properly and confidently. **Each staff member is required a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education per year.** Employees must submit original certificates to the Director immediately upon completion of coursework in order to get proper credit. You will receive a copy of your completion certificate immediately upon submission. You are required to comply with the state minimum annual training requirement which include CPR and First Aid.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

We have a requirement of 10 volunteer hours per year for each employee. This may be in the form of volunteering during school events not during work hours (i.e. Trunk or Treat, Festivals, etc.).

COMMUNICATION

Parent Communication is very important. Try to let each parent know something about what his or her child did during the day. Be open to reasonable parent requests and questions. If you are in doubt, please ask the Director. **Pay special attention to getting parent requests communicated to all staff members working with the child!!** Use of the communication app is required for all staff. For children under 2 all meals, naps and diapers are to be logged. For all children a weekly classroom update and 2 weekly individual updates are required.

VISITORS

We have an “OPEN DOOR” policy and we welcome parents and others to visit our center. Besides prospective parents, we may also have student teachers, teacher observers, administrators and an occasional “drop in” visitor. Staff is always expected to be courteous to these visitors and welcome them to our center.

FIELD TRIPS

The Director must approve arrangements for off-campus field trips at least 3 weeks in advance. Written permission must be obtained from all parents. When leaving the Center's premise, you must note the time you left, where you are going, when you will be back, and the names of the staff and children present on the trip.

Field trips may be planned using center vehicles. Teachers may drive these vehicles if they have met the State requirements for transporting children. Children will be transported in accordance with the current Texas laws regarding seat belts/booster seats/car seats.

At all times while students are off premises, emergency contact forms and health assessments for each child, first aid kit, permission slip and class roster must be in the possession of at least one staff member per group.

WATER ACTIVITIES

BEFORE doing any water activities, Staff must be familiar with water activities guidelines as outlined in Minimum Standards to be aware of any special ratio changes or limitation on permitted activities. In addition, staff must make sure that each child has written permission to participate in water activities in their enrollment papers. Finally, for any water activities other than sensory table or gardening, parents must have notice first (for example, swimming, sprinkler play or splash days).

MAINTENANCE (ROOM/BUILDING ORGANIZATION AND CLEANLINESS)

It is the responsibility of each staff member to keep rooms and the building neat, safe, clean, organized, attractive and appropriate for children. The teachers are required to have the classroom ready each day before the children arrive, and closing teachers are responsible for putting the room back in a clean and orderly way at the end of the day.

Teachers will encourage children to clean up after themselves in the classrooms and restrooms, making sure that the water is off, sinks and counters are wiped off, toilets are flushed, and there is no paper on the floor.

Teachers are responsible for cleaning their rooms daily including sanitizing toys, mopping floors, cleaning highchairs, table etc.

Teachers are responsible for keeping their classroom storage cabinets clean and orderly. We encourage teachers to store materials in plastic storage containers with lids and discourage the use of cardboard boxes.

RESOURCE ROOM STORAGE

Generally, classroom materials and supplies are stored in the classrooms or activity rooms. Teacher resource room storage is for supplies ordered by the Director and made available to the staff.

The refrigerator labeled for teacher use only may be used to keep staff lunches and drinks. Staff members are responsible for removing those items each day. Keeping the kitchen clean and organized is a group project and it is important that each staff member clean up after him/herself.

OFFICE EQUIPMENT

All office equipment (copier, computers, etc.) are available to all teaching staff and may be for center related purposes only. Personal use of the equipment is not allowed without permission.

SMOKING & ALCOHOL

The use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco products is not permitted in the Center, on the playground, or on the grounds. This also includes vaping and vape products. Staff also smelling strongly of cigarette smoke will be asked to change clothes.

To ensure the safety of children, families, and staff, our center maintains a strict drug- and alcohol-free workplace. Employees

must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during working hours, on company property, or while supervising children.

The company reserves the right to conduct drug and/or alcohol testing in the following circumstances: Pre-Employment Testing, Random Testing, Reasonable Suspicion Testing, Post-Accident Testing, and Return-to-Duty/Follow-Up Testing.

Reasonable suspicion may include, but is not limited to:

- Odor of alcohol or drugs on breath, clothing, or person. Slurred speech, unsteady balance, or impaired coordination
- Erratic, unsafe, or unusual behavior
- Possession of alcohol, drugs, or related paraphernalia at work

Supervisors will document observations in writing, and whenever possible, a second supervisor/manager will also provide written confirmation.

Refusal to submit to testing when required under this policy will be treated as a positive result and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Any employee who tests positive for drugs or alcohol, or who is found to be under the influence at work, will be immediately terminated.

CONFERENCES

Parent conferences can and should be rewarding experiences.

A parent conference is a meeting between a child's parent(s) and teacher. The meeting brings out a good understanding of the child and his or her development. Parent conferences are to be scheduled by the teacher and should be held at least twice a year (the Director will announce the dates for the conferences each semester).

There are several reasons for parent conferences. The first is progress. This means the rate at which each child is developing and meeting developmental milestones. Each child's developmental portfolio demonstrates this clearly and should be shared with families at that time. Conferences can also be arranged to discuss behavior – these are general conferences just to touch base with the parent. The parent can report on such things as the child's attitudes, health, family relationships, interests, and any social factors that may come into play with the child's development. The teacher should report on such things as the child's attitude toward school and other children and progress in his/her development.

POSTED INFORMATION

Each classroom teacher is responsible to assure that the following are ***posted in the room***:

- Emergency Policies
- Allergies
- Diapering Policy (for infant and toddler classrooms)
- Daily Classroom Schedule
- Weekly Lesson Plan
- Field Trip Information and/or Upcoming Events
- Menus

MOVIE/VIDEO POLICY

Children should not bring videos from home. Movies will only be shown to children when it is used as a supplement to the theme for the week. Before showing a video, it must be approved by the Director and submitted with the week's lesson plans. A request form must be completed with the name of the video and how it relates to the lessons for the week.

LESSON PLANS

Lead Teachers are responsible for posting lesson plans on their

Parent Information Board by Monday morning before the children arrive, for the current week. Weekly activities must be planned in accordance with the school's philosophies and curriculum guidelines of developmentally appropriate practice and discovery learning. Teachers shall plan activities to balance the day/week for the children and to avoid neglect of any one curricular area. A lesson plan form will be distributed to all teachers and will be used to plan weekly curriculum. Lesson plans for the following week must be completed and turned in to the Director by 3:30 p.m. on Thursday

PERSONAL PROPERTY & PHONE POLICY

To ensure a safe, distraction-free, and professional learning environment, this policy establishes guidelines for storing employee personal belongings while at work. All employee personal items (including but not limited to purses, bags, backpacks, and phones) must be stored in designated lockers or other approved storage areas provided by the school. Personal items may not be kept in classrooms, hallways, or other student-accessible areas.

Personal cell phones and electronic devices must be secured in lockers during working hours. Phone use during work hours is not permitted except during breaks or in case of emergencies, and only in designated staff areas. No personal calls will be made or received while in a classroom. **TEXT MESSAGING IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.** Any messages received via school landline will be taken and given to the teacher.

Each employee will be assigned a locker for storage of personal belongings. The school will provide locks. Combinations will be kept on file by administration for safety and access needs. Employees may not substitute their own locks without written approval. Lockers remain the property of the school, and

administration reserves the right to access lockers if necessary, however your personal property will not be searched.

Employees are responsible for securing their belongings in their designated locker. The school is not liable for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property that is not stored in designated lockers.

Employees may only bring beverages, snacks, or food items into classrooms. These items must be kept discreetly and safely out of student reach.

Company will stock bathrooms with feminine hygiene products for ease of use so you will not need to bring purses or bags to the restroom with you.

DRESS CODE

Your use of discretion in style of dress and behavior is essential to illustrate your professionalism. Therefore, while performing duties for the Center, you are expected to dress in attire appropriate to the business environment, and you are expected to behave in a professional and businesslike manner. You will use good judgment in your behavior, at all times, to best represent yourself and the center.

Clothing should always be clean and in good repair. You will receive t-shirts as required uniform at the start of employment and from time to time, Shining Stars Academy will issue new school related shirts or other similar clothing item. The number of items received will be documented in your employment folder. Should your employment with Shining Stars Academy be terminated for any reason, before your 90-day Orientation Period is completed, all items must be returned within 7 days before your final paycheck is issued. If they are not returned you will be

required to repay the cost of t-shirts via deduction from final paycheck.

You are hired to work with children and being down and on the floor frequently is part of the job responsibility. Clothing must be appropriate to engage children in all types of activities throughout the day. Jeans are allowed; however, they must fit loosely with no holes or lavish accessories. Use a conservative outlook when deciding upon apparel. Biker shorts, tights, and leggings are not permitted.

Jewelry will be conservative. Long chain necklaces or pendants should not be worn as they can present a safety hazard to small children. Earrings should also be small, conservative, and secure, to prevent children from grabbing and pulling loose.

Shoes must always be neat and in good repair. Tennis shoes or flats are best. Since you are expected to engage the children in activities on the playground then shoes should be appropriate for the situation. Open toe or open heel shoes are not recommended for safety reasons.

STAFF MEETINGS

To ensure that staff has the opportunity to receive pertinent information and clarification of problems and issues, we conduct staff meetings quarterly. We document the dates on which staff meetings have been held. You are expected to attend. Staff are paid for mandatory meetings held outside normal working hours.

COACHING

You are expected to follow all policies and procedures for smooth operation and safety of the children in your care. However, everyone occasionally makes mistakes or needs

guidance for optimal performance of teaching duties. When an employee needs guidance progressive discipline procedures will be followed. Those procedures may include but may not be restricted to the following: oral coaching or warning, written warning, written improvement plan, administrative leave with or without pay, up to termination. Nothing in this policy or in the handbook is intended to limit in any way the center's right to terminate at any time, with or without cause and with or without advance notice.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

STATE LICENSING RULES AND REGULATIONS

All staff are expected to be knowledgeable in State Licensing Rules and Regulations for Child Care and are expected to follow all procedures as outlined in the Rules and Regulations for care of children. Failure may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

MEAL AND SNACK ROUTINES

Children must wash their hands before being seated for lunch/snacks. Toddler meals may be dished up by the staff members. Preschoolers are encouraged to serve themselves family style in an orderly manner. Children are encouraged to try all foods, however, if a child is not interested in a particular food, do not force him/her to try it. Food is not to be used as a reward or punishment. All children need to be encouraged to sit at the tables during meal/snack time. Encourage the children to show courtesy by not eating until everyone is served. Children should be encouraged to help as much as possible. Teachers are to encourage and demonstrate pleasant conversation at the tables. Teachers may eat the same food

while the children are eating, however, when the children are close to finishing, all staff must finish as well. Do not rush the children through a meal, however, do not allow children to play in their food.

After lunch, have the children use the bathroom and wash their hands & face.

Staff should wear plastic kitchen gloves when handling food. Teachers shall wash and sanitize table surfaces before meals and snacks. After meals, the table shall be washed, and the floor swept. If you bring food from home or order out, please consume such food on your break away from the children. You are to clock out for your lunch break unless otherwise authorized by the manager to work through the break. You are expected to only eat center food that is offered to all children in your care while in the presence of children. Always be aware if drinking hot beverages around the children and keep them out of reach to avoid possible burns. Any beverages other than those being offered to children must be consumed from a closed container and kept away from the children.

CULTURES AND HOLIDAYS

It is impossible to totally ignore holidays/celebrations, especially the Christmas season, in view of the flurry of activities generated by them. We need to be aware of, and sensitive to, the diversity of customs and beliefs represented by the children in our Center. It goes without saying that no child should be embarrassed or made to feel alienated because of his or her parents' specific faith or beliefs. Each holiday season provides an opportunity to emphasize mutual understanding, acceptance and brotherhood among all racial, ethnic and religious elements

of the human family. Activities should not involve children in worship activities and should be structured to present the culture rather than the religious emphasis of the season/holiday.

TOILETING

Children in diapers shall be diapered on a regular daily schedule and as needed. Changing tables shall be disinfected after each use. Staff shall wash their hands before and their hands and the child's hands after diapering and use plastic gloves when changing the child. Children are not to be left unattended on the changing table. Teachers of preschool classrooms are not required to have a regular diapering schedule but will change children as needed.

Teachers shall change children's clothes if they become wet or dirty. Soiled clothes shall be removed in a sanitary manner, placed in a plastic bag, closed securely and placed in the child's cubby to be sent home. CHILDREN'S PERSONAL ITEMS MAY NOT BE LAUNDERED AT THE CENTER. Soiled underpants or training pants MAY NOT be rinsed out before placing in a plastic bag, solid waste should be thrown in toilet. Teachers shall wash hands immediately after changing soiled clothing.

HAND WASHING

Hands should be washed upon arrival at the Center, before handling food, after every diaper change, use of the bathroom, before using the water table, after touching pets, after being outside and after blowing/wiping noses. In order to teach good HAND WASHING skills to children, please help them wash their hands as noted above.

CLEANING/DISINFECTING

Teachers shall implement proper and frequent cleaning and disinfecting practices and routines to provide a clean environment for children and to help prevent the spread of disease. Disinfecting with chemical agents (bleach, disinfectant) destroys specific, harmful germs. Teachers shall use the following guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting:

- Surfaces and objects contaminated with blood, urine, vomit or stool: clean and disinfect immediately.
- Objects handled by young children (ex. Toys, mouthed objects, tabletops, door handles): clean and disinfect at least daily and when soiled,
- Diapering area: clean and disinfect after each diaper change.
- Water tables: clean and disinfect at least daily and more often if soiled.
- Uncarpeted areas: clean and disinfect daily and when soiled.
- Carpeted areas: swept/vacuumed daily, spot clean and disinfect when there is body fluid soiling.

ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION FROM THE CENTER

Children with signs of a communicable disease cannot be admitted into the Center. Teachers and parents are to look over the child briefly upon arrival at the center for any signs of illness such as:

- A temperature over 100 degrees taken in the armpit.
- A tympanic (ear) temperature over 100 degrees.
- An oral temperature greater than 101 degrees.
- An illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in child-care activities including outdoor play.
- The illness results in greater need for care than the caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and

supervision of the other children in care.

- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
- Inflammation of the eyes.
- Skin lesions, i.e., impetigo, ringworm, and scabies.
- Any undiagnosed rash.

Children at the center showing any or a combination of any of the above symptoms are to be taken to the office and a parent called to take the child home. The call to parents can be made after clearing the illness with the owner or Director.

For illnesses other than fever, diarrhea and vomiting, children must be kept home the recommended number of days.

A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.

PET CARE

Any teacher wanting to have a pet in their classroom must review the State guidelines for acceptable pets in the classroom. No pets are permitted until all rules have been reviewed with the Director and written permission has been granted.

It is the teacher's responsibility, when keeping classroom pets, to maintain them and their containers in a clean and sanitary manner. Pets will not be allowed if they interfere with the cleanliness of the room or the safety of the children. Pets are not to be left unattended outside of their containers.

CLASSROOM TABLET POLICY

Each classroom is provided with a tablet (iPad) for instructional and administrative use. The teachers assigned to the classroom are **jointly responsible** for the care, security, and proper use of the tablet.

- **Use and Storage:** Tablets must be used for work-related purposes only and stored securely when not in use.
- **Accountability:** If a tablet is lost, stolen, or damaged due to negligence or failure to follow proper procedures, the teachers assigned to that classroom may be held accountable. Consequences may include verbal or written warnings, additional training, or financial responsibility for repair or replacement of the device.
- **Reporting:** Any damage, loss, or malfunction must be reported to administration immediately. Prompt reporting may reduce or mitigate consequences.
- **Shared Responsibility:** Since tablets are assigned to classrooms and not individuals, all staff members in the classroom share responsibility. “He said / she said” disputes will be resolved based on evidence, observation, and administration’s judgment.

Maintaining the integrity and availability of classroom technology is essential for smooth operations and student learning. All staff are expected to take this responsibility seriously.

SAFETY POLICIES

SURVEILLANCE POLICY

Purpose

Our childcare center is committed to providing a safe, secure, and

high-quality environment for children and staff. To support this mission, we have installed video cameras in classrooms, common areas, and outdoor playgrounds. The purpose of these cameras is to:

- Promote child safety and well-being.
- Document incidents, accidents, or emergencies.
- Support staff training, coaching, and professional development.
- Comply with licensing and regulatory requirements.

Scope and Location

Cameras are installed in areas where children and staff are present, including:

- All classrooms and indoor common areas.
- Hallways and front office.
- Outdoor playgrounds and facility entrances.

*Important: Cameras are not installed in private areas where employees and children have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as bathrooms and changing areas.

Monitoring and Access

- Only designated management personnel have access to live feeds and recordings.
- Recordings are used solely for safety, training, compliance, or incident investigation purposes.
- Employees are not permitted to access, share, or distribute recordings unless explicitly authorized.
- Parents are authorized to request footage if an incident is reported and management sees fit.

Use of Recordings

Recordings may be used for:

- Investigating incidents, accidents, or policy violations.
- Staff coaching and professional development.
- Compliance with licensing or legal requirements.

Recordings may not be used for:

- Personal purposes unrelated to center operations.

- Monitoring staff outside of work duties or in private areas.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All footage is confidential. Unauthorized access, sharing, or distribution of recordings is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Storage and Retention

- Recordings are stored securely and protected with restricted access.
- Recordings are retained for 15 days unless needed for ongoing investigations or licensing compliance.
- After the retention period, recordings are permanently and securely deleted, unless kept for training purposes.

Impact on Evaluations

Recordings may be referenced to support staff training, coaching, or performance evaluations. The primary goal is to ensure safety and professional growth, not punitive surveillance.

By working at our center, employees acknowledge and understand that:

- Cameras are installed in accordance with this policy.
- Recordings may be used for safety, compliance, or training purposes.
- Employees are expected to maintain the confidentiality of all recordings.

AUTHORIZED ADULTS / SIGNING IN AND OUT

The arrival and departure of children are extremely important events. Parents develop opinions about the Center, teachers and the program from these interactions. PLEASE GREET VISITORS, PARENTS AND CHILDREN BY INTRODUCING YOURSELF AS THEY ENTER AND ACKNOWLEDGE THEM WHEN THEY LEAVE!

Parent(s) must designate, in writing, all other adults who may pick up their child from the Center. **If an unfamiliar adult comes to pick up a child, check the listing of authorized adults for the child and if their name is listed, check their identification.** If you recognize the person listed, you do not need to check I.D. **IMPORTANT: No matter how insistent a person may be, if he/she is not on the list, you CANNOT let the child leave.**

For the safety of the children in our care, the security of our campus, and the efficiency of our daily operations, non-employees are not permitted beyond the front office area of the facility. This includes personal visitors, friends, or partners.

Employees may not bring visitors into classrooms, playground areas, staff workspaces, or other operational areas of the center. If someone needs to drop off or pick up an item for you, they must do so through the front office. Failure to follow this expectation may result in disciplinary action, as maintaining a secure and distraction-free environment is a critical responsibility for all staff members.

CLASSROOM SAFETY

The staff is responsible for the safety and well-being of each child. In doing so, the staff shall be responsible for the following safety precautions:

- The classroom shall be arranged to allow for freedom of movement with no sharp corners, unanchored bookshelves or other safety hazards.
- All furniture and equipment shall be in good repair.
- Carpeting shall be kept clean.
- Walls shall be kept clean and free of dirt, paint, or cracks.
- Classrooms shall be kept clean and free from accumulated trash and dirt.

- All medications, cleaning substances or any toxic substances shall be kept out of children’s reach.
- Extension cords shall not be used.
- ***Any items in need of repair or cleaning shall be reported to the Director.***

SUPERVISION

Children will always be supervised and will never be left anywhere unattended.

At times when it is necessary for teachers to separate, (for example, one teacher on the playground, one teacher cleaning / preparing classroom), each teacher shall be responsible for a number of children so that **no teacher is ever out of ratio.**

All staff are expected to practice active supervision at all times when caring for children. This means being fully engaged and constantly aware of children’s activities, positioning yourself to see and respond quickly, and using your body to actively supervise—standing, bending, lifting, and moving as needed to maintain safety. Active supervision ensures that staff can promptly prevent accidents, respond to emergencies, and support children’s participation in a safe, nurturing environment.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire:

Fire drills will be conducted monthly. Teachers must shut windows and close doors behind them. One teacher will lead the children out the nearest, designated exit, and the second teacher will follow the children out. Children and teachers will stay together in a group in the designated area. Teachers are to take roll and a head count when safely outside the building. Teachers will lead children inside the building after the designated person

in charge has given the all-clear.

Tornado:

Tornado drills will be conducted 4 times a year. The Director or Assistant Director will announce the drill. Teachers will lead children to their designated tornado drill location. Children will sit on the floor against the wall. Teachers are to take roll and a head count when safely at the designated location. Teachers will lead children back to the classrooms after the designated person in charge has given the all clear.

PLAYGROUND / OUTDOOR PLAY

The teacher will enforce the following playground rules.

- Children may not throw sand, rocks, mulch or tire chips.
- Children may not climb up the slide.
- Children must slide feet first down the slide on their bottoms.
- No toys from the classroom or toys from home are allowed outside on the playground. Balls, shovels, or other outdoor materials are not allowed on climbing structures.
- Tricycles stay on the sidewalk. Children must be seated to ride tricycles. If a child runs into the wall or another child while riding the tricycles, they will lose their turn.
- Pushing, shoving and wrestling are not allowed.
- Staff are to be actively involved with the children on the playground. Staff must be positioned to view all parts of the playground. Staff must be spread out throughout the playground so that they are on opposite ends of the playground from each other.
- No climbing on the fence or trees.

Teachers are required to use hand rope for guiding children in halls to ensure all students are accounted for and together. Name to Face practice and daily sheets must be completed anytime children are taken outside. Name to Face daily sheets must be turned in to management at the end of every day.

Cold Weather Policy for Outdoor Play: Teachers shall not take infants and toddlers outside if the temperature is below 40 degrees (with the wind chill factored in). Preschool and PreK children will not go outside if there is precipitation but may spend a limited amount of time outside when the temperature is below 40 degrees (with the wind chill factored in). When going outside on cold days, teachers shall make sure that children’s coats are zipped, and caps or hoods and mittens are on.

Hot Weather Policy for Outdoor Play: Teachers shall not take infants and toddlers outside if the temperature reaches 95 degrees (with the heat index factored in). Preschool and PreK children will not go outside if the temperature reaches 100 degrees (with the heat index factored in). When we do go out on hot days, teachers shall be mindful of the effect of the heat on children by providing opportunities for shade, allowing children more trips to the water fountain, and limiting the amount of time the children are outdoors.

EMPLOYEE ACCOUNTABILITY

All employees are expected to act in a manner that ensures the safety and well-being of children, full compliance with licensing standards, and protection of the school’s reputation and operations. Any actions, omissions, or negligence that result in harm to a child, violations of state minimum standards, licensing citations, or other regulatory deficiencies are considered serious breaches of professional responsibility.

Employees understand that such breaches may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. In addition, if an employee’s conduct causes the school to face regulatory

penalties, financial loss, or other harm, the center reserves the right to pursue all available remedies. This includes, but is not limited to, civil litigation and reporting criminal conduct to law enforcement authorities in the form of pressing charges, which may lead to prosecution.

Employees are responsible for seeking guidance and clarification when unsure about policies, procedures, or legal obligations. The school expects all staff to maintain the highest standards of care, supervision, and compliance at all times.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

Teachers use many techniques to assist children in resolving conflicts. Although methods vary depending on children's ages and the severity of the situation, all teach problem-solving skills and instill an intrinsically motivated sense of right and wrong. Teachers use the following techniques when dealing with conflict situations:

- **Limit setting:** Children are given basic, clear, and concise rules to guide their behavior. Boundaries and expectations expand as children develop.
- **Consistency:** So children know what to expect, limits and expectations are consistent throughout the classes, and all adults respond in a similar way to conflict situations.
- **Tone:** A kind yet serious tone delivered by intervening adults reinforces children's sense of security and lets them know the situation is under control.
- **Modeling:** Adults clearly demonstrate compassionate, caring behaviors that set examples for children to follow.
- **Passive intervention:** Teachers give children time to

work through their own problems but are there to help if things escalate to destructive or aggressive behavior.

- **Physical intervention:** Children are physically separated if they begin to hurt each other.
- **Identifying/ interpreting:** Teachers clarify problems, diffuse tension, and facilitate problem solving.
- **Validating feelings:** Acknowledging one's own emotions and those of other children facilitates learning.
- **Generating options/solutions:** Children are given tools to settle conflicts (negotiate, make retribution, collaborate, etc.).
- **Redirection:** A request to stop a negative behavior is accompanied by a suggestion for an appropriate behavior to replace it.
- **Natural consequences:** Teachers point out and reinforce natural consequences as they occur. Children see the results of their own behavior and begin to modify it accordingly. "You threw sand after we asked you not to. Now you need to leave the sandbox and find a different area to play in."

Teachers shall plan their programs as to minimize behavior problems by:

- Planning a program that is appropriate for the age and individual levels of the children.
- Providing a balance between active/quiet and self-directed/teacher-directed activities.
- Carefully planning transitions between activities.
- Focusing 100% attention on the children, guiding their behavior, facilitating their learning, interacting, listening and encouraging them as they meet and strive to overcome new challenges.

DO'S AND DON'TS

DO SAY...	DON'T SAY...
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“Sit down when you slide”	“Don’t stand up when you slide”
“Dig in the sand”	“Don’t throw sand”
“Keep the puzzle on the table”	“Don’t dump the puzzle on the floor”
“Turn the pages carefully”	“Don’t tear the book”
“Talk in a quiet voice”	“Shut up! Don’t shout”
“Time to go inside”	“Should we go inside?”
“Come wash your hands”	“Did you want to wash your hands?”

DO...

1. Speak directly to the child; do not call across a room.
2. Speak in a calm, kind voice.
3. Speak in short, meaningful sentences appropriate to the child’s level of understanding. Begin the sentence with the child’s name.
4. Get down on the child’s level if possible so that the child can see your face.
5. Keep your emotions under control.
6. Praise the child for appropriate actions.

DON’T...

1. Make fun (harass, humiliate, name call, embarrass) the child.
2. Give the child a choice if he cannot, in reality, have a choice
3. Compare the child with another child. “See how clean Johnny’s table is.”
4. Be dishonest with the child. “Johnny didn’t mean to hit you.”
5. Make a child feel guilty by saying “I’m ashamed of you.”
Instead express your feelings “That makes me angry when you

do that.”

6. Make a child feel inferior by saying, “You’re big now. Only babies cry.”
7. Make a child say they are sorry.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

EVACUATION AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

All staff are expected to review and be aware of all emergency and evacuation procedures and participate in emergency drills. In the event of an emergency, operating procedures are in place to ensure the safety of children.

Evacuation Plans:

- All employees are responsible for moving children to the designated safe area.
- Emergency evacuation & relocation diagrams are located in areas specified by DFPS & local authorities

In some circumstances, parents will be called upon to pick up their children. As needed, the local authorities will be called to aid in the transportation of the children to an alternate shelter away from the center.

Alternate shelter:

Clay Madsen Recreation Center

1600 Gattis School Rd.

Round Rock, TX 78664

- Upon departure and arrival, the Director or alternate assistant will have a list of all children that must be accounted for. Together, the Director or alternate assistant and the caregivers will verify that all children are present.
- The Director or alternate assistant is responsible for calling

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the local authorities needed such as:

Fire department, ambulance, local police or sheriff, poison control, and DFPS childcare licensing.

- The Director or alternate assistant is responsible for securing children's emergency numbers, emergency medical authorizations, and attendance sheets during an emergency.

FIRST AID PROCEDURES

Minor cuts and abrasions suffered while at Shining Stars Academy will receive proper care-specifically, they will be washed with soap and warm water and properly bandaged. Treatment will be logged, and the parent will be notified when the injury occurred.

If a medical emergency arises, a parent will be contacted before any emergency treatment takes place unless doing so endangers the child's life. In such a case, necessary steps will be taken, putting the child first (calling hospital, doctor, control, and so forth). If a parent is unable to be reached, the alternate responsible adults listed on the child's Emergency Card will be contacted.

INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTS

If a child is injured at the Center, the teacher in charge shall administer first aid and then complete an Incident Report Form describing the injury. An Incident Report Form shall be filled out if:

- the injury leaves a mark, bump, or cut on the skin;
- if it involves a burn; any injury involving the head, even if there are no visible signs of the injury;
- if a child bites/is bitten.

The purpose of the form is to notify parents of the injury, how it

happened, and what steps we took to administer first aid and to correct (if possible) the circumstances that caused the injury. A parent must sign the form to acknowledge that he/she is aware of the child's injury. The parent gets the original of the form the day of the injury; one copy shall be kept in the child's file. The parent shall be notified by phone of the injury if it is a head injury, a bite that breaks the skin, an allergic reaction, and any injury that might need medical attention. If a student assistant is required to complete an Incident Report Form, a lead teacher or administrative staff member must provide an authorizing signature. **A parent signature is also required.**

DISPENSING MEDICATION

Prescription and non-prescription medication shall be given only if the time it was given.

HANDLING OF MEDICINE

- All medication will be stored out of reach from children.
- Medication will be stored so it does not contaminate food.
- Shining Stars Academy will refrigerate medication (if applicable).

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members must be 25 years of age or older with a valid driver license and will be required to take a 2-hour transportation training prior to the transportation of children. This training will be renewed annually.

Staff members will abide by all state MVR including no major violations, DUI, racing, hit & run, speeding in excess of 20 mph over posted speed limit, manslaughter.

No more than 2 moving violations within the past 3 years

No more than 1 at fault accidents within the past 5 years.

Staff is required to abide by minimum standards and Shining Stars Academy written Transportation Policy. You will be

provided with the written Transportation Policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All employees of Shining Stars Academy will always keep confidentiality with all matters of the center. Due to the sensitive nature of information that you will know as a teacher of young children, it is imperative that you keep sensitive information confidential. Any information about children or their families must be shared on a “need to know” basis only. Thus, be very sensitive about discussing children’s developmental needs and family information in public places such as the hallway. Others that do not have a need to know could hear such information. Protect the interests of each child and family by keeping confidentiality.

The expectation is for you to be supportive of center efforts by avoiding negative or malicious discussions about center issues. Stay positive and focus on the early childhood needs of the children in your care.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT & ANTI-GOSSIP POLICY

To maintain a respectful, professional, and emotionally safe environment for employees, children, and families, all staff are expected to communicate in a manner that reflects integrity and professionalism at all times.

Gossip, defined as discussing coworkers, children, families, or center operations in a negative, speculative, or non-work-related manner with individuals who do not have a legitimate business need to know, is strictly prohibited.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Discussing another employee’s performance, discipline, or personal matters
- Spreading rumors, assumptions, or unverified information

- Speaking negatively about coworkers, management, children, or families
- Engaging in divisive conversations that create conflict or discomfort in the workplace

Employees are expected to:

- Address concerns directly with management rather than coworkers
- Maintain confidentiality regarding all workplace matters
- Contribute to a positive, team-oriented environment
- Refrain from participating in or encouraging gossip initiated by others

Any employee who feels they are the subject of gossip, or who witnesses inappropriate workplace discussions, should report the concern to management immediately.

Employees who engage in gossip or contribute to a toxic work environment may be considered to be acting against the best interest of the center and its operations.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Severe or repeated violations that result in harm to staff, children, families, or the center's reputation may result in escalated disciplinary measures.

Additionally, gossip or negative discussions of any kind are strictly prohibited *in the presence of children at all times*. This includes classrooms, playgrounds, hallways, and any area where children may overhear. Engaging in gossip or unprofessional discussions in front of children will be considered a **serious violation of this policy** due to its direct impact on the emotional environment and quality of care. Such behavior may result in **immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination**, regardless of prior warnings.

PURCHASE REIMBURSEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent procedures for employee reimbursement requests and to clarify ownership of reimbursed items.

Employees must submit a written reimbursement request prior to making any purchase they wish to be considered for reimbursement. Requests must be submitted to management and include a description of the item(s) to be purchased, the intended use and benefit to the school, estimated cost and vendor information. Purchases made without prior written approval are not eligible for reimbursement. Any items purchased and reimbursed by the school are considered company property. Such items must remain on school premises at all times unless specifically authorized by administration. Employees may not take reimbursed items for personal use or remove them from the school upon resignation or termination of employment. After an approved purchase, employees must provide original itemized receipts within 7 days of purchase. Reimbursements will be processed according to the school's payroll or accounting schedule. Personal purchases, unapproved expenses, or items not directly related to the school's operations will not be reimbursed.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADDRESS ACCURACY (W2)

Employees are responsible for ensuring that their mailing address is accurate and up to date with the center both during employment and after separation. W-2 forms are mailed via the United States Postal Service; we do not provide digital copies.

Failure to provide a correct address may result in your W-2

being delayed, returned, or lost, and the center is not responsible for reissuing W-2s due to incorrect or outdated address information. To avoid issues, employees should notify HR promptly of any changes to their mailing address.

The address listed on the top of your paystub sent with each paycheck is the address that Shining Stars Academy will send the W2 to. It is the employee's responsibility to check each paystub to ensure the address is correct, and as aforementioned, update HR if not.

CARE ABUSE DETECTION AND REPORTING

Shining Stars Academy is committed to taking a pro-active position regarding the prevention of child abuse. Shining Stars Academy will ensure annual training is completed by employees to prevent and respond to abuse and neglect of children. Shining Stars Academy is a mandatory reporter of child abuse and child neglect. As such, all employees and volunteers of Shining Stars Academy who come into contact with the children at Shining Stars Academy must report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the center Director.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

For information from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services on reporting abuse, neglect or exploitation, visit: http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp Abuse Hotline and Website. Call the Texas Abuse Hotline toll-free at 1-800-252-5400 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide. Make your report through their secure web site and you will receive a response within 24 hours:

Recognizing the Signs of Child Abuse

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical Abuse is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior
- Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

NEGLECT

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been

offered and refused.

Suspect Neglect When You See:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual Abuse includes fondling a child’s genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
- Sexual comments, behaviors or play
- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child’s age
- Sexual victimization of other children

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional Abuse is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child’s growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

- Over compliance
- Low self-esteem
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children
- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems
- unconcerned about the child's problems

SUDDEN INFANT DEATH REDUCTION

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is the unexplained death of an infant under one year of age. Employees will adhere to below policies to help prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome:

- Shining Stars Academy will always sleep infants on their back (considered to be the safest and healthiest sleeping position).
- Shining Stars Academy does not use wedges or position devices.
- Shining Stars Academy cribs are safe, with slats that meet or exceed safety standards required by the state. Each crib includes a mattress that fits the crib.
- Cribs are not to be cluttered with blankets or toys.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT & ACCEPTANCE

Your signature below represents acknowledgement that you have received, thoroughly read, and agree to the “Employee Handbook and Policies” presented to you in this handbook.

It also represents your understanding that you always have access to the Employee Handbook by going to www.shiningstarsroundrock.com > scroll down to the bottom right on Home page > click the Employees button > then click the Employee Handbook button.

Staff name (Please print)

Staff Signature Date

Director’s Signature Date