

STAFF MEMBER HANDBOOK

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Introduction

Welcome and thank you for choosing Schola International! We are very proud of all the people who have chosen to become a part of our family at Schola. We truly believe that you are our most asset and without your participation Schola International cannot be successful in fulfilling our vision and mission.

OUR MISSION

To transform the lives of the children and families we work with by creating a safe learning environment that feels like home and provides our students and their parents with a loving family-like supportive network.

Maintain an encourage a learning environment that ensures high equality academic education as well as healthy socioemotional skills in a multicultural multilingual setting.

We make sure our staff has the best tool set to work with our students and provide them with every learning opportunity they need, we also continuously ensure everyone at Schola is suitable and committed with our mission and values.

OUR VISION

We work to enable our students to fully develop their innate capabilities as successful learners, confident kind individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors to society by:

- Providing a positive, caring, respectful and relationships-based environment

- Ensuring Schola is a place where your child will feel safe and look forward to his day-to-day interactions and different learning activities.
- Nourishing each students' curiosities and interests and preparing them for the bright future ahead of them.

OUR VALUES

We believe no one can give what he doesn't possess, that is why we strive to provide our students with a rich and nourishing environment in which they experiment first-hand our core values:

- JOY
- KINDNESS
- RESPECT
- EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
- INTEGRITY
- PARTNERSHIP AND CARE

OUR CURRICULUM

SKILLS OF LIFE

All children are innate helpers, they are eager to contribute and engage in the everyday activities they witness at home. At Schola International we give them the opportunity to take part in those activities and practice their skills in an environment that fits their growing curiosity. Our Skills of Life work cycles and activities invite students to perform the same activities they see at home, during these activities the child develops concentration, independence, responsibility, sense of self fulfillment and executive skills such as: cognitive order, task organization, prioritization, flexibility; as well as fine and gross motor skills.

Our students' transit through different sets of skills of life beginning with Basic Life Skills such as pouring, cutting, and folding. Moving forward to applied exercises of self-care skills and environmental care. The final transition is towards Kindness and Courtesy where Skills of Life are seen in action in everyday social interactions; and finally, to Movement Control where through practical exercises students learn to recognize and control their body with both fine and gross motor skills.

CREATIVE EXPRESION

In Schola International we celebrate our students unique and shining personalities and strive to give every child the opportunity to create and express their individuality in artistic ways that will expand their creative horizon.



Through our Creative Expression Work Cycles, we encourage students to own whatever creation or activity they are engaging with; By doing this they are also learning to commit to their own work and choices, try out new ideas, discover new ways of thinking and explore problem solving in a fun encouraging environment and creative manner.

HOLISTIC EDUCATION

In Schola International we nurture all aspects of our students growing minds and bodies. We see each child as an individual eager to discover himself and explore and learn from the world that surrounds him. We encourage Experiential Learning, Self-Guided Learning, and community engagement by forming a strong network of committed families and teachers working together to help our children bloom into the wonderful, kind, and helpful human beings they are destined to become.

OPEN AIR LEARNING

Outdoor Work Cycles are a fundamental part of Scholas daily routine. During these Work Cycles students are encouraged to engage in the outdoor world that surrounds them enabling them to grow their curiosity and discover new learning material. Connecting with nature and exploring all that nature has to offer is a continuous hand-on and full sensory experience which our students get to enjoy every day.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Language development is a vital foundation of our curriculum. Research shows time and again that the best time for mastering multiple languages is during early childhood. Children who are exposed to multiple languages during the early years of brain development are more likely to be proficient not only in language development and communicational skills but also in their social-emotional skillsets.

In Schola International everyday our students are exposed to three languages: Spanish, English, and French. Our three Lead Teachers are native speakers of each of these languages and their entire Work Cycle is given in their mother tongue, thus language acquisition is achieved through everyday fun and engaging learning activities that comply with our unique learning curriculum.

By nature, we are a multicultural learning environment and believe in the importance of nurturing children to embrace cultural diversity.

ACADEMIC FOUNDATION

Being a micro school our small teacher to student ratio allows for plenty one-on-one time and permits the lead teacher to personalize Academic Learning activities to each students' abilities



and work preferences. Through ongoing assessments, we make sure all students are on track with their age appropriate Academic and Developmental Milestones. Our excellent lead teachers create content and hands-on activities that allow students to enjoy their day-to-day learning experience at Schola International.

NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT

The purpose of this handbook is to give a general understanding of the personnel policies of Schola International. It should help answer many common questions. All Staff Members are responsible for reading and understanding this handbook.

This handbook cannot and does not cover every situation or answer every question about employment at Schola International. This handbook is also not an employment contract and is not intended to create contractual obligations of any kind.

Each Staff Member became an employee at Schola International voluntarily and employment is at will. "At will" means that a Staff Member may terminate employment at any time. Likewise, "at will" means that Schola International may terminate employment at will at any time, with or without cause or advance notice, as long as we do not violate federal or state laws.

The Schola International has the right to change, add or remove policies. Each Staff Member will be informed in writing prior to their implementation. The revised version will always be available to all Staff Members in the Policies and Procedures Book.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

To give equal employment and advancement opportunities to all people, we make employment decisions at Schola International based on each person's performance, qualifications, and abilities. Schola International does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices, based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

We will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless making the reasonable accommodation would result in an undue hardship to Schola International. Our Equal Employment Opportunity policy covers all employment practices, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

Questions about any type of discrimination at work should be directed to the Center's HR representative or Owner. Staff Members will not be punished for asking questions about this. Also, if we find out that anyone was illegally discriminating, that person will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

It is our policy to afford equal opportunity as required by law to all qualified persons and applicants or employment, based on their qualifications without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, physical disabilities, age or veteran status. This obligation includes recruitment, advertising, solicitation for employment, hiring, training, education, placement, promotion, transfers, demotion and termination, compensation and benefits, and social and recreational activities.

WHY YOU ARE HERE

The ultimate vision and objective of Schola International is to provide a safe, stimulating, and nurturing environment where the young children under our care can develop age appropriate cognitive, physical, social, and emotional skills while simultaneously assimilating the language and culture. The Center has operating policies and procedures in place to reach that objective. Every Staff Member must understand that the objective is more important than the rules themselves; therefore, if a rule conflicts with the overall vision and objective of the center, then the rule must be questioned. If this is the case, please bring it to the attention of your supervisor.

Working together as a team, we can provide the optimal service to the children under our care and have a positive and efficient environment in which to work and to develop healthy relationships. Each Staff Member is recognized as valuable and important, each bringing unique characteristics to our team.



First and foremost, Staff Members must always comply with the licensing regulations set forth by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Printed copies of the "Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers" will be available to Staff Members at all times. Failure to comply with any standard, which may affect the safety and/or well-being of a child under our care, will be considered a cause for dismissal.

A "Job Description" which outlines specific responsibilities to each position will be provided. As we strive to develop and maintain a quality program, the "Job Description" may be modified at any time as needed. Affected Staff Member/s will be informed in writing of any changes.

In the event of need, a Staff Member may be assigned to work in a different area or may be asked to perform duties different from those outlined in his/her Job Description. Please see this as our overall effort to provide optimal care, and also as opportunity for staff to cross-train and to learn more about the overall program.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

Staff Members are responsible to the Program Director and, ultimately, to the Owners. The responsibilities of the Program Coordinator, include supervision of the entire staff, management of all personnel, and overseeing the care of all the children in the Center. Any problems should be reported to the immediate supervisor. If the problems are not resolved, one may proceed according to the chain of command. In the event of urgency, Staff Members must report to the assigned "Person in Charge".

The Owners have the final authority in all instances. Most decisions will be made in conjunction with the Director and the Financial Advisor. Staff Members are directly responsible to the Director(s); however, this does not mean that a Staff Member cannot speak to the Program Coordinator. This line of communication is always open.

In cases of conflict, attempts should be made to settle the disputes with the individual involved. If resolution is not possible, the Director and/or Financial Advisor should be consulted. All disputes must be handled in a professional and confidential manner.

As we strive to maintain a close community which nurtures the growth and well-being of all its members, we will be a GOSSIP-FREE environment. Listening to gossip is considered gossiping.

BUSINESS ETHICS AND CONDUCT

We expect Schola International Staff Members to be ethical in their conduct. Conduct of Staff Members affects the reputation and success of Schola International. Schola International



requires Staff Members to carefully follow all laws and regulations and have the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The Schola International's continued success depends on our customers' trust. Staff Members owe a duty to Schola International and to our customers to act in ways that will earn the continued trust and confidence of the public.

As an organization, Schola International will comply with all applicable laws and regulations. We expect all Directors, Officers, and Staff Members to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to not partake in illegal, dishonest, or unethical activity.

If a Staff Member is unsure if an action is ethical or proper, the Staff Member should discuss the matter openly with the director. If necessary, the Director may also contact the Financial Advisor for advice and consultation.

It is the responsibility of every Staff Member to comply with our policy of business ethics and conduct. Staff Members who ignore or do not comply with this standard of business ethics and conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment.

STAFF MEMBER CONDUCT ON THE JOB

Each Staff Member is expected to act at all times on behalf of and in accordance to the values of Schola International. The facility is legally liable for negligence and harm to any child incurred at the Center; therefore, extreme caution must be used by all Staff Members when performing job duties. Furthermore, Staff Members must, at all times, use appropriate language when communicating with children, families or other Staff Members. Use of foul or inappropriate language at Schola International is grounds for dismissal.

HIRING OF RELATIVES

When relatives or persons involved in a dating relationship work in the same area of an organization, it may cause problems at work. In addition to claims of favoritism and morale issues, personal conflicts from outside can sometimes carry over to work.

For this policy, we define a relative as any person who is related to a Staff Member by blood or by marriage, or whose relationship with the Staff Member is similar to that of a relative. We define a dating relationship as a relationship that might reasonably be expected to lead to a consensual "romantic" or sexual relationship. This policy applies to all Staff Members regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.



Although Schola International does not prohibit employing relatives of current Staff Members or persons involved in a dating relationship, we will monitor these situations when the Staff Members are in the same area. In case of an actual or potential problem, we will take quick action. This can include reassignment or, if necessary, termination of employment for one or both of the Staff Members involved. If a Staff Member is in a close personal relationship with another Staff Member, we ask that he/she avoid displays of affection or excessive personal conversation at work.

IMMIGRATION LAW COMPLIANCE

Schola International is committed to employing only people who are United States citizens or who are aliens legally authorized to work in the United States. We do not illegally discriminate because of a person's citizenship or national origin.

Because we comply with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, every new Staff Member at Schola International is required to complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and show documents that prove identity and employment eligibility. If a Staff Member leaves Schola International and is rehired, he/she must complete another Form I-9 if the previous I-9 with Schola International is more than three years old, or if the original I-9 is not accurate anymore, or if the original I-9 is no longer on file.

EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES

It is important that Staff Members understand the definitions of the employment classifications at Schola International and that they know their classification. The reason is because one's employment classification helps determine one's employment status and benefits eligibility. Questions about employment classification should be directed to the Center's Director.

Staff Members are either NONEXEMPT or EXEMPT from federal and state wage and hour laws. NONEXEMPT employees are entitled to overtime pay under the specific provisions of federal and state laws. EXEMPT employees are excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. EXEMPT or NONEXEMPT classification may be changed only with written notification by Schola International's Director. Unless otherwise informed, Staff Members at Schola International are classified as NONEXEMPT.

In addition, being a Nonexempt or Exempt employee, Staff Members also belong to one of the following employment categories:

REGULAR FULL-TIME Staff Members are those not assigned to a temporary or introductory status AND that are regularly scheduled to work 40 or more hours/week. In most cases, regular full-



time Staff Members are eligible for all Schola International benefit programs, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

PART-TIME Staff Members are those not in a temporary or introductory status AND that are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week. Part-time employees receive all legally mandated benefits, such as Social Security and workers' compensation insurance. Part-time employees are not eligible for the other Schola International benefit programs.

INTRODUCTORY Staff Members are those whose performance is being evaluated to determine whether further employment in a specific position or with Schola International is appropriate. After satisfactorily completing the introductory period, each Staff Member will be told about their new employment classification.

TEMPORARY Staff Members are those hired as an interim replacement, or to temporarily increase our workforce, or to help finish a specific project. Staff Members are in the temporary category for a limited time. Temporary Staff Members receive all legally mandated benefits, such as Social Security and workers' compensation insurance. Temporary employees are not eligible for other Schola International benefit programs.

INTRODUCTORY PERIOD

Schola International has an introductory period for new Staff Members. During the introductory period, the Staff Member's work habits and abilities will be evaluated to make sure that he/she can perform his/her job satisfactorily. The introductory period also gives the Staff Member time to decide if the new job meets his/her expectations. The introductory period for all new and rehired Staff Members is the first 90 calendar days after their hire date.

If a Staff Member is absent for a significant amount of time during his/her introductory period, the length of the absence will automatically extend the introductory period. The introductory period may also be extended if Administration decides the time was not long enough to evaluate the Staff Member's performance. This could happen either during or at the end of the introductory period.

When Staff Members satisfactorily complete the introductory period, they are assigned to the "regular" employment classification.

During the introductory period, new Staff Members are eligible for those benefits that are required by law, such as Social Security and workers' compensation insurance. After becoming regular Staff Members, they may also be eligible for other Schola International benefit programs, subject to the terms and conditions of each benefit program.



PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Staff Members and their supervisors are encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, ongoing basis. In addition, Staff Members will have formal performance evaluations to discuss their work and goals, to identify and correct weaknesses, and to encourage and recognize strengths. The formal performance evaluations will usually take place at the end of a Staff Member's introductory period and, after 12 months of employment, at the end of each academic school year. Formal performance evaluations may also be conducted on an as-needed basis, and upon request (assuming reasonable time has elapsed since the last evaluation).

Merit-based pay adjustments may be granted to some Staff Members to recognize truly superior work performance. These adjustments are based on several factors including the information documented by the formal performance evaluations.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

It is the intention of Administration to have accurate job descriptions for all jobs at Schola International. Job descriptions are used to help new employees understand their jobs and their responsibilities. Job descriptions are also used to identify the requirements of a job, set up the hiring criteria, set standards for employee performance evaluations, and establish a basis for making reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

The Administrative Department prepares a job description when a new job is created. We review existing job descriptions and change them when a job changes. A Staff Members can help by making sure that his/her job description is accurate and describes the job duties.

A job description does not necessarily cover every task or duty that a Staff Member may be assigned. Staff Members may be assigned additional responsibilities as necessary. Questions related to job descriptions should be directed to the Director or Owner.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Center hours of operation are determined by the Owners. The hours are subject to change depending on the season and enrollment. Staff Members will be given as much notice as possible when schedules change.

The hours of operation are 7:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday. The hours from 12:00 pm to 2:30 pm are the time during which Staff Members will take their scheduled 30 Minutes "lunch" break.



While the center will not close for business from 12:00 pm to 2:30 pm, most full-time Staff Members will be expected to take a half-hour lunch break. Staff Members will be compensated for lunch breaks. Staff Members working less than 20 hours per week will not be required to take a lunch hour.

PROMPTNESS

Promptness is essential. Staff Members who arrive late or take a prolonged lunch hour place an unfair burden on their fellow team members. Habitual tardiness and/or absenteeism will be reprimanded and constitutes grounds for termination at the discretion of the Director, Financial Advisor and/or Owner. When a Staff Member is running late for work, he/she must notify the Assistant Director responsible for opening the School before the shift begins.

PARKING

We strive to keep the parking as customer friendly as possible. However, due to limited parking, Staff Members are expected to follow the current parking policy, as communicated via email. Staff Members that do not adhere to the current parking policy will either be written up or lose their opportunity to park in the designated spots during their next assigned month.

OFFICE SYSTEM AND OFFICE SUPPLIES

Without approval of the Director, the fax machine, copy machine and arts and craft supplies may not be used for personal needs.

Only very short personal calls are permitted during working hours. If a Staff Member must make or receive an extended phone call, he/she must first make sure there is adequate coverage and then clock out for the call.

CELL PHONE USE

It is important that every staff member's attention remains on the children at all times. A second's lapse in attention could result in a serious accident, which, with appropriate supervision, would have been prevented. Therefore: Cell phones are not permitted in any of the program rooms with the exception of lead teachers for documentation purposes. Cell phones should remain turned off and stored in a purse, bag, coat, classroom cell phone box, or the office, etc. while a staff member is clocked in. Cell phone use is permitted only during an approved break, and never in a classroom. It is never appropriate to make a personal phone call, send a text message, check voicemail, etc. while in the presence of children, even while on an approved break.



The use of cell phones for calls and text messaging is prohibited in the presence of children. If a Staff Member is expecting an important call to his/her cell phone, permission must be requested from the Director to receive the call.

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

Every Staff Member has the right of personal dignity and safety and no Staff Member or supervisor shall physically or sexually harass a fellow Staff Member or visitor in our office in any way. This policy includes same-sex harassment. Violation of this policy constitutes grounds for immediate dismissal.

BREAKS AND SMOKING POLICY

Because we are required to always meet our staff/child ratios, routine breaks are not scheduled; however, a maximum of two short breaks is permitted when there is someone available to provide coverage.

Schola International and its grounds are considered smoke-free environments; smoking is strictly prohibited.

WEATHER-RELATED CLOSINGS

Schola International will remain open during most severe weather. The Director and/or Assistant Director will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day.

In the event that Schola International closes early or cancels care for the following day, parents will be contacted and informed of the situation. Children should be picked up in a reasonable amount of time to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home. Families will still be charged during weather closings; however vacation days may be applied.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION REGARDING CHILDREN

All information that transpires between a Staff Member and the children under his/her care, or their families, is to be kept confidential. Information disclosed by a family should be communicated with the Director if pertinent. This information must not be discussed with other Staff Members, other families, or one's own family or friends. Inside the Center, issues related to a child's learning and/or well-being may be discussed with the parent or the legal guardian. While talking with a parent about any private matter, it should be done in such a way that other parents and children in the hallways or classrooms may not hear. Inappropriate disclosure of confidential information constitutes grounds for dismissal.



CONFIDENTIALITY

Staff Members are prohibited from disclosing company confidential and proprietary information for the duration of the Staff Member's employment and for two years following Staff Member termination. Confidential and proprietary information includes proprietary knowledge, trade secrets, client information, strategic plans, and other information that is confidential and proprietary to Schola International with competitors. Anything that is developed, written, produced, or invented during or as a result of employment, if it is in any way related to the scope of the company's business, is considered proprietary.

PRIVACY POLICY

One of our most important assets is our students' and parents' trust. Keeping student and parent information secure and using it appropriately is therefore a top priority for all of us at Schola International. Employees must safeguard any confidential information our parents and students share with us. Employees must also ensure that they use student and parent information only for the reasons for which the information was gathered, unless further use is allowed by law.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

All information pertaining to Schola International business is confidential, proprietary and a protectable trade secret, except to the extent that Schola International has made such information public, such as through advertising, a press release or a publicly filled report. Information about the children, families and staff in our program is confidential; therefore, staff must not talk about children, families or other staff members while in the center or in public places. Only children's first names are used on any artwork or public display of any work. Since our center is a laboratory school there are specific contexts when information may be shared for educational purposes, pseudonyms are used to guard confidentiality. Documents should be properly safeguarded at all times. No employee should attempt to obtain confidential information which does not relate to his or her employment duties. Employees should treat all nonpublic Schola International information as confidential both during and after their employment. All staff must sign a Confidentiality Agreement Form.

PERSONAL CONDUCT OUT OF THE CENTER

Any time that Staff Members get together as a group, including outside the Center, they represent Schola International, and are so recognized by families and other staff. Therefore, it is very important that Staff Members act in a professional manner and refrain from speaking about



children and families, or acting inappropriately when together as a group, even when Staff Members are not physically within the walls of the facility.

CHILD AND BUSINESS RECORDS

All child and business records are confidential and are the property of The Schola International. No child's or business' records shall be removed from the center. With a request in writing, a parent is entitled to a copy of his/her child's records. The original file belongs to the Center and must always be kept on file.

A child's records cannot be altered or erased. If there is an error, cross it out with a single line, initial it, and correct it. All entries made in a record by any Staff Member should be initialed.

CHANGES TO PERSONAL INFORMATION

Any changes such as contact information, emergency contacts, name changes and health related issues affecting job responsibilities must be communicated to the Center's Director in writing via email as soon as possible so that records can be updated accordingly.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

The use and abuse of drugs or alcohol pose a serious threat to Schola International, the Staff Members, children, and their families. To maintain and ensure a safe, healthy, and efficient environment, the Center has adopted the following policies. Staff Members shall not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during working hours. It is strictly forbidden to consume drugs or alcohol on a lunch break.

The possession, use, or sale/distribution of alcohol or drugs, in any amount, on our premises or while on duty is strictly prohibited. The only exception to this policy is possession and use by a Staff Member of a medication which has been prescribed specifically for the individual by a licensed physician. If the prescription drug is such that it may impair performance or judgment, the Staff Member should not work while taking the drug(s). To ensure the safety of the children, all staff medications, including prescription and over the counter, must always be stored up high, out of any child's reach.

Any Staff Member may be required to submit to and release the results of an alcohol and/or drug examination upon reasonable suspicion or cause from the Director, Financial Advisor or Owner. Reasonable cause is defined as a reasonable suspicion that the individual has drugs or alcohol in his/her possession or is currently impaired by drugs or alcohol, based on observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech, or smell of a Staff Member.



Schola International will institute such procedures as required to effectively enforce this policy. This may include the requirement that Staff Members cooperate in personal, or facility searches when the possession of alcohol or drugs is suspected. Refusal to cooperate with these procedures; refusing to take and release the results of any substance test requested by the employer; testing positive on any such test and any other violation of these policies will subject the Staff Member to immediate termination or such other disciplinary action as the employer may determine in its sole discretion to impose upon the individual.

POLICY FOR VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES

Due to the young age of infants and children and the proximity of children and caregivers throughout the day, there is an increased risk of illness and infection in children and staff in childcare settings. Some of these illnesses, such as flu and whooping cough, are vaccine preventable. It is required by Child Care Licensing that all children enrolled in group care have up-to date immunizations (based on Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Vaccines for Child Care Facilities), unless exempt for medical conditions or reasons of conscience. The State does not have vaccine requirements for adults working in childcare centers.

At present Schola International does not require any specific immunizations for adults working in the Center. However, the following vaccines are recommended:

- Influenza: This immunization, given once yearly, helps protect against the flu. Persons caring for children younger than 12 years of age are at increased risk for flu. Furthermore, infants cannot receive this vaccine before 6 months of age. Therefore, they are at increased risk for contracting the flu from infected caregivers.
- Pertussis (whooping cough): This illness is very contagious and most severe for babies. Whooping cough is usually spread by coughing or sneezing and many babies who get whooping cough are infected by persons including caregivers who may not know they have the illness. Most people have been vaccinated against whooping cough during childhood. However, it is now known that the immunity from this vaccine wears off over time. Adults may therefore be susceptible to contracting whooping cough and spreading it to others.

Many insurance policies cover the cost of immunizations. For Staff Members who are not insured, vaccines may be received at a minimal cost (<\$25.00 for each vaccine) through the ASN (Adult Safety Net) program created by the State. Local ASN clinics may be located at the following website: www.dshs.state.tx.us/ASN.



PROFESSIONALISM

Schola International staff member is a child care professional and is expected to act as such. The following general guidelines for professionalism should be maintained at all times:

- Arrive on time and stay entire shift, if needed.
- Is not absent from work on a regular basis and finds a substitute when necessary.
- Dress appropriately for interaction with children.
- Take directions, suggestions and criticisms, and follow through to improve performance.
- Respect confidential information regarding children, families, and co-workers.
- Display a positive attitude toward the entire center (the program, children, families and co-workers).
- Attend staff meetings and other Center events.

DRESS CODE

Dress, grooming and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all Staff Members and affect the image Schola International presents to parents and their children, visitors, and guests.

The Schola International dress code for teachers consists of Black pants or Jeans pants and the Schola International vest. The lighter-weight V-neck shirt is permitted during the warmer months, May through September. All work attire should be clean, neatly pressed and without large, visible stains. If a Staff Member reports to work out of uniform or dressed in an unacceptable manner, i.e. knee is not covered by pants, he/she will be written up and may be asked to clock out and return home to change clothes. Comfortable shoes or tennis shoes are acceptable provided they are clean and in good condition.

The Schola International will supply one vest upon initial employment and twice a year (August and February).

ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR

A good attitude and hard work are just as important to one's success as are proficient skills. Everyone benefits when all Staff Members work together as a team. Each Staff Member should strive to be gracious, helpful, and accommodating to fellow Staff Members, children, and parents.

There is zero tolerance for rudeness with children and their families, co-workers, supervisors, administrative staff, and Owners. There is zero tolerance for dishonesty.



SOCIAL MEDIA

The following principles apply to professional use of social media on behalf of Schola International as well as personal use of social media when referencing Schola International.

- Staff Members are prohibited from posting photos of children enrolled at the Center or personal information about them on the Internet, including Facebook, Instagram, and blogs. This policy is in place to protect the privacy of children enrolled at the Center and their families.
- Staff Members need to know and adhere to Schola International's Staff Member Handbook, and other company policies when using social media in reference to The Schola International.
- Staff Members should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their images, as well as Schola International's image.
- Staff Members should be aware that Schola International may observe content and information made available by Staff Members through social media. Staff Members should use their best judgment in posting material that is neither inappropriate nor harmful to The Schola International, its employees, or customers.
- Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment.
- Staff Members are not to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential or not public. If there are questions about what is considered confidential, Staff Members should check with the Administrator and/or supervisor.
- Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Staff Members should refer these inquiries to authorized spokesperson of The Schola International.
- If Staff Members encounter a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, Staff Members should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of a supervisor.
- It is highly recommended that Staff Members keep Schola International related social media accounts separate from personal accounts.

HAND WASHING

Staff members must wash their hands at the following times:

- Upon arriving at the center
- After each diaper change
- After helping a child use the toilet

- After wiping a nose, coming into contact with saliva or any other bodily fluid.
 - Before preparing meals
 - Before and after meal times
 - Before and after using the sensory table
 - After removing gloves
 - After using the restroom
 - After returning to the center from a break
 - After coming indoors from the playground
- **Frequent hand washing with soap and warm running water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses like diarrhea, the flu, and conjunctivitis (pink eye).

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

At the Schola International, we strive to maintain a clean, healthy, and professional environment. Except when consuming food with the children (this must be the same food or drink as the children), food and drinks, except for water, should be consumed only in the break room. It is the duty of each Staff Member to clean his/her own dishes at the time of use, return dishes to La Cocina, and to work together in keeping the break room clean and clutter free.

GRIEVANCEPROCEDURE

As childcare professionals, all staff members are expected to make reasonable attempts to resolve conflicts directly with the individual(s) concerned. If a solution cannot be reached, staff members should then seek assistance from the Director and/or Assistant Director in resolving the conflict.

Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise. Staff members who discuss issues with other staff members not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure. This policy applies both during paid hours as well as on a staff member's personal time.

CO-WORKERCOMMUNICATION

Open communication between staff members, parents, and children is crucial to a successful program. Before leaving a classroom for any reason (bathroom, making a copy, calling a parent) an employee should inform his/her cooperating teachers of the reason he/she is leaving. For all



involved, it is important that all issues be addressed and resolved as they arise. All employees are expected to function as a team member at all times.

PERSONNEL FILES

Schola International maintains a permanent personnel file for each staff member. These files are confidential, and staff must arrange a time with the Director and/or Assistant Director to review their file. Staff members are prohibited from accessing the personnel file of another staff member for any reason. Staff members should report to the Director and/or Assistant Director if there is a change in address, phone number, emergency contact, e-mail address, marital status, or number of dependents.

DOCUMENTATION OF ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at Schola International using an Accident/Incident Report. Please document all biting incidents as accidents. If a biter breaks the skin of another child, an accident/incident report needs to be completed for the biter as well as the child who was bitten. Use great detail when explaining events, but never include other children's names. If the injury is serious, a parent needs to be contacted before pick-up. The parent shall sign the report the same day as the incident. A copy may be given to the parent. All Accident/Incident Reports must be given to the Director and/or Assistant Director to be placed in the child's permanent file.

DOCUMENTATION OF ALLERGIES

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location in the classroom. If the allergy is food-related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the kitchen area. All staff working in the classroom of child with allergies must review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of emergency procedures should the child have an allergic reaction. All allergic reactions must be documented with a Health Incident Form.

EMPLOYMENT TERMINATION

There can be many reasons why employment may terminate. The following are some of the most common reasons for termination of employment:

- Resignation: voluntary employment termination initiated by an employee.
- Discharge: involuntary employment termination initiated by the organization.



We will usually schedule an exit interview for a Staff Member when he/she terminates. At the exit interview, topics such as your benefits, benefits conversion rights and return of Schola International- owned property are covered. Staff Members may also make suggestions or complaints and ask questions during the exit interview.

All accrued, vested benefits that are due and payable at termination will be paid out. Regular, full-time Staff Members may be allowed to continue some benefits by paying for them out of pocket. Regular full-time Staff Members will be notified in writing about which benefits that can be continue and the limitations and details of how to continue them.

Staff Members shall give a minimum of a two-week written notice when resigning from his/her position. This two-week period is in addition to any vacation that has accrued. The last paycheck will be issued at the next regularly scheduled payday.

Any violation of the principles set forth in this manual may result in disciplinary action including dismissal. All Staff Members serve at will and may be terminated for any reason or no reason. For minor violations (such as tardiness, dress code violations, cell phone usage in the classroom), Staff Members may be given a written notice (or “written up”) in an attempt to restore him/her to the highest standard. Three written notices issued to a Staff Member within a twelve-month span will result in termination. For more serious offenses (such as a Minimum Standards violation, gossiping, dishonesty or insubordination), the Staff Member may be terminated or placed on Probation. The length of the probation and the reasons for it will be presented to the Staff Member in writing. During the probationary period, the individual will not be eligible for pay increases and bonuses.

The policies described in this manual are guidelines that do not preempt the authority of the employer to dismiss a Staff Member for reasons that are not specifically described in this manual.

PAYDAYS

Paydays are biweekly, every other Saturday. If payday falls on a holiday, paychecks will be distributed on the last business day preceding the holiday.

Schola International offers a direct deposit program. Direct deposit means that a Staff Member’s pay will be deposited directly into the Staff Member’s bank account, if authorized. On paydays each Staff Members will receive a statement outlining the details of their pay.



ADMINISTRATIVE PAY CORRECTIONS

Schola International tries to make sure that all Staff Members are paid correctly and on scheduled paydays. If a mistake is made, notify the Center's HR representative immediately so that the error can be corrected as quickly as possible.

OVERTIME

Our policy is to avoid overtime if possible; however, there may be times when Schola International cannot meet its operating requirements or other needs during regular working hours. If this happens, we may schedule Staff Members to work overtime hours. When possible, we will try to give Staff Members advance warning of a mandatory overtime assignment.

If the care of our children requires a Staff Member to work overtime, it must be reported on the Time Card. Nonexempt Staff Members will receive overtime pay in accordance with the federal and state wage and hour laws. Overtime pay is based on the actual hours worked. For this reason, time off for sick leave, vacation, and other paid or unpaid leaves of absence is not counted as hours worked when calculating overtime pay.

HOLIDAYS

The Schola International will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day, , New Year's Day (obs)
- Martin L King, Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day,
- Thanksgiving Day and after Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas holidays.

Regular full-time Staff Members will be compensated for the hours normally scheduled on holidays. Holiday pay will be calculated at the straight time pay rate as of that holiday multiplied by the number of hours that normally would have been worked that day.

If eligible nonexempt Staff Members work on a recognized holiday, they will receive holiday pay plus their wages at one and one-half times their straight-time rate for the hours they worked on the holiday.

Holiday paid time off is not counted as hours worked when calculating overtime.



HEALTH INSURANCE

Schola International offers health insurance benefits to regular full-time Staff Members and their dependents. Eligible Staff Members may enroll in the health insurance plan subject to the terms and conditions of the agreement between Schola International and its insurance carrier. If a Staff Member is enrolled in the health insurance plan and changes to an employment classification that would make him/her no longer eligible.

CHILD CARE BENEFIT

Schola International offers a childcare assistance program to help parents who work at Schola International. Full-time Staff Members are eligible to receive a 50% discount applied to the child's tuition assuming space is available. The remaining tuition balance must be paid monthly in the form of a check or automatic withdrawal.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION BENEFIT

The Schola International participates in the Worker's Compensation Insurance Program.

If a Staff Member is injured on the job, no matter how slightly, he/she should report the accident to his/her immediate supervisor or the Administrator right away. A detailed description of the accident must be submitted in writing on the day the accident occurred. Filing a false claim is grounds for dismissal.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Schola International provides bereavement leave to Staff Members who need to take time off because an immediate family member died. To request bereavement leave, see the Center's Director. Bereavement leave will normally be granted unless there are business reasons that require the Staff Member to be at work.

Regular full-time Staff Members are eligible for up to 3 days of bereavement leave with pay. While on a paid bereavement leave, Staff Members will receive his/her base pay rate. With his/her supervisor's approval, a Staff Member may use any available paid leave benefits available, such as vacation, if more time off is needed.

For bereavement leave, "immediate family" means a Staff Member's spouse, parent, child, brother, or sister.



JURY DUTY

Schola International encourages Staff Members to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty if summoned. Regular full time Staff Members may request up to 50% of his/her full wages during the time of jury duty service for a period of at least three days, but no more than five days.

If eligible for jury duty, Staff Members will be paid at their base rate of pay for one half of the number of hours he/she would normally have worked that day.

If a regular full-time Staff Member stays on jury duty longer than paid jury duty allows, the Staff Member may use any available PTO benefits available, such as vacation, to be paid for the unpaid jury duty leave.

If a Staff Member received a jury duty summons, it must be showed to his/her supervisor as soon as possible. This will allow for proper planning for possible absence from work. When the court schedule permits, the Staff Member is expected to report to work.

Either the Staff Member or Schola International may ask the court to excuse the Staff Member from jury duty if necessary. Schola International may ask that a Staff Member be relieved from going on jury duty if the Staff Member's absence would cause serious operational problems for Schola International.

Subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans, Schola International will continue to provide health insurance benefits for the full period of unpaid jury duty leave.

A Staff Member's benefits, such as vacation, sick leave, or holiday benefits, will not accrue during an unpaid jury duty leave. When the Staff Member returns from leave, the benefits will start accruing again.

TIME OFF WITHOUT PAY

Time Off without Pay is generally discouraged; however, if requested, a maximum of two days of time off without pay may be granted to a full time Staff Member in good standing with good attendance. Staff Members wishing to take additional Time Off without Pay may be asked to resign and reapply after the leave time has ended. Only exceptions in extreme circumstances will be made.

Since part-time Staff Members do not accrue paid vacation, up to five days per year of time off without pay may be permitted, assuming good standing.



PAID TIME OFF

Paid time off is paid to employees who are considered full time, and may be used for illness, personal, or vacation time with proper notice. An employee is given paid time off hours after they are placed in a full-time position.

Paid time off (PTO) is accrued at 4 hours for each 80 hours of work per pay period in which the employee meets 40 hours/week without absences. Over time generated in a week does not count towards 80 hours worked.

PAID HOLIDAYS

Schola International will grant all regular full-time employees ten (10) paid holidays each calendar year. The Director will communicate any variations, additions, or special notices to you. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed on the following Monday.

Holiday pay is calculated based on your regular rate of pay and normal work schedule. You will receive full credit for the above holidays if you are at work on the last working day before and the first working day after the holiday. Time off will be granted the day before or after a holiday if the employee has PTO available and the day was pre-approved. Employees calling in the day before or after a holiday will not be paid for the holiday, be required to present a doctor's note upon return and will be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination. Holidays are subject to change by the Board at any time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Full-time Staff Members with six months of service or more are eligible for a leave of absence for extended illness or injury. This includes pregnancy and childbirth, which may be a medical requirement for absence from work. The leave is only approved for the period of time which is medically required to be away from work. The medical leave may not exceed 60 calendar days but may be renewed upon agreement with the Owners if the Staff Member has received a physician's statement verifying the need for a continuation of medical leave. At the end of the approved leave, failure to return to work or the request of additional leave will result in the termination of employment. Leave is without pay; however, earned sick leave and vacation time may be used. Also, the entire premium for health insurance must be paid by the Staff Member while on leave of absence. The premiums will be discussed in detail on an individual basis.



Upon return from a leave of absence, the Director will make every effort to reinstate the Staff Member to the same position and hours as previously occupied; however, the immediate availability of the same position and hours cannot be guaranteed at the time the Staff Member returns to work.

PAY ADVANCES

Regular Staff Members may ask for a pay advance if there is an urgent need because of a personal emergency. To request an advance, the Staff Member must explain the emergency in writing to the Owner. Schola International will look at every request separately and do not guarantee that all requests will be approved.

PROCEDURE FOR CALLING IN SICK OR FOR FAMILY EMERGENCY

If unable to report to work due to illness, child's illness or family emergency, the Assistant Director responsible for opening the School must be contacted at least two hours before your shift begins; if more notice is possible, it would be appreciated.

When a Staff Member does not report to work or leaves work early due to illness or child's illness, the Staff Member must contact the "Scheduler" before 7:30pm that same day via email or text message to make it known if he/she will be reporting to work on the following day. If communication is not made by 8:00 pm, the assumption will be that the Staff Member will not be returning to work on the following day and a substitute will be arranged.

Staff Members that miss work due to illness may be required to bring a doctor's note or have a medical release before returning to work. A doctor's note is required for all sick leave absences taking place on the first and last business day of each week. After calling in sick more than three times in a 12-month span, the Staff Member will be required to bring doctor's notes for subsequent sick leave absences within that 12-month span.

Car trouble is not considered an emergency. Please arrange for a ride from a friend, family member or taxi if the problem arises.

Please Note: All absences will be monitored. Excessive absences, or pattern of absences that begin to occur, will be addressed by the Administrator and could be grounds for termination. It is important to understand that when we are short of staff, it is not only stressful on the other Staff Members but affects the children as well. Without a doubt, working in a childcare environment can sometimes be very stressful. Please let the Administrator or Director know if a to regroup or even a "*stress free*" day off needs to be taken. The Schola International strives to be sensitive to the needs of its Staff Members and will try to decide to accommodate such needs.



REQUESTING TIME OFF

Staff Members should request planned PTO from the “Scheduler” at least one week in advance via email. Time off should only be considered “approved” if an affirmative response to the email is received. Each request will be reviewed based on a number of factors, including the current business needs and staffing requirements. Time off that has been approved may later be unapproved by the Administrator if PTO is exhausted before the planned vacation time takes place.

Full-time Staff Members may be permitted to take one unpaid half-day up to six times per year or once every two months. These requests must also be submitted via email one week in advance. Time off in smaller increments than half-days will rarely be permitted; an exception would be if the staff-member taking time off would not place the classroom/school out of staff-child ratio.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

There may be times when emergencies, such as severe weather, fires, power failures, or earthquakes, disrupt normal business operations at Schola International. We may even have to close a facility.

If we decide to close AFTER the workday has already started, Staff Members will be paid for the time they were scheduled to work for the remainder of that day. If we decide to close BEFORE the workday starts, Staff Members will not be paid for the time off. However, Staff Members may request to use any available PTO accrued.

If an emergency closing is not authorized and a Staff Member does not report for work, he/she will not be paid for the time off. A Staff Member may request to use any available PTO accrued.

There may also be sometimes when we ask Staff Members in essential operations to work on a day when we are officially closed due to an emergency. If we ask a Staff Member to work on a day when we are officially closed, said Staff Member will be compensated for hours worked.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Staff Members counted in staff/child ratios are responsible for completing their 24 clock hours of annual training required by Child Care Licensing. At least six hours of annual training must be in one or more of the following topics: Child growth & development; Guidance & discipline; Age-appropriate curriculum; and Teacher-child interaction. At least one hour of annual training must focus on prevention, recognition, and reporting of Child Abuse. The remaining clock hours must be relevant to assigned job responsibilities. If a Staff Member provides care for children less than



24 months of age, one hour of annual training must cover: 1) Recognizing and preventing shaken baby syndrome; 2) Preventing sudden infant death syndrome; and 3) Understanding early childhood brain development.

No more than 50% of required annual training hours may be obtained through self-instructional/online training.

Schola International holds two staff in-service days each year, in February on President's Day and on the last Friday before Northside Independent School District's school year begins in August. It is required that Staff Members, both full time and part time, are present for these in-service days.

Payment for registration of seminars, workshops, classes, etc., is handled on an individual basis. When attending non-required training requested by the Director or Financial Advisor, registration fees may be reimbursed in special circumstances; this decision will be made by the Program Director or Financial Advisor on a case-by-case basis. Reimbursement will only be provided upon submission of appropriate documentation (original certificate or letter) of such training.

Additional staff training is always encouraged. However, unless additional training is requested by Director, Staff Members will not be compensated for training hours beyond the 24 annual hours required by childcare licensing.

REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

Mileage will be paid for errands made in a Staff Member's private vehicle on behalf of the center. Mileage will be reimbursed at the IRS reimbursement rate. The "Reimbursement Report" form should be completed within one week of the expense incurred and signed and approved by the Program Director or Administrator.

Half of the cost of the required fingerprint check will be reimbursed upon successful completion of the 90-day introductory period.

The expense of items purchased for classroom activities will be reimbursed if a receipt is submitted. The total amount reimbursed to Staff Members may not exceed \$25 per month per classroom. Items that qualify for reimbursement include food ingredients for cooking, sensory and/or science activities; art supplies that are not normally stocked at the school; printing of photos for use in the classroom. Other items may be reimbursed at the discretion of the Program Director/ Administrator. Special permission to exceed the \$25 classroom budget may be granted in certain circumstances by the Director.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF STAFF MEMBER HANDBOOK

I have read ***The Schola International Staff Member Handbook*** dated 2023. I understand it is my responsibility to read the handbook and ask questions about anything I do not understand. I understand that I am a Staff Member at will and my employment and compensation can be terminated at any time at the option of either the corporation or myself. I understand that no representative of the corporation has any authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period or make an agreement contrary to the foregoing policy.

NOTE: PTO is not pay

_____ Printed Name of Staff Member

_____ Signature of Staff Member Date