



Staff and Volunteer Handbook

Updated July 2018

(Based on the SAEL Charter and adopted from Codman Academy's example)

SAEL MISSION

The mission of Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning is to inspire students to achieve high standards, create quality work, develop quality character, and embrace lifelong learning and service through Expeditionary Learning.

SAEL VALUES

At Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning, we...

- **understand** that individuals learn best through purposeful experiences that provide opportunities to become active learners taking responsibility for their own learning.
- **value** the use of the world existing beyond the classroom walls in order to teach compassion, service, discipline and respect.
- **develop** a sense of civic and social activism in students.
- **believe** that we have a responsibility to provide stewardship of the Earth.
- **focus** on development of individual character steeped in our 'design principles' and 'character traits' including grit, integrity, collaboration, curiosity, craftsmanship, advocacy.
- **foster** a culture of reflection, critique and revision.
- **incorporate** project-based learning, fieldwork and the arts into purposeful and rigorous Expeditions.
- **blend** a strong sense of community, supportive environments, and parent involvement.

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About This Handbook

This Handbook sets forth some of the general procedures and policies currently in effect at the Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning. The School reserves the right to change, revoke, or add policies or procedures without notice. Please note that this Handbook does not constitute an employment contract.

Open Door Policy

Sierra Academy encourages communications and interchange of ideas, suggestions, and issues affecting the school, including the students and staff. If you have any ideas, suggestions, issues, or concerns about any aspect of the school, please feel free to communicate with the Principal, Staff, or members of the Board. The School wants to hear from you to foster mutual understanding and identify areas of improvement.

Norms and Professional Responsibilities – General

Norms

What we need from ourselves and our colleagues in order to fulfill the school's mission:

- LISTEN – with the intention of learning
- SPEAK – to share, wonder, clarify, connect
- ENGAGE – explore yourself as a practitioner; help others discover by thinking
- BE PRESENT – keep interruptions to a minimum (including phone / laptop use)
- BE CREW – leave no trace; be aware of opportunities to serve; be prompt
- ENJOY one another – reach out; be inclusive; foster humor, praise
- HAVE COURAGE – take risks; be okay with not knowing
- CELEBRATE LEARNING – focus on growth, but take time to recognize and appreciate triumphs in the process
- ASSUME THE BEST – support and feedback are meant to lift us all up and make us better for our students

Staff Non-Negotiables

As a staff member of SAEL I will hold myself and all students to high expectations, with the goal of supporting community learning, culture, and professionalism. This means I will

- Believe all students can and will succeed with the right support
- Strive to recognize the positive in all students and staff more often than I recognize what each needs to work on; I will aim to give more positive feedback than negative.
- Find ways to envision a better school, a better system, and a view of education that is outside the box to find what is best for student learning
- Engage in positive, solution-oriented talk by avoiding negative, pessimistic talk; vent a little, solve a lot

- Conserve and protect our precious resources to the greatest extent possible; Resources include our students, families, and community members, paper/disposable materials, and energy.
- Be ok with not knowing as the start up process does not always offer the security of having all the answers to everything in the beginning; the trade off is that I get to contribute to and construct a reality and a future together with our community
- Act with integrity and respect to all members of the SAEL community and expect students and fellow staff to do likewise. When I hear or see disrespect or a lack of integrity in the community, I will quickly follow up with persons involved.
- Make myself available to discuss student needs, concerns, and suggestions. I will encourage students to respectfully advocate for themselves and other community members.
- Complete my work collaboratively with craftsmanship, academic integrity, and honesty and expect students to do the same.
- Come to my classes and meetings on time and prepared and likewise hold my students accountable for coming on time and prepared for every class, activity, and meeting.
- Ensure I am present and professional at SAEL or while representing SAEL; this means I keep personal communications (cell, email) and issues affecting my work to a minimum.
- Demonstrate grit when faced with challenges and setbacks.

Our principle goal is supporting student learning and we do not want to spend time on issues that distract us from this. These are our staff ‘Non Negotiables’, meaning they are not up for discussion during the regular school day when classes, clubs, crew, and community meetings are in session.

As part of a team, I will play an active role in supporting my fellow staff members.

HISTORY:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” –Margaret Mead

Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning began as a vision for local community members, families, and educators associated with Grass Valley Charter School. GVCS is a thriving, mentor EL K-8 school. Members of this community were seeing 8th graders leave the school without an option to continue to learn in a project-based, relevant, inspiring way.

The SAEL Board worked to create and submit a charter petition to the Nevada Joint Union High School District (NJUHSD). SAEL’s charter petition was approved by the NJUHSD in April of 2011 for five years. The SAEL Board then worked to secure the Public Charter School Grant Program (PCSGP) funds in order to begin planning with a staff. The school held information sessions, gained momentum, weathered some ups and downs with the NJUHSD, and planned to open in August of 2012. A staff was hired and working to plan the school. Students were recruited. The SAEL Board and staff personally, professionally, and financially sacrificed to keep the school alive. Unfortunately, although the PCSGP funds were promised in February of 2013, they were not actually received until late July 2013 and SAEL was forced to push back the launch of the school until the next school year. The SAEL Board continued to push forward with the plan to open for the 2014-2015 school year. With the grant funds secured and new teachers ready to be hired, the SAEL Board was recruiting a Principal while preparing SAEL for a second planning year. The Principal was hired as the founding principal at the end of December 2013 with founding teachers, new board members, and staff joining throughout the planning year

The SAEL Crew worked tirelessly to recruit students and plan for the opening of the school. Because of this collaborative, dedicated effort, SAEL had its first day of school on August 13, 2014.

Teaching and Learning

“There is more in us than we know. If we can be made to see it, perhaps, for the rest of our lives we will be unwilling to settle for less.”

—Kurt Hahn, Founder of Outward Bound

Every one of us – regardless of our responsibilities or job title – is first and foremost a teacher. Everything we do and everything we say - or do not say – counts.

We teach by our positive example of integrity, grit, advocacy, curiosity, craftsmanship, and collaboration. Our students read because they see that we read and that we value reading. Our students are willing to engage in adventure, both physical and academic, because they see that we engage in adventurous pursuits and that we value adventure. Whether speaking or listening intently to a student in the hallway, at a SAEL outreach event, in a classroom, at lunch, during crew, in front of the school or in the field, there always exists the opportunity to transform the slightest interaction into a “teachable moment”.

We are here to teach, but we are also here to learn. We support and challenge each others’ growth as professionals. We ask for and give each other feedback so that we can improve in our practice and in our own personal growth.

Communication

We try to err on the side of over communication with each other. Face to face communication can be a powerful form of communication but it is not always possible and depending on the matter, not necessarily appropriate or efficient. While we make extensive use of email, as a general guide, communication about any matter that is sensitive and/or highly confidential should be done in person.

As a public institution, all written documents – including email – may be subject to Freedom of Information laws and could be summoned in any legal case. A personal email account is advised for personal communication.

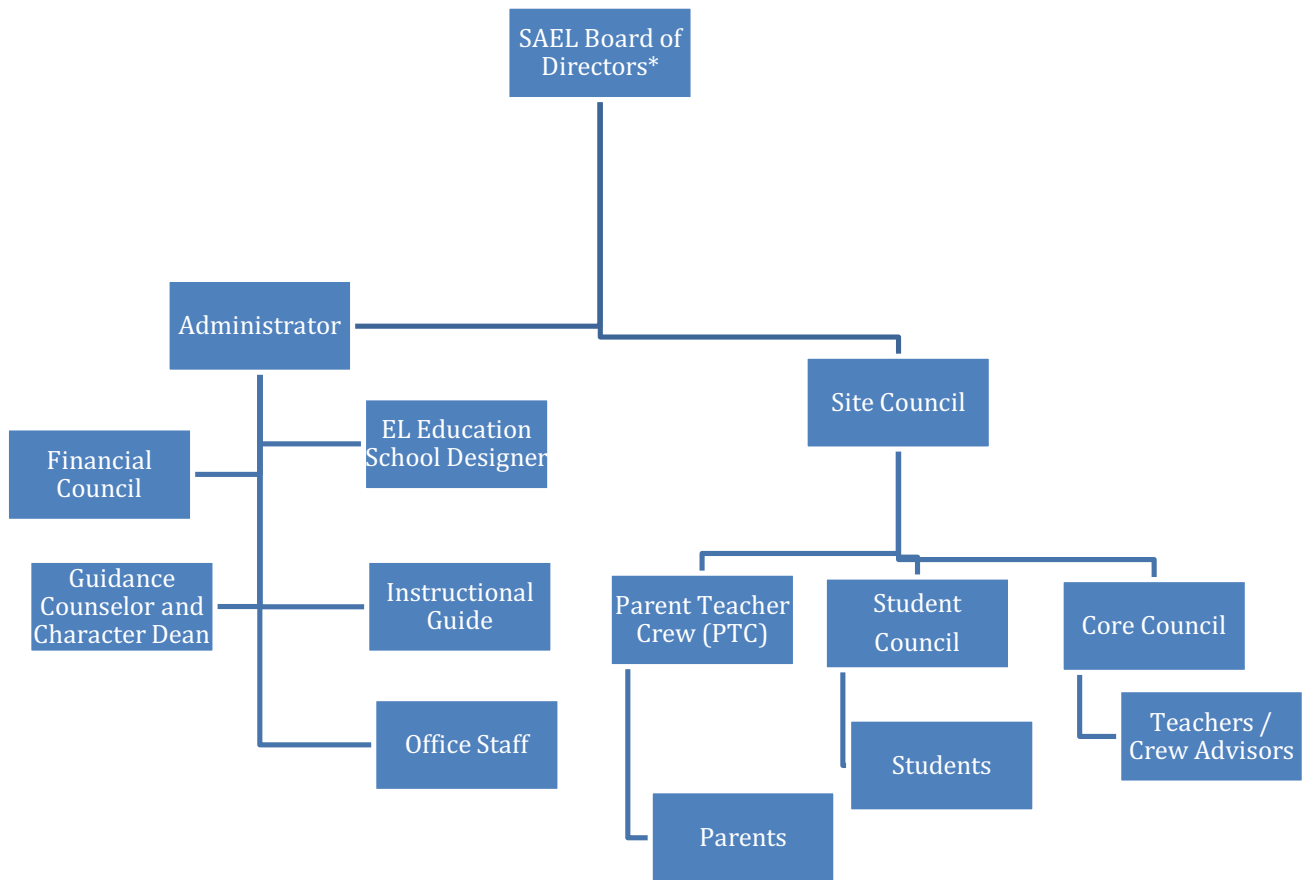
If you have a concern, suggestion, idea, compliment or complaint, please share it promptly. We are very committed to sharing our learning with each other as well as a broader education community. We are interested in hearing about your successes as well as what has not worked.

Communication with parents/guardians should be recorded in Jump Rope as a note in the event such documentation is later needed.

Staff will meet regularly in full and small groups. Ideally Fridays the entire staff is present for our professional development. In addition, teachers meet regularly with the Principal to review curriculum and instruction issues or student progress.

Every Staff member has a physical mailbox in the main office and a Google Apps for Education Account. It is essential that you check both your physical mailbox and email inbox regularly. You must also access our calendar and respond to calendar requests in a timely manner.

SAEL Organizational Chart June 2018



*Nevada Joint Union High School District (NJUHSD) authorizes Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning (SAEL). Our Charter was unanimously re-approved for 5 years for SY 16-17 to SY 20-21. SAEL must adhere to the tenets of the SAEL Charter in order to stay in compliance with our authorizer. The NJUHSD nominates a representative to be a voting member on the SAEL Board.

Organization Chart Clarification

Core Council	Site Council	Student Council	Financial Council	PTC
SAEL’s “Instructional Leadership Team” that supports student achievement	Group that works through LCAP and general goal development and monitoring every year	The official student leadership group	Meets to advise the Administrator in anticipation of October and February Budget Revisions and June Adoption	Meets to connect parents, provide information about the development of the program, and get feedback from our families
A representative group of core teachers and staff	A representative group of teachers, staff, admin, PTC, parents, Student Council	1 student from each CREW and facilitated by the Student Leadership Coordinator	An Advisory Council to the SAEL Admin consisting of the CSMC business manager and a SAEL Board representative	Open to all SAEL parents / guardians
Meeting monthly or bimonthly	Meeting monthly	Crew elections annually	Triannually	Meetings are monthly with Board Meetings directly before
The EL Education School Designer is an employee of EL Education that acts as a school-wide improvement coach and liaison to the national organization.				
The Instructional Guide is a SAEL employee that works to coach and support teachers in order to improve student achievement.				
Coordinators for internal leadership roles including Literacy, Student Leadership, Fieldwork, Arts Integration, etc. inform leadership decisions and are informed by stakeholder input as well.				
All SAEL staff and community members have opportunities to provide feedback, input, and support to the growth of our community.				

Customs and Traditions

At SAEL, we are creating our culture, customs, and traditions in order to sustain an environment where students and staff thrive, not just survive:

Teacher Support and Accountability: Each staff member will engage in a series of observations and an annual review. Within that process, the Teacher Led Conference will happen twice per year for all full time, core academic staff and other willing part time, elective staff if scheduling and budgeting allows. This TLC is similar to how students engage in an SLC as outlined in the attached Teacher Support and Accountability Plan

Mid-Year and Implementation Review with EL: We participate fully in the creation of an EL Work Plan, the assessment of that work, and planning to improve our implementation of Expeditionary Learning for the benefit of our students.

Visitors to The School: As a school committed to sharing our learning with a larger education community, we often have visitors to our school and classrooms. All visitors must be approved in advance in writing by the Administrator. Visitors must sign in at the front office and receive a visitor sticker. Visitors may not observe in any classrooms without permission of the Administrator. If you

see someone on our campus that does not have a sticker and you do not know, err on the side of caution and help direct that person to the main office. (See School Safety Plan for more details.)

Names: We are a small, family oriented school. However, we expect staff to use Mr. or Ms. before their first names when working with students at SAEL or representing SAEL at outreach events. We understand that familial, supportive bonds can be made with our student and family communities, but do not believe that students should or need to get in the habit of addressing teachers by their first names in order to do this. In college and the military, salutations are expected during initial interactions and we are preparing our students for life after SAEL

Celebrations

We welcome families and students of many different religious traditions and economic backgrounds at SAEL. We want to be respectful of all our students, families, and staff. Birthdays can be celebrated in Crew, but we need to be sure of all food allergies for the community and each Crew in particular before food should be brought in and shared. Religiously or politically neutral decorations like snowflakes are allowed, but ideally all displays or documentation boards are showcasing student or general SAEL work more than any decorations.

Guiding principles for decision making

- We will work as a staff to further define how decisions are made at SAEL. Essentially we will use an ABCD decision making model.***
- The core tenet of our decision making is to prioritize what is best, both in the short-term and long-term, for our students, alumni, and families.
- However, we aim to be a sustainable organization and therefore make decisions that are respectful of staff energy and talent.
- Our decisions are guided by principles of fairness and social justice.
- We utilize a clear, transparent decision-making process.
- We deeply value the input of all of our staff members.
 - We respect and encourage diverse perspectives.
 - We provide solution-oriented input; we accompany criticism with realistic solutions and a willingness to implement them.
 - We set a dedicated time and place for feedback and changes.
- Each staff member's major influence is within the realm of his/her job responsibilities. Influence expands with proven excellence in areas of direct control.
- We support refining our vision as a school. While we value improvement, we respect the fundamental mission and structure of the school.
- We value consistency, innovation, and collaboration when making curriculum and instruction decisions.
 - The Principal serves as the school's instructional and curricular leader; holistic instructional decisions reside with this role.
 - We empower instructional teams to make grade-specific and department-specific decisions.
 - We empower teachers to make classroom-specific decisions.
- We will support decisions once made, regardless of personal viewpoints.

*** ABCD Decision Making Model

<p>A = Admin Decision. A clearly identified organizational leader makes and communicates the decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Budget/LCAP Management & Reporting ▪ Purchasing approvals of any kind (advance approval for anticipated reimbursements included) ▪ Legal and Liability decisions and issues ▪ Interpersonal conflicts ▪ Personnel Issues ▪ Evaluation of Staff ▪ Disciplinary consequences (expulsion must be voted on by the SAEL Board) ▪ Emergency response ▪ President of Board of Directors and staff member liaison with the Board ▪ Primary liaison with EL Education, NJUHSD, NCSD, NCOS, CCSA, YM&C, CSMC, WASC 	<p>B = Admin Decision with Input. An organizational leader has the final say, but the decision is made with the input of others – particular individuals, a committee, a team, or parties affected by the decision. It is the responsibility of the organizational leader to communicate the decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schedule (including room assignments) ▪ EL Work Plan development ▪ School Goal development and monitoring ▪ Hiring process ▪ Calendar ▪ Curriculum ▪ Discipline Matrix, consequences, response ▪ Materials and Texts request and fulfillment ▪ Principal’s biannual Character recognition/awards ▪ Handbook development
<p>C = Collaborative decision made by a team. An organizational leader might be involved, but s/he has equal say alongside other members of the team. A designated person from the team is responsible for communicating the decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expedition planning ▪ Fieldwork Planning ▪ Crew curriculum planning ▪ Student placement in classes ▪ Recruitment ▪ Meeting agendas ▪ LCAP/Budget development and monitoring 	<p>D = Delegated decision made by a group or individual named by an organizational leader. The group or individual making the decision is responsible for communicating it to others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tech Management: Tech Coordinator ▪ Maintenance: Custodial / Operations ▪ Immediate Discipline: Character Dean ▪ Special Opportunities: ie Panama Intensive: Staff organizing after approval ▪ Student Leadership: Student Leadership Coordinator ▪ Enrollment: Guidance Counselor ▪ Senior Experience (ie graduation, yearbook, prom, senior trip, dances etc.): Senior Experience Coordinator ▪ HR paperwork ie time card, health insurance, onboarding packet, reimburse forms (not salary): Office Manager ▪ Standardized Testing: Testing Coordinator ▪ Attendance support and reporting: Admin Asst ▪ PTC events and opportunities

XII. EMPLOYEE RIGHTS—taken directly from the SAEL Charter

Qualities in a SAEL Teacher and SAEL Principal will be sought after as delineated in the Employee Qualifications Section. Administrators, teachers, students, and other stakeholders will be actively involved in the selection of these candidates. The SAEL Principal will solicit feedback from teachers and other key stakeholders annually. Employees of this Charter School will participate in STRS, PERS, or Social Security depending upon each individual's eligibility. No NJUHSD district employee will be required to work at SAEL (Ed. Code 47605 (3)(e)).

All employees hired by SAEL are at-will employees and are not represented by any existing union contract. Procedures for employee evaluations are summarized in this document and will be delineated in the appropriate staff handbook. SAEL shall be the exclusive public employer for purposes of the employees of the SAEL for purposes of Chapter 10.7 (commencing with Section 3540) of Division 4 of Title 1 of the California Government Code.

SAEL staff perform duties that fall under the following categories.

a. Classified Employees

1. Each classified employee will complete duties as per their job description and individual contracts.

b. Certificated Employees

1. Certificated employees maintain rights as described in this document and in their individual employee agreements.
2. Part time certificated employees are often hired to teach specific subjects or classes, typically year after year. Employee rights and terms of employment of part time certificated teachers are governed by their specific employee agreements.

Program needs and overall needs of the Charter School shall be overriding factors in deciding any and all staff reductions at SAEL.

c. Charter School Contracted Employee

Charter School Contracted Employees are governed by their specific employee agreements or contracts. Such employees are those that are hired, usually for a short term, to perform a specific function or service after which their position ceases. Examples may be dance lessons, art lessons, etc.

d. Meet and Confer Procedure

- a. Once SAEL is at full capacity, percentage increases in the salary steps may be considered by the SAEL Board. When the SAEL Charter is up for renewal, the Core Council will meet and confer to consider changes to the existing SAEL Salary Step Schedules in conjunction with the Financial Council, SAEL Principal, and SAEL Governing Board.
- b. In the event the Core Council, Financial Council, and SAEL Administrator do not reach tentative agreements on one or more of the issues discussed during the “meet and confer”

sessions, an outside facilitator or mediator may be used and may make recommendations to the SAEL Board concerning the terms and conditions of employment for the current school year.

- c. The SAEL Principal may negotiate for salary directly with the SAEL Board of Directors at any time.

e. Procedure for request of a leave of absence

Any site-based SAEL employee may enter into an agreement with SAEL according to the following specification: This agreement specifies the dates for break in service and reinstatement with a future employee agreement. Written notification requesting such an agreement must be received by SAEL administrator prior to March 15th of the previous school year. The agreement would state when a break in service would occur and when a new employee agreement would be issued if enrollment so warrants. Willingness to enter into this agreement is at the discretion of the SAEL Board and based upon the recommendation of the SAEL Principal.

Student/Family Handbook

We work collaboratively to create the Student/Family Handbook and get it approved by the SAEL board.

Dress Code

We expect all staff to dress professionally in attire that they would feel comfortable wearing in the presence of an important visitor (e.g. families, funders, superintendents, government officials, etc.). We also know that we will frequently be in the field, engaging in adventurous activities, and want to respect each staff person's professional judgment and personal style. However, the following items are considered inappropriate at all times: ripped or soiled clothing or footwear, overly revealing clothing, or any clothing/apparel that has words, terms, or pictures that may be offensive to other community members. In addition, although it is not clothing, colognes and perfumes should not be overwhelming.

Exceptions to this policy around soiled/ripped clothing will be made on certain occasions (e.g. painting the school, doing a Tough Mudder to raise funds for SAEL, on Crew Orientation, etc.).

Telephone Usage

School telephones are for school business use. Personal calls (incoming and outgoing) should be limited to essential matters and should be of short duration.

Cell Phones

Staff and students should be sure to turn all personal cell phones to vibrate when at SAEL or representing SAEL. For risk management purposes, it may be required that certain staff have cell phones on and ringing to communicate with staff that is off-site or in the Adventure area.

U.S. Mail

Postage in the office is for official school business only. Personal use of the postage is not allowed.

Technology

Staff are expected to acquire mastery in use of technology as it pertains to work. See Tech Acceptable Use Policy for staff and students.

Letters and Communications Home

Documentation is an important dimension of our work and extends to correspondence with families and students. This has legal implications so observance is particularly important. Prior to sending any letter/communication to the whole school community, please share it with the Principal for a "second set of eyes" and approval. Although E-mail creates a "paper trail," you should also document any communications in Jump Rope when appropriate so it is clear how issues are being addressed and resolved. In order to ensure that we are all on the same page about what is occurring in classes and throughout the school day, if you are communicating with your full grade or class, please cc the Principal and Assistant to the Principal on the email. This will help us know what is going on in case families are inquiring. We will work on our systems and structures throughout early years to determine best practices, but in the beginning it is better to overshare to ensure clarity for all SAEL staff about what is happening at the school.

Forms

The first and best place to look for any form is on Google Docs

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

IEPs should be kept locked and are confidential. IEPs are available for staff to use with guidance from our SPED Coordinator. Please do not leave this paperwork unattended or remove it from school grounds. If you see this paperwork left out, please return it to the SPED Coordinator as soon as possible.

Personal and Family Emergency Plans

All SAEL staff members are expected to develop personal and family emergency plans. Each family should anticipate that a staff member may be required to remain at school following a catastrophic event. Knowing that the family is prepared and can handle the situation will enable school staff to do their jobs more effectively.

Purchases and Reimbursements

All purchases or planned reimbursements must be approved in writing by the SAEL Administrator prior to purchase. Our Office Manager will handle the majority of the details of purchasing and reimbursing, but the Principal will need to approve any purchases or planned reimbursements. An email communication is acceptable for written approval, but the Office Manager may request to see this before proceeding through the purchasing process.

SAEL would like to honor staff fieldwork engagement while also balancing the sustainability of the fieldwork program in general at SAEL. Fieldwork is both an opportunity for staff to engage in exciting and positive learning experiences and something that asks staff to be away from home, potentially using their own vehicle, and spending nights in the field. With all this in mind, if a SAEL staff member (not volunteer) is officially engaged in fieldwork (not deciding to join as a volunteer or for an exciting opportunity to work with students), SAEL will reimburse mileage according to the current SAEL approved ratio of money per mile in excess of 100 miles round trip. This includes only official SAEL fieldwork and senior trip experiences that are approved in advance. This only applies to the teacher's own vehicle and not a rental vehicle rented by SAEL. The rental vehicle costs would all be handled by the school if the rental vehicle was rented for the purpose of fieldwork by the school. Gas for the rental vehicle would be paid back based on receipts.

Mileage Reimbursement for Travel by Automobile

For pre-approved travel only (such as EL PD), SAEL will reimburse per mile for travel. See the Office Manager for current rate. Carpooling is always encouraged. SAEL does not reimburse for travel to and from work.

Mileage Reimbursement for Travel by Plane

For pre-approved travel only (such as EL PD), SAEL will reimburse flight costs. Flights are reimbursed to and from the pre-approved travel destination. If staff are traveling from or to a different location, flights will be reimbursed at a comparable rate to what it would have cost to do a normal flight from home to the regular destination and back.

Submitting a Reimbursement Form

In order to be processed, reimbursements must be completely prepared and dated. Submitted receipts must be the originals. Reimbursements will be processed within 30 days. We are unable to reimburse expenses without the actual receipt.

Text Distributions and Collection

Teachers are responsible for signing books/texts out to students for their respective classes and should keep a Google doc log for this of date signed out and returned. Class sets need to be numbered and labeled at the very least before ever being distributed to students. At year end, teachers will submit a list of students with outstanding books to the Office Staff.

Emergencies

We have a comprehensive, board-approved Safety Plan for the NCE Site. Details and protocols will be reviewed in the all-staff professional development days prior to the first day of school. In general, for any medical emergency where you are the first responder, call or have a student call 911 immediately, then notify the office.

Suspicion of Child Neglect and/or Abuse

<http://mandatedreporter.ca.com/faq/faq.htm> Department of Children and Families

Under California state law, all adults working in schools are considered mandated reporters. Please notify the Principal that you are making a report and document that you have made the report and notified the Principal. See the above web site for extensive information about how to report a suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

Medication

Under no circumstances should Staff administer medications, including over the counter medications, to a student. Students should not share personal prescription medication with each other. We have developed extensive Health, Safety, and Risk Management Policies and Procedures with support from the NJUHSD Health Services and our WFR certified Adventure Teacher.

Referrals to Social Workers/Counselors

Staff and volunteers should bring any concerns to the Guidance Counselor and SAEL Administrator immediately for any serious safety or wellness issues. Other issues can be emailed.

SAEL recognizes that adolescents are dealing with many things in their lives aside from school that may be affecting their daily functioning. We recognize that adolescents need a safe and trusting person they can work with to overcome their problems and excel to their full potential. Counseling

services provided at the school or off-site are strictly confidential. What is talked about during counseling is kept between the social worker or counselor and the adolescent.

----Helpful Tips for Working with Students

(Informed by Monarch High School Volunteer Handbook, San Diego, CA)

When working with students at SAEL:

1. Be sensitive to cultural differences (socio-economic, ethnic, etc.).
2. Maintain a non-judgmental attitude; be open to listening (our students love to talk and like to have someone to listen to them).
3. Be assertive and consistent; set limits for behavior and stick to them; avoid staff splitting.
4. Do not make promises that you can't keep; do what you say you will do.
5. Set boundaries; keep personal information confidential when it is inappropriate.
6. Maintain confidentiality and trust of student EXCEPT in cases of suspected abuse, concerns about suicide, etc. Report concerns to the Principal immediately.
7. Do not project your personal goals onto a student, instead, ask what is best for this student – how can I empower them to improve their lives and education?
8. Hold high expectations for students.
9. Be aware that intellectual development and social charm do not equal emotional maturity and what the student may be ready to do.
10. You are not responsible for changing the life of a student. You are a teacher, not a professional therapist.

SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE YOUTH CONTACT PRACTICES

(this section pulled directly from SAEL's Student and Family Handbook)

Adapted Directly from SAEL Teachers Day work with internationally acclaimed professional development organization Challenge Day and its founders Rich and Yvonne St. John-Dutra, MA, MFT in addition to their 10 Tips for Creating Safe and Supportive Youth Contact © Challenge Day

“What if, rather than creating policies to protect young people, we instead empower them to protect themselves with our support?”

During our Challenge Day programs and workshops we use humor and education to demonstrate the importance of hugs and compassionate touch. On many levels, working in a public setting and normalizing hugs and safe emotional and physical contact, we provide opportunities and tools for adults to safely and effectively offer their support to youth.” –Rich and Yvonne St. John Dutra

What students can expect regarding safe and supportive contact:

STAFF WILL:

- Create classroom and group safety norms collaboratively to set clear and consistent boundaries for safe and supportive contact in the traditional classroom and in the field.
- Not engage in compassionate touch unless they ask permission of the student first.
- Honor differences and be sure to respect the diversity of people's boundaries while still remaining present and available with support.
- Act as adult role models and strive to create and maintain appropriate and safe cross generational relationships that involve safe physical and emotional support.
- Keep contact with young people public and consistent as much as possible
- Share their own personal and professional boundaries that they have developed or must adhere to.
- Create open communication with parents, caregivers, and key family members and encourage youth to connect with positive members of their support network as well as their peers.

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

It is the policy of SAEL that no teacher or staff member will use corporal punishment against a student. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting or the use of any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior. While the use of appropriate touching is part of daily life and is important for student development, a teacher and staff member must ensure that they do not exceed appropriate behavior. If a child or other staff member specifically requests that he or she not be touched, then that request must be honored without question. If the child or other staff member has not requested that they not be touched, then the following forms of touching are considered appropriate:

- Hugs initiated by the student
- Hugs given with permission
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Hand-shakes
- "High fives" and hand slapping
- Touching shoulders and arms around the shoulder area
- Touching face to check temperature, wipe away a tear, and remove hair from face or other similar types of contact for similar purposes
- Patting a student on the knee (grades K through 5)
- Holding hands while walking with small children or children with significant disabilities
- Arms around shoulders
- Reasonable self defense
- Reasonable defense of another
- Reasonable restraint of a violent person to protect others or property

Except as discussed above, the following forms of touching are never appropriate:

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses on the mouth
- Corporal punishment

- Sitting students on one's lap (grades 3 and above)
- Touching buttocks, chests or genital areas
- Pushing a person or another person's body part (other than in self defense, defense of another or property)
- Showing affection in isolated areas
- Wrestling with students or other staff-member
- Bench-pressing another person
- Tickling, piggyback rides or massages
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Any form of sexual contact
- Poking fingers at another person that results in an offensive contact

This policy does not prevent touching a student for the purpose of guiding them along a physical path, helping them up after a fall, engaging in a rescue or the application of Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) or other emergency first-aid. Nor does it prohibit the use of reasonable force and touching in self-defense or in the defense of another. Restraining a child who is trying to engage in violent or inappropriate behavior is also allowed. Only such force as necessary to defend one's self, another or the child or to protect property is legally allowed. Excessive force is prohibited.

An attempt to violate this policy by placing another person in reasonable apprehension that they will be a victim of one of the acts prohibited under this policy is also prohibited. A reasonable apprehension normally includes an overt act, but words alone may be sufficient to violate this policy if the words uttered were such that under the circumstances it could be reasonably assumed that physical contact would be attempted. Violation of this policy could subject the teacher or staff member to discipline up to and including termination. This policy must necessarily be somewhat flexible. Sometimes, especially when dealing with younger children or children with a disability, touching is more appropriate. A touch for the purpose of helping (i.e. cleaning up a small child after a bathroom accident) may be appropriate in limited circumstances although clearly inappropriate in more general circumstances. An accidental touch is never inappropriate provided it is a true accident. It is impossible to define each and every instance when touching is inappropriate. Teachers and staff members should apply the rules of common sense in the circumstances they find themselves.

STAFF/STUDENT INTERACTION POLICY

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

While reported incidences of sexual misconduct committed by teachers and school staff are low throughout the country, every incident results in consequences that must be immediately addressed by the particular school community. Accordingly, it is the purpose of this policy to provide additional clarification to the *Standards of Conduct* expected in current SAEL ethics-related rules and regulations so that staff members clearly understand the prohibitions and behavior boundaries, which must govern their conduct. (For purposes of this policy, staff includes all school employees—certificated or classified; coaches or advisors; full-time or part-time- as well as volunteers). The rules of conduct set forth in this policy are not intended to serve as an exhaustive delineation of requirements, limitations, or prohibitions on staff conduct and activities established by this school. Rather, the components of this policy serve:

- (1) To alert staff about some of the more sensitive and often problematic

matters involved in faculty/staff student relationships.

- (2) To specify Boundaries related to potentially sexual situations and conduct—the crossing of which is contrary to accepted norms of behavior and in conflict with the duties and responsibilities of staff.
- (3) To provide staff members with clear guidance in conducting themselves in a manner that reflects high standards of professionalism. (It is important for SAEL to maintain a school-wide culture in which students and staff understand their responsibilities to report sexual misconduct without fearing that school leaders will betray them, if they do. In order to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation, students and staff must know that the administration will investigate reports about possible misconduct.)
- (4) To clarify that potential improper action may have significant consequences.
- (5) To provide an environment that empowers staff and students to identify actions that appear to have crossed Boundaries.
- (6) To define the process that SAEL will use for addressing potential improper conduct.
- (7) To preserve student and staff privacy rights during any pending investigation as much as possible.

BACKGROUND AND GENERAL POLICY PROVISIONS

Actions by staff members that are inconsistent or in conflict with the values established by SAEL can harm students, staff members, and the school's operation; therefore, such actions are unacceptable. It is the policy of this school that all employees conduct themselves at all times in a manner that reflects the ethical standards consistent with the rules contained in this policy and otherwise proclaimed by this school. The provisions set forth herein are intended to guide all SAEL staff members toward conduct that reflects the high standards of behavior and professionalism required of school employees while defining interaction Boundaries between students and staff members.

An educator accused of sexual misconduct, whether or not the accusation is true, becomes at risk for loss of job as well as for criminal and/or civil legal actions. Occurrences of sexual misconduct by a staff member disrupt the education of other students, sidetrack the instructional focus of the school, and harm the school's legitimacy—all of which threaten the school's future ability to recruit skilled professionals and maintain a credible operation in the eyes of the community.

It is vital that school administrators equip staff with a policy that clarifies acceptable and unacceptable behavior with students. It is also critical that staff members study this policy thoroughly and behave in ways to avoid even the appearance of misconduct.

While not all Boundaries and/or situations can be addressed in a single policy, the issues delineated herein are among those that can be most problematic for staff members and

among those that can have the greatest potential for a negative impact on this school and its community. Staff members should seek guidance in their daily conduct from established policies, procedures, and directives as well as through the guidance and recommendations of school leadership. Although this policy gives specific, clear direction, it is each staff member's obligation to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents, students, colleagues, or school leaders.

BOUNDARIES

Boundaries Defined

For the purposes of this policy, the term “Boundaries” are defined as acceptable professional behaviors by staff members while interacting with a student. Trespassing beyond the Boundaries of a student/teacher relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member’s perspective, but some of these can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a student or parental point of view. The purpose of the following lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between staff and students but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct.

Staff members must understand their own responsibilities for ensuring that they do not cross the Boundaries as written in this policy. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of the established Boundaries will be considered irrelevant for any required disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is critical that all employees study this policy thoroughly and apply its spirit and intent in their daily activities. Although sincere, professional interaction with students fosters the charter mission of “Academic Excellence,” student/staff interaction has Boundaries regarding the activities, locations and intentions.

Unacceptable Behaviors

(This list, and any subsequent lists, are not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather illustrative of the types of behavior addressed by this policy.)

- **Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal and intimate nature.**
- Kissing of ANY kind.
- Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student in a private situation.
- Intentionally being alone with a student away from the school.
- Making, or participating in, sexually inappropriate comments.
- Sexual jokes, or jokes/comments with sexual double-entendre.
- Seeking emotional involvement (which can include intimate attachment) with a student beyond the normative care and concern required of an educator.
- Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented.

- Discussing inappropriate personal troubles or intimate issues with a student in an attempt to gain their support and understanding.
- Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable with Caution

(These behaviors should only be exercised when a reasonable and prudent person, acting as an educator, is prevented from using a better practice or behavior. Staff members should inform their supervisor of each circumstance and occurrence.)

- **Giving students a ride to/from school or school activities without parent permission (only in “emergency” situations).**
- Being alone in a room with a student at school and with the door closed.
- Allowing students in your home with signed parent permission for a pre-planned and pre-communicated educational activity, which must include another educator, parent, or other responsible adult).
- Remarks about the physical attributes or physiological development of anyone.
- Excessive attention toward a particular student.
- Sending e-mails, text messages, Facebook/social media responses, or letters to students if the content is not about school activities.

Acceptable and Recommended Behaviors

- **Obtaining parents' written consent for any after-school activity on or off campus (exclusive of tutorials).**
- Obtaining formal approval (site and parental) to take students off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions.
- E-mails, text-messages, phone conversations, and other communications to and with students must be professional and pertain to school activities or classes. (Communication should be initiated via school-based technology and equipment.)
- Keeping the door open when alone with a student.
- Keeping reasonable space between you and your students.
- Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries.
- Keeping parents informed when a significant issue develops about a student.
- Keeping after-class discussions with a student professional and brief.
- Asking for advice from senior staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to Boundaries.
- Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with a student.
- Informing your Principal about situations that have the potential to become more severe.
- Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a

more serious situation later.

- Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students and/or co-workers.
- Asking another staff member to be present if you will be alone with any student who may have severe social or emotional challenges.
- Asking another staff member to be present, or within close supervisory distance, when you must be alone with a student after regular school hours.
- Giving students praise and recognition without touching them in questionable areas; giving appropriate pats on the back, high-five's, and handshakes are appropriate.
- Keeping your professional conduct a high priority during all moments of student contact.
- Asking yourself if any of your actions which go contrary to these provisions are worth sacrificing your job and career.

REPORTING

When any staff member, parent, or student becomes aware of a staff member having crossed the Boundaries specified in this policy, he or she must report the suspicion to the Principal promptly. ** A reasonable suspicion means something more than a mere suspicion but less than absolute knowledge. It is based on facts which would lead a reasonable person to believe the conduct occurred All reports shall be confidential. Prompt reporting is essential to protect students, the suspected staff member, any witnesses, and the school as a whole. Employees must also report to the administration any awareness of, or concern about, student behavior that crosses Boundaries, or any situation in which a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse.

INVESTIGATING

The Principal, or designated representative, will promptly investigate and document the investigation of any allegation of sexual misconduct, using such support staff or outside assistance as he or she deems necessary and appropriate under the circumstances. Throughout this fact-finding process, the investigating administrator, and all others privy to the investigation, shall protect the privacy interests of any affected student(s) and/or staff member(s), including any potential witnesses, as much as possible. The investigating Principal, or designated representative shall promptly notify their insurance company and law firm that an investigation is in progress; the Principal, in turn, shall notify the Governing Board in closed session of the existence and status of any investigations. Upon completion of any such investigations, the Principal shall report to the Governing Board any conclusions reached. The Principal, or designated representative shall consult with SAEL legal counsel, prior to, during, and after conducting any investigation.

CONSEQUENCES

Staff members who have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, and where appropriate, will be reported to authorities for potential legal action.

California Penal Code Section 11166 requires any teacher or child care custodian who has knowledge of, or observes, a child in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse to report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately, or as soon as practically possible by telephone and to prepare and send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

TRAINING

This document shall be discussed with and acknowledged by all SAEL employees as part of their initial employment and again, on an annual basis, as part of on-going training for all SAEL employees. A copy of this acknowledgement will be placed into each SAEL employee's personnel folder. In addition, appropriate portions of this policy and related information will be incorporated into on-going SAEL communications activities (e.g., via the daily bulletin, the school website, the parent newsletter), to underscore the continuing importance that SAEL places on student/staff interaction.

Staff are encouraged to do the following training every other year:

Must be completed within the first 6 weeks of school or hire.

- Mandatory Reporting: Child Abuse & Neglect (SafeSchools)
- Other trainings as assigned or mandated

Failure to do so can result in loss of the ability to stay employed at SAEL. Ideally CPR/AED and First Aid stays up to date.

Morning Circle

Morning Circle is an important part of building community and staying on the same page about SAEL developments. Morning Circle will start promptly at 9:05am every school day and end about 9:15am. We appreciate that you need to be prepared to teach at 9:20am, but we also know things move fast here and a quick whip around of morning announcements and greetings will help us stay on top of these developments and build our Crew in the process.

Classroom Management

Use your classroom management system as your means of holding students accountable. All teachers are expected to norm with their students, hold students to these norms, and support students to be accountable to these norms. Student discipline should be handled in the classroom to the greatest extent possible, Students can be sent to the office after all other attempts to keep the student engaged in learning has been exhausted. Jump Rope will act as a way to document student character infractions and successes.

Space and Facilities Management

1. *If you're in early or stay late and allow students to be in the building with you, they must be under your direct supervision at all times. You should never be alone with a student. You should never have a student alone with you on campus after school.*

The main office and the school will open every day at 8:45am and close every day at 4:45pm. We

communicate to families that although the school day starts at 9:20am and finishes at 4:30pm, there will be adults and an open space available for students. You cannot and should not alter the hours of the school day for a student consistently. This means you should not promise a family that you can come every day and open your classroom at 8:30am so the family can have time to drop off their other kids. You should not communicate with families directly about modifying the schedule as it will cause miscommunication around hours of operation and pick up and drop off. It can also create systems of inequity and safety. Be careful what you promise to families about the use of our facilities and always consult with the Principal if you have questions. The Principal must know what is happening and what is being planned to happen in all facilities at all times

2. Please turn off lights and electronics and lock the doors to classrooms/offices when you exit.

Again, this is to protect and preserve precious school resources and further avoid the possibility of students being where they're not supposed to be unsupervised.

3. If you're the last one out of the school, please ensure the main front door is locked, especially.

4. If you're using technology, such as iPads or cameras, make sure you also lock this technology up at the end of its use. You should never leave the room if tech is unsecured unless it is an emergency.

Facilities Use Policies

It is the SAEL's goal to operate the facility so it is functional, clean, safe and attractive to provide a good environment for health care, education, and as a sign of respect for staff, students and the community. We are working toward upholding the EL norm of having "Beautiful Spaces". We are working through our new relationship as new neighbors and must assume the best at all times during this process. Immediately check in with the SAEL Principal or Character Dean if an issue arises with neighbors or anyone else using our facility. Immediately email Admin with a new concern about the facility (ie, broken door, leak) so we can communicate with the landlord.

Housekeeping

- Place trash in proper receptacles. Cardboard is broken down for transport to the recycling bin. White paper is recycled; use blue bins. **USE BOTH SIDES OF ALL PAPER!**
- Report accidents, spills and broken or damaged equipment or furniture to Assistant to the Principal.
- Display posters, flyers and notices on appropriate bulletin boards or walls. Do not use scotch tape on any surfaces for hanging materials. It is very difficult to remove.
- Use colored painters tape or removal tacks. Do your best to preserve any paint job that was done by dedicated SAEL volunteers.
- Use only dry erase markers on white boards and keep them clean.
- Food attracts rodents and insects. It should not be left out and about with open packaging.
- Consume food and drink in the cafeteria or outside as much as possible. Water is always allowed in the classrooms. Snacking is also allowed when appropriate, but it is much easier to clean up a mess outside.
- Food, water, and gum norms need to be established with students in each class. These items should not be dropped on the ground or put under desks.
- Clean up after yourselves – kitchen, refrigerator, microwave.
- As the responsible adult in charge of your teaching space, you are expected to ensure that students have completed the clean up of the space by the end of the class or day. Teachers are also responsible for the care of furniture and equipment in their classrooms. Please periodically check your tables or desks for graffiti, etc.

- Please notify the Assistant to the Principal in writing of any major maintenance issues as after you become aware of them as possible.

Security

- Keep valuable items under lock and key – or at home. Close and lock doors when you leave a room.
- NEVER PROP AN OUTSIDE DOOR (except science classrooms) and make sure all classrooms are locked.
- Do not admit anyone you do not know to your classroom. See Emergency and Safety Policies for further details.

Fire Protection

- Staff and students should be familiar with the fire evacuation route from spaces they use as well as the location and proper use of extinguishers. See Emergency and Safety Policies for further details.

Parking

- Staff can park in the Staff Parking Lot. Volunteers can use available street parking. See parking maps for details.

Money / Fundraising

Any money collected by staff must be deposited with the Office Manager in a locked box. Staff must have prior approval from the Principal and/or PTC before organizing any fundraising events or asking students/families/the community for funds.

Professional Responsibilities - Staff

Professional Development

Planning and professional development are built into the daily schedule and annual calendar.

www.eleducation.org

As an EL school we have access to on and off-site EL professional development opportunities. Use EL Commons to gain and share best practices with EL educators from throughout the country. Contact our School Designer when appropriate to get more support. Work with the Principal to determine which off-site PD offerings in EL and beyond are appropriate and can be supported.

Meetings

- Staff meetings will occur Friday with the entire teaching staff as much as possible. These meetings will also be affected by fieldwork opportunities.
- Office Staff will have regular meetings as well.
- Full time Staff meet with the Principal on a regular basis to discuss aspects of teaching and learning, including implementation of classroom practices, resource gathering for curriculum development, long-term project planning and behavior management.

Performance Review

We are in the growth business. Our job as educators is to foster specific growth in our students. We enter each new school year with a goal in mind for where we'd like our students to be at the end of the year. We meet our students where they are, simultaneously recognizing the strengths that they already possess and coaxing them towards discovery of their weaknesses. Through classroom activities, fieldwork, conversations in the hallways and the like, we expose our students to new ways of

being, previously unexplored concepts and brand new paradigms. At many points in the process we check in with our students, assessing their understanding of the information that we've exposed them to and their ability to utilize this information while thinking critically through problems. In the end we hold our students accountable for their knowledge, asking them to demonstrate their growth in areas of weakness and strength.

This process, the focused, multi-leveled approach to education, is what we aim at emulating in our own development as educators. Our Teacher Support and Accountability Plan connects observation, evaluation, reflection and professional development. We assess where we are, set goals for where we'd like to be, expose ourselves to new information to improve our practice and demonstrate understanding of our own growth over time.

Every staff and faculty member should have a formal annual review by the Principal.

Currently, we focus on EL's three Dimensions of Student Achievement and have a modified version of Kim Marshall's Teacher Evaluation Rubrics as the main tool for self and Principal evaluation (See separate documentation on the Teacher Support and Accountability Plan for more information). Using the Mastery Knowledge and Skills, Culture and Character, and High Quality Student Work as the three dimensions we strive to support students to achieve, teachers are asked to create a Teacher Led Conference based on these dimensions.

Resources for First Year Teachers (or any teachers!) (from the Marshall Memo)

Websites

In this helpful *Kappan* feature, Buffalo (NY) teachers John Collins and Marcia Nigro suggest the following websites for novice teachers:

- The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory has expert suggestions on teaching at-risk students: <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/atocont.htm>.
- Teacher Tools has lesson plans, curriculum materials, and other helpful resources: <http://www.teachertools.org/index.html>.
- New Teachers Online is sponsored by the Teachers Network and has videos, links to lesson plans, and information about grants: <http://teachersnetwork.org/ntol>.
- The American Federation of Teachers page covers discipline and school safety, with information on classroom management: <http://www.aft.org/topics/discipline/index.htm>.
- The National Education Association sponsors this comprehensive website with lesson plans, blank forms, record-keeping tips, and advice from veteran teachers: <http://www.nea.org/teachexperience/newteachers.html>.
- Roosevelt University professors give advice: <http://Staff.roosevelt.edu/BTSP/index.htm>.
- The U.S. Department of Education, site has online discussions, mentor teacher exchanges, workshops, reports, and more: <http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/index.html>.
- The New Teacher Center connects novices with accomplished teachers from the University of California/Santa Cruz: <http://www.newteachercenter.org>.

- The University of North Carolina, School of Education has a New Teacher support page featuring real-world advice on curriculum, fears, classroom management, and motivation: <http://www.learnnc.org/support/newteach>.

Employment Agreement Renewal

Full time staff should notify the Principal in writing by March 1 if they wish to return. Letters expressing an intention to renew Employment Agreements (pending successful completion of the year) will be issued by June 1.

JumpRope and Powerschool

Every teacher is required to post grades for assignments, projects and tests online through JumpRope. The parent and student portal should be updated at least every 2 weeks. You may be asked to additionally enter information, data, and attendance in Powerschool when appropriate. *For marking period dates, please see School Calendar.*

Report Cards and Progress Reports

The school sends home formal Report Cards 2 times a year, at the end of each semester. We also send out Progress Reports at least 2 times a year, in the middle of each semester at the quarter mark. Taken together, these 4 updates keep families informed about each student's academic progress when provided in addition to student and parent access to the Jump Rope Student and Family portal.

Crew Leader Responsibilities

Crew Leaders are the primary contact between the school and the family. Each Crew Leader is assigned to a group up to about 15 students. It is the Crew Leader's responsibility to check in with the student on a regular basis, regarding academic and character progress. Crew Leaders will contact parents on a regular basis to report how the student is doing, both positive news and areas for improvement.

Fieldwork Guidelines

Our Adventure Teacher and Coordinator annually update the risk management and fieldwork policies and procedures. Essentially, all fieldwork must be approved in writing by the Principal. The main SAEL Google calendar must be updated with all relevant information about the fieldwork **no later than 2 weeks prior to the fieldwork date when at all possible**. We would like to communicate pertinent information about the days' activities to parents/guardians in a timely manner. *This is a potential liability issue for you and for the school and would appreciate your diligent cooperation in this matter.*

Planning Stages

Supervising teachers and the Principal will have a conversation about their plan for any fieldwork (off-campus). The conversation should include discussion of:

1. agenda for the day including goals, logistics and whether additional adult needed; ratios
2. communicating with assisting staff so they are clear on their roles and responsibilities.
3. posting it on the main SAEL Google calendar

During

1. See Fieldwork and Risk Management Policies and Procedures
2. All students and staff are still responsible for upholding SAEL norms while on fieldwork

Follow-up

1. Send thank you notes as needed.

Common Classroom Practices

Displayed in each classroom: Expedition title, guiding questions, long-term targets (appropriate amount), student norms, tech box, bell schedule, calendar, other poster as assigned (ie, TPTs)

On Documentation Panels/Bulletin Boards: Project description, rubrics, evidence of student work progress through time/revisions, exemplary student work

On Board Daily: Agenda, Learning Targets

Passes: Students should leave class sparingly and only in times of extreme need. This means that during instructional time disruptions to use the bathroom, check in with other teachers, go to the main office, etc. should be kept to a minimum. If a student needs to leave class to pick up something from the main office, go to the main office to make call, be excused from class to leave for a Dr.'s appointment, etc., a pass should be given. We will norm as a staff on what those passes are and what they look like, but we will not accept students into our classrooms or the main office without passes.

Documenting Curricula

As a Staff, we have determined best practices for documenting/labeling our curricula. We use Google Docs to share Combined Expedition Planners, the shared Scope and Sequence for Grades 9-12, and other resources. See grade level folders and SAEL for Teachers. The labeling of docs should always have a date accompanying it if it is being modified or filed with the chance of revision (ie Student Apple Giving Protocols_060114 to indicate this doc was last changed on June 1, 2014. Although Google Docs will keep time stamps, on modifications, once you download the doc, that's harder to track.)

Substitute Teachers

We will use in house staff or well-known, reliable, subs from our community as substitute teachers. If staff member needs to be out, arrangements should be made with the Principal as soon as that staff member knows she will be out. Emergency sub plans should be on file in the main office by the end of August.

*It is still the responsibility of the teacher to have Lesson Plans for the day. An emergency lesson plan should be kept in the office by the end of August and updated accordingly. You should also email the Asst to the Principal and the Principal your plan that morning before classes begin. Sub plans should not involve someone else making copious amounts of copies.

Physical Demands

Teachers will spend the majority of the day standing and sitting in the classroom and must be able to maneuver throughout the classroom and in tight spaces around student desks. Dealing with students can involve kneeling, squatting, stooping, or bending on a frequent basis. While standing the teacher will frequently hold light objects they are working and demonstrating, etc. These can be held from waist level to slightly above the teacher's head. The chalkboard or white board is occasionally to frequently used which can require grasping the chalk or marker or eraser, reaching at, below or above shoulder height with the dominant upper extremity and may require trunk or neck rotation to look back at class. The teacher may be required to do an occasional lunch duty, escort students across the campus, or cover Adventure/PE class, which involves walking on even and uneven surfaces including pea gravel and negotiating a 6" curb.

The teacher may use computers, overhead projectors, TV, VCR, etc. which would require a 10 pound force to push or pull the TV/VCR stand. The overhead projector requires 5 pounds of force to move. When working with equipment it may also be necessary to forward bend, squat, and/or kneel.

The teacher often moves children's desks and chairs to change the layout of the classroom to influence teaching situations. It is occasionally necessary to lift and carry boxes weighing up to 25 pounds from the office to the classroom up to 200 feet away.

The teacher must sit on an occasional basis when developing lesson plans, grading, etc. This is done at the desk with forward bending from the waist, leaning on the forearms, and looking down which requires neck flexion. It is necessary to grasp and manipulate pens, markers, scissors, staplers, etc., either occasionally or frequently, depending on the day. May occasionally have to climb or balance on counters, step- ladders or chairs.

Professional Responsibilities – Volunteers, Independent Contractors, Intensive Teachers

You are a critical part of SAEL's comprehensive approach to education. Helping every student identify and pursue his or her own passionate interest is an important SAEL's goal.

Adolescents need the opportunity to make choices, to have meaningful adult relationships and to try out, as well as go deeper with a wide range of learning opportunities. For Intensives and Electives student choice is often considered, but cannot always be accommodated. Your patience may be called upon as you win students over to your own passionate interest.

The most important guideline for all SAEL Staff in any capacity is to over communicate with the rest of us. You will also have a designated person – Principal or other designee -- as your primary contact. This person is available for discussions about curriculum planning. Also, please speak to your primary contact about any concern you may have before your concern or question becomes a problem.

Volunteer Driver Procedures

This provides a clear policy for all Employee and Volunteer drivers and applies to ALL individuals that support the transportation of Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning students. This includes all school activities within school hours, club activities outside of school hours, school functions, or any time SAEL asks a driver to transport a student.

The Fieldwork Coordinator must clear all SAEL Employee and Volunteer Drivers. Confirmation of a driver's clearance can only be approved after Employee and Volunteer Drivers have completed the following steps:

- 1) Provide a copy of a valid Californian driver's license to the SAEL Fieldwork Coordinator.
- 2) Receive approval from the California Employer Pull Notice Program (SAEL Fieldwork Coordinator will support SAEL Employee and Volunteers in the application process for this program. SAEL applies for this on your behalf).
- 3) Evidence of Car Insurance that includes the following Insurance Minimums:
Automobile Liability - \$100,000 per person; \$300,000 per occurrence
Property Damage - \$50,000 per occurrence

Medical Payments - \$5,000 per person

- 4) Complete and sign the Volunteer Waiver and return to the SAEL Fieldwork Coordinator.
- 5) Fingerprinting must be completed for any volunteer accompanying SAEL on any over-night fieldwork or in order to drive any student that is not your own child in a one on one capacity. (please contact Mr. Berry for details).

All Approved SAEL Employee and Volunteer Driver information will be maintained within a private SAEL Google Doc by the SAEL Fieldwork Coordinator. This doc will be shared with SAEL Admin.

Staff (Employee) Policies

Equal Employment Opportunity

Employment decisions at the SAEL will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. The School does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic prohibited by law. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training. Anyone found to be engaging in any unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Fingerprinting

Employment is subject to and contingent upon the completion of a criminal background check by the California Department of Justice. Convictions for certain crimes, including but not limited to sex, controlled substance offenses and serious and violent felonies, as specified in the California Education Code and Penal Code, may bar employment.

Confidential Personnel Files

The school maintains a confidential personnel file on each staff person. The personnel file will contain evaluation documents, as well as any other employment-related documents or correspondence, including such information as education, experience, work performance and progress. Staff who wish to review their own file may do so with five days prior notice to the Office Manager. Staff may view their files only in the presence of a person authorized to maintain the files.

All staff records kept by the School will be preserved for at least three years from the personnel action unless otherwise required by law. The School regards this information as confidential and will release it only with the written permission of the staff person or by legal process. When the School receives a request for information from agencies, stores, banks, or other institutions, only non-confidential information such as date of employment and name of position will be released. Confidential information such as pay rate, past earnings, home address, telephone number, or social security number will not be released unless authorized in writing by the employee.

Personnel Data Changes

Each staff person must notify the School of any changes in personnel data such as mailing address, phone number, dependents' names, emergency contacts, and new educational accomplishments. Also, the School needs to know any changes of marital status, life insurance beneficiary or W-4 Exemptions.

Benefits Package

Several programs cover all staff in the manner prescribed by law; they include: Workers' compensation, state disability, and unemployment insurance. The school also offers several other benefits, including Health and Disability.

Workers' Compensation

The School provides a comprehensive worker's compensation insurance program at no cost to the staff. Staff who sustain injuries while on the job or work-related illnesses must inform the Principal immediately. No matter how minor the injury may appear, it must be reported immediately. Failure to do so may affect an employee's right to coverage. Neither the School nor the insurance carrier will be liable for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in an off-duty recreational, social or athletic activity-

Paid Time Off (PTO)

SAEL recognizes the importance of supporting our staff. We believe our staff should have the ability and opportunity to take care of themselves.

Eligibility

Regular full time active employees are eligible to accrue PTO (both personal and/or illness-related). Active service begins with an employee's first day of work and continues thereafter unless interrupted by an absence without pay, a leave of absence, or termination of employment. Part-time and temporary employees are not eligible to accrue PTO.

Accrual

Regular full-time active employees accrue PTO at the rate of ten (10) hours per month. PTO accrues up to a maximum of 180 hours. Once the maximum accrual is reached, no further PTO will accrue until an employee's accrued PTO hours decrease below the 180 hour maximum. Exceptions to this policy, based on extraordinary circumstances, require the written approval of the SAEL Board.

Approval of Negative PTO Policy

When necessary, the SAEL Administrator is authorized to allow employees to incur a negative PTO balance of up to 40 hours. The Administrator must send a signed authorization to the SAEL Board each time an approval is given. If for some reason the negative hours requested by the employee are over the allowed amount, the Administrator must require prior approval from the Chairman of the Board.

Hours per Month	Hours per Year	Days / Weeks per Year
10.00	120.00	15 days / 3 weeks

Scheduling

PTO requests must be made in writing at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled PTO dates and require written approval of the SAEL Administrator. PTO requested in advance is at the discretion of SAEL Administrator. If you must call in on the morning of work, text or call the Principal by 7:00am

on her/his cell.*

Pay Out

Accrued unused vacation hours will be paid at the time of employment separation, at the employee's current salary rate at the time of termination.

*It is still the responsibility of the teacher to have Lesson Plans for the day. An emergency lesson plan should be kept in the office by the end of August and updated accordingly. You can also email the Principal your plan that morning before classes begin. Sub plans should not involve someone else making copious amounts of copies.

Excessive Lateness or Absences

Excessive lateness will not be tolerated. It is in violation of our professional norms, directly impacts our students and staff, and can be grounds for termination. It can result in an equivalent reduction in pay or time off. Excessive unexcused absences can be grounds for termination. Staff should check in with the SAEL Administrator before (if possible or safe to do so) or after any lateness for the school day or other SAEL obligations.

Leave of Absence Policy

See "Employee Rights" section

Family Medical Leave Policy

California is one of the few states that has a short-term disability insurance (SDI) benefit program for employees. Employees fund the program through payroll deductions, and can receive partial compensation benefits when they are temporarily unable to work due to disability, including pregnancy. California's program also provides for paid family leave for employees who need time off to care for a seriously ill family member or to bond with a new child.

California law allows working mothers to begin leave up to four (4) weeks prior to the expected due date of a child. A woman may choose to work closer to her due date. If a medical condition or pregnancy complication requires her to do so, she may have to begin a full or partial leave earlier.

From the date of actual delivery, the law allows for up to six (6) weeks (vaginal delivery) or up to eight (8) weeks (c-section) of additional time off. One cannot be denied a full leave due to pregnancy and/or the birth of a child. This is approximately a 10-12 week maternity leave for most women, depending on the actual date and type of delivery. Working closer to one's due date does not extend their time off once they have delivered their baby. For additional information regarding SDI benefits, please see the State of California Employment Development Department (EDD) website:
http://www.edd.ca.gov/disability/SDI_Online.htm

Pregnancy Disability Leave

This policy explains how SAEL complies with the California Pregnancy Disability Act, which requires SAEL to give each female employee an unpaid leave of absence of up to four (4) months per pregnancy, as needed, for the period(s) of time a woman is actually disabled by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

Employee Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for pregnancy disability leave, the employee must be disabled by pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition and must provide appropriate medical certification concerning the disability.

Events That May Entitle an Employee to Pregnancy Disability Leave

The four (4) -month pregnancy disability leave allowance includes any time taken (with or without pay) for any of the following reasons:

1. The employee is unable to work at all or is unable to perform any one or more of the essential functions of her job without undue risk to herself, the successful completion of her pregnancy, or to other persons because of pregnancy or childbirth, or because of any medically recognized physical or mental condition that is related to pregnancy or childbirth (including severe morning sickness); or
2. The employee needs to take time off for prenatal care.

Filing for California Short-Term Disability

It is the responsibility of the employee to file for SDI. To collect benefits, an employee must file a claim with the state's Employment Development Department (EDD). You must do this within seven weeks of becoming unable to work, or you might lose the right to benefits.

Duration of Pregnancy Disability Leave

Pregnancy disability leave may be taken in one or more periods, but not to exceed four months total. "Four months" means the number of days the employee would normally work within four months. For a full-time employee who works five (5) eight (8) hour days per week, four (4) months means 693 hours of leave (40 hours per week times 17 1/3 weeks). For employees who work more or less than forty (40) hours per week, or who work on variable work schedules, the number of working days that constitutes four (4) months is calculated on a pro rata or proportional basis.

For example, for an employee who works twenty (20) hours per week, "four months" means 346.5 hours of leave entitlement (20 hours per week times 17 1/3 weeks). For an employee who normally works forty-eight (48) hours per week, "four months" means 832 hours of leave entitlement (48 hours per week times 17 1/3 weeks).

At the end or depletion of an employee's pregnancy disability leave, an employee who has a physical or mental disability (which may or may not be due to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions) may be entitled to reasonable accommodation. Entitlement to additional leave must be determined on a case-by case basis, taking into account a number of considerations such as whether an extended leave is likely to be effective in allowing the employee to return to work at the end of the leave, with or without further reasonable accommodation, and whether or not additional leave would create an undue hardship for SAEL. SAEL is not required to provide an indefinite leave of absence as a reasonable accommodation.

Pregnancy disability leave does not count against the leave which may be available as Family Care and Medical Leave.

Pay During Pregnancy Disability Leave

1. Disabilities caused or contributed to by pregnancy, miscarriage, childbirth and recovery therefrom are, for all job-related purposes, temporary disabilities and shall be treated as such under any health or pregnancy disability leave consistent with applicable law.

2. An employee has the right to utilize Paid Time Off (PTO) provided for absences necessitated by pregnancy, miscarriage, childbirth and recovery therefrom.
3. The employee may select to not use her accumulated PTO.
4. The receipt of PTO pay, or state disability insurance benefits, will not extend the length of pregnancy disability leave.
5. PTO accrues during any period of unpaid pregnancy disability leave only until the end of the month in which the unpaid leave began.

Health Benefits during Pregnancy Disability Leave

SAEL shall provide continued health insurance coverage while an employee is on pregnancy disability leave consistent with applicable law. The continuation of health benefits is for a maximum of four (4) months in a twelve (12) -month period. SAEL can recover premiums that it already paid on behalf of an employee if both of the following conditions are met:

1. The employee fails to return from leave after the designated leave period expires.
2. The employee's failure to return from leave is for a reason other than the following:
 - The employee is taking leave under the California Family Rights Act.
 - There is a continuation, recurrence or onset of a health condition that entitles the employee to pregnancy disability leave.
 - There is a non-pregnancy related medical condition requiring further leave.
 - Any other circumstance beyond the control of the employee.

Seniority during Pregnancy Disability Leave

An employee on pregnancy disability leave remains an employee of SAEL and a leave will not constitute a break in service. When an employee returns from pregnancy disability leave, she will return with the same seniority she had when the leave commenced.

Medical Certifications during Pregnancy Disability Leave

1. An employee requesting a pregnancy disability leave must provide medical certification from her healthcare provider on a form supplied by SAEL. Failure to provide the required certification in a timely manner (within fifteen (15) days of the leave request) may result in a denial of the leave request until such certification is provided.
2. Re-certifications are required if leave is sought after expiration of the time estimated by the healthcare provider. Failure to submit required re-certifications can result in termination of the leave.

Requesting and Scheduling Pregnancy Disability Leave

1. An employee should request pregnancy disability leave by submitting a Request for Leave in writing to the Principal. An employee asking for a Request for Leave for maternity purposes will be referred to SAEL's then current pregnancy disability leave policy.
2. Employee should provide not less than thirty (30) days or as soon of notice as is practicable, if the need for the leave is foreseeable. Failure to provide such notice is grounds for denial of the leave request, except if the need for pregnancy disability leave was an emergency and was otherwise unforeseeable.

3. Where possible, employees must make a reasonable effort to schedule foreseeable planned medical treatments so as not to unduly disrupt SAEL's operations.
4. Pregnancy disability leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically advisable, as determined by the employee's healthcare provider.
5. If an employee needs intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule that is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, the employee may be transferred temporarily to an available alternative position for which he or she is qualified that has equivalent pay and benefits that better accommodates recurring periods of leave than the employee's regular position.
6. In most cases, SAEL will respond to a pregnancy disability leave request within two (2) days of acquiring knowledge that the leave qualifies as pregnancy disability and, in any event, within ten (10) days of receiving the request. If a pregnancy disability leave request is granted, SAEL will notify the employee in writing and leave will be counted against the employee's pregnancy disability leave entitlement. This notice will explain the employee's obligations and the consequences of failing to satisfy them.

Work While On Pregnancy Disability Leave

An employee will be fully relieved of their work and not be expected to perform tasks while on leave. Any exception to this policy element must be pre-approved in writing by SAEL and agreed to by the employee.

Return to Work

1. Upon timely return at the expiration of the pregnancy disability leave period, an employee is entitled to the same position unless the employee would not otherwise have been employed in the same position at the time reinstatement is requested. If the employee is not reinstated to the same position, she must be reinstated to a comparable position unless one of the following is applicable:
 - a. The employer would not have offered a comparable position to the employee if she would have been continuously at work during the pregnancy disability leave.
 - b. There is no comparable position available, to which the employee is either qualified or entitled, on the employee's scheduled date of reinstatement or within sixty (60) calendar days thereafter. SAEL will take reasonable steps to provide notice to the employee if and when comparable positions become available during the sixty (60) day period.

A "comparable" position is a position that involves the same or similar duties and responsibilities and is virtually identical to the employee's original position in terms of pay, benefits, and working conditions.
2. When a request for pregnancy disability leave is granted to an employee, SAEL will give the employee a written guarantee of reinstatement at the end of the leave (with the limitations explained above).
3. In accordance with SAEL policy, before an employee will be permitted to return from a pregnancy disability leave of three (3) days or more, the employee must obtain a certification from her healthcare provider that she is able to resume work.
4. If the employee can return to work with limitations, SAEL will evaluate those limitations and, if possible, will accommodate the employee as required by law. If accommodation cannot be made, the employee will be medically separated from SAEL.

No employee, including employees on pregnancy disability leave, may accept employment with any other employer without SAEL's written permission. An employee who accepts such employment without written permission will be deemed to have resigned from employment.

Family Care and Medical Leave

This policy explains how SAEL complies with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") and the California Family Rights Act ("CFRA"), both of which require SAEL to permit each eligible employee to take up to twelve (12) workweeks (or twenty-six (26) workweeks where indicated) of FMLA leave in any twelve (12) month period for the purposes listed below. For purposes of this policy, all leave taken under FMLA or CFRA will be referred to as "FMLA leave."

Employee Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for FMLA leave, the employee must have been employed by SAEL for a minimum of twelve (12) months and must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the twelve (12) month period immediately preceding commencement of the FMLA leave.

Events That May Entitle an Employee To FMLA Leave

The twelve (12) week (or twenty-six (26) workweeks where indicated) FMLA allowance includes any time taken (with or without pay) for any of the following reasons:

1. To care for the employee's newborn child or a child placed with the employee for adoption or foster care. Leaves for this purpose must conclude no later than twelve (12) months after the birth, adoption, or placement. If both parents are employed by SAEL, they will be permitted a combined total of twelve (12) weeks of leave for this purpose.
2. Because of the employee's own serious health condition (including a serious health condition resulting from an on-the-job illness or injury) which makes the employee unable to perform any one or more of the essential functions of his or her job (other than a disability caused by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, which is covered by SAEL's separate pregnancy disability policy).
 - a. A "serious health condition" is an illness, injury (including, but not limited to, on-the-job injuries), impairment, or physical or mental condition of the employee or a child, parent, or spouse of the employee that involves either inpatient care or continuing treatment, including, but not limited to, treatment for substance abuse.
 - b. "Inpatient care" means a stay in a hospital, hospice, or residential health care facility, any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care, or any period of incapacity. A person is considered an "inpatient" when a health care facility formally admits him/her to the facility with the expectation that he/she will remain at least overnight and occupy a bed, even if it later develops that such person can be discharged or transferred to another facility and does not actually remain overnight.
 - c. "Incapacity" means the inability to work, attend school, or perform other regular daily activities due to a serious health condition, its treatment, or the recovery that it requires.
 - d. "Continuing treatment" means ongoing medical treatment or supervision by a health care provider.
3. To care for a spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent with a serious health condition or military service-related injury. When an employee is providing care to a spouse, son,

daughter, parent, or next of kin who is a covered Armed Forces service member with a serious injury or illness, the employee may take a maximum of twenty-six (26) weeks of FMLA leave in a single twelve (12) -month period to provide said care.

4. For any “qualifying exigency” because the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, or parent of an individual on active military duty, or an individual notified of an impending call or order to active duty, in the Armed Forces.

Amount of FMLA Leave Which May Be Taken

1. FMLA leave can be taken in one (1) or more periods, but may not exceed twelve (12) workweeks total for any purpose in any twelve (12) month period, as described below, for any one, or combination of the above-described situations. “Twelve workweeks” means the equivalent of twelve (12) of the employee’s normally scheduled workweeks. For a full-time employee who works five (5) eight-hour days per week, “twelve workweeks” means sixty (60) working and/or paid eight (8) hour days.
2. In addition to the twelve (12) workweeks of FMLA leave that may be taken, an employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered Armed Forces service member shall also be entitled to a total of twenty-six (26) workweeks of FMLA leave during a twelve (12) month period to care for the service member.
3. The “twelve month period” in which twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave may be taken is the twelve (12) month period immediately preceding the commencement of any FMLA leave.
4. If a holiday falls within a week taken as FMLA leave, the week is nevertheless counted as a week of FMLA leave. If, however, SAEL’s school session has temporarily ceased for some reason and employees are generally not expected to report for work for one or more weeks, such as the Winter Break, Spring Break, or Summer Vacation, the days SAEL’s activities have ceased do not count against the employee’s FMLA leave entitlement. Similarly, if an employee uses FMLA leave in increments of less than one (1) week, the fact that a holiday may occur within a week in which an employee partially takes leave does not count against the employee’s CFRA entitlement unless the employee was otherwise scheduled and expected to work during the holiday.

Pay during FMLA Leave

1. If an employee chooses to receive a partial wage replacement benefit during the FMLA leave, SAEL and the employee agree to have School-provided Paid Time Off (PTO) supplement the partial wage replacement benefit, unless otherwise prohibited by law.
2. An employee on FMLA leave for child care or to care for a spouse, domestic partner, parent, or child with a serious health condition may choose, but is not required, to use any or all accrued PTO at the beginning of any otherwise unpaid FMLA leave.
3. If an employee has exhausted his/her PTO, leave taken under FMLA shall be unpaid leave.
4. The receipt of PTO or State Disability Insurance benefits will not extend the length of the FMLA leave. PTO ceases to accrue at the end of the month in which unpaid leave began.

Health Benefits during FMLA Leave

The provisions of SAEL's various employee benefit plans govern continuing eligibility during FMLA leave, and these provisions may change from time to time. The health benefits of employees on FMLA leave will be paid by SAEL during the leave at the same level and under the same conditions as coverage would have been provided if the employee had been continuously employed during the leave period. When a request for FMLA leave is granted, SAEL will give the employee written confirmation of the arrangements made, as well as the portion of the employees contribution (if any) for the payment of insurance premiums during the leave period.

If an employee is required to pay premiums for any part of his/her group health coverage, SAEL will provide the employee with advance written notice of the terms and conditions under which premium payments must be made.

SAEL may recover the health benefit costs paid on behalf of an employee during his/her FMLA leave if:

1. The employee fails to return from leave after the period of leave to which the employee is entitled has expired. An employee is deemed to have "failed to return from leave" if he/she works less than thirty (30) days after returning from FMLA leave; and
2. The employee's failure to return from leave is for a reason other than the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition that entitles the employee to FMLA leave, or other circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

Seniority during FMLA Leave

An employee on FMLA leave remains an employee and the leave will not constitute a break in service. An employee who returns from FMLA leave will return with the same position and seniority he/she had when the leave commenced.

Medical Certifications during FMLA Leave

1. An employee requesting FMLA leave because of his/her own or a relative's serious health condition must provide written medical certification from the appropriate health care provider. Absent extenuating circumstances, failure to provide the required certification in a timely manner (within fifteen (15) days of SAEL's request for certification) may result in denial of the leave request until such certification is provided.
2. SAEL will notify the employee in writing if the certification is incomplete or insufficient, and will advise the employee what additional information is necessary in order to make the certification complete and sufficient. SAEL may contact the employee's health care provider to authenticate or clarify information in a deficient certification if the employee is unable to cure the deficiency.
3. If SAEL has reason to doubt the medical certification supporting a leave because of the employee's own serious health condition, SAEL may request a second opinion by a health care provider of its choice (paid for by SAEL). If the second opinion differs from the first one, SAEL will pay for a third, mutually agreeable, health care provider to provide a final and binding opinion.
4. Re-certifications are required if leave is sought after expiration of the time estimated by the health care provider. Failure to submit required re-certifications can result in termination of the leave.

Procedures for Requesting and Scheduling FMLA Leave

1. An employee should request FMLA leave by completing a Request for Leave and submitting it to the Principal. An employee asking for a Request for Leave will be given a copy of SAEL's then-current FMLA leave policy.
2. Employees should provide not less than thirty (30) days' notice for foreseeable childbirth, placement, or any planned medical treatment for the employee or his/her spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent. Failure to provide such notice is grounds for denial of a leave request, except if the need for FMLA leave was an emergency or was otherwise unforeseeable.
3. Where possible, employees must make a reasonable effort to schedule foreseeable planned medical treatments so as not to unduly disrupt SAEL's operations.
4. If FMLA leave is taken because of the employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of the employee's spouse, domestic partner, parent or child, the leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary, as determined by the health care provider of the person with the serious health condition.
5. If FMLA leave is taken because of the birth of the employee's child or the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care, the minimum duration of leave is two (2) weeks.
6. SAEL will respond to an FMLA leave request no later than five (5) days of receiving the request. If an FMLA leave request is granted, SAEL will notify the employee in writing that the leave will be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. This notice will explain the employee's obligations and the consequences of failing to satisfy them.

Return to Work after FMLA Leave

1. Upon timely return at the expiration of the FMLA leave period, an employee (other than a "key" employee whose reinstatement would cause serious and grievous injury to SAEL's operations) is entitled to the same or a comparable position with the same or similar duties and virtually identical pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment unless the same position and any comparable position(s) have ceased to exist because of legitimate business reasons unrelated to the employee's FMLA leave.
2. When a request for FMLA leave is granted to an employee (other than a "key" employee), SAEL will give the employee a written guarantee of reinstatement at the termination of the leave (with the limitations explained above).
3. Before an employee will be permitted to return from FMLA leave taken because of his/her own serious health condition, the employee must obtain a certification from his/her health care provider that he/she is able to resume work.
4. If an employee can return to work with limitations, SAEL will evaluate those limitations and, if possible, will accommodate the employee as required by law. If accommodation cannot be made, the employee will be medically separated from SAEL.

Limitations on Reinstatement from FMLA Leave

1. SAEL may refuse to reinstate a "key" employee if the refusal is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous injury to SAEL's operations. A "key" employee is an exempt

salaried employee who is among the highest paid 10% of SAEL's employees within seventy-five (75) miles of the employee's worksite.

2. A "key" employee will be advised in writing at the time of a request for, or if earlier, at the time of commencement of, FMLA leave, that he/she qualifies as a "key" employee and the potential consequences with respect to reinstatement and maintenance of health benefits if SAEL determines that substantial and grievous injury to SAEL's operations will result if the employee is reinstated from FMLA leave.

At the time it determines that refusal is necessary, SAEL will notify the "key" employee in writing (by certified mail) of its intent to refuse reinstatement and will explain the basis for finding that the employee's reinstatement would cause SAEL to suffer substantial and grievous injury. If SAEL realizes after the leave has commenced that refusal of reinstatement is necessary, it will give the employee at least ten (10) days to return to work following the notice of its intent to refuse reinstatement.

Employment during FMLA Leave

No employee, including employees on FMLA leave, may accept employment with any other employer without SAEL's written permission. An employee who accepts such employment without SAEL's written permission will be deemed to have resigned from employment at SAEL.

Bonding Leave

An employee can take up to twelve (12) weeks per year of unpaid leave to bond with a newborn or newly adopted or fostered child. For bonding, the leave must be used and completed within twelve (12) months of the birth, adoption, or fostering of the child.

Payroll

All staff are paid two times each month. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period. All staff need to keep timely and accurate time cards with the Office Manager throughout the year as instructed by the Principal. Staff may have pay directly deposited into their bank accounts if they provide advance written authorization to the School. Staff will receive an itemized statement of wages when their check is deposited directly.

Staff pay is subject to all deductions required by law, federal tax and state and local income taxes, as applicable. The amount of the deductions will depend on earnings and on the information furnished on the W-4 form regarding the number of exemptions claimed by the employee. If an employee wishes to modify this number, s/he should request a new W-4 form from the Office Manager. Only an employee may modify his or her own W-4 form. Verbal or written instructions are not sufficient to modify withholding allowances. The School advises all staff to check their pay stub to ensure that it reflects the proper number of withholdings. Other deductions may be made from paychecks with the employee's permission, including Health Insurance Premiums and other voluntary authorized deductions.

The W-2 form staff receive annually reflects how much of their earnings were deducted for these purposes. Any other mandatory deductions to be made from paychecks, such as court ordered garnishments, will be explained whenever the School is ordered to make such deductions. Staff should discuss questions about pay and deductions with the Office Manager.

Social Media

Sierra Academy and the SAEL Administrator encourage employees to celebrate their professional work on social media. However, we all must remember that posts are public and can impact our students and families both positively and negatively. Student full names should never be used in posts. Students, families, and staff will be asked to fill out a media waiver in order for SAEL to use their likeness in promotional materials and posts. It is important to remember that the SAEL Media Waiver only covers students to be featured on SAEL's official sites/media and not teacher/staff/volunteers personal sites/media.

The "friending" or "following" of students should be carefully considered and we highly recommend you do not "friend" a student before their graduation. Although social media can be a powerful tool to connect and share with students, SAEL staff should consider the appropriateness of this connection. Consider all communications with students on social media to be fully public. If you witness or become aware of cyberbullying among our community through your use of personal or professional social media, it is advised that you report this to the SAEL Administrator as soon as possible in order to prevent further bullying or harassment. Group chats or crew-wide calls should be considered public and are appropriate for schedule related attendance.

Always be fair and courteous to fellow SAEL staff members, families, students, volunteers, board members, community members, or people who do work on behalf of SAEL in any capacity. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our Open Door Policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating that disparage students, families, co-workers, or partners in education, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, sexuality, gender identity, disability, religion, or any other status protected by law or policy.

Workplace Conduct and Disciplinary Action

All staff are expected to treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times; staff are expected to refrain from any conduct that may be dangerous to others. Weapons of any kind and other dangerous devices and substances are prohibited from the premises. (Adventure gear that is used in the field or that stays on the Adventure Teacher and Coordinator's person must be documented and inventoried, but is acceptable to have on school grounds with the written consent from the Principal.) The School will not tolerate threatening, intimidating or coercing another employee, student, parent, visitor, Trustee or member of the public at any time, including off-duty periods. Any and all threatening, intimidating and coercing conduct must be reported to the Principal immediately. Staff engaging in conduct that threatens, intimidates or coerces may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, the school expects

staff to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all staff, students, and the organization. The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of infractions that may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of School property;
- Falsification of timekeeping records;
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer or use of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace;
- Abuse or neglect of any kind directed toward a student;
- Disruptive activity;
- Negligence or conduct leading to damage of property;
- Violation of safety or health rules;
- Smoking in prohibited areas;
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment;
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials;
- Excessive absences or any absence without notice;
- Unauthorized absence from work station during the workday;
- Unauthorized use of School property;
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information;
- Violation of personnel policies;
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct; and
- Insubordination.

Employment may also be terminated for any other reason deemed by the School to justify termination. In the absence of an executed written contract to the contrary, all employment with the School is at-will.

Work Environment

Teachers work in a variety of settings including classrooms and outdoors and may experience heat or cold extremes as well as fumes, odors, and dust. In addition, the noise level can be moderate to loud.

Tobacco Free Workplace

Smoking is prohibited throughout the workplace and up to one hundred yards from the school grounds. Smoking is also prohibited on fieldwork. This policy applies to all staff, students, parents, visitors, board members, and board officers.

Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace

SAEL is committed to maintaining a workplace that is free from illegal drugs and alcohol. Staff are strictly prohibited from the use of alcohol while on duty at any of the School's programs or any SAEL outreach event unless it is explicitly stated that the event is for the purpose of social mixing. In addition with respect to illegal drugs, the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace. Pursuant to Federal regulation, staff are mandated as a condition of employment to notify the School of any drug statute conviction

occurring in the workplace within 5 days of such a conviction.

Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. SAEL aims to provide drug and alcohol abuse awareness training to all staff. Such training will include information on any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs.

Conflict of Interest

Staff are encouraged to consider how their position at SAEL should not be used to gain unwarranted or unfair privileges in the community or with students and families.

Employee Protection “Whistleblower” Policy

If any employee reasonably believes that some policy, practice, or activity of SAEL is in violation of law, a written complaint must be filed by that employee with the SAEL Board.

It is the intent of SAEL to adhere to all laws and regulations that apply to the organization and the underlying purpose of this policy is to support the organization’s goal of legal compliance. The support of all staff is necessary to achieving compliance with various laws and regulations. An employee is protected from retaliation only if the employee brings the alleged unlawful activity, policy, or practice to the attention of SAEL and provides SAEL with a reasonable opportunity to investigate and correct the alleged unlawful activity. The protection described below is only available to staff that comply with this requirement.

SAEL will not retaliate against an employee who in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of SAEL, or of another individual or entity with whom SAEL has a business relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of law, or a clear mandate of public policy.

SAEL will not retaliate against staff who disclose or threaten to disclose to a supervisor or a public body, any activity, policy, or practice of SAEL that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, or a rule, or regulation mandated pursuant to law or is in violation of a clear mandate of public policy concerning the health, safety, welfare, or protection of the environment.

XIV. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS (TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM CHARTER)

The purpose of the SAEL dispute resolution process is to have school community members resolve issues in-house in an amicable and fair manner whenever possible. “School community members” include: students, teachers, parents, administration, applicant families, volunteers, advisors, community members, partners, and collaborators.

The following is the process for dispute resolution between school community members:

- a. An attempt should be made to discuss and resolve the conflict with the people directly involved before proceeding further. Parents need to attempt to resolve issues with a teacher first before proceeding on.
- b. If this is not effective, then the disputing parties should contact the Charter School Principal or a mutually agreed upon teacher to assist in informal resolution of the issue.

- c. If informal resolution is not effective, then the disputing parties should contact the Charter School Principal and put their concerns and/or complaints in writing. This document is to contain the following:
 - What the specific issue or complaint is.
 - What in particular they were not satisfied about in the initial and subsequent resolution attempts (steps a. and b.).
 - What they believe to be a reasonable solution to the issue or problem.
 - d. If this is not effective, then the disputing parties should contact The SAEL Charter Council. The complaining party agrees to inform the Charter School Principal in advance of this action. The disputing party is required to submit this complaint in writing to the Charter Council with the same contents as listed in step c. The SAEL Charter Council decision shall be final.
 - e. The NJUHSD Superintendent and the SAEL Charter Council agree to inform the SAEL Principal if they are contacted regarding a conflict at SAEL and to refer the involved parties to this Dispute Resolution Process before further action.
-

Confidentiality

The protection of the School's confidential information is vital to the interests and the success of the School.

It is the policy of the School to ensure that the operations, activities and business affairs of the School are kept confidential to the greatest possible extent. If during the course of employment, you acquire confidential information or proprietary information about the School and its students, such information is to be handled in strict confidence and not to be discussed with persons outside the School. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples: student records, compensation, certain policies and procedures, and building and security-related information.

Staff are also responsible for the internal security of such information.

Please remember that keeping all of the School's proprietary information confidential is part of your employment arrangement with the School. This obligation shall remain in effect during your employment at the School and at all times thereafter. Violation of this policy is a serious breach of confidence and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

Violence in the Workplace

The safety and security of all of our staff is of primary importance. Threats, threatening and abusive behavior, or acts of violence against staff, visitors, consumers, tenants, clients or other individuals will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy will lead to corrective action up to, and including, termination and/or referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies for arrest and prosecution. The School reserves the right to take any necessary legal action to protect its staff.

Any person who makes threats, exhibits threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts shall be removed from the premises as quickly as safety permits and shall remain offsite pending the outcome of an investigation. Following investigation, the School will initiate an immediate and appropriate

response. This response may include, but is not limited to, suspension and/or termination of any business relationship, reassignment of job duties, suspension or termination of employment, and/or criminal prosecution of the person or persons involved.

All staff are responsible for notifying management of any threats that they witness or receive or that they are told another person witnessed or received. Even without a specific threat, all staff should report any behavior they have witnessed that they regard potentially threatening or violent or which could endanger the health or safety of an employee when the behavior has been carried out in connection with the School's business. Staff are responsible for making this report regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threatening behavior and the person or persons being threatened.

Bullying and Intimidation Policy

SAEL is committed to providing a school free of bullying and intimidation. Accordingly, bullying and intimidating behavior are strictly prohibited. As a school community we will create a Bullying Prevention and Accountability process. At the bare minimum, accounts of bullying should be documented in Jump Rope for the bullying student and the Crew Advisor of the both students involved should be notified. We launched our school with a zero-tolerance policy for bullying, a focus on the creation of a safe school environment and culture, the explicit teaching of the SAEL character traits, clear documentation of character infractions, and open lines of communication among staff members about student behavior. Our Business Manager is also a trained facilitator in Anti-Bullying policies and procedures.

Use of Equipment

Staff are expected to exercise care, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines. Staff should report all defective and/or damaged equipment to the Business Manager immediately. Improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Chain of Command if Administrator is off-site

The administrator should always be contacted and no major discipline or decisions are to be made in her absence. The senior certificated teacher would consult with office staff and available teachers to make a reasonable decision normally in the scope of the administrator in the absence of the administrator. This does not include any major A decisions and there is already a chain of command and hierarchy clearly laid out for emergencies in our School Safety Plan.

XVII. EMPLOYER OF RECORD (TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM CHARTER)

The Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning will be the employer of record for purposes of the Educational Employees Relations Act ("EERA"), and will act for such purposes independently from the NJUHSD. All employees of SAEL are "At-Will", individually contracted employees not subject to an existing collective bargaining agreement, unless the employees were to elect, through the PERB (Public Employment Relations Board) procedures, to form a bargaining unit. SAEL employees are subject to the terms and conditions of employment as set forth in the Charter Document and/or any Employee Handbook developed by the SAEL consistent with law and the Charter Document

- a. Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning will employ the Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning Certificated and Contracted Employees. The Salary Committee is established by SAEL employees to address their interests in salary and benefits while

employed with the SAEL. They will follow recommendations made by the salary committee for compensation.

- b. SAEL will employ classified employees and they will follow the resolution process listed in section XIV. They will follow recommendations made by the salary committee for compensation.

SEE APPENDICES FOR FORMS WITH SIGNATURES REQUIRED:

SAEL Staff and Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement

I have read the Staff and Volunteer Handbook and agree to abide by the policies set forth in this document. I understand that these policies will be followed. I will do my part to uphold these policies.

By my signature below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of SAEL's Staff and Volunteer Handbook, on the date indicated below. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read and review the Handbook carefully. I also acknowledge that it is my responsibility to ask for clarification if I do not understand any of the policies included in the Handbook.

I understand that the Staff and Volunteer Handbook contains important information regarding SAEL's expectations, policies and guidelines and that I am expected to comply with these expectations, policies and guidelines at all times. I understand that the Staff and Volunteer Handbook does not provide a binding contract, but provides guidelines for personnel concerning some of SAEL's policies.

This is a document that we will revisit as a staff and adjust our best practices together accordingly. We will do this in structured collaboration sessions.

SAEL reserves the right to modify, alter, add to or delete any of the policies, guidelines or benefits contained in this handbook at any time with or without notice in order to best serve students.

Other than the SAEL Administrator with support from the SAEL Board of Directors, no other entity or person has the authority to modify this handbook.

Name (print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



SAEL MEDIA APPEARANCE RELEASE

I hereby irrevocably consent to the recording, use, reuse, transmission, exhibition, broadcast by Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning, use of my voice, actions, likeness (actual or simulated), name, appearance, and other reproductions of my physical likeness in regards to the Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning Website, Social Media, and Promotional Materials. Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning shall have the exclusive, perpetual right to use, including without limitation any broadcaster or exhibitor for the Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning offerings, the right to use my likeness in and in connection with the Website, Social Media, and Promotional Materials for publicity, marketing or advertising. I understand that I will not be paid any money for giving Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning these rights to use my likeness in these promotional videos, or for signing this release ("Release").

Without limiting any other release set forth herein, I hereby absolutely, unconditionally and forever release and discharge Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning from any and all claims, demands, controversies, causes of action, damages, rights, liabilities and obligations whatsoever directly or indirectly relating to, or arising from physical or other injury resulting from my appearance in connection with the Website, Social Media, and Promotional Materials for publicity, marketing or advertising or regular school related activities in connection therewith. I hereby expressly assume any and all risks of physical or other injury arising out of my appearance in the promotional series or activities in connection therewith.

I understand that the Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning is recording my Likeness in reliance on this consent. I further acknowledge that Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning's reliance on the agreements contained in this Release constitutes full and adequate consideration to me. I acknowledge that Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning has no obligation to use my likeness.

This release shall be deemed to be entered into in Nevada County, California, and shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of California applicable to agreements entered into and carried out entirely within California.

Name (Printed)

Full Address

Telephone Number

Consent [To be signed by the Parent/Guardian if the person is under the age of 18]

I acknowledge that I have read the foregoing Release and am familiar with each and all of the terms, covenants and conditions contained therein, I am satisfied that said Release is fair and equitable, and I hereby give my express consent to the execution thereof and will not revoke my consent thereto at any time hereafter.

Name (Printed): _____

Signature

Date _____

STAFF ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT

(Terms and Conditions)

Please read the following carefully before signing this document. This is a legally binding contract and must be signed before access is granted.

SAEL's technology services provide access to the Internet for students and staff. Students and staff will have access to e-mail, information and news from a wide variety of sources and research institutions, public domain and shareware software, discussion groups and access to many university libraries. Our goal in providing this service to teachers and students is to promote educational excellence in our schools by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication. SAEL strongly believes that the valuable information and interaction available on the network far outweigh the possibility of users procuring material that is not consistent with the educational goals within each school.

Attached are guidelines provided to establish your responsibilities in the use of technology services within SAEL, including the use of Internet. All use of technology will follow the SAEL Administrative regulations. If a user violates any of these provisions, his/her account or access privileges may be terminated, appropriate disciplinary action taken, and all future access could be denied. The signatures at the end of this document are legally binding and indicate the parties who signed have read the terms and conditions carefully and understand their significance.

- I. **ACCEPTABLE USE** - The purpose of SAEL's provision of access to the Internet is to support research and education consistent with the educational objectives of the SAEL. Users are personally responsible for following this provision at all times when using the electronic information service. Transmission of any material in violation of any federal or state law is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, threatening or obscene material, copyrighted material, materials protected by trade secret, or advertisement of products or services. Use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.
- II. **PRIVILEGES** - The use of the computer system is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in a cancellation of that privilege. The SAEL system administrator will deem what is inappropriate use, take appropriate action and determine consequences. Also, the system administrator may close an account or deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts.
- III. **NETWORK ETIQUETTE AND PRIVACY** - The use of an account requires that you abide by accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - **BE POLITE.** Do not send abusive messages to anyone.
 - **USE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE.** In all messages, do not swear or use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language. (Note that e-mail or other communication, transfer or transmission is not guaranteed to be private.)
 - **BE SMART.** Anything pertaining to illegal activities is strictly forbidden. Communications or activities relating to or in support of illegal activities must be reported to appropriate authorities.

- **PRIVACY.** Do not reveal the personal address or phone numbers of yourself or any other person. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed private property. Do not forward/distribute an e-mail message without permission from the author.
- **CONNECTIVITY.** Do not use the network in such a way that would disrupt the use of the network by others.

IV. **PERSONAL USE** - The use of the network is a privilege, not a right. Users must strive for the most responsible use of the resources for purposes related to accessing, sharing, and creating information as well as working with others for scholarly and work-related communications. Employees shall not engage in personal use or communication during instructional time. The network shall NOT be used for private business activities.

V. **ILLEGAL USE** - The network and computer equipment shall not be used for illegal purposes. For example, among other crimes, it is a felony to intentionally access any computer system or network for the purpose of devising or executing any scheme or artifice to defraud or extort; or obtain money property, or services with false or fraudulent intent, representation or promises. (California Computer Crime Bill, 1979, Section 502 of the Penal Code)

VI. **SERVICES** - SAEL makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The SAEL will not be responsible for any damages you may suffer while on the system. These damages include, but are not limited to, loss of data as a result of delays, non-deliveries or mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by the system or your errors or omissions. Use of information obtained via the system is at your own risk. SAEL specifically disclaims any responsibility for the accuracy of information obtained through its services.

VII. **SECURITY** - Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. *Users must notify the system administrator at once if they identify a security problem.* Do not demonstrate the problem to others. Do not use another individual's account or allow another individual to use your account, forge messages, or post anonymous messages. Attempts to log-in to the system under another user's name may result in the cancellation of user privileges. Any user identified as a security risk will be denied access to the system.

VIII. **VANDALISM** - Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user or any other agencies or networks that are connected to the system. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Any vandalism will result in disciplinary action, and/or legal referral. In addition, you will be held liable for damages incurred as a result of vandalism and charged for repairs.

IX. **UPDATES** - SAEL technology service may occasionally require new registration and account information from you to continue providing services. You must notify the system administrator of any changes in your account information.

I understand and will abide by the above Terms and Conditions for the use of SAEL technology services, including Internet access. I further understand that any violation of the regulations above is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked, disciplinary action in accordance with Education Code 44932 et seq. may be taken and/or appropriate legal action pursued.

Staff Member Name: _____

Date: _____ Staff Member Signature: _____