



# **GREEN**

## **CHARTER SCHOOLS**

**2025 POLICY MANUAL**

Approved 7.21.25

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## GREEN CHARTER SCHOOLS

### **GREEN Upstate High School (9-12)**

356 Bridgeway Boulevard  
Simpsonville, SC 29681

[upstatehs@scgreencharter.org](mailto:upstatehs@scgreencharter.org)

864.509.6302

### **GREEN Charter Middle School (6-8)**

211 Century Drive  
Greenville, SC 29607

[gvlms@scgreencharter.org](mailto:gvlms@scgreencharter.org)

864.241.0151

### **GREEN Charter Elementary School (K-5)**

1440 Pelham Road  
Greenville, SC 29615

[gvles@scgreencharter.org](mailto:gvles@scgreencharter.org)

864.288.4134

### **GREEN Charter School Midlands (K-8)**

7820 Broad River Road  
Irmo, SC 29063

[midlands@scgreencharter.org](mailto:midlands@scgreencharter.org)

803.563.5387

### **GREEN Charter School Spartanburg (K-8)**

8150 Warren H. Abernathy Highway  
Spartanburg, SC 29301

[spartanburg@scgreencharter.org](mailto:spartanburg@scgreencharter.org)

864.586.3939

### **GREEN Charter School Lowcountry (K-8)**

8717 Old University Boulevard  
North Charleston, SC 29406

[lowcountry@scgreencharter.org](mailto:lowcountry@scgreencharter.org)

843.501.7911

### **GREEN Charter School Simpsonville (K-7)**

1100 Brookfield Boulevard  
Greenville, SC 29607

[simpsonville@scgreencharter.org](mailto:simpsonville@scgreencharter.org)

864.326.2151

## **1000 OVERVIEW**

### **Authority**

The adopted policies set forth herein pertain to the Global Renewable Energy Education Network, Inc., also known as GREEN Charter Schools, and referred to throughout this document as “GREEN,” collectively as “School” or “Network,” and in its entirety as GREEN Charter Schools. GREEN is a non-profit corporation incorporated in the state of South Carolina. The policies and procedures adopted by the GREEN Board of Directors (Board) establish the general parameters within which the daily operations of the GREEN schools in South Carolina are to be governed. Administrative procedures for carrying out and implementing Board policies are developed and implemented by the administration, under the direction of the Executive Director. All members of the School community are expected to comply with the policies contained herein, subject to any stated limitations and/or exceptions. The policies set forth in this manual supersede all manuals, handbooks, or other documents previously issued. These policies may be modified at any time by the GREEN Board.

### **Content**

The policies of the Board shall consist of its adopted Bylaws, the policies and procedures adopted by the Board and contained within this Policy Manual, and any separate documents approved by the Board that are expressly incorporated by reference in particular policies and declared to constitute Board policy.

Administrative procedures are not part of Board policy and may be altered by the administration without Board action. Administrative procedures may not conflict with Board policy or with applicable laws including, but not limited to, the South Carolina Charter Schools Act of 1996 and those promulgated by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE).

### **Limitations**

All Board policies and administrative procedures shall be interpreted and administered in a lawful manner. The Board shall make the final interpretation of its policies, and the administration shall make the final interpretation of its procedures.

Board policies and procedures and administrative procedures are limited by legal constraints, as are the rights of those to whom Board policies and administrative procedures apply and are not intended to grant a cause of action not independently established in law.

### **Rules of Construction**

In ascertaining the intent of the Board in adopting a policy or procedure, or of the administration in establishing a regulation, the following presumptions, among other legally applicable presumptions, may be used:

1. That neither the Board nor the administration intends a result that is incapable of execution or unreasonable.
2. That neither the Board nor the administration intends to violate federal, state, or any other applicable law.

If any policy or procedure or administrative procedure can be given multiple interpretations, the Board and the administration intend that only constitutional and lawful interpretations shall be valid, and that neither an unconstitutional nor an unlawful interpretation was intended.

## **Non-Discrimination and Grievances**

GREEN Charter Schools is committed to providing equal access to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, pregnancy, age, sex, or any other protected characteristic, as may be required by law. The School prohibits any form of discrimination in its educational programs or its employment practices.

Students or parents/legal guardians having complaints relevant to Title IX or Section 504 alleging discrimination in educational programs and activities on the basis of sex and/or disability may present that complaint in writing to the School's Title IX coordinator, the Director of Special Services.

## **Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, GREEN affirms that it does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services, or activities. It further does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices.

Questions, concerns, complaints, or requests for additional information regarding the ADA or Section 504 may be forwarded to the appropriate ADA/Section 504 Coordinator. Individuals needing auxiliary aids/services for effective participation in programs and services at GREEN should make those needs known to the School's ADA/Sections 504 Coordinator and/or the Director of Special Services. For further information regarding GREEN's Non-Discrimination Policy, please see the Personnel section of this Policy Manual.

## **Mission**

The Global Renewable Energy Education Network (GREEN) will prepare students in STEM to creatively and responsibly impact our complex world in renewable energy, sustainability, and conservation efforts.

## **Vision**

At GREEN Charter Schools, every student is empowered to impact the world for the better.

# 2000 BOARD OPERATIONS & BYLAWS

## General Authority

The existence of a Governing Board for a charter school in South Carolina is a legal requirement set forth in § 59-40-50 of the S.C. Charter Schools Act of 1996 and is also a requirement mandated by non-profit corporate law. Please refer to the most recent version of the GREEN Charter Schools Bylaws.

The GREEN Board of Directors (hereafter, the "Board") is ultimately responsible for the oversight of the management and supervision of the affairs of GREEN Charter Schools. To exercise this responsibility, the Board shall establish appropriate and necessary school policies and procedures and shall delegate appropriate and necessary authority to the GREEN Charter Schools' Executive Director and other administrative staff. Under this structure, the management of GREEN is accountable to the Board. The Board shall ensure that all schools within the GREEN Charter Schools Network accomplishes the outcomes for which they were chartered while complying with all applicable constitutional, statutory, regulatory, contractual, financial, and ethical parameters. Board authority shall be exercised only by a majority vote of the Board and never through individual action unless otherwise delegated by the Board.

## Financial Authority

The Board shall approve annual budgets and ensure the financial affairs of GREEN are managed in such a way that a minimum three percent (3%) of all School operating revenues shall be retained as a perpetually growing contingency fund that shall only be utilized upon a two-thirds Majority Vote of the Board. The Board shall also establish and abide by clearly defined policies that govern the authority to enter into contracts.

## General Responsibilities

The Board's primary duties include, but are not limited to, the hiring and evaluation of the Executive Director, strategic planning, and continual assessment of all GREEN schools in fulfilling the GREEN mission, as well as the oversight of the public trust.

Election to the GREEN Board carries with it a responsibility of stewardship. The Board is responsible for ensuring that corporate documents have been adopted and continuously updated as necessary to guide the proper operation and management of the organization.

The following corporate documents are the responsibility of the GREEN Board, and are listed in order of priority/authority:

## Bylaws

The Bylaws of the GREEN Board are drafted and approved by the Board and serve as the legally binding set of rules which must be followed by both the Board and GREEN. They are periodically

updated to add or remove certain Articles or to clarify previous versions. The most recent revision of the GREEN Bylaws was adopted by the Board on and read as follows:

## **Article I: Name & Incorporation**

The name of the organization is Global Renewable Energy Education Charter School, Inc., hereinafter referred to as GREEN Charter Schools or GREEN.

## **Article II: Purpose and Location**

GREEN Charter Schools is a federally tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose purpose is to operate state-sponsored charter schools in the state of South Carolina as provided by the South Carolina Charter Schools Act, S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-40-10, et seq.

## **Article III: Members**

GREEN Charter Schools is a non-profit organization without members.

## **Article IV: Mission and Vision**

### **Mission**

The Global Renewable Energy Education Network (GREEN) will prepare students in STEM to creatively and responsibly impact our complex world in renewable energy, sustainability, and conservation efforts.

### **Vision**

At GREEN Charter Schools, every student is empowered to pursue their dreams and equipped to impact the world for the better.

## **Article V: Board of Directors**

**A. General Authority.** The Board of Directors (hereafter, the “Board”) is ultimately responsible for the oversight of the management and supervision of the affairs of GREEN Charter Schools. To exercise this responsibility, the Board shall establish appropriate and necessary school policies and shall delegate appropriate and necessary authority to GREEN Charter Schools’ Executive Director and other administrative staff. The Board shall ensure that the School accomplishes the outcomes for which its schools were chartered while complying with all applicable Constitutional, statutory, regulatory, contractual, financial, and ethical parameters. Board authority is always exercised only by a majority vote of the Board and never through individual action unless otherwise delegated by the Board.

**B. Financial Authority.** The Board shall approve annual budgets and ensure the financial affairs of the School are managed in such a way that a minimum three percent (3%) of all School operating revenues shall be retained as a perpetually growing contingency fund that shall only be utilized upon a two-third majority vote of the Board (as defined by these Bylaws). The Board shall establish and abide by clearly defined policies that govern the authority to enter into contracts.

**C. Number of Members.** The Board will be comprised of up to 11 members, selected in accordance with Article V of these Bylaws. A majority of the members of the Board must have a background in either K-12 education or business. Each campus will be represented by one (1) elected Board member. The maximum number of Board members will be 11.

**D. Quorum and Voting.** The presence of a majority of members of the Board (e.g., four of seven members) shall constitute a quorum sufficient for the transaction of the business of the Board. Except where otherwise provided in these Bylaws, all decisions of the Board require a simple majority vote of members present to pass and be deemed effective.

## **Article VI: Election, Appointment, Resignation and Removal of Directors**

**A. Appointment and Election of Board Members.** A majority of Board members shall be elected, and the remaining Board members shall be appointed by the Board, in accordance with the election and appointment procedures described in this Article. For elected Board member positions, each campus shall be represented by one (1) elected seat, and only persons qualified to vote at that campus as set forth under Section F shall be entitled to vote in that campus's election.

**B. Terms of Board Members.** A Board member shall serve a term of two (2) years but may be re-elected and/or re-appointed. To ensure continuity, Board members shall have staggered terms, with half or nearly half of the elected campus representative positions elected on odd-numbered years and the remaining half or nearly half elected on even-numbered years. For the elected positions, each GREEN campus must be represented by a Board member. A Board member shall not be elected or re-elected or appointed or re-appointed for more than four (4) terms, or eight (8) years continuously, making the maximum term limit for each Board member eight (8) years in total.

**C. Qualification of Board Members.** All candidates for either election or appointment to the Board must meet the qualifications set forth in these Bylaws and in South Carolina state law and must comply with Internal Revenue Service requirements applicable to 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations. In particular, but without limitation, Board members must be residents of South Carolina and must not have been convicted of a felony.

Individuals interested in running for election are required to attend a pre-election workshop at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the election that will explain what is required and expected of Board members. All individuals who successfully complete the pre-election workshop will then be accepted as valid nominees and be placed on the GREEN Charter Schools election ballot. Similarly, individuals being considered for initial appointment to the Board must complete the Pre-Election Workshop prior to being nominated.

The School will abide by all Internal Revenue Service prohibitions on inurement to the benefit of any Board member including those that prohibit any employee or vendor of the organization from serving as a Board member. For the avoidance of doubt, no full-time or part-time employee of the School may serve on the Board. Additionally, former employees of the School must wait 18 months from their last day of employment or the settlement of any employment-related dispute with the School before they may be nominated for election or appointed to the Board.

**D. Election Committee.** The following individuals will comprise the Election Committee: The Executive Director, the Human Resources Director, and one Board member. The Executive Director will chair the committee and will only vote in the event of a tie. The Committee will carry out the responsibilities set forth herein and supervise each election. The Committee will dissolve each year once the elections are complete.

**E. Election Process.** Board elections shall be held during the second quarter (Q2) of the fiscal year. Sixty calendar days prior to each election, a request for written nominations for candidates to serve on the GREEN Charter Schools Board will be published to all eligible voters by the Election Committee. The Executive Director or their designee will immediately begin accepting written nominations and will promptly notify each prospective candidate to determine their willingness to serve.

Twenty calendar days prior to each election, an official list of all qualifying candidates, as defined above, will be published to all eligible voters, along with the dates, times, places, and instructions on how to vote. If the School intends to host public forums, debates, and/or other campaign events, the dates, times, and locations of the events should be published with this notification as well. No candidate may individually campaign on any school campus, except at a school-sponsored forum, debate, or other event.

Voting may be conducted via either online ballots or paper ballots, as determined by the Election Committee.

**Paper-Ballot Voting** - Each election should take place in one easily accessible location on each school's campus. Polls should remain open from at least 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. One list of all eligible voters will be maintained; however, the list may be divided into sections (i.e., last names beginning A-L and M-Z) to make the process as quick and orderly as possible. Each ballot will clearly identify each candidate in alphabetical order by last name using the same font and size. No name will have a distinguishing feature(s) from the others. Each ballot will also clearly instruct the voter how to vote. Each voter will place their ballot into a secure container, which will not be opened until votes are tallied. Only the Election Committee will have access to the ballots. The Election Committee will tally all votes from the election at a public meeting and will announce the results.

**Online Voting** - The online ballot method selected by the Election Committee must be secure and be provided by a credible third-party provider, thus protecting the legitimacy of the election results. Polls should remain open from at least 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Each ballot will be made of paper and will clearly identify each candidate in alphabetical order by last name using the same font and size. No name will have a distinguishing feature(s) from the others. The Election Committee will tally all votes from the election at a public meeting and will announce the results. No results are to be published before that time.

**F. Voting Eligibility:** All employees of the School and all parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in the School are eligible to vote in an election. The right to vote shall be based upon a person's status as a parent/legal guardian of a student and/or as an employee of the School. Parents or legal guardians are entitled to one vote for each student enrolled, with the vote being exercised for elections at the campus where the student is enrolled. In the case of multiple parents or legal

guardians of a student, the right to vote may be exercised by only one parent or legal guardian. An employee is entitled to one vote at the campus where he or she works. If a person is both a parent and employee, he or she gets one vote as an employee and one vote for each child. By way of example, a teacher at GREEN Upstate High School who is also the parent of two (2) students enrolled at GREEN Charter Elementary School would be entitled to cast one vote in campus elections for GREEN Upstate High School and two (2) votes in campus elections for GREEN Charter Elementary School.

**G. Irregularities:** All reports of irregularities, fraud, or concerns regarding an election shall be made in writing to the Election Committee within 48 hours of the close of the election, and any concerns not properly presented to the committee will be waived. The Election Committee will not announce the results of an election until all appropriately presented concerns have been satisfied within the sound discretion of the Committee. An announcement should be made, however, within 10 days of an election.

**H. Seating of Elected Board Members:** Newly elected candidates should be seated on the Board no later than the third quarter (Q3) of the fiscal year following the election. Outgoing Board members serve until such time and may serve as ex officio Board members until the end of the quarter.

**I. Appointments:** Board appointments shall be made during the second quarter (Q2) of the fiscal year. The Governance Committee shall screen potential appointees, investigating and assessing their suitability for consideration as Board members, and determining whether to recommend to the Board an individual for nomination. Nominations must result in a Board composition where at least 50 percent (e.g., four of seven) of the members of the Board are individuals who have a background in K-12 education or in business as required by statute. Individuals being considered for nomination must attend training that will explain what is required and expected of Board members. The Governance Committee shall submit a biographical summary and any other information it may deem useful for any individual it recommends for membership on the Board. Upon submission of the nomination to the Board, and if the nominee has expressed a willingness to serve, the Chair of the Board shall conduct a vote. Appointments require a simple majority decision.

**J. Resignation of Directors.** Resignations from the Board must be submitted to the Board Chair in writing and are effective upon receipt or upon the date specified in the letter of resignation.

**K. Removal of Directors.** Except as specified in Article X. below, directors may not be removed from the Board except for "Cause" upon a two-thirds majority vote of the Board. "Cause" shall include: (a) the failure of a Board member to attend at least 80% of the Board's regularly scheduled meetings over any consecutive six-month period, (b) gross dereliction of the duties of a Board member specified by these Bylaws or by applicable law; (c) a violation of any conflict-of-interest policies of GREEN Charter Schools; or (d) other conduct materially harmful to the reputation or operations of GREEN Charter Schools.

**L. Vacancies.** All Board vacancies, except as required by the South Carolina Charter Schools Act, will be filled by a simple majority decision of the Board. The Board will appoint a replacement director to serve out the remainder of the term of a resigning Board member, at which time the Board member who has filled a vacancy is subject to re-election or re-appointment. The Board may call a special

election if the resigning director was an elected member and if the term remaining is more than nine (9) months before the next election or appointment cycle. All Board members shall be a member of the nominating committee for filling Board vacancies resulting from the resignation or removal of a Board member. As a general rule, the Board should consider no fewer than three (3) potential candidates when filling vacancies.

**M. Orientation Program.** Pursuant to the SC Charter Schools Act of 1996, § 59-40-155, **Orientation programs for board members and administrators**, subsection A: Within one year of taking office, all persons elected or appointed as members of a charter school board of trustees after July 1, 2006, shall complete successfully an orientation program in the powers, duties, and responsibilities of a board member, including, but not limited to, topics on policy development, personnel, instructional programs, school finance, school law, ethics, and community relations. The orientation must be provided at no charge by the State Department of Education or an association approved by the department. Upon completion of the program, the board member shall provide their certificate of completion to the GREEN Board Clerk.

## **Article VII: Meetings of the Board of Directors**

### **A. Board Meetings**

The Board will hold a minimum of eight regular meetings per year, or as often as may be stipulated by current statute or charter, whichever is greater. The Board's schedule of regular meetings shall be established in August of each year. A special meeting of the Board may be called by the Chair or by a simple majority of the Board. The Board shall give notice of its meetings as required by the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act or other applicable law. The Board meetings will be held either in person at any GREEN campus or by way of an online meeting or a combination of both.

In the normal course of its meetings, the Board will follow Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised in its current edition, by citing this clause of the Bylaws.

### **B. Special Meetings**

Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or upon the request of three (3) or more Board members, or upon the request of the Executive Director. Adequate notice of special meetings shall be given to the public at least 24 hours in advance and shall include at a minimum the posting of the written agenda at the place of regular meetings. Board members will be given at least 48 hours' notice of special meetings and the topic(s) to be addressed. Notice to Board members may be by telephone, email, fax, or some other means calculated to achieve notification. In addition, when special circumstances occur and are declared by the Board, the Board may meet in an emergency session on less than 24 hours' notice. Board members and the public shall be given as much notice of the emergency meeting and subjects to be considered as is reasonable under the circumstances, including the posting of a written notice at the place of regular meetings. The minutes of an emergency meeting shall reflect the reason for holding the meeting under emergency circumstances.

### **C. Board Workshops**

The Board may schedule workshops to study topics of importance to one or more schools operated by the non-profit corporation or planned to be operated by the non-profit corporation. Workshops may be called by the Chairperson or by three (3) members of the Board. Board workshops shall be open to the public unless an exception to the "Government in the Sunshine Act" applies.

#### **D. Minutes of Meetings**

Within a reasonable time after the adjournment of a meeting, but not more than one month, the Board Secretary shall make available to the members of the Board a draft of the minutes of the meeting. The minutes shall, at a minimum, include the names of the Board members present at the meeting, a description of each motion or other proposal made, and a record of all votes. The minutes shall be submitted to the Board for approval at its next regular meeting. Once approved by the Board and signed by the Secretary and Chairperson, the official Board minutes shall be posted to the GREEN Charter Schools website.

#### **E. Addressing the Board:**

Before addressing the Board, individuals are urged to seek a solution to their concerns through the proper staff and administrative channels. The Board shall allow up to 30 minutes (or more, at the Board's discretion, when pressing issues arise) at the beginning of its Board workshops and regular Board meetings to allow persons interested in GREEN Charter Schools an opportunity to address the Board. The following Guidelines will govern speakers who address the Board during this public comment period:

- a) Individuals may sign up by emailing their name to the Board Chair before 3:00 pm EST on the day of the meeting. A maximum of 30 minutes will be allocated for the public comment part of any given meeting.
- b) Each speaker will have a maximum of three minutes to speak.
- c) When appearing before the Board, speakers must provide their name and email address.
- d) Speakers may comment on issues scheduled for consideration at the Board meeting or other appropriate concerns pertinent to the operation of the School.
- e) Speakers may provide the Board with written comments or other documentation relating to their topic.
- f) Speakers are expected to present their comments in a respectful and professional manner. Profane, vulgar, or defamatory comments will not be permitted.
- g) Confidential legal, student, and personnel matters may not be discussed but may be submitted to the Board in writing.
- h) Speakers will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. Individuals will not be denied the opportunity to address the Board on the basis of their viewpoint.
- i) The Board vests in its Chairperson, or presiding officer, the authority to terminate the remarks or any speaker who does not adhere to the above Guidelines

#### **Article VIII: Officers and Committees**

The Board Officers of GREEN Charter Schools shall consist of a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The duties of the Board Officers are as follows:

The Chair or their Board-approved designee will preside at all Board meetings. The Chair shall serve as the Chair of the Governance Committee. The Chair will be an authorized joint signer of all checks with the Executive Director or their designee. The Board may approve additional Board members or Officers as check signers. The Chair is a voting member of the Board.

The Vice Chair will assume the role of Chair on a temporary basis in the event of the Chair's absence.

The Board Secretary will be responsible for the minutes of all meetings and will notify the Board of Directors of all meetings as provided in the Bylaws. The Board Secretary may utilize a Board Clerk to assist with these responsibilities; however, the selection of any Board Clerk must be approved by the Board. The Board Clerk must abide by the same code of conduct as members of the Board but may not participate in any Board deliberations or votes.

The Board shall form and maintain standing committees at all times as described below. Each committee shall include at least two (2) Board members. Each committee must be chaired by a Board member. All committees serve in an advisory capacity to the Board with final decisions requiring a full Board vote unless decision-making authority on a particular issue has been explicitly ceded to the committee by the Board.

## **Governance Committee**

The Governance Committee consists of the Board Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. The Executive Director shall serve as an ex-officio member. The Board Chair serves as Chair of the Committee. The Governance Committee is responsible for how the Board governs, and as such, has the following responsibilities:

- Overseeing all aspects of the organization's functions on behalf of the Board.
- Making recommendations to the Board on governance policies, practices, and procedures.
- Monitoring compliance with South Carolina non-profit and charter school governance regulations and, accordingly, providing prudent and timely guidance to the Board.
- Monitoring compliance with all GREEN Charter Schools' charters and providing prudent and timely guidance to the Board.
- Monitoring and assessing the relationship between the Board and the Executive Director and making recommendations to the Board to ensure that the Board continues to function independently from the administration.
- Reviewing changes recommended by the administration, including issues regarding disclosures, policies, and ethical considerations, and presenting to the Board for final approval.
- Recommending Board and committee appointments, establishing criteria for Board Service, and vetting prospective Board member candidates, as well as ensuring that Board member orientation and in-service training is provided.

## **Finance Committee**

As noted above, the Finance Committee shall include at least two (2) Board members. The Committee must be chaired by a Board member. The Executive Director shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will serve in an advisory capacity to the Board with all final decisions requiring a full Board vote unless decision-making authority on a particular issue has been explicitly ceded to the committee by the Board.

The Finance Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Providing detailed review of financial statements and financial issues, including budget, accounting, tax, investment issues, compensation oversight, and all audit issues as presented by the Executive Director or their designee.
- Providing oversight of all audit matters, including the financial reporting process, the audit process, the School’s system of internal controls, and compliance with all laws and regulations.

## Personnel Committee

As noted above, the Personnel Committee shall include at least two (2) Board members. The Committee must be chaired by a Board member. The Executive Director shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee will serve in an advisory capacity to the Board with final decisions requiring a full Board vote unless decision-making authority on a particular issue has been explicitly ceded to the committee by the Board. The Personnel Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Providing oversight and general policy guidelines on all matters related to School personnel. These include, but are not limited to, ensuring fair and equitable compensation, fair and equitable employee performance management, employee grievances, etc.
- Providing yearly evaluations of the Executive Director.

## Growth and Infrastructure Committee

As noted above, the Growth and Infrastructure Committee shall include at least two (2) Board members. The Committee must be chaired by a Board member. The Executive Director shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Growth and Infrastructure Committee. The Growth and Infrastructure Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Advising the Board on infrastructure improvements and needs related to education and overseeing and monitoring progress on new and existing infrastructure projects.
- Developing long-range capital improvement plan to maintain safe and appropriate learning environments.
- Forecasting growth and expansion efforts to better serve more students, offering a range of programs within the School’s charters, and identifying additional communities to serve.

**Note:** The Chair has the responsibility to recommend appointments to all committees other than the Governance Committee and may create ad-hoc committees as needed. All committee appointments require final approval by the Board. All committee members shall abide by the GREEN Charter Schools’ Conflict of Interest Policy. All committees shall conduct their affairs in the same collaborative, collegial manner as the Board, including a required majority vote on all its plans and recommendations prior to submission to the Board.

## Article IX: Executive Director

The Executive Director will:

1. Serve as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Corporation and report to the Board of Directors.
2. Exercise such authority as may be delegated by the Board of Directors via its Policy Governance System.
3. Operate GREEN Charter Schools within all applicable Constitutional, statutory, regulatory, contractual, financial, and ethical parameters.
4. Supervise the day-to-day operation of the School and be responsible for all personnel matters and determinations to include but not limited to hiring, discipline, promotion, and termination within legal, prudent, and ethical practices as delegated by policy.
5. Present evidence to the Board of Directors of compliance with all policies and progress toward/achievement of all end statements encapsulated in GREEN Charter Schools' Policy Governance System.
6. Maintain the official records for each school operated by the Corporation.
7. Be responsible for the safekeeping of all official papers, including the official minutes of the Board, its written policies, financial records, titles, contracts, obligations, and other documents that belong to the Board or pertain to its business.
8. Be authorized to make purchases, commitments, and expenditures in accordance with the approved procurement policy of the Corporation.
9. Be an authorized signer of all Corporation checks as per procurement policy.
10. Exercise direction and control of all financial affairs of the Corporation, including the preparation of the Corporation's financial statements, the implementation of sound financial management practices, and the supervision of the Corporation's financial and accounting personnel.

All Board members, the Executive Director, and all other management personnel of the School shall annually submit a signed Certificate of Compliance that affirms that they have read and agree to abide by all policies and the Bylaws of GREEN Charter Schools. Each individual shall submit the certificate to the Board Chair or the Board Secretary.

## **Article X: Open Meetings**

The Board will observe all "open meetings" provisions and other provisions of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, S.C. Code Ann. §§ 30-4-10, *et seq.* ("FOIA").

## **Article XI: Minimum Board Duties**

All Board members shall acknowledge and agree that each Board member has a reasonable duty of care to help ensure that GREEN Charter Schools will reach its full potential. Each Board member agrees that they will actively participate in the basic processes, assessments, development, and responsibilities necessary for School success. Basic Board responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Actively maintaining and advocating the organization's mission and vision.
- ii. Selecting, developing, supporting, and formally assessing (when scheduled by the Board) the Executive Director.

- iii. Providing oversight as a fiduciary of the corporate organization within the parameters of Board policy and state statute.
- iv. Assisting the Board in ensuring that the School's fiscal and material property is used only in pursuit of the School's mission and that it is properly accounted for and protected (i.e., insured).
- v. Ensuring legal and ethical integrity, maintaining measurable standards and accountability, and assuring annual compliance certification by all Board members and School management as required by the authorizer.
- vi. Recruiting and orienting new Board members and assessing the Board's own performance objectives via annual GREEN Board Evaluation Criteria and individual member reviews.
- vii. Enhancing the organization's public standing.
- viii. Actively and methodically evaluating the ongoing improvement and progress of the School.

## **Article XII: Amendments to Bylaws & Charters**

These Bylaws may be amended, when necessary, by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board of Directors. Within five (5) business days of passage, the Board must notify its authorizer (i.e., the South Carolina Public Charter School District) in writing of the amendment. The Board acknowledges the authorizer's right to disapprove changes to any GREEN Charter Schools' charter, which includes its Bylaws. Upon written receipt of disapproval, the Board shall take the appropriate corrective action at its next regularly scheduled GREEN Board meeting.

## **Article XIII: Non-Discrimination**

GREEN Charter School shall not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, gender, or age in either the hiring and other employment practices of the school or in its admission policies for students. Further, GREEN shall be open to all South Carolina students on a space available basis and shall not discriminate in its admission policies or practices. GREEN shall conduct all of its activities in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal anti-discrimination laws, as well as in accordance with all other laws and regulations applicable to the operation of public charter schools in the State of South Carolina.

## **Article XIV: Conflicts of Interest**

Each member of the Board shall comply with all applicable laws concerning conflicts of interest. In addition, the Board and its members shall observe the following guidelines:

1. Members of the Board will not provide recommendations for employment of any individual who is a candidate for employment in a school operated by the Corporation.
2. No Board member may have an immediate family member employed by GREEN Charter Schools. As used in this policy, "immediate family" means a Board member's spouse, child, stepchild, sibling, parent, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, first cousin, spouse of the Board member's parent, child, or sibling, or any relative living in the household of a Board member. Any "immediate family" of a Board member who is also a student at the school is exempt from this provision.

3. Board members will abstain from deliberating or voting on any student discipline matter involving their child.
4. The Board shall not transact business with any bank or financial institution in which a Board member owns thirty percent or more of the stock or other ownership interest.
5. The Board shall not do business with any entity in which a Board member and/or a member of their immediate family holds an ownership interest. This shall not apply to publicly traded corporations unless the Board member and/or the members of the Board member's immediate family own ten percent or more of the stock of the corporation.
6. No Board member shall be employed in any position in a school operated by the Corporation.
7. No Board member shall accept a monetary fee or honorarium in excess of \$100 for a speaking engagement or for participation in a seminar, discussion panel, or other activity that directly relates to the official duties of the Board.

## CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the within and foregoing pages constitute the Bylaws of GREEN Charter Schools in effect as of July 21, 2025.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson Signature  
GREEN Charter Schools

Mandy Townes 7/21/2025  
Printed Name & Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Signature

Laura Van Sant 7/21/2025  
Printed Name & Date

## Policy Manual

This Policy Manual will provide guidance for the general day-to-day operations of all GREEN Charter Schools in South Carolina. The policies set forth herein shall be adopted or amended by the Governing Board in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Bylaws. All staff members of GREEN should become familiar with and follow the directives of the Policy Manual and the current GREEN Charter Schools' Employee Handbook.

### Board Resolutions

A Board Resolution is a written statement made and approved by the Governing Board detailing decisions and directives of the Board which may or may not be permanent directives to be included within the Policy Manual.

The Budget shall be the plan by which the expenditures of the organization's resources shall be approved. See the Section entitled Financial *Authority* for additional information regarding the Budget process. All expenditure of GREEN's funds must align with the Board-approved Budget.

### Board Membership

The Governing Board affirms that the directors, officers, administrators, faculty, and other employees of GREEN have an obligation to exercise their authority and to carry out the duties of their respective positions for the sole benefit of its students. Individual members of the Governing Board hold no authority or decision-making ability outside of official meetings of the Governing Board unless an individual Governing Board member is delegated specific authority by the full Board.

Per § 59-40-50(9) of the SC Charter Schools Act of 1996, a charter school board shall consist of a board of directors of seven or more individuals, with the exact number to be specified in or fixed in accordance with its Bylaws. Per the GREEN Bylaws, its Board shall comprise a minimum of seven members, selected in accordance with Article V of its Bylaws. Additionally, a majority of the members of the Board must have backgrounds in either K-12 education or business. Each campus will be represented by one elected board member. The maximum number of board members will be eleven.

### Terms of Board Members

**B. Terms of Board Members.** A Board member shall serve a term of two (2) years but may be re-elected and/or re-appointed. To ensure continuity, Board members shall have staggered terms, with half or nearly half of the elected campus representative positions elected on odd-numbered years and the remaining half or nearly half elected on even-numbered years. For the elected positions, each GREEN campus must be represented by a Board member. A Board member shall not be elected or re-elected or appointed or re-appointed for more than four (4) terms, or eight (8) years continuously, making the maximum term limit for each Board member eight (8) years in total.

Additionally, at least fifty percent of the members of the Board must be elected by GREEN employees and parents/legal guardians of students enrolled at GREEN. Parents/legal guardians shall have one vote for each enrolled student. All members must be residents of the state of South Carolina. A person who has been convicted of a felony is prohibited from serving on the board.

## **Election Process**

Board elections shall be held during the second quarter (Q2) of the fiscal year. Any person seeking to apply to serve as a member of the Governing Board shall submit an application available from GREEN's website, along with a letter of intent and resume, which shall be submitted to the Board for review and consideration. The applicant must agree to follow all Board policies and to submit to fingerprinting, a S.L.E.D. background check, and required Board training.

Individuals interested in running for election are required to attend a pre-election workshop at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the election that will explain what is required and expected of Board members. All individuals who successfully complete the pre-election workshop will then be accepted as valid nominees and be placed on the GREEN Charter Schools election ballot. Similarly, individuals being considered for initial appointment to the Board must complete board training prior to being nominated.

## **Board Training**

South Carolina law requires that all charter school governing board members attend a board orientation program within one (1) year of being elected or appointed. This basic training shall focus on the powers, duties, and responsibilities of a board member including, but not limited to, topics on policy development, personnel, instructional programs, school finance, school law, ethics, and community relations. This training is provided at no cost on a quarterly basis by the SCDE through the Office of School Transformation.

*Legal reference:*

*South Carolina Charter Schools Act of 1996, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-155(A).*

## **Board Member Resignations**

Any Board member who wishes to resign from office shall inform the Board Chair in writing. The resignation shall become effective upon receipt or upon the date specified in the letter of resignation. The Chair shall certify the existence of the vacancy to the Board. The Board will then appoint a replacement to serve using the process described within these policies.

## **Removal Process**

The Governing Board may remove a Board member whenever, in its judgment, the best interests of GREEN would be served thereby, but such removal shall be without prejudice. In order to remove the Executive Director, the Board must vote on the issue and must have a quorum present.

## Conflict of Interest Policy for Board Members

All matters in which a possible conflict of interest may exist for a board member shall be handled in accordance with the South Carolina State Ethics Commission Rules of Conduct, which are set forth by statute at S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-700 et seq. and according to the Bylaws as developed by the GREEN Board. Each member of the Board shall comply with all applicable laws concerning conflicts of interest.

In addition, the Board and its members shall observe the following Guidelines:

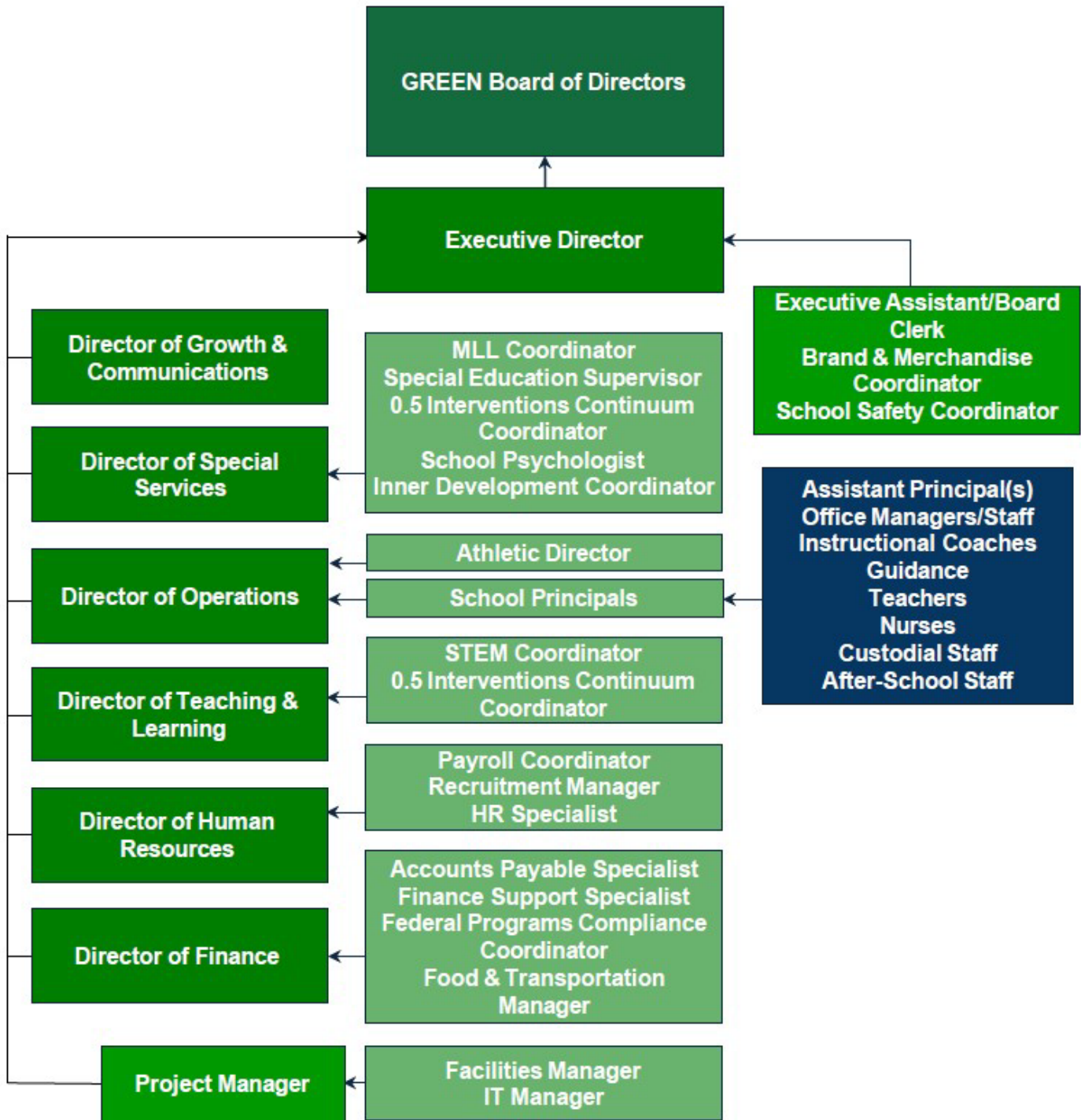
1. No Board member may have an immediate family member employed by GREEN Charter Schools. As used in this policy, "immediate family" means a Board member's spouse, child, stepchild, sibling, parent, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew or first cousin, or the spouse of the Board member's parent, child, or sibling, or any relative living in the household of a Board member. Any "immediate family" of a board member who is also a student at the school is exempt from this provision.
2. Board members will abstain from deliberating or voting on any student discipline matter involving their child.
3. The Board shall not transact business with any bank or financial institution in which a Board member owns 30 percent or more of the stock or other ownership interest.
4. The Board shall not do business with any business in which a Board member and/or a member of their immediate family holds an ownership interest. This shall not apply to publicly traded corporations unless the Board member and/or the members of the Board member's immediate family own ten percent or more of the stock of the corporation.
5. No Board member shall be employed in any position in a school operated by the Corporation.
6. No Board member shall accept a monetary fee or honorarium in excess of \$100 for a speaking engagement, participation in a seminar, discussion panel or other activity that directly relates to the official duties of the Board.
7. Members of the Board will not provide recommendations for employment of any individual who is a candidate for employment in a school operated by the Corporation.

### *Legal References:*

*South Carolina State Ethics Commission Rules of Conduct, S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-700 et seq.*

*South Carolina Charter Schools Act of 1996, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50(11).*

**GREEN CHARTER SCHOOLS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



## **General Authority**

The administration of GREEN Charter Schools is responsible for directing and managing the staff at all GREEN schools and ensuring that the educational philosophy, goals, and general objectives adopted by the GREEN Board are successfully met.

## **Executive Director**

The Executive Director, in their role of oversight of all school administrative staff at all GREEN campuses, shall ensure the preparation and maintenance of job descriptions for all personnel at all schools according to standard personnel practices. Such job descriptions shall be kept in the office of the Director of Human Resources.

## **Executive Director Job Description**

The Executive Director shall:

1. Serve as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Corporation and report to the Board of Directors.
2. Exercise such authority as may be delegated by the Board of Directors via its Governance Policy.
3. Operate GREEN Charter Schools within all applicable constitutional, statutory, regulatory, contractual, financial, and ethical parameters.
4. Supervise the day-to-day operation of all schools and be responsible for all personnel matters and determinations to include, but not limited to, hiring, discipline, promotion, and termination, within legal, prudent, and ethical practices as delegated by policy.
5. Per the Progress Monitoring Schedule, present evidence to the Board of the compliance of all Directors with all policies and the fulfilment of all role responsibilities.
6. Maintain the official records for each school operated by the Corporation.
7. Be responsible for the safekeeping of all official papers, including, the official minutes of the Board, its written policies, financial records, titles, contracts, obligations, and other documents that belong to the Board or pertain to its business.
8. Be authorized to make purchases, commitments, and expenditures in accordance with the approved procurement policy outlined in the charters.
9. Be an authorized signer of all Corporation checks per the Procurement Policy.
10. Exercise direction and control of all financial affairs of the Corporation, including the separation of the Corporation's financial statements, the implementation of sound financial management practices, and the supervision of the Corporation's financial and accounting personnel.

# **Executive Director General Responsibilities**

## **Policy Manual**

The Executive Director shall establish and maintain an orderly plan for preserving and making accessible the policies adopted by the GREEN Board, the Bylaws adopted by the Board, and the procedures of the administration. The Board policies, the Board Bylaws, and the administrative procedures shall be published in a manual, maintained in current condition, and made available to all persons concerned.

## **Policies**

Policies are statements of intent which are adopted by the GREEN Board. They serve as guidelines for the administration in the development and implementation of procedures for operating the GREEN schools. Each policy is subject to amendment, revision, or deletion by the Board when necessary for legal, safety, or other substantive reasons. The Executive Director takes the primary initiative in the policy-making process by recognizing the need for specific policies and presenting any proposed policy statements for consideration, modification, and adoption to the GREEN Board for approval.

## **Principals**

The principal of each GREEN school is responsible for all aspects of the administration and supervision of employees and students at their assigned location. The principals report to the Executive Director or their designee. The principals enforce policies established by the Board and/or the Executive Director.

## **Changes to Bylaws**

As mentioned above, the Bylaws are the rules governing the internal operations of the Board. When the need for a new Bylaw or modification of an existing Bylaw arises, the Executive Director may be directed to develop and present the Board with a new or revised Bylaw for consideration, modification, or adoption.

## **Administrative Leeway in Absence of Board Policy**

In cases where emergency action must be taken within the School Network and where the Board has provided no guidance for administrative action, the Executive Director shall have the power to act, but the decision shall be subject to review by the Board. It shall be the duty of the Executive Director to inform the Board of any action taken and of the need for possible additional policies or revisions of existing policies, if applicable.

## **Administrative Culture**

The GREEN Charter Schools Administration holds itself to extremely high standards of conduct which it continuously models and affirms:

- I. The administration at GREEN is deeply committed to the fundamental philosophies of the School as outlined in its core documents, including its Charters, Contracts, the Bylaws of its

Governing Board, its Strategic Plan, and all other policies as set forth in this Policy Manual as well as in its Handbooks.

- II. The administration models and cultivates a culture of integrity, responsibility, and high ethical and professional standards.
- III. The administration models and promotes a positive culture of trust among its stakeholders.
- IV. The administration supports its teachers and staff.
- V. The administration demonstrates flexibility when necessary.
- VI. The administration effectively manages the organizational and operational needs of the School.
- VII. The Central Office administration consists of a group of professional educational leaders, who promote high educational standards and expectations throughout the entire GREEN community.
- VIII. The administration is skilled in fiscal matters.
- IX. The administration demonstrates skill in matters of public relations and political protocols.
- X. The administration attracts, hires, and retains highly talented teachers and staff.



## The Global Renewable Energy Education Network (GREEN) Strategic Plan: July 2024 - June 2027

The Board-approved GREEN Strategic Plan is designed to serve all levels of our organization. It represents our areas of focus from July 2024 - June 2027. This plan will guide our collective work over the next three years and will be revised as needed to remain a living document.

### **THE GREEN MISSION: Why do we exist?**

The Global Renewable Energy Education Network (GREEN) will prepare learners in STEM education to creatively and responsibly impact our world in renewable energy, sustainability, and conservation efforts.

### **GREEN GOALS: What is our direction?**

- **Customer Satisfaction:** GREEN's focus on customer satisfaction is the responsibility of all GREEN staff. Together, we will seek input from all stakeholders to improve every aspect of our work.
- **Increase Quality:** GREEN will focus on continuous improvement to strengthen student and staff success. We will effectively and efficiently manage all resources, responsibilities, and talent. We will seek excellence without exception across our programs, products, and services.
- **Capacity Development:** GREEN's success will depend on the quality of our professional staff and the adequacy of our facilities in fulfilling our mission. We will increase capacity among our staff and improve our instructional settings. This combined effort will create a multitude of options to better serve our customers. GREEN will offer our educational expertise regionally, statewide, and beyond.
- **Fiscally Sound:** We will provide a transparent budget process, increase our reserve fund, ensure fiscal stability, and fund innovative programs, products, and services.

### **CORE PRINCIPLES: What do we believe?**

1. We believe that autonomy, mastery, and purpose are critical components to effectively support voice and choice for every stakeholder across our learning community.
2. We believe our collective efforts will develop integrated global citizens.
3. We believe in the dignity and contributions of all members of our learning community.
4. We believe in the value of and need for high-quality productive human relationships.
5. We believe in teaching curiosity and critical thinking skills, so that we can empower students to be lifelong innovators and creative problem solvers.
6. We believe in supporting the personal and professional dreams and aspirations of our students and staff.
7. We believe in the GREEN Strategic Plan, voice and choice, the parallel process, our glossary of terms, and the development of our DREAMS Framework.

### **SUPER-GOALS – What are our long range, highly challenging goals?**

1. GREEN will provide mandated training and professional development opportunities to support our internal staff and will also offer them to regional and state educators.
2. GREEN will increase its reserve fund by more than 3% annually during Fiscal Years 2025-2027.
3. GREEN will raise enrollment across our Network of schools to 4000 students by the 2027-2028 SY.

### **Key Steps: What big steps must we take?**

1. Increase awareness of our GREEN Graduate Profile and develop School Profiles.
2. Improve our GREEN program frameworks for grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12.
3. Enhance our special education programs and services.
4. Develop professional development opportunities and conference services to better serve our educators.
5. Ensure high-quality alignment in our operations and instruction.
6. Increase relational capacity across our schools and among our stakeholders.
7. Implement a robust facility plan to support our instructional program and future expansion.
8. Plan effectively for the horizontal and vertical alignment of our programming across all campuses.
9. Ensure full transparency of all processes.
10. Utilize student assessment data to inform course offerings and instructional efforts.
11. Create a measurable DREAMS Framework to synthesize our holistic efforts.
12. Create and implement an industry-based advisory Board at GUHS.

### **OUR VISION: What do we want to see?**

At GREEN, every learner is empowered to pursue their dreams and positively impact the world for the better.

### **STAFF SANDBOX: Where do we want to play?**

We will support our staff's personal and professional development in alignment with GREEN's Strategic Plan through deeper understanding and pursuit of their autonomy, mastery, and purpose.

### **SMART NUMBERS: What will we evaluate to know we are successful?**

1. Student accomplishments and their impact on our learning community.
2. Student enrollment and retention.
3. Staff engagement, retention, and leadership development.
4. Corporate partnerships aligned with our mission.
5. Number of students on our waiting lists.
6. State achievement data and SC School Report Cards.
7. SCPCSD approval of amendments or expansions.
8. Community outreach, partnerships, and fundraising events.
9. Transition data and discipline referral information.
10. Stakeholder surveys - anecdotal as well as via email and phone interviews.
11. Anecdotal evidence regarding student engagement and school connectedness.

### **BRAND PROMISE: What is our service promise to our customers?**

All of us at GREEN promise to be thoughtful and responsive to the needs of all learners and receptive to the input of our customers. We are *GREEN 4 ALL* which expresses the value of renewable energy, sustainability, and conservation efforts. We are *ALL 4 GREEN* to galvanize our coalition of stakeholders to fulfill our mission and the GREEN Strategic Plan. ***GREEN 4 ALL - ALL 4 GREEN.***

### **THE PROCESS:**

The Executive Director, the Executive Leadership Team, and all GREEN leaders will develop plans that build from this Strategic Plan. These plans will be measurable and inform our overarching goals. Additionally, each year, GREEN will produce an Annual Report aligned to this Strategic Plan to highlight our successes, challenges, and implications for the future.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity Policy**

GREEN Charter Schools is an equal opportunity employer. In accordance with anti-discrimination law, it is the purpose of this policy to effectuate these principles and mandates. GREEN prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type and affords equal employment opportunities to employees and applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, age, national origin, disability status, genetic information, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. GREEN adheres to all local, state, and federal laws with respect to equal employment opportunity.

It is GREEN's policy to afford equal employment opportunity to qualified individuals protected by law, except where a bona fide occupational disqualification applies. This policy of equal opportunity encompasses all aspects of the employment relationship, including applications and initial employment, promotion and transfer, selection for training opportunities, wage/salary administration, recruiting, hiring, reassignments, sponsored training, compensation, benefits, layoff and rehires, termination of employment, recreation programs, and the application of services, retirement, seniority, employment benefit plan policies, and other terms and conditions of employment as provided by law.

The U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate in the workplace. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) cover all private employers, state and local governments, and educational institutions that employ 15 or more individuals.

Any School employee found exhibiting discriminatory or harassing behavior will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If you believe that you have been discriminated against or otherwise denied an opportunity in violation of this policy, please follow the Staff Reporting Procedure found in this Manual.

### *Legal References:*

*Title VII, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq (1964).*

*Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 USC § 12101 et seq (1990).*

*Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, 42 U.S.C. § 2000ff et seq.*

## **Disability Accommodations Policy**

GREEN Charter Schools is committed to complying with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It is the School's policy not to discriminate against any qualified employee or applicant with regard to any terms or conditions of employment because of such individual's disability or perceived disability so long as the employee can perform the essential functions of the job. Consistent with this policy of nondiscrimination, GREEN will provide reasonable accommodations

to a qualified individual with a disability, as defined by the ADA, who has made the School aware of their disability, if such accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship on the school.

Any employee who believes they have a disability that requires reasonable accommodation should submit their request in writing to GREEN's Director of Human Resources. The School will then engage with the individual regarding reasonable accommodations which would allow them to work consistent with the ADA. All employment decisions, including reasonable accommodation, shall be based on the situation at hand and will focus on the essential functions of the job and any hardship to the School, not the disability of any individual.

*Legal Reference:*

*Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.*

## **Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment Policy**

GREEN is an equal opportunity employer committed to providing an educational and work environment in which all persons are treated with dignity and respect. The School prohibits discrimination, including harassment, of any employee, student, guest, or visitor because of race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information, or any other personal characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law. GREEN prohibits any conduct which creates an objectively offensive or hostile work environment. The School also prohibits retaliation against any person who has filed a complaint of discrimination or participated in any manner in the investigation and resolution of a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

### **PROHIBITED CONDUCT UNDER THIS POLICY**

#### **Discrimination**

This policy prohibits unlawful discrimination of any kind, including but not limited to, discrimination based on race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions including but not limited to, lactation, genetic information, or military status (including reserves), marital or family status, or any other legally protected category under federal, state, or local law.

This policy applies to all aspects of the employment relationship between the School and its employees, including, but not limited to recruitment, hiring, termination, promotion, transfer, assignment and reassignment, training, working conditions, wages and salary, employee benefits and the application of the School's policies and procedures.

Discrimination in employment on certain specified grounds is prohibited by a variety of federal and state laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1967, as amended; and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended. This policy is intended to be coextensive with the acts and omissions prohibited by federal and state anti-discrimination laws.

Any violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Harassment**

This policy prohibits harassment motivated by race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions including but not limited to, lactation, genetic information, military status (including reserves), marital or family status, and/or engaging in protected opposition or participative activity under any federal or state employment discrimination law.

The term “harassment” includes unwelcome (from the perspective of the person or persons being harassed) conduct (oral, written, graphic or physical) directed against any person or group of persons because of a factor or trait (such as race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, genetics, or military status) that has the purpose or reasonably foreseeable effect of creating an offensive, demeaning, intimidating, or hostile work environment for that person or group of persons.

Harassment can also include verbal harassment (epithets, derogatory statements, remarks about an individual’s body, degrading words used to describe an individual), demands for sexual relations or sexual contact, threats, or insinuations that the person’s employment, wages, promotional opportunities, work assignments, or other conditions of employment may be adversely affected by not submitting to sexual advances or improved by submitting to those advances, unwelcome jokes, etc. It also includes visual harassment such as leering, making sexual or inappropriate gestures, displaying sexually aggressive pictures, and innuendo.

Harassment because of race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, national origin, or similar unlawful factors is a prohibited form of discrimination under state and federal employment laws and is also considered misconduct subject to disciplinary action. Harassment of a student by another student or by a teacher or other staff member is also a violation of this policy.

Each GREEN employee is responsible for assisting in the prevention of unlawful harassment or discrimination in the following ways:

- ◆ Refrain from participation in or encouragement of actions that could reasonably be perceived as unlawfully motivated harassment or discrimination.
- ◆ Report acts of suspected unlawful harassment or discrimination to a supervisor or the Director of Human Resources or their designee as soon as possible.
- ◆ Encourage any employee who discloses or confides that they are being unlawfully harassed or discriminated against to report these acts to a supervisor or the Director of Human Resources or their designee immediately and inform the employee that if they do not do so, the employee will report the alleged unlawful incident.

Any violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

This Non-Discrimination/Non-Harassment Policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment with GREEN, including but not limited to, compensation practices.

### *Legal References:*

*The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 (Pub.L. 95-555), (which amended Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).*

*The Equal Pay Act of 1963.*

*The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967.*

*Title II, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 USC § 12101 et seq.*

*§§ 501, 503, and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.*

*The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, 42 U.S.C. § 2000ff et seq.*

*South Carolina Human Affairs Law, § 1-13-10. et seq.*

*Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.*

*Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.*

## **Sexual Harassment and Title IX**

It is the policy of GREEN Charter Schools to provide a healthy educational and working environment for its students, staff, and visitors that is free from sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and interpersonal violence (to include sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking). The School adheres to all Title IX policies and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, veteran status, or any other protected category under applicable state, local, or federal law.

Title IX is a federal law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex, which includes sexual harassment and sexual violence, in educational programs and activities. Prohibited discrimination occurs when a student or employee is treated differently based on their sex. As required by Title IX and its implementing regulation, 106.8(b)(2)(i), GREEN does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs and activities. The School is committed to providing a work and school environment that is free of sexual harassment and will not tolerate sexual harassment activity by any school employee, substitute employee, student, or third party. It will act quickly and impartially to address claims of sexual harassment and discrimination and remedy discriminatory effects of inappropriate acts of discrimination.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact, and other verbal or physical conduct, harassing or unwelcome comments or conduct of a sexual nature when submission to that conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment or is used for employment decisions, or when that conduct has the purpose or the effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or

creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. The sexual harassment can occur in person, online, on school premises, or off school premises, and can constitute a violation of state and federal law.

Any employee who believes that they have been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately to the School so that an investigation and the appropriate corrective action may be taken at once. In the absence of a victim's complaint, the School, upon learning of, or having reason to suspect, the occurrence of any sexual misconduct, will ensure that an investigation is promptly commenced by the appropriate individuals. Under South Carolina law, a person has 180 days to file a complaint of sexual harassment in the workplace with the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission (SCHAC). The federal statute of limitations allows 300 days from the date of the alleged incident to report it to EEOC.

### **Anti-Retaliation/Anti-Intimidation Policy**

Title IX and GREEN Charter Schools strictly prohibit retaliation against and intimidation of any person because of their reporting of an incident of alleged sexual misconduct or participation. The School will take strong disciplinary action in response to any retaliation or intimidation. Any suspected violations of this policy will be investigated promptly and thoroughly and with as much discretion as circumstances reasonably permit. The School will take remedial action when warranted, up to and including dismissal of the offending employee(s).

Employees must cooperate with all aspects of an investigation. Refusal to cooperate during an investigation may result in appropriate action, up to and including termination. No employee may be retaliated against because they have made a reasonable, good faith complaint of prohibited discrimination, including unlawful harassment, or because they have participated in the investigation of such a complaint or have supported another employee's complaint of prohibited discrimination, including unlawful harassment. False or malicious complaints of discrimination or harassment may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action. This does not apply to complaints made in good faith, but which are determined to be unfounded.

#### *Legal References:*

*Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.*

*Title VII of the Civil Rights Law of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq.*

*The South Carolina Human Affairs Law, § 1-13-10. et seq.*

### **Prohibition Against Retaliation**

GREEN prohibits retaliation against any person who files a complaint in good faith alleging discrimination or harassment. The School also prohibits retaliation against any person who participates in an investigation and/or the resolution of a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

GREEN encourages employees to come forward and participate in investigations. We will make all reasonable efforts to keep investigations confidential, and to protect those who file complaints. If

an employee retaliates against another employee for reporting discrimination or harassment, that employee will be subject to serious consequences, up to and including termination.

## **Investigative Process**

When an employee makes an informal or formal complaint, the School shall protect the confidentiality of the employee's claims to the best of its ability. GREEN will take immediate steps to stop the alleged conflict and protect the parties involved. One of the first considerations may be the need to take immediate measures for the protection of the accuser or the alleged victim.

The School will promptly investigate any such allegations and expects all employees to participate and keep all matters strictly confidential. At the end of the investigation, the Director of Human Resources or their designee will issue a report with their findings as well as a recommendation. The employee who reported the incident will be informed once the investigation is complete.

Any employee accused of inappropriate behavior will be treated with respect. If the accusation is serious and credible, the employee may be suspended, with or without pay, during the investigation. The accused employee will be informed of the outcome of the investigation. If the investigation reveals that the employee was at fault, the accused employee may be subject to discipline. This may include anything from a verbal warning up to and including termination, depending on the severity of the action.

Employees will not be disciplined for failing to report something that happened to them. Nor will GREEN retaliate for any good faith report. A good faith report means that the employee believes that something inappropriate happened, even if the investigation determines no inappropriate behavior occurred.

If an employee makes a bad faith complaint, it will be considered harassment. A bad faith complaint is one where the complainant knowingly lies or misrepresents the situation to accuse a co-worker, damages someone's reputation, or seeks personal gain. Either party may appeal the decision by filing a written report with the GREEN Director of Human Resources.

## **Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment Training**

New employees will receive training through Vector which includes the topic of anti-discrimination and anti-harassment. All administrators are responsible for ensuring that their staff members are familiar with this policy and that new employees are trained as necessary throughout each school year.

GREEN will make every reasonable effort to train and inform all employees regarding these policies. Each employee will certify yearly that they have read this Policy Manual and agree to uphold all School policies, including those regarding harassment and discrimination.

A copy of this policy and its accompanying procedure are to be distributed to all supervisory and non-supervisory personnel and posted in appropriate places.

# Sexual Misconduct Policy

GREEN Charter School is dedicated to the safety and well-being of all individuals. The School is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for everyone in our schools, on our campuses, and off our campuses while participating in school-related activities, especially our students. The School will not tolerate any abuses of, or inappropriate behavior, toward its students by any employee, vendor, visitor, volunteer, or any other person.

All employees or individuals who are assigned to work with students will undergo a thorough background check that will include criminal and sex offender registry checks. All such individuals will also be introduced to the definition of abuse and neglect, signs to watch for, and trained in how to report an incident as part of the Vector training.

Any violations of this policy will be taken seriously and will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. GREEN reserves the right to remove any person from working with our students at any time it believes such action to be in the best interest of the student or our school community.

## Guidelines

### Employees must adhere to the following guidance:

- Always work in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations with students and encourage open communication.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate physical distance with all students.
- If any type of physical contact with a student is required, it should be done so openly and with the consent of the student. Physical contact should not be intrusive or disturbing in any manner.
- Use a buddy system if a student needs to use a restroom outside of the employee's view.
- Treat all students equally and with respect and dignity.

## Reporting Possible Abuse

- If an employee observes any inappropriate behavior involving a student, they must take appropriate action to see that the behavior is stopped immediately.
- If an employee observes or learns of any suspected violations of this policy, they must notify a supervisor immediately.
- Employees must respond promptly to any report of alleged abuse or other inappropriate conduct involving a student.

- Comply with the obligations of applicable law as to the reporting of an alleged incident and cooperate with any subsequent investigation.

## **Investigation**

The school administration will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation when notified of any possible violations of this policy. The investigation will include:

- Speaking with the reporting party regarding the alleged incident and inquiring as to what was observed or told to them.
- Recording the time, date, and location of the alleged act.
- Identifying any witnesses to the purported incident and obtaining contact information for all parties involved.
- Interviewing all parties involved in the alleged incident.

## **Prohibited Acts Under This Policy**

- Any display or demonstration of sexual abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct toward a student.
- Sexual advances or sexual activity.
- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a student.
- Causing mental or emotional injury to a student.
- Possessing or accessing obscene or pornographic materials.
- Leaving a student unsupervised.
- Engaging in inappropriate physical contact with a student.
- Engaging in inappropriate verbal contact with a student, including, but not limited to, contact through telephone, e-mail, or the Internet.
- The use of inappropriate language in the presence of students.
- Using harsh or abusive language with a student or using any physical or corporal disciplinary practices.
- Transporting students in the employee's personal or company vehicles without prior written approval from a supervisor.

## Staff Grievance Policy

The purpose of this policy is to settle staff grievances as defined below at the lowest administrative level when an informal resolution of the situation is not possible. GREEN Charter Schools will keep all grievance proceedings as informal and confidential as is appropriate at all levels of the process.

A grievance is a claim by an employee of a violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of a provision of federal or state laws, and or school policies, as may affect the employment or work of an employee. The Executive Director will not consider actions subject to the Teacher Employment and Dismissal Act, S.C. Code of Laws 2004, § 59-24-410, et seq., as amended; § 59-26-40, as amended, to be applicable in these instances. Subjects such as employment decisions implemented under a School's reduction in force, reassignments/transfers of any employee, support staff terminations, and professional and support staff evaluations are not considered to be grievances under this procedure.

An employee who wishes to file a grievance must complete the prescribed grievance form and present it to his or her supervisor within 10 days following either the event giving rise to the grievance or the time when the employee reasonably should have gained knowledge of its occurrence. At the school level, the supervisor is the Principal.

Should the employee believe that the resolution of the grievance requires a decision beyond the supervisor's level or area of authority, the employee will state such a belief on the grievance form. If the supervisor agrees concerning a lack of authority to resolve the grievance, they will immediately pass the grievance on to their supervisor. If, however, the supervisor determines that resolution of the grievance is not outside their authority, the supervisor will hear the grievance.

The supervisor will arrange a meeting with the employee within 10 days of receipt of the grievance. At the grievance hearing, the employee may have a representative of their choice present, other than an attorney. The supervisor will provide the employee with a written response to the grievance within 10 days after the meeting. The response will include the name of the next level supervisor to whom the grievance may be appealed, provided that the appeal is presented in writing within five days of the date of the supervisor's written response.

The grievance may be appealed to each supervisory or administrative level up to the Executive Director level. At each of the lower levels, the procedure above will be followed. The original grievance and the Executive Director's response will serve as the basis of the grievance appeal.

For an appeal to the Executive Director, the Director of Human Resources will arrange a hearing within 15 days of receipt of the request and will respond in writing to the employee within 15 days of the grievance being heard. The Executive Director, the Director of Operations, and the Director of Human Resources may, at their discretion, hear witnesses and evidence directly. At this level, the employee may be accompanied by a representative, including an attorney of his or her choosing at the employee's expense, provided that notice of legal representation be given to the Executive Director, the Director of Operations, and the Director of Human Resources at least four days prior to the grievance appeal hearing. The decision of the Executive Director or their designee is final and will be binding on all parties.

## *Legal References:*

*Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended.*

## **Staff Grievance Procedure**

GREEN encourages the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns by employees so that an investigation and corrective action can be taken to address the matter. Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.

Any individual who believes that they have been the victim of any prohibited workplace conduct or who believes that they have witnessed such conduct should discuss such concerns with their immediate supervisor, the Executive Director, or the Director of Human Resources.

All complaints alleging wrongdoing will be investigated promptly. Investigations may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have relevant knowledge. GREEN will maintain confidentiality throughout the investigatory process to the highest extent possible.

## **Prohibition Against Retaliation**

*GREEN prohibits retaliation against any person who files a complaint alleging discrimination or harassment. The School also prohibits retaliation against any person who participates in an investigation and/or the resolution of a complaint of discrimination or harassment.*

*We encourage employees to come forward and participate in investigations. We will make all reasonable efforts to keep investigations confidential, and to protect those who file complaints. If an employee retaliates against another employee for reporting alleged discrimination or harassment, that employee will be subject to serious consequences, up to and including termination.*

## **Investigative Process**

GREEN Charter Schools will investigate any such allegations and expects all employees to participate and keep all matters strictly confidential. At the end of the investigation, the investigating party (usually the Human Resources Director, but occasionally another party, or even an outside investigator) will issue a report with all findings as well as a recommendation. The employee who reported the incident will be informed once the investigation is complete.

Any employee accused of inappropriate behavior will be treated with respect. If the accusation is serious and credible, the employee may be suspended, with or without pay, during the investigation. The accused employee will be informed of the outcome of the investigation. If the investigation reveals that the employee was at fault, the accused employee may be subject to discipline. This may include anything from a verbal warning up to and including termination, depending on the severity of the action.

Employees will not be disciplined for failing to report something that occurred to them. Nor will GREEN retaliate for any good faith report. A good faith report means that the employee believes that something inappropriate happened, even if the investigation determines no inappropriate behavior occurred.

If an employee makes a bad faith complaint, that will be considered harassment. A bad faith complaint is one where the complainant knowingly lies or misrepresents the situation to accuse a co-worker, damages someone's reputation, or seeks personal gain. Either party may appeal the decision by filing a written report with the GREEN Director of Human Resources.

## **Fraternization**

Fraternization is interaction between co-workers that extends beyond business relationships. Romantic relationships between managers and anyone in their reporting line are strictly prohibited at GREEN.

## **Pornography**

Employees are strictly prohibited from accessing pornography on company-owned equipment, even while off company property. Using your personal device to access pornography while working or while in the company of other GREEN employees is also forbidden.

## **Proof of U.S. Citizenship and/or Right to Work**

As required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), all offers of employment from GREEN are contingent upon verification of a potential employee's authorization to work in the United States. No later than the first day of work, the employee must provide original documents verifying this authorization to work and complete a Federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form, as required by federal law. For employees whose authorization to work in the United States expires, GREEN will re-verify employment authorization on or before the expiration date. If the employee cannot provide unexpired documentation at that time, the School may be required to terminate employment and take such action as required by law.

Amendments to IRCA require all employers to verify the legal status of employees through the Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify system within three (3) days of the employee's start date. GREEN is also required to provide the Social Security Administration, and if necessary, the Department of Homeland Security, with information from each employee's Form I-9 to confirm work authorization.

## **Verification of Documentation**

The School considers any information provided by prospective employees throughout the hiring process to be truthful, accurate, and complete. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information may result in the exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment, or if the person has been hired, may result in termination of employment.

## Background Checks

A National/State Background and South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (S.L.E.D.) check will be conducted by the Director of Human Resources or their designee for all offers of employment for all new hires or rehires. Additional criminal background checks may include the following: The Sex Offender Registry Check, the Child Abuse Registry Check, and the Global Terror Watchlist Search.

GREEN requires all employees to disclose all criminal convictions through a self-reporting process. All School employees shall be required to self-report within five (5) working days of the conviction (whether under appeal or not) to the Director of Human Resources. Failure to do so is grounds for Disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Human Resources may also request the following additional background checks, if necessary, based on the position being filled. These checks may include:

- Business Reference Verification
- Educational Attainment Verification
- Motor Vehicle Records
- Search of School Records
- Pre-Employment Drug Testing

## Personnel Records

Personnel records shall be maintained for all GREEN employees in accordance with applicable state and federal Laws. These records contain important information regarding employee job and personnel history. It is important to keep all records updated. Therefore, it is the employee's responsibility to notify the Director of Human Resources of any changes to their name, address, telephone number, number of dependents, beneficiary designation, emergency contacts, or any other pertinent information. Employees may review and receive copies of the contents of their personnel records through a written request to the Director of Human Resources.

All employee files shall be maintained in a secure location by the Director of Human Resources and may include the following:

- Name
- Address and telephone number
- Number of eligible dependents
- W-4 deductions
- Emergency contact information
- Direct deposit information
- Evidence of successful completion of required educational training
- South Carolina Teaching Certificate (if applicable)
- Employee assessments
- Signed contract (if required)
- Withholding allowance documentation (W-4)
- Copy of Social Security Card

- Benefits enrollment documentation
- S.L.E.D. background check results
- Letters of reprimand and information regarding any disciplinary action
- Personal Data Sheet
- Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9 Form)
- Signed Drug-Free Workplace Policy Agreement
- Signed Acknowledgement of Review and Receipt of the GREEN Policy Manual and the GREEN Employee Handbook

It is the responsibility of the employee to promptly obtain and submit these documents upon request as applicable.

## **Employment Agreements**

South Carolina is an “employment-at-will” state. Either the employer or an employee may end the employment relationship without giving either notice or a reason. All employment agreements offered by GREEN to its employees shall specifically state that either the School or the employee may choose to cancel the contract at any time with or without cause.

The School shall provide written notice to all currently employed teachers regarding the status of their employment for the upcoming school year by April 30. Failure to provide this written notice on or before April 30 will necessitate the issuance of an employment agreement to that teacher. Teachers who have been offered re-employment must notify the School’s Director of Human Resources in writing of their acceptance of the employment agreement by May 10.

If applicable, the School shall notify retired educators of employment in writing on or before May 1 for the upcoming school year. Retired educators must provide documentation of compliance with the earnings limitation exemptions required by the SCDE.

### *Legal References:*

*S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-25-410, 420.*

*The General Appropriation Act, 2021 S.C. Acts 94, Proviso 1.78.*

*S.C. Code Ann. § 9-1-1795.*

## **Nepotism Policy**

It is the policy of GREEN that individuals may not be hired for any full-time, part-time, or temporary position which would create a supervisor/employee relationship within anyone (1) department between two (2) individuals who are related by blood, marriage, or law.

As used in this policy, the word “department” shall mean and include all levels of the organization under the Executive Director into which the various structural areas of operations of the School fall within GREEN.

In the event of marriage between employees of GREEN, creating a relationship which violates this policy, one of the persons affected must transfer to a location compatible with policy provisions, or in cases of refusal to transfer, be terminated from that location by the end of the school/fiscal year or within six (6) months from the date the relationship was established, whichever is the greater period.

The degrees of relationship included in the above restrictions are as follows:

- By Blood: Parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin
- By Marriage: Husband, wife, stepparent, stepchild, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, half-sister, half-brother, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece
- By Law: Legal guardianship relationships, adoptive parent/child relationships

Additionally, two (2) members of an immediate family may not be employed and assigned to the same administrative department at the same time without prior written permission from the Executive Director or their designee.

In the appointment and selection of new employees, the School shall adhere to this policy. All current supervisor/employee relationships established prior to the adoption of this policy will not be affected as long as the employees remain in their current job assignments.

#### *Legal Reference:*

*S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-750.*

### **Teacher Certification**

Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-26-30, the South Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) adopts nationally recognized educator assessments for certification purposes and establishes qualifying scores on each assessment. The traditional pathway to South Carolina teacher certification is through completing a bachelor's degree that includes a teacher preparation program. The SCDE oversees the certification process. To meet the basic eligibility requirements for teaching certification in South Carolina, candidates must have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, pass the Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) assessments, and pass a background check. It is the teacher's responsibility to comply with all teaching certification requirements, including beginning the certification renewal process before the expiration date.

Under S.C. Code § 59-40-50(B)(5) of the S.C. Charter Schools Act of 1996, a charter school in its discretion may hire non-certified teachers in a ratio of up to 25 % of its entire teaching staff. However, in a new charter school, an educator teaching in the core academic areas as defined by the No Child Left Behind law must be certified in those areas or possess a baccalaureate or graduate degree in the subject they are hired to teach. Part-time non-certified teachers are considered pro rata in calculating this percentage based on the number of hours they are expected to teach.

Additionally, per S.C. Code § 59-40-50(B)(6), at least one (1) member of the administrative staff of the charter school must be certified or experienced in the field of school administration. Within 90 days of employment, an administrator employed by the charter school must successfully complete an orientation program in the powers, duties, and responsibilities of a school administrator including, but not limited to, topics on personnel, instructional programs, school finance, school law, ethics, and community relations. The orientation must be provided at no charge by the SCDE, or an association approved by the Department. S.C. Code § 59-40-155(B).

*Legal References:*

*South Carolina Charter Schools Act of 1996, § 59-40-10 et seq.*

*No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002.*

## **Employee Classification**

At the time of hire, all employees are classified as either exempt or non-exempt for administrative purposes, as determined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). By law, employees in certain jobs are entitled to overtime compensation for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per work week, not including accrued leave hours. These employees are referred to as “non-exempt.”

An “exempt” employee is a salaried employee engaged in an executive, administrative, professional, or other exempt classification as defined by the FLSA. Exempt employees are not entitled to overtime pay under the FLSA. If you have any questions as to your status, please see the Director of Human Resources.

Employees will be classified as 190-day, 210-day, or 230-day employees according to their position classification or at the discretion of their supervisor. The amount of leave allowed is also determined by the employee’s classification (*see Leave Requests in this Manual*). The calendars for each of these groups will be set each year by the administration.

*Legal Reference:*

*The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended.*

## **Employee Compensation**

GREEN shall pay all eligible employees on a semi-monthly (twice monthly) schedule. All employees are required to participate in direct deposit and all compensation shall be paid through the School’s payroll system in the form of direct deposit (electronic transfer) to the NACHA financial institution of the employee’s choice.

No compensation may be paid directly to School employees by the administration, PVO/PTO, Booster Club, or any other school support organizations.

## **Direct Deposit**

Direct deposit is mandatory for all employee compensation. Enrollment requires the employee to submit a direct deposit authorization form specifying the bank where the deposit will be sent and submission of a voided check or a letter from the bank which includes the account and routing numbers. Any changes to an employee's direct deposit should be submitted to the Director of Human Resources or their designee immediately to ensure continued receipt of wages in a timely manner.

## **Staff Attendance Policy**

Punctuality and regular attendance by staff are vital to the smooth operation of the School and are a necessary component to ensure that GREEN meets its objectives. If circumstances necessitate that an employee be absent from work, appropriate reporting and documentation procedures must be followed.

GREEN employees are salaried or hourly employees. If an employee is consistently late or excessively absent, the School's ability to perform is affected and an unfair burden is placed on colleagues. Therefore, unless an absence is approved in advance and in writing by the employee's supervisor or excused under the School's Paid Time Off (PTO) or other applicable policy, employees are responsible for being at work and arriving on time. An employee who is absent for reasons other than those permitted or excused under the School's PTO or other applicable policy or who repeatedly fails to provide notice as required, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **Holidays**

Eligible GREEN employees are entitled to certain annual holidays based on the academic calendar:

- Labor Day**
- Thanksgiving Break**
- Winter Break**
- New Year's Day**
- Presidents' Day**
- Spring Break**
- Memorial Day**
- Juneteenth**
- Fourth of July**

## **Paid Time Off**

GREEN employees are entitled to a specific number of paid leave days each year as indicated in the chart below. The number of Paid Time Off (PTO) days granted each employee is based on an employee's classification. Please note that the allowable number of paid leave days encompasses sick days as well.

Employees must submit all PTO requests in advance through BambooHR. The requests are then routed to the employee’s supervisor for review. Employees will be notified if the PTO request has been approved.

The number of PTO leave days permitted per year are as follows:

Employee Classification	Days of PTO Allowed Per Year
190-Day Employees	10 days/year
210-Day Employees	11 days/year
230-Day Employees	20 days/year

PTO leave may be accrued year after year if not used, up to a maximum cap, as indicated below:

Employee Classification	Maximum Days that may be Accrued
190-Day Employee	40 days
210-Day Employees	45 days
230-Day Employees	80 days

Please note the following:

- All PTO requests must be made through BambooHR.
- Any PTO request that will cause the employee to exceed their allotted number of PTO days requires the employee to meet with their supervisor and the Director of Human Resources or their designee.
- Time accumulated beyond the amounts above will be paid out at the end of each school year once the PTO bank max has been reached at a rate set each year by the administration as indicated in the chart above.
- GREEN will not accept the transfer of PTO hours from other employees.
- GREEN will not pay out PTO banks upon termination of employment but will assist in the transfer of any remaining banked PTO hours if the new employer will accept them.

### Unplanned Leave

Employees should inform their supervisor directly that they will be taking PTO in situations where the absence is unplanned and must also submit the PTO request through BAMBOOHR.

### Paid Parental Leave

GREEN Charter Schools will provide up to a maximum of six (6) weeks of paid parental leave to eligible employees following the birth of an employee’s child or the placement of a child with an employee in connection with adoption. The purpose of paid parental leave is to enable the employee to care for and bond with a newborn or newly adopted child. This policy will run concurrently with leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Employees planning to apply for Paid Parental Leave should notify their supervisor and the Director of Human Resources as early as possible.

## **Eligibility:**

Eligible employees must meet the following criteria:

- Have been employed with GREEN for at least 12 months immediately preceding the date that leave would begin; and
- Be a full-time employee (part-time and temporary employees are not eligible for this benefit).

In addition, employees must meet one of the following criteria within the last 12 months:

- Have given birth to a child;
- Be the spouse of a woman who has given birth to a child; or
- Have adopted a child who is 17 years old or younger. This provision does not apply to the adoption of a stepchild by a stepparent or the placement of a foster child.

Note: If both parents are employees of the School at the time of the birth or adoption of the child, both parents are eligible for paid parental leave.

## **Amount, Timeframe, and Duration**

Eligible employees will receive up to a maximum of six (6) weeks (30 workdays) of paid parental leave per birth or adoption of a child. In addition, in no case will an employee receive more than six (6) weeks of paid parental leave in a rolling 12-month period, regardless of whether more than one (1) birth or adoption event occurs within that 12-month period.

Each week of paid leave will be compensated at 100% of the staff member's regular base pay. Paid parental leave will be paid on the School's regularly scheduled pay dates. Approved paid parental leave may be taken at any time during the 12-month period immediately following the birth or adoption of a child. Paid parental leave may not be used or extended beyond this 12-month timeframe and must be completed before the child's first birthday or the first anniversary of the adoption of the child.

Employees must take paid parental leave in one (1) continuous period of leave and must use all paid parental leave during the 12-month timeframe indicated above. Paid parental leave cannot be used on an intermittent basis and may only be used for the purpose of caring for or bonding with a newborn or newly adopted child.

Upon termination of the employee's employment at GREEN, they will not be paid for any unused paid parental leave for which they were eligible.

## **Bereavement Leave**

When a death occurs in an employee's immediate family, an employee may take up to five (5) days off with pay. Written notification must be given to the employee's supervisor with a copy to Human Resources, and a Leave Request Form must be submitted through BambooHR. In unusual circumstances, additional time off may be granted, with or without pay, at the discretion of the

administration. For purposes of this policy, "immediate family" means an employee's spouse, great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, legal guardians, brothers, spouse of brothers, sisters, mothers-in-laws, fathers-in-laws, spouse of sisters, children, spouse of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of either the employee or the spouse. Proof of funeral events may be requested by the Director of Human Resources or their designee upon the employee's return to work.

## **Family and Medical Leave Act**

GREEN Charter Schools is a "covered employer" under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The FMLA is a federal statute requiring employers to provide employees with unpaid leave for certain medical and family reasons. The FMLA affords employees the opportunity to take "job-protected" leave, which means that they cannot be fired or otherwise disciplined as a result of their decision to take leave, and they are entitled to return to their same job or an "equivalent job" when their period of leave ends. If an employee believes they meet the qualifications for FMLA, they should schedule an appointment with the Director of Human Resources or their designee.

### **Employee Eligibility**

Employees qualify for FMLA protections if:

- They have worked for the organization for at least 12 months;
- They have worked at least 1250 hours for the organization during those 12 months; and
- They currently work at a location where there are at least 50 employees within a 75-mile radius.

### **Qualifying Circumstances**

Under the FMLA, there are six (6) primary circumstances in which employees of covered employers are eligible to take unpaid, job-protected leave. These are:

1. To care for a newborn child within one (1) year of birth.
2. To care for an adopted child or a child placed in foster care within one (1) year of adoption or placement.
3. To care for a spouse, child, or parent who has been diagnosed with a serious health condition.
4. If the employee has been diagnosed with a serious health condition that prevents them from performing essential job functions.
5. If a qualified exigency arises out of the employee's spouse, child, or parent going on covered active duty in military service.
6. To care for a spouse, child, parent, or next of kin who is a covered service member and who has been diagnosed with a serious injury or illness (known as "military caregiver leave").

### **Duration of Leave**

The FMLA entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, "job-protected" leave in a 12-month period, with an exception for military caregiver leave. Eligible employees who take military caregiver leave can take up to 26 weeks of protected leave in a 12-month period.

For additional questions about the FMLA, employees should contact GREEN's Director of Human Resources.

*Legal Reference:*

*Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, 29 U.S.C.*

## **Paid Military Leave for Public Employees in South Carolina**

GREEN Charter Schools complies with all state and federal laws regarding employee leave due to military service, including the military reserves and National Guard, and the employee's rights upon return to work.

South Carolina law states the following regarding paid military leave for employees of the state and its political subdivisions:

*Officers and employees of the State of South Carolina, and departments and subdivisions thereof, shall be entitled to military leave without loss of pay, seniority, or efficiency rating, when attending National Guard encampments or schools for training, under proper authority, and on all other occasions when ordered to active duty, in the service of the State of South Carolina. S.C. Code § 25-1-2250.*

An employee taking leave under this policy shall forward a copy of their military orders to their supervisor immediately upon receipt. In addition, employees who are serving in the armed forces may be entitled to protection under federal law such as The Uniformed Services Employment Act of 1994 (USERRA), including the right to re-employment if certain criteria are met, and, in some cases, the retention of benefits based upon the length of service which would have been accrued had the employee remained on the job.

USERRA is a federal statute that protects service members' and veterans' civilian employment rights. USERRA requires employers to provide leaves of absence to workers who enter military service while employed and to re-employ them upon the conclusion of their service. It also protects service members from discrimination in the workplace based on their military service or affiliation.

USERRA provides four important benefits related to military leave:

- Protection from discrimination based on military status or military obligations.
- The right to re-employment upon conclusion of military service.
- Protection from termination for a period of time after returning from service.
- Certain rights in connection with pensions and other employee benefits plans.

*Legal References:*

*South Carolina Code of Laws § 25-1-2250.*

*The Uniformed Services Employment Act of 1994.*

## Failure to Return From Leave

Unless required otherwise by law, an employee granted a leave of absence under these provisions who fails to return to work upon expiration of the leave will no longer have a protected absence. Further absences will count against the attendance policy.

## Jury Duty

Employees summoned for jury duty will be allowed the necessary time off from work to perform this important civic responsibility. Employees must give their supervisor immediate notice from the Court of their intent to serve. Employees will be expected to report to work during all regular hours if the Court does not require their presence. The School may require the employee to supply documentation from the Court affirming the employee's jury service.

## Employee Benefits

GREEN offers a comprehensive Benefits Plan for its employees which may vary from year to year as determined by the School. The Director of Human Resources shall communicate this information upon hiring and thereafter on a yearly basis during Open Enrollment.

## Open Enrollment

PEBA provides an annual open enrollment period during which an employee may add, cancel, or change coverage. If no action is taken by the employee, previous coverage will continue for the next calendar year.

The open enrollment period for active subscribers falls during the month of **October** each year. During this period, eligible employees may change their coverage without a special eligibility situation being required. Changes become effective the following January 1. Examples of the changes that an employee can make during the Open Enrollment period include the following:

- Employees may enroll themselves, their eligible spouse, and/or their eligible child(ren) in health insurance coverage.
- Employees may cancel health coverage or drop their spouse and/or child(ren) from health insurance coverage.
- Employees may enroll in or drop State Vision Plan coverage for themselves, their eligible spouse, and/or their eligible child(ren).
- Employees may be required to enroll or re-enroll in MoneyPlus as indicated below:
  - Employees already enrolled in the MoneyPlus Pretax Group Insurance Premium feature do not need to re-enroll.
  - Permanent full-time employees must re-enroll in the MoneyPlus Medical Spending Account (MSA) and/or Dependent Care Spending Account each year.
  - MSA participants receive a debit card at no charge. A new card is not sent to participants each year; the card is valid for five (5) years.
  - Employees participating in the MoneyPlus Pretax Premium feature may elect, make changes, or cancel Optional Life. Medical evidence may be required.

- Employees do not need to re-enroll in the Health Savings Account (HSA) each year if they wish to continue contributing the same amount. If they do wish to change the amount during Open Enrollment, they should indicate the new amount in the PEBA MyBenefits portal. If they wish to stop contributing or are no longer eligible to contribute, they should enter a zero under this section in MyBenefits.
- Employees who are enrolling in an HSA and who currently have a full (not limited use) MSA can begin contributing to their HSA on January 1, if the MSA has a zero balance as of the last day of the previous plan year (December 31). ASIFlex will automatically convert any carryover funds in an MSA to a Limited-use MSA for employees who enrolled in an HSA.
- Note: Employees may enroll in, cancel, add, or drop a spouse and/or child(ren) from Dental Plus or Basic Dental only during Open Enrollment in odd-numbered years.

Changes to benefits may be made as announced.

## Termination of Coverage

Insurance coverage ends upon the following events:

- The last day of the month in which you were engaged in active employment, unless you are transferring to another participating group;
- The last day of the month in which you become ineligible for coverage (for example, your working hours are reduced from full-time to part-time);
- The day after your death; or
- The date the coverage ends for all subscribers.

Coverage for your spouse and/or children will end upon the following events:

- The date your coverage ends;
- The date coverage for spouses and children is no longer offered; or
- The last day of the month in which your spouse's or child's eligibility for coverage ends.

Employee termination of a spouse or child:

- To drop a spouse or child from insurance coverage, the employee must complete a Notice of Election form which is available in BambooHR within 31 days of the date the spouse or child is no longer eligible for coverage

## COBRA

If your coverage or your spouse's or child's insurance coverage ends, you may be eligible for continuation of coverage as a retiree, as a survivor, or under COBRA. COBRA, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, requires that continuation of group health, vision, dental or Medical Spending Account coverage be offered to you and your covered spouse and children if you are no longer eligible for coverage due to a qualifying event.

Qualifying events include:

- The covered employee's working hours are reduced from full-time to part-time;
- The covered employee voluntarily quits work, retires, is laid off, or is fired (unless the firing is due to gross misconduct as determined by the employer);
- A covered spouse loses eligibility due to a change in marital status; or
- A child no longer qualifies for coverage (e.g., due to age).

**Employees should reach out to the Director of Human Resources or their designee regarding COBRA.**

## **Workers' Compensation**

GREEN Charter Schools provides Workers' Compensation benefits pursuant to South Carolina law. The South Carolina Workers' Compensation Act provides that if an employee suffers injury by accident arising out of and in the course of employment, that individual may be entitled to recover medical expenses, temporary total compensation for lost time, and permanent disability benefits if they suffered any permanent injury as a result of the work accident.

If you suffer an injury on the job, you should immediately report it to your supervisor. You should also request that the employer be responsible for the appropriate medical treatment.

Under current law, your employer has the right to select the doctor who will treat you. If you visit your own doctor without permission of the employer, the employer may not be held liable for the medical expense, unless it constitutes an emergency condition. You do have the right to choose a physician to evaluate you for the specific disability, but it will not be covered by the employer. In the event the claim is denied, you can attempt to handle the case yourself or you may hire an attorney to represent you.

*Legal Reference:*

*The South Carolina Workers' Compensation Law, § 42-1-110 et seq.*

## **Payroll Withholding**

All Federal, State, and Social Security taxes will be automatically deducted from employee paychecks as required by law, as will Social Security contributions, health insurance premiums, and the like. Each deduction will be recorded on the employee's pay stub.

The Federal Withholding Tax deduction is determined by the W-4 form completed by the employee upon hire. It is the employee's responsibility to submit a new W-4 form through Bamboo HR whenever their deductions change. **It is incumbent upon each employee to ensure that their W-4 form and entire BambooHR profile is accurate.**

## **403(b) Plan**

GREEN employees are eligible to participate in the School's optional 403(b) plan. A 403(b) plan is a

retirement plan offered by public schools and certain 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations. Like a 401(k), a 403(b) account enables you to defer a portion of each paycheck for your retirement, and the School may match a portion of your contributions.

Employees can choose to enroll in the 403(b) plan and have the option of contributing a percentage of their gross pay each pay period. Participants will receive a contribution from GREEN each pay period at a rate of 7%. Contributions from employees have an annual limit, currently \$23,500 for 2025. Catch-up contributions exist for those age 50 or older. Employees become fully vested upon enrollment confirmation and upon leaving employment at GREEN, employees can select whether to roll over their 403(b) account or cash out the funds.

Wayne Flowers with ValuTeachers manages the 403(b) plan for GREEN employees. He may be reached at [wflowers@valuteachers.com](mailto:wflowers@valuteachers.com) and can provide you with the necessary paperwork to enroll in the plan. If you have additional questions, please reach out to the Director of Human Resources or their designee.

## **Standards of Employee Conduct**

Employees are expected to always meet acceptable standards of professional conduct during their employment with GREEN Charter Schools. Any employee who deviates from these rules and standards may be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

Disciplinary actions may vary due to extenuating circumstances or prior violations. Because the circumstances of each situation are different, the School may handle each disciplinary situation differently without setting a precedent for future cases. Prior warning is not a requirement for termination. If you are disciplined in writing, you will receive a copy of your warning, and a copy will be kept in your personnel file.

Examples of conduct by GREEN staff which may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or termination of employment, include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Dishonesty of any form, including fabrication or falsification of any documents or records, or any misrepresentation or material omission of any fact.
2. Neglect, misuse, or unauthorized use of School funds, equipment, vehicles, or property.
3. Theft, misappropriation of property, or intentionally damaging property belonging to the School, an employee, a student, or a visitor.
4. Disrespectful actions or words directed to a student, visitor, employee, supervisor, or anyone else with whom the School deals at any time.
5. Insubordination or refusal or failure to obey instructions from a supervisor or a School administrator or using disrespectful, obscene, abusive, or threatening language to a supervisor or School administrator.

6. Fighting, disorderly conduct, rude boisterous play, practical jokes, or pranks conducted during work hours or while on School premises.
7. Leaving the job during working hours without prior permission from the Administration.
8. Use of obscene, abusive, inappropriate, or threatening language, intimidation, or coercion towards a student, visitor, employee, or anyone else with whom the School deals at any time.
9. Immoral conduct, indecency, or gambling during work hours or while on School property.
10. Sleeping on the job, avoidance of work, or failure to conduct assigned tasks.
11. Using a cell phone/school phone excessively during work hours.
12. Making false or malicious statements about a student, visitor, employee, or supervisor.
13. Failure to cooperate with an internal investigation.
14. Tardiness, excessive absenteeism, or failure to follow appropriate procedures when absent.
15. Disclosing or accessing confidential information about a student, visitor, employee, supervisor, or anyone else with whom the School deals at any time without prior written authorization from the administration.
16. Solicitation, acceptance, or the giving of gratuities or bribes.
17. Refusal to submit to drug screening when requested. This includes any attempt to tamper with a drug screening test and/or unsatisfactory test results.
18. Failure to report a workplace injury or accident on School property or while conducting work-related business as required by School policy.
19. Possession of any firearm, knife, ammunition, explosive, or any other weapon on School property, including in the parking lots and while operating School vehicles.
20. Willful disregard of safety rules and procedures. Failure to use safety equipment when required or tampering with safety devices.
21. Possession of, consumption of, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages while on School premises, including in School parking lots, while on School-approved field trips, while conducting School business, or during an employee's meal break.
22. The illegal use, manufacture, distribution, sale, or possession of illegal drugs or non-prescription controlled substances, or the dispensing of drugs without a proper prescription. This prohibition includes the presence of any illegal drugs in your system.

23. Being convicted of, pleading guilty to, or pleading no contest to a crime, or any conduct that damages the reputation of the School.
24. Interfering with the work of others at the School.
25. Failure to comply with any School policy.
26. Failure to immediately report the harassment or intimidation of anyone at GREEN Charter Schools, specifically including harassment or intimidation because of that person's sex, race, color, age, religion, national origin, handicap (or disability), or marital status as required by school policy.
27. Giving a false or misleading reason to obtain sick leave, military leave, funeral leave, or any other leave.
28. Unsatisfactory performance.
29. Discussing differences between employees in front of students or visitors or failing to settle differences in a calm manner.
30. Teachers may tutor other students during school hours; however, no monetary compensation is allowed, and the tutoring teacher may not comment on a class or the student's classroom teacher and their classroom procedures.

If you become aware of another employee's behavior or actions that you believe are inappropriate, illegal, problematic, or in any way affect your job performance or the School work environment, you are obligated to discuss such behavior or actions with your principal or supervisor.

Disciplinary action is in the sole discretion of the School and may result in any of the following:

- Verbal Warning
- Written Warning
- Final Warning
- Suspension without Pay
- Termination of Employment

## **Late to Work**

Punctual and regular attendance is an essential responsibility of each employee at GREEN. Employees are expected to report to work as scheduled, on time, and prepare to start working. Employees are also expected to remain at work for their entire work schedule. Late arrival, early departure, or other absences from scheduled hours are disruptive and should be avoided.

## **Outside Employment**

It is the policy of GREEN that any outside employment cannot be in conflict with an employee's work at the School. Employees may not engage in outside employment or business activities except as authorized by this policy.

Outside employment is defined as employment with an entity other than GREEN Charter Schools that includes compensation or involvement in other business activities, to include but not limited to, paid consulting or owning a business.

Nothing contained in this policy shall abridge the authority of the Executive Director or their designee to require cessation of outside employment by an employee, where the employment creates the appearance of impropriety to the public or where the employment interferes with the employee's ability to perform his or her job duties satisfactorily. The decision of the Executive Director or their designee in such cases is not subject to appeal.

GREEN employees may engage in outside activities for compensation when the following conditions are met:

- The employee only engages in the outside employment during non-duty hours or when the employee is on pre-approved annual leave, compensatory leave, holiday leave, or leave without pay.
- The employee does not use GREEN facilities, funds, supplies, personnel, services, time, or resources for outside employment.
- The employee does not represent, nor purport to represent, GREEN, its Executive Director, or its employees while engaged in outside employment.
- The employee does not engage in any outside employment which creates a potential conflict of interest with their employment at GREEN.

Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **Substitute Teachers**

It is the responsibility of the principals or their designees to assign a substitute to fill any vacancy created by the temporary absence of a regular staff member for a short period of time. The substitute teacher will be selected from a list of approved substitutes. To the extent possible, substitute teachers should possess the training and experience to ensure that students will receive uninterrupted instruction.

Retired teachers may be employed as substitute teachers without jeopardizing their retirement salary within the limits as prescribed by law.

Rates of compensation for substitute teachers will be established by the Director of Human Resources or their designee.

## **Transfers**

Transfer of employees to other positions, departments, or school locations may be made as required at the discretion of the Administration as needed for the optimal functioning of the School.

## **Travel Policy**

**All GREEN travel expenses incurred by School employees must receive prior written approval from the Director of Finance or their designee to be eligible for reimbursement.**

If the travel expenses are to be incurred by the Executive Director, they will provide the Board Chair and/or the Director of Finance with notice of the trip prior to incurring the travel expenses. The Executive Director's travel expenses must be approved by the Board Chair and/or Director of Finance prior to being reimbursed.

## **Registration**

The Director of Finance or their designee will pay registration fees in advance for attendance at pre-approved conference(s), seminar(s), or workshop(s).

## **Accommodations**

The Director of Finance or their designee will make all hotel reservations for employees traveling on GREEN-related travel. When more than one GREEN employee is traveling to the same destination, rooms will be booked with two (2) people of the same gender per room (with separate beds). Employees will not be required to share a room with their supervisor. If an employee prefers a separate room rather than sharing, that employee is responsible for the portion of room cost above double occupancy.

Hotel expenses for one-day meetings will not be reimbursed unless arrangements have been pre-approved in writing by the Director of Finance or their designee. Hotel costs for the day before a one-day or multiple-day conference, seminar, or workshop will be allowed only if the program starts at or before 8:00 a.m. and the travel time is two (2) and half hours or more and will negatively impact attendance.

## **Airline Tickets**

The Director of Finance or their designee will make all flight reservations for employees traveling on GREEN-related travel.

## **Driving in Lieu of Airline Travel**

When the most economical means of transportation is an airline flight and the employee elects to travel by personal vehicle, mileage reimbursement will not exceed the price of airfare for a round-trip coach ticket and a rental car (if applicable). Also, the GSA rate must still be used for all hotels and flights.

## **Taxi/Uber/Lyft Fares**

Travel between the airport and the booked hotel is only reimbursable if a free hotel shuttle is not available. If more than one (1) GREEN employee is traveling, ride sharing should be exercised whenever possible to minimize costs.

## **Parking**

Parking at hotels, conference centers, or other travel destinations will be reimbursed at the least expensive option available (e.g., the self-parking rate rather than the valet rate) and only for the days required for travel. Parking at an airport for travel will also be reimbursed at the least expensive option available (i.e., the actual cost or the lowest published rate for that airport).

## **Airline Baggage Fees**

Airline baggage fees will only be approved if deemed necessary based on the duration of the trip and the baggage policies of the airline on which the flight is booked. For travel of two (2) nights or less, any checked luggage will not be reimbursed. If travel is for three (3) to six (6) nights, only the cost of one (1) checked bag will be reimbursed. If travel is for seven (7) or more nights, only the cost of up to two (2) checked bags will be reimbursed. Additional costs for overweight bags are not reimbursable.

## **Family/Friends Accompanying Employee**

If an employee is accompanied by family or friends on an authorized business trip, only those expenses directly attributed to the employee will be reimbursed.

## **Mileage Reimbursement**

Employees will be reimbursed for the use of a personal vehicle when on approved GREEN business at the current Internal Revenue Service rate per mile, as directed by the State Comptroller General's Office, when such reimbursement is the most economical method available. When more than one employee is traveling to the same location, employees should arrange to carpool whenever possible. Only actual miles driven on behalf of the School will be reimbursed.

## **Travel Between School Campuses**

Employees who are assigned to work at more than one GREEN campus will be reimbursed for travel between schools.

## **Travel Between Residence and Primary Work Location**

Mileage incurred for travel between an employee's home and their primary work location is not eligible for reimbursement. However, if an employee departs directly from their residence for a

school-related trip without reporting to their primary work location, they may be reimbursed for the actual mileage traveled—less the mileage of their normal daily round-trip commute (if applicable).

### **Travel Reimbursements**

To receive reimbursement for travel-related expenses, all employees must submit a Travel Reimbursement Form to the Director of Finance or their designee no later than seven (7) days after their return. In no circumstance will any receipts held longer than 30 days after return be reimbursed.

### **Meals**

Meal reimbursements for travel conducted on behalf of GREEN will be made according to the current applicable GSA per diem rate for each meal. To be eligible for reimbursement, meals must be purchased by the employee, and **itemized receipts must be submitted**. If a meal is provided as part of a conference, meeting, lodging package, or otherwise covered by GREEN (e.g., sponsored by a vendor or paid directly), any additional meal purchased by the employee will **not** be reimbursed.

### **Other Incidental Travel Expenses**

Any other travel expenses submitted for reimbursement must be reasonable and necessary.

### **Documentation of Expenses for Reimbursement**

Employees must provide the following documentation to the Director of Finance or their designee within 7 (seven) days of returning to be reimbursed for School-related travel expenses:

- ✓ Program/Agenda of the meeting attended
- ✓ GREEN Expense Reimbursement Form with appropriate signatures
- ✓ All receipts for transactions made with a GREEN credit/debit card during travel
- ✓ If needed, a travel map summary may be requested to show the number of miles driven in the personal vehicle
- ✓ All receipts for which reimbursement is being requested
- ✓ Hotel/Motel Receipt with zero balance
- ✓ Registration receipts from events
- ✓ Parking receipts
- ✓ Boat or train fare receipts
- ✓ Air transportation receipt
- ✓ Toll receipts
- ✓ Bus ticket receipts
- ✓ Taxi or Uber receipts
- ✓ Rental car receipts
- ✓ All meal receipts for which reimbursement is being requested

### **Prohibited Travel Reimbursements**

Please note that employees will not be reimbursed for the following expenses:

- × Entertainment expenses (e.g., in-room movies)
- × Alcoholic beverages
- × Tobacco products

## **GREEN Credit Card Use During Travel**

Certain travel expenses may be paid for with GREEN’s credit card by those employees that are assigned a GREEN credit card. Those expenses include:

- ✓ Gas for rental car
- ✓ Airline baggage fees
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Any additional pre-approved transactions

## **Car Rentals**

Employees seeking to use a rental car during GREEN-related travel must contact the Director of Finance or their designee for approval prior to picking up the vehicle. Vehicle rental requests are only to be made if the reimbursement costs of using the employee’s personal vehicle or carpooling are greater than the cost of a car rental.

## **Social Media Guidelines for Employees**

These Guidelines apply to the use of social media by all employees of GREEN Charter Schools. Social media is generally defined as websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. This definition can encompass many platforms. It includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet on sites such as Wikipedia, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, chat rooms, personal blogs, and all other similar forms of electronic communication.

### **Use of Social Media to Promote GREEN Charter Schools’ Programs and Activities**

GREEN Charter Schools’ employees who seek to use social media sites or applications as educational tools for students or for extracurricular activities and programs must follow the following procedures:

1. Read and familiarize themselves with all Guidelines herein.
2. Complete GREEN’s Social Media Awareness Training.
3. Obtain prior written permission from a supervisor stating the purpose for the utilization of social media.

**While using social media to support GREEN Charter Schools’ programs and activities, employees must adhere to the following Guidelines:**

1. Ensure that the use of all social media complies with GREEN’s policies as well as with all applicable state and federal laws, including, but not limited to, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

2. Ensure that all communications through GREEN-sponsored social media comply with the School's policies concerning confidentiality, including the confidentiality of student information. If an employee is unsure of the confidential nature of the information, the employee shall consult with a supervisor prior to communicating such information.
3. Restrict students' access to any GREEN-sponsored social media accounts, with the exception of a social media activity that is an approved component of an educational activity.
4. Permit parents to access any page that their student has been invited to join.
5. Grant administrative access to another GREEN employee.
6. Provide their supervisor with administrative access to any page established by the employee for school-related purposes, if requested.
7. Monitor all the social media accounts regularly.
8. Notify GREEN's Director of Operations when you stop using a social media account.
9. Maintain professionalism in the establishment and maintenance of all Schools-sponsored social media accounts and activities.

### **Prohibitions and Responsibilities**

1. Employees are prohibited from making harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory, threatening, or similar statements in all social media communications.
2. Employees are prohibited from using any GREEN sponsored social media accounts for communications involving potential private financial gain, political commentary, commercial purposes, advertising, proselytizing, or solicitation purposes.
3. Employees must follow copyright and fair use laws in the creation of online content.
4. Employees may not use a GREEN-sponsored social media account in any manner that proffers personal opinions as those of the School or its individual campuses, or in a manner that could be construed as such.
5. Employees are required to comply with all GREEN Social Media Guidelines, and all School policies, procedures, rules, and any applicable laws with respect to the use of electronic communication devices, networks, GREEN-issued accounts, or when accessing School-sponsored social media sites or while using personal devices on GREEN's wireless network or while accessing School servers.

### **Warnings and Notices**

1. GREEN reserves the right to monitor all employee use of School computers and other electronic devices, including employee social media activity. An employee should have no expectation of personal privacy in any communication made through social media, including personal online accounts, while using GREEN's electronic communication devices.
2. No employee has the authority to represent or speak on behalf of GREEN unless such employee has written permission from a supervisor to do so.
3. Nothing in these Guidelines should be construed as implicit permission to represent GREEN through the use of social media.
4. Employees shall not speak to the media on GREEN's behalf without contacting the Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee. All media inquiries should be sent directly to their attention.

## Personal Use of Social Media

This section applies to social networking that employees are engaging in for any personal, non-work-related purposes.

### Personal Social Media Use and GREEN Charter Schools

1. Employees may not use their personal online social media accounts for classroom activities without the express written permission of the employee's supervisor. In general, only GREEN-sponsored social media accounts should be used for such purposes.
2. An employee may not reference GREEN using personal social media accounts in a manner that could be reasonably construed as an official School communication unless the employee states within the communication that such communication is the personal view of the employee and that the views expressed within are the employee's alone and do not represent the views of GREEN Charter Schools.

### Employee Rights

1. Nothing in these Guidelines is intended to infringe upon GREEN Charter Schools' employees' First Amendment rights to speak out on matters of public concern.
2. An employee shall not be required by their supervisor to provide their username, password, or other means of authentication for a personal social media account.
3. An employee shall not be required to authenticate or access a personal online account in the presence of their supervisor.
4. An employee shall not be required to invite or accept an invitation from their supervisor or required to join a group utilizing the employee's personal social media account.

**Because inappropriate content created by school employees using social media can interfere with the educational process, employees must refrain from social media use that does any of the following:**

1. Disrupts school activities or interferes with the operation of GREEN.
2. Breaches the confidentiality rights of GREEN students or employees.
3. Harasses, defames, or threatens GREEN co-workers or other members of the GREEN school community.
4. Creates a discriminatory or hostile working or learning environment at GREEN.
5. Endangers or otherwise puts students at risk of harm.
6. Violates the law or GREEN Charter Schools policies.

### Communication with Students via Social Media

GREEN employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with all students, parents, and colleagues on social media. For example, absent a prior pre-existing relationship (e.g., relative, family friend), it is inappropriate for a teacher or administrator to "friend" or accept any friend request from any student, parent, or legal guardian or otherwise establish a special relationship with selected students through social media, and it is likewise inappropriate for an employee to provide students or parents with access to personal postings unrelated to GREEN Charter

Schools. This prohibition against friending or adding students or accepting requests from students to be friended or added applies to ALL GREEN students, regardless of whether the student is or is not one of your students or is or is not assigned to your classroom.

### **Notice Regarding Privacy When Using GREEN Charter Schools Computer Resources**

GREEN reserves the right to monitor employee use of all GREEN Charter Schools' electronic communication devices and networks, including a review of personal social media activity. An employee should have no expectation of privacy in any personal communication made through social media while using GREEN Charter Schools' computers, mobile devices, or other electronic communication devices.

### **Retaliation is Prohibited**

GREEN Charter Schools prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from these Social Media Guidelines or for cooperating in any resulting investigation. Any employee who retaliates against a colleague for reporting a possible deviation from these Guidelines or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **Employee Dress Code**

All GREEN employees shall maintain professional standards of dress and appearance appropriate to the organization as a whole and to your individual role. Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness contribute to the professional image we present to our school community and our visitors.

### **Employee Use of Cell Phones**

Employees are not to use cell phones for personal use while teaching or supervising students. Use of cell phones for school business, however, is permissible. Group texting may be utilized in emergency situations.

### **Solicitation**

GREEN follows a no solicitation policy for its employees and students while on campus. Neither employees nor students may solicit for goods or services of any kind while on School premises. Any exceptions to this policy must receive prior written approval from the school leader or their designee.

### **Termination of Employment**

Nothing in this Policy Manual is intended to create, nor shall it be interpreted to create, a contract or agreement of employment, or any part of a contract or agreement of employment, either express or implied. The relationship between GREEN Charter Schools and its employees is strictly that of "employment at-will," and is in no way guaranteed and may be terminated at any time by the employee or the employer with or without cause, and with or without prior notice.

The School requires that employees return all documents, files, computer equipment, tools, access cards, keys, and other School-owned property to their direct supervisor on or before the last day of work. GREEN reserves the right to hold an employee's final paycheck until all School-owned property has been returned. The employee's final paycheck will be paid on the next scheduled payday.

## **5000 STUDENTS**

### **Admission to GREEN: The Enrollment and Lottery Processes**

GREEN Charter Schools is all-inclusive and strictly adheres to the provisions of the S.C. Charter Schools Act addressing the admission of students. The School will conduct an enrollment period each year during which parents/legal guardians can register their children for the upcoming school year. If there is enough room for every interested student, the School will not need to conduct a lottery. If a lottery is necessary, the School will conduct a blind lottery for available seats in which student names will be selected at random, by grade, with spots offered in the order of names selected. When the capacity for each grade level is reached, the remaining applications will be placed on a waiting list.

**S.C. Code § 59-40-50(B)(8)** states in part: “A charter school must not limit or deny admission or show preference in admission decisions to any individual or group of individuals...A charter school may give enrollment priority to a sibling of a pupil currently enrolled and attending, or who, within the last six (6) years, attended the school for at least one (1) complete academic year. A public charter school shall give enrollment preference to students enrolled in the public charter school in the previous school year. An enrollment preference for returning students excludes those students from entering into a lottery. A charter school also may give priority to children of a charter school employee and children of the charter committee, if priority enrollment for children of employees and of the charter committee does not constitute more than 20% of the enrollment of the charter school...”

**S.C. Code § 59-40-50(B)(7)** states in part: “A charter school must admit all children eligible to attend public school to a charter school, subject to space limitations.” It further states that, “it is required that the racial composition of the charter school enrollment reflect that of the local school district in which the charter school is located or that of the targeted student population of the local school district that the charter school proposes to serve, to be defined for the purposes of this chapter as differing by no more than 20% from that population. This requirement is also subject to the provisions of § 59-40-70(D). If the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building, students must be accepted by lot, and there is no appeal to the sponsor.”

### **Enrollment of Students Who Have Been Homeschooled**

For parents wishing to enroll their child at GREEN who is coming from a Homeschooled setting, please note that GREEN will request you submit the information required by the State for homeschooled students which details the requirements for attendance, curriculum used, recordkeeping, and instructor credentials. In the absence of these records (in light of the fact that there was no mandated oversight by the State for several years), GREEN will accept any records, lesson plans, portfolio documentation, or other materials you have for each student for each year homeschooled.

This documentation will assist us in placing your student in the correct grade level. Please note that testing may also be used to assist in this process.

Please see the links below for resources that may help you better understand the rules for homeschooling in South Carolina:

SCDE's Home Schooling page: <https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/state-accountability/home-schooling/>

Homeschooling Resource page: <https://www.homeschoolingsc.org/getting-started-page/>

Documentation possibilities: <https://www.homeschoolingsc.org/how-do-unschoolers-document-learning/>

## **Lottery Priority Exceptions**

Lottery priority exceptions may be given if allowable by Board policy. For example, a simultaneous enrollment process for grades six (6) and nine (9) gives students enrolled at any GREEN campus preference for GREEN Upstate High School. Additionally, siblings of students already admitted to or enrolled at GREEN may be given priority consideration in the lottery if such a priority has been established by the Board in accordance with state law.

### *Legal Reference:*

*South Carolina Charter Schools Act of 1996, § 59-40-10 et seq.*

## **For Families Experiencing Homelessness (McKinney-Vento)**

The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal program established in 1987 designed to address the problems that homeless children and youth can face when enrolling and attending school. Under the Act, students are deemed to be homeless if they are:

- Living with a friend, relative, or someone else because they lost their home or cannot afford a home;
- Staying in a motel or hotel due to lack of affordable housing;
- Living in an emergency or transitional shelter or a domestic violence shelter;
- Staying in substandard housing;
- Living in a car, park, public place, abandoned building, bus station, or train station;
- Awaiting foster care placement;
- Living in a campground or an inadequate trailer home;
- Abandoned in a hospital; or
- Living in a runaway or homeless youth shelter.

Under the Act, it is irrelevant for qualifying purposes how long the child has been without a home. It also does not matter if the child is living with a parent or is separated from their parent(s). Migrant children, preschool children, and youth on their own are covered if they fall into any one of the above categories. Runaway youth can be considered homeless even if their families want them to come home. Students who live in any public or private place that is not considered a regular residence are also covered.

McKinney-Vento allows children and youth in homeless situations the right to:

- Stay in their school even if they move.
- Enroll in a new school without proof of residency, immunizations, or school records.
- Receive transportation to school.
- Attend preschool programs.
- Receive all the school services they need.
- Have disagreements with schools settled quickly.
- Attend their school of origin while disagreements are settled.

Under McKinney-Vento, every local educational agency (LEA) is required to designate a liaison for homeless children and youth. In GREEN's case, the South Carolina Public School District (SCPCSD), otherwise known as our District or Authorizer, coordinates services to ensure that homeless children and youth enroll in school and have the opportunity to succeed academically. The District contact for McKinney-Vento is the SCPCSD Director of Federal Programs.

GREEN will ensure that homeless students are not stigmatized nor segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. A homeless student will be admitted to the School in alignment with the school's established enrollment policy. Transportation will be provided to and from the student's current school of origin at the request of the parent or legal guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied student, the SCPCSD's liaison for homeless students.

If a family is in a temporary or inadequate living situation due to a loss of housing, your child may be eligible for certain educational rights and services. Additional information is available from GREEN's Director of Special Services or from the campus guidance counselor.

*Legal References:*

*Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114-95, 129 Stat. 1802.*

*McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, 42 U.S.C.A. Section 11431, et seq. - Provides that homeless children are entitled to a public education, including a public preschool education.*

*Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C.A. Section 2000c, et seq. - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin, among other factors, by public elementary and secondary schools.*

*Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C.A. Section 2000d - No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.*

*S. C. Code, 1976, as amended:*

*S.C. Charter Schools Act of 1996, § 59-40-10 et seq.*

*S.C. Charter Schools Act of 1996, § 59-63-40 - Discrimination on account of race, creed, color, or national origin prohibited.*

*Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1, 551 U.S. 701 (2007).*

*Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (1982).*

*South Carolina State Board of Education Regulations.*

*R-43-272.2 - Review process for homeless children and unaccompanied youth.*

## **Tardiness**

Parents/legal guardians and students shall make every attempt to ensure that their student(s) arrives on time for school each day. Late arrivals are disruptive for the teacher, the class, and for the student arriving late. Students who are late for the start of school and who do not drive themselves to school must have their adult driver come to the main office of their campus to sign each student in as tardy (this rule applies to carpools as well). Students who drive themselves and are tardy shall also report to the Main Office upon arrival at school.

Once the student(s) has been properly signed in, they will receive a late slip for admittance to class. Tardiness due to medical reasons should be accompanied by a physician's note and will be deemed excused. Habitual unexcused tardiness may result in disciplinary action and will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

## **Attendance**

GREEN Charter Schools strongly believes that regular school attendance is an essential factor in student success.

Attendance is defined as the presence of the student in classes on days when school is in session. South Carolina law requires regular school attendance for every child who is at least five (5) years of age on or before the first day of September of a particular school year, until the child turns 17 years of age. There are several limited exceptions to this requirement which are found in **S.C. Code Ann. § 59-65-30**. Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and they face statutory penalties if they neglect that responsibility.

The school year in South Carolina consists of 180 days. State law mandates that students attend 85 days of each 90-day semester and 170 days of each 180-day school year in order to be considered for advancement to the next grade level. This means that only 10 absences are permitted for the entire 180-day school year (or five (5) absences for a 90-day semester class). The School must approve or disapprove absences whether lawful, unlawful, or a combination thereof (as described below), for purposes of awarding credit for the year.

Notes from parents/legal guardians will excuse a student's absence until they reach the maximum allowable absences. After that point, their absence will be excused only if the student presents an official medical note from the physician treating the child stating that the student had to be out the entire day for each day they missed. All medical notes should be submitted to the student's teacher.

## **Medical Homebound**

South Carolina Board of Education Regulation 43-241 states that students who cannot attend public school because of accident, illness, or pregnancy, even with the aid of transportation, are eligible for medical homebound or hospitalized instruction. A physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner must certify that the student is unable to attend school but may profit from the instruction given in the home or hospital. Any student participating in medical homebound instruction or hospitalized instruction must be approved by the District Superintendent or their designee on standardized forms provided by the South Carolina Department of Education.

GREEN Charter Schools recognizes the importance of ensuring educational continuity for students facing medical challenges and is committed to providing equitable educational opportunities for all students. The Medical Homebound Policy enables the School to support students' academic progress while accommodating their medical needs, ensuring a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

The following process must be followed when requesting medical homebound services:

### **Request Process:**

1. The parent/legal guardian must submit a formal written request for medical homebound services to the School administration, accompanied by supporting medical documentation.
2. Upon receiving the request, the School administration will review the documentation and assess the student's eligibility for medical homebound services.
3. Intermittent medical homebound requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriate duration and frequency of services.
4. Approval for medical homebound services must be made by the Executive Director or their designee.

### **Implementation of Services:**

1. If medical homebound services are approved, a plan for educational instruction will be developed in collaboration with the student, parent/guardian, healthcare providers, and School personnel.
2. For a student with an IEP, a certified special education teacher will be assigned to provide specialized instruction and services as outlined in the student's IEP.

### **Review and Monitoring:**

1. The effectiveness of medical homebound services will be periodically reviewed to assess the student's progress and determine the need for continued services.

2. The medical homebound plan will promptly address any changes to the student's medical condition or educational needs.

### **LEA Rights:**

1. The Local Education Agency (LEA) reserves the right to refuse a medical homebound request if it determines that the student does not meet the eligibility criteria or if additional supporting medical documentation is required.
2. The LEA may request additional medical documentation or evaluations to ensure the appropriateness of medical homebound services.

Medical Homebound is designed to support a student's absence from school due to a medical condition. Please contact the Director of Special Services or their designee for more information.

### *Legal References:*

*South Carolina Board of Education Regulation 43-241.*

*Medical Practice Act, Article 7.*

*Nurse Practice Act,*

## **Truancy**

It is the intention of GREEN Charter Schools to ensure that all of its students succeed academically. In order to do so, regular attendance at school is needed, expected, and required by law.

Truancy is defined as when a child misses too many days of school that are not approved. South Carolina law requires regular school attendance for every child who is at least five (5) years old on or before the first day of September of a particular school year, until the child turns 17 years of age.

As amended, **South Carolina Board of Education Regulation (SBE) Reg. 43-274** uses a three-tiered approach for defining the varying levels of truant behavior. The varying levels of truancy are important because there are requirements and limitations at each level for what should and can be done to address the student's truant behavior.

A child is deemed to be a truant, a habitual truant, or a chronic truant depending on the surrounding circumstances, as described below:

**A. Truant:** A child, at least six (6) but not yet 17 years old, who has accumulated three (3) consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five (5) unlawful absences. At this point, the parent/legal guardian will be contacted by the School via phone or email to request a conference with the student and parent/legal guardian to address the absences.

**B. Habitual Truant:** A child, at least 12 but not yet 17 years old who (1) fails to comply with the intervention plan developed by the School, the student, and the parent/legal guardian, and (2) accumulates two (2) or more additional unlawful absences. If there is no response to the above and 2 more days are missed (for a total of 5 consecutive days), the child is considered a habitual truant,

and the parent/legal guardian will be sent an email to request a conference with both the parent/legal guardian and the student to address the absences via the development of a Truancy Intervention Plan. The written intervention plan and documentation of non-compliance must be attached to the truancy petition asking for court intervention. It will be noted in the documentation that South Carolina law allows only 10 unexcused absences per academic year before advancement is at risk. After 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences, GREEN Charter Schools will drop the student from its enrollment on the 11<sup>th</sup> day.

**C. Chronic Truant:** A child, at least 12 but not yet 17 years old, who (1) has been through the school intervention process; (2) has reached the level of a habitual truant and has been referred to family court and placed under an order to attend school; and (3) continues to accumulate unlawful absences is deemed a chronic truant.

## **Written Excuses**

Any student who misses school must provide a written excuse, signed by their parent/legal guardian or doctor. This excuse note must be presented within two (2) school days of returning to school. The school administration will keep all excuses confidential.

The excuse note should include the dates of absence, the reason for the absence, the telephone number of parent/legal guardian or doctor, and the required signatures. An excuse improperly submitted according to the terms of this policy may cause the absence to be recorded as unexcused.

If a student fails to bring a valid excuse to school, they will automatically receive an unexcused absence. If a student brings a false (or forged) excuse, their teacher will refer the student to the school administrator for review, investigation, and consideration of disciplinary action.

## **Lawful Absences**

Lawful absences include, but are not limited to, absences due to:

a) Absences caused by a student's illness and whose attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others. These absences must be verified by a physician statement within two (2) days of the student's return to school.

b) Absences due to an illness or death in the student's immediate family verified by a statement from the parent/legal guardian within two (2) days of the student's return to school.

c) Absences due to a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith. Such notification must be given in writing to the school administrator.

d) Absences for students whose parents/legal guardians are experiencing a military deployment. Specifically, absences when the parent/legal guardian of a student is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be excused as long as the duration

of such absences are deemed reasonable in duration by the school administrator so that the student can visit with their parent/legal guardian.

e) Absences due to activities that are approved in advance in writing by the administration. This includes absences for extreme hardships. Such approval should be prearranged whenever possible.

## **Unlawful Absences**

Unlawful absences include but are not limited to:

a) Absences of a student without the knowledge of their parent/legal guardian.

b) Absences of a student without acceptable cause with the knowledge of his or her parent/legal guardian.

c) Suspension is not to be counted as an unlawful absence for truancy purposes.

All absences, whether excused or unexcused, will be approved or disallowed by the school principal or their designee. Absences in excess of the allowable absences specified for the course duration will result in the student losing course credit or promotion unless the student's non-attendance is caused by one of the lawful absences listed above. This determination shall be made by the Executive Director or their designee and may be appealed to the Board for final determination.

### *Legal references:*

*S.C. Charter Schools Act of 1996, § 59-40-10 et seq.*

- *§ 59-19-340 - Child development programs.*
- *§ 59-65-10 - Compulsory attendance age group in South Carolina includes children ages five through 17; parents may waive compulsory kindergarten attendance requirement.*

*State Board of Education Regulations: R-43-274 - Student Attendance: Lawful and Unlawful Absences.*

## **Early Dismissal**

Leaving school with a parent/legal guardian prior to the official end of the school day is considered an early dismissal. Any other person(s) attempting to pick up a child from the school must be prepared to show a photo ID and have been previously authorized by the parent/legal guardian to pick up the student as officially recorded in the student's file.

Elementary students must be in the classroom receiving instruction for a minimum of 3.5 hours (including lunch) to be counted present for the day. Students leaving before meeting this requirement will be considered absent for the entire school day.

Middle and high school students must be in each class receiving instruction for a minimum of 25 minutes to be counted as present for that class. If a student is in a class for less than one half of the

class time, the student will be marked absent for that period. Absences due to early dismissals may affect a student's ability to receive credit for a high school course. Too many absences/early dismissals may result in the student being required to repeat a course to receive credit.

If early dismissals become habitual, the parent/legal guardian must be prepared to show appropriate documentation verifying the necessity of an early dismissal at the time the student is released from school.

## **Student Fee Policy**

### **Statement**

The Board authorizes the establishment of a Student Fee Policy at GREEN Charter Schools as a supplemental revenue source. GREEN may charge nominal student fees to families each year for materials, technology, and other services, and for optional activities such as athletics and other extracurricular activities which are outside of the regular instructional program. These fees will be used to enhance resources for activities which are not covered by the basic educational program at GREEN and to offset the associated costs. GREEN believes that these activities are incredibly valuable and create a highly beneficial whole-school experience for our students. They enrich their education, build civic, social, physical, and collaboration skills, while also enhancing character development.

### **Scope**

A Technology Fee and School Dues will be due from each student at the beginning of each school year. Additionally, an Activity Fee and Athletics Fee will be due from each student participating in school-sponsored extracurricular clubs/activities or athletics at the time of registration or sign-up process for each activity. If there are tryouts for an athletic activity, fees will be due after the roster is determined and a student makes the team. Extracurricular activities are defined as activities that do not fall within the scope of the regular curriculum and carry no academic credit. Activity and Athletic Fee amounts will be based on the overall cost of the sport or extracurricular activity. All student fees will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be budget neutral, therefore ensuring financial responsibility and fiscal integrity. All student fees will be communicated to staff and families and made available upon request.

### **Fee Collection Schedule**

#### **A. Technology Fees and School Dues**

A Technology Fee and School Dues will be due from each student at each grade level each school year. These fees support the acquisition of essential materials and the maintenance and repair of devices due to accidental damage. Additional fees may be charged for the intentional or negligent destruction of any GREEN technology equipment. School dues will be nominal and will support certain celebrations and special events.

*Note: Students in grades K-2 will not be charged a Technology Fee.*

## **B. Athletics and Activities Fees**

An Athletics and Activities Fee will be due from students for each sport or activity in which they participate. These fees supplement the cost of equipment, materials, various dues, uniforms, transportation, and advisors or coaches associated with offering a robust athletic program and numerous other extracurricular activities at GREEN.

*Note: Special events such as dances, field trips, the prom, dress-down days, the purchase of yearbooks, and the like are not covered by student fees. GREEN also reserves the right to charge nominal fees for additional unfunded school needs or services. This includes, but is not limited to, school transportation services, shuttles, and special invitations or recognitions for students or staff.*

### **Payment**

Payment of fees shall be made directly to the front office of each campus which will track payments and issue receipts.

### **Waivers**

The Board does not wish to create a barrier for students to participate in extracurricular activities at GREEN. Families who are experiencing financial hardship may be eligible for a fee waiver and may apply for the waiver through the front office of their school.

### **Refunds**

Refunds for the payment of Athletic Fees and Activity Fees will not be made for any reason once the team or club roster has been determined. Additionally, refunds will not be made to students who:

1. Drop out of a sport or club before the season or club has ended.
2. Are suspended from a sport or club as a result of a rule violation.
3. Become academically ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities.
4. Are injured or ill and unable to compete or participate.
5. Unenroll from GREEN Charter Schools for any reason.

## **School Dress Code Guidelines**

School Dress Code Guidelines are provided to assist parents/legal guardians and shall apply to all students at GREEN. Deviation from the Dress Code will result in a call to the parent/legal guardian for a change of clothes and/or in possible disciplinary action for repeated offenses.

All clothing must be neat and clean without rips, tears, holes, or frayed edges. Students should be dressed and groomed in a manner to keep the focus on learning.

## **Attire for School Building:**

### **Shoes**

- Closed-toed shoes are required.
- Slippers, flip-flops, sandals, shoes with wheels, and open-toed shoes are prohibited.
- Tennis shoes are required for PE classes.

### **Bottoms**

- All bottoms must be khaki or navy blue. Shorts must be at least fingertip length when standing with arms at the sides.
- Skirts, skorts, shorts, capri pants, joggers, and regular pants are permitted.
- All bottoms must be worn at the waist and undergarments shall not be visible.
- Leggings, athletic wear, sweatpants, and overalls are prohibited.
- Bike shorts or leggings for under skirts or jumpers are recommended.
- Students in **grades K-5** may also wear tan or navy jumpers with the school logo over a navy blue, green, or white polo shirt.
- Students in **grades 9-12** may wear jeans in standard shades of blue denim with no rips, tears, holes, or frayed edges.

### **Tops**

- GREEN Charter Schools-issued or approved logo shirts are required.
- GREEN Charter Schools logo hoodies are permitted.
- Solid navy-blue vests, cardigans, sweaters, sweatshirts, and jackets are permitted.
- Any color long sleeve T-shirt may be worn under a short sleeve polo shirt during colder months.

### **Head Coverings and Hair**

- Hats are not allowed. Only religious head coverings are permissible.
- Hair color and hair style should not be distracting to the learning environment.

### **Jewelry and Accessories**

- All jewelry and accessories must be school appropriate. Spiked, oversized, or distracting or dangling items are prohibited.

## **Attire for Dress Down Days, Field Trips, and Other Events During School Hours:**

- Clothing worn on these days may not be revealing, expose undergarments, or display suggestive wording or illustrations.
- Leggings are not permitted unless worn under a dress or tunic-length top.

**Note:** GREEN Charter Schools-issued/approved branded apparel can be purchased through Owl Owtfitters at [www.owlowtfitters.com](http://www.owlowtfitters.com). If assistance is needed in paying for approved brand

apparel for uniform purposes, please reach out to [www.owlowtfitters.com](http://www.owlowtfitters.com) who will work with your school's PTO/PTA to assist with funding.

## Disciplinary Guidance

GREEN Charter Schools (GREEN) is committed to excellence without exception. Our parents, staff, and students accept the shared responsibility of our schoolwide Culture of Care. Part of our Culture of Care encompasses a shared commitment to speaking and acting in support of our pursuit of this high standard of excellence.

One of the galvanizing aspects of being a part of GREEN is that many of our employees are our parents as well. This simple organizational fact aligns very well with a foundational aspect of education law known as *in loco parentis*. Under this concept, our employees as school personnel assume some of the responsibility of the parent while in the educational setting. This guidance provides us with the freedom to care for our students as if they are our own. Additionally, it is widely accepted that all parents want their children to attend a school that shares the hope for their children's future and guides them in experiencing happiness and reaching their true potential. At GREEN, we embed this idea in all our structures and processes. A key example of this approach is embedded within our Youth Suicide Prevention Policy:

*“One of GREEN’s strategic goals is to cultivate and sustain safe, effective, and collaborative schools for its staff and students. This includes creating learning environments where students, staff, and families feel valued, comfortable, and supported. Each of our schools must intertwine emotional, social, behavioral, cultural, and academic safety across all facets of the GREEN community, our school structures, and expectations for all members of our learning community.”*

Simply put, everything we do must align with our Culture of Care. Our homework policy, our grading policy, and yes, our approach to student discipline must be instructive and supportive, allowing students to self-correct and improve their conduct, resulting in greater self-discipline and self-determination. At GREEN, this also means we are committed to meeting the various needs of all our students. Furthermore, this means that our approach to discipline allows students to make the positive changes necessary to make all of us at GREEN happier and more successful. Our approach focuses on the development of identity, or identity formation, as all, the development of deeper empathy, and healthy decision-making is all part of maturing students are not who they are going to become. Their intrinsic value, their personal responsibility and defining oneself. Growing up is a process, and we know that.

**The basic tenets of GREEN’s disciplinary approach include the following:**

- All discipline is instructive and developmentally appropriate, allowing students to self-correct first.
- Our approach is progressive, in that students may receive sanctions or restrictions if they are unable to make the necessary changes to their conduct.
- GREEN’s central focus with all discipline is to inform and teach expectations.

- Everyone deserves an explanation as to why we have established expectations or why a consequence was issued.
- All disciplinary matters must be confidential and pertinent ONLY to the student, family, and staff involved.
- GREEN recognizes that caring and appropriate attachments between students and staff members is critical in developing trust.
- These healthy relationships create shared expectations and raise students' expectations of themselves and instill in them a healthy desire to please.
- Preservation of the sanctity of our learning environments is the goal of all our disciplinary efforts. No one may detract from the learning of others. Therefore, GREEN will always address any concern impacting the learning environment.

### **GREEN's entire school community recognizes the imperative to:**

- Maximize all structures and transitions within our school day.
- Establish expectations across all settings.
- Create ownership of learning and personal responsibility (i.e., "JOIN UP").
- Stimulate creativity, innovation, and motivation to learn.
- Establish a continuum and a compendium of whole school, small group, and individual strategies.
- Teach developmentally appropriate and effective decision-making as well as an awareness of relative value.
- Teach, acknowledge, and monitor appropriate behavior and respond to inappropriate behavior.
- Establish the eight habits of highly effective students. This is an ideal state for our students to aspire to become. Taken together with the GREEN graduate profile, it illuminates our expectations for our students and the habits they can develop to positively impact the world for the better.
- All students and staff will develop their personal mission statement. This process allows each member of our learning community to establish the expectations and aspirations they have for themselves.

### **Our stakeholders in the context of discipline:**

Parents are the primary educators and are first consulted to gain insight about their child. When discipline escalates, parents are notified, and next steps are established together. All incidences are documented, and whenever possible, parents need to be contacted PRIOR to the close of school/carlina. Parents should not be blindsided by their upset child. If we call ahead, they can be prepared to address their child's concern(s). This will avoid the inevitable call from an upset parent seeking to understand what took place.

Students can and should self-govern. They will be instructed in the habits of successful students and develop a personal mission statement. When discipline matters occur, students will be listened to, and their perspective will be summarized and clarified back to them to ensure a shared understanding. Attempts will be made to empathize, so they feel more connected with and

understood. Then, a plan to address any concern will be developed, including formal notification of any restriction from school.

GREEN Charter Schools has simplified behavioral concerns into three buckets of concern. This includes low-level concerns, negotiable concerns, and nonnegotiable serious concerns. Each of these buckets include the provision of hearing and notice to any student whose behavior is addressed. This ensures we protect procedural safeguards but also aligns with our foundational concept of student voice. It is important to note that each behavior may be escalated if the seriousness identified through investigation warrants it. Conversely, it could be deescalated if through investigation the concern has diminished.

***GREEN Charter Schools will be investigating an effective Peer Mediation Program to be implemented at all our schools. Peer Mediation is a critical step in making sure our students take responsibility for solving their problems and listening to one another in times of conflict.***

#### **TEACHER INTERVENTIONS FOR MINOR INFRACTIONS:**

Minor infractions should typically be addressed by the classroom teacher. They include verbal redirection, verbal warning, parent communication via phone call initially and in email later as needed. Additional efforts include having lunch with the student to review concerns and with parent permission, staying after school.

#### ***BUCKET NUMBER ONE:***

**Minor Infractions:** These behaviors are small but must be addressed. These behaviors are critical to address as they are small violations of our expectations and if left unaddressed could escalate or at least diminish our learning environment. They include: Dress code or uniform violations, tardy to school or class, inappropriate language, inappropriate use of cell phones, misuse of hall passes or transitions, violating personal space/boundaries, playful horseplay, etc.

#### ***BUCKET NUMBER TWO:***

**Negotiable Concerns:** These are behaviors that need to be addressed and need to be changed. The following behaviors are negotiable, but important. They include: Public displays of affection, insubordination, disrespectful/directed foul language, academic dishonesty, racial slurs, hateful speech, bullying and/or cyber bullying, threats between students, failure to follow directions, repeated minor offenses, gossip/spreading false information, inappropriate use of technology, any act that disrupts the learning environment, etc.

#### ***BUCKET NUMBER THREE:***

**Non-negotiable Concerns:** These behaviors are serious in nature and could result in suspension and consideration of expulsion. They include: Sexual assault/abuse, an arrestable offense, possession of

a weapon, possession of drugs, dealing drugs, assault or fighting, property destruction/vandalism, repeated negotiable offenses, gangs or organized crime, hacking school software or systems, threats, and/or intent to disrupt school, etc.

### **Full Range of Administrative Consequences:**

- After-School Detention
- Lunch Detention
- In-School Suspension
- Out-of-School Suspension
- Consideration of Expulsion

## **Student Code of Conduct**

At GREEN, we believe in a Culture of Care. We continuously remind our students that their behavior, whether on campus or off, reflects on both them and on our School. It is our goal to provide close communication with parents/legal guardians at the onset of discipline problems, so that together we can find early solutions for any student facing behavioral issues.

### **Classroom Behavior**

At GREEN, our faculty and staff work together with our students to encourage a successful and cooperative learning environment. In the classroom, we ask students to model the following behavior:

- Respect themselves and others
- Follow directions the first time
- Be prepared for each class
- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Transition quickly and quietly

Classroom teachers will address general classroom disruptions by taking appropriate in-class disciplinary actions. Should misbehavior continue or interrupt the instructional environment, the teacher may create a behavior agreement between the student and the teacher and/or hold a parent/legal guardian conference prior to referring the issue to the School administration. If disruptive actions are repetitive or serious in nature, an immediate referral will be made to the administration.

The following rules apply to all students while on GREEN property:

- Students shall always model good behavior while on any part of campus.
- Students are not permitted outside or in the gym during class periods unless accompanied by a teacher or in the possession of a hall pass issued by a staff member.

## **Behavior Outside the Classroom**

We expect GREEN students to model good behavior outside of the classroom whether on GREEN property or when participating in or attending GREEN-supported events off campus.

### **Guidelines for Student Conduct at GREEN:**

- A. Federal and state laws grant individuals reasonable expectations of privacy, and freedom from unreasonable search and seizure of property. Such guarantees are limited and must be balanced against the School's responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all its students. Students may be subject to the search of person or property if a reasonable suspicion exists that the student may have violated the Student Code of Conduct and/or state or federal law. Student lockers and other storage areas (including, but not limited to, motor vehicles, book bags, pocketbooks, notebooks, pockets, etc.) may be searched at any time.
- B. Students will be held responsible for having prohibited items in their personal control, including, but not limited to, items located in vehicles, backpacks, clothing, or with items belonging to someone else.
- C. Technology-based infractions may result in a suspension of network privileges and/or Internet access. Alternative instructional materials may be provided.
- D. Cyberstalking, or engaging in conduct which communicates, or causes to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person, and serving no legitimate purpose, is strictly prohibited and subject to immediate disciplinary action.
- E. Cyberbullying, or the willful and repeated harassment and intimidation of a person through the use of digital technologies, including, but not limited to, email, blogs, social websites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, chat rooms, instant and text messaging, and cell phone technologies) is also strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary action.
- F. Students may not use school equipment or networks to engage in cyberbullying or cyberstalking, including, but not limited to, the posting of harassing messages on the internet, any social networking sites, or other digital technologies, which may include social cruelty, direct threats, or other language or expressions unprotected by law. Cyberbullying or cyberstalking may also include breaking into another person's account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation or relationships. Any form of cyberstalking and cyberbullying are strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary action.

## **Cell Phones/Electronic Devices**

Students are prohibited from using cell phones/personal electronic devices in any capacity or for any purpose during designated school hours without prior teacher or administration approval. This includes, but is not limited to, during clubs, tutoring, and after-school care.

Failure to follow cell phone procedures may result in confiscation of the cell phone. Parents may retrieve the phone from the administrator who confiscated it or from the main office at the end of the day. This same policy applies to smart watches.

GREEN will not be held responsible for the theft, loss, or damage to cell phones or other electronic devices brought onto its property.

## **GREEN Charter Schools Health Policies**

GREEN recognizes that healthy students learn better. The School employs a licensed CPR-certified nurse at each of its campuses to enhance the educational process by removing health-related barriers to learning while optimizing the level of wellness. GREEN Charter Schools Nurses engage in an active partnership with students, parents/legal guardians, school staff, and local community resources. As part of this partnership, parents/legal guardians should report any illness or condition that a student has that may require medical support during the school day.

### **Visits to the Health Room**

*Note: Students must have a completed Consent to Treat form on file at the beginning of each school year to receive health room services.*

Students must obtain a pass from a teacher to visit the Health Room on campus. If a student is injured or becomes sick at school, the student will be assessed and evaluated by the School Nurse. Students suffering from the following illnesses will be sent home for their own well-being and for the health of our students and staff:

- Active vomiting or diarrhea;
- A fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or above;
- Any condition that may be contagious; or
- An injury/illness that requires further evaluation by a physician.

### **Contacting Parents/Legal Guardians**

If it is determined that the student must be sent home for health reasons, their parent/legal guardian will be contacted to pick up the student. It is therefore essential that GREEN have current contact information for all students so that we may reach parents/legal guardians when necessary. If a student has an emergency health situation and needs immediate care that cannot be provided on campus, the emergency contacts for that student will be called if we cannot reach a parent/legal guardian first.

### **Emergency Medical Services**

Neither GREEN Charter Schools nor its personnel assume any financial responsibility for treatment or transportation costs incurred should a student require Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for any emergency that cannot be treated at the school.

## **Illness Protocol**

Parents/Legal Guardians must follow the following protocol before a student may return to school:

- Students must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Fever is defined as a temperature of 100.4 or greater.
- Students must be diarrhea-free for 24 hours without the use of diarrhea-suppressing medication. Diarrhea is defined as three or more episodes of loose stools in a 24-hour period.
- Students must remain out of school for 24 hours from the last vomiting occurrence and have eaten 1-2 meals without vomiting before returning to school.

## **Immunization Requirements**

According to South Carolina state law, a child cannot be admitted to any school without a valid SC Certificate of Immunization or a medical, religious, or special exemption at the time of school entrance. Students entering from another South Carolina school must submit an immunization record at registration. Students entering from out-of-state may obtain a special exemption and have thirty (30) days to obtain a valid SC Certificate of Immunization record from a healthcare provider or from the Health Department. Students that do not meet immunization requirements will not be allowed to remain in school.

## **Student Medication Policy**

Whenever possible, medication should be given before or after school so that the parent/legal guardian can administer it. All medication required to be given at school must be delivered to the School Nurse or their designee by the student's parent/legal guardian or a previously designated adult. Under SC Law, students may not carry any medication on their person without the joint written permission of their physician, parent/legal guardian, and the School allowing the student to self-administer and self-monitor. All medication will be maintained in the Health Room. Medication needed on field trips is also covered by this policy and must be given to and administered by an employee of GREEN Charter Schools designated by the school principal. Violations of this policy are subject to school disciplinary action.

**To ensure the safety of students, the following requirements apply:**

- All prescription medication must have written parent/legal guardian and physician authorization before it can be administered at school. Prescription medication authorizations must be completed on or after July 1 to be considered for the upcoming school year.
- All prescription medication will be administered as labeled and Over the Counter (OTC) medication doses may not exceed package directions.
- All prescription medication must be brought to school by a parent/legal guardian, or designated person over 18 years of age and given directly to the School Nurse or designated school personnel.

- All prescription medications must be received by the School in the original container with the pharmacy label containing the student's name, name of the medication, dose, and amount clearly visible on the bottle/container.
- OTC medication provided by the parent/legal guardian must be in a new unopened container, clearly labeled with the student's name, and accompanied by a signed GREEN Charter Schools Authorization for Non-Prescription Medication at School.
- OTC medications that are to be given daily for more than one (1) week must have a doctor's order.
- Parents/legal guardians are responsible for knowing the expiration date of any medication brought to school and replacing the medication before the expiration date. **GREEN School Nurses will not administer expired medication.** (For example, if the medication expiration date is 10/25, the last date the nurse will administer the medication is 09/30/25 unless a specific date of expiration is indicated on the medication.)
- Parents/legal guardians are responsible for informing the school of any changes in prescription medications or doses. A new GREEN Charter Schools Prescription Authorization form must be completed, and a newly labeled pharmacy container must be provided by the parent/legal guardian.
- Any newly prescribed medications or changes in dosage must be initiated at home for at least two to three days so the parent/legal guardian can monitor the student for adverse reactions.
- Medication authorization forms are only valid for the current school year and must be renewed each school year.
- School Nurses may only administer medications that are FDA approved.
- No medication containing Aspirin will be given at School without a doctor's authorization. This includes, but is not limited to, Pepto Bismol, Excedrin, and certain OTC medications.
- If a student forgets to take a morning dose of medication, GREEN School Nurses are prohibited from administering that dose at school. Parents/legal guardians may come to the Health Room to give the missed dose once the parent has brought the medication to school.
- If there is sufficient evidence that unsupervised self-monitoring or self-medicating would seriously jeopardize the safety of the student or others (e.g., stimulants, pain relief medication, anti-depressants), the School may refuse to allow the student to carry the medication. Medications approved for self-administering are asthma inhalers, insulin for diabetic students, and Epi-Pens for severe allergic reactions.
- Unused medication will be securely disposed of by the School unless picked up within one (1) week of being discontinued.
- **Any medications not picked up by a parent/legal guardian by the last day of school will be destroyed.**

GREEN and its employees reserve the right to refuse to honor medication requests that are inconsistent with professional standards, accepted prescribing limits (e.g., manufacturer's guidelines, Physician's Desk Reference), deemed unsafe for the school setting, and/or other legitimate reason(s). A licensed nurse may refuse to administer any medication that, based upon the nurse's individual assessment and professional judgment, has the potential to be harmful, dangerous, or inappropriate. If this occurs, alternatives for meeting the student's needs will be discussed with the parent/legal guardian.

## **Safe Access to Vital Epinephrine (SAVE) Act**

The Safe Access to Vital Epinephrine (SAVE) Act, recently approved by the South Carolina Legislature, allows school districts to store supplies of epinephrine auto-injectors for identified school staff to use in emergencies for students with no known history of allergic or anaphylactic reactions.

Parents/legal guardians of students with known allergies should continue to provide Epi-pens for their children. These students will need to submit an individual emergency plan completed by the student's health care provider to the school nurse.

Every GREEN school has a school nurse and first responders who are trained in Epi-pen administration in the case of allergic reactions.

## **Communicable Diseases**

To protect our school community from contagious illnesses, students or staff infected with certain diseases are not permitted to attend school by law while contagious. Parents/legal guardians of students with a communicable or contagious disease, including blood-borne diseases, should notify the school so that others who may have been exposed to the disease can be alerted. Students or staff who reveal that they have contracted a communicable disease will have their status safeguarded in accordance with federal and state statutes dealing with confidentiality, and their civil rights will be respected.

## **Head Lice**

If a student is discovered to have head lice while at school, the following protocol will be observed:

- The parent/legal guardian will be notified, and the student will be sent home.
- The student must be treated for head lice before returning to school. Parents/legal guardians must notify the school that the student has been successfully treated.
- Before the student can be allowed back into school, the school nurse must check the student's head with the parent/legal guardian present to ensure there are no live lice or excessive nits present.
- If necessary, students in an entire classroom may be checked for lice.
- Students experiencing chronic problems with lice will be checked frequently to avoid spreading them to others.

## **Illness/Injury: PE and Recess Excuses**

If a student is to be excused or limited for three (3) or more consecutive days from participation in school activities, they are required to bring a statement signed by a physician. Students who are unable to participate in Physical Education (PE) or recess or who received stitches/staples or required the use of assistive devices (e.g., crutches, cast, cane, air cast, wheelchair), are required to bring a physician's note detailing the following:

1. Medical/Injury diagnosis
2. Date student may return to school
3. Activity restrictions

4. Date of return to full activity
5. Statement of student's need to use crutches, splints, etc. and for how long, if applicable
6. Date student may resume participation in sport practices and games

*Legal References:*

*SC Code of Laws §§ 44-1-140, 44-29-180, 44-29-200; § 63-13-180.*

*SC Code of Regulations Chapter 61-20 and Chapter 114, Article 5.*

## **Youth Suicide Prevention and Intervention Policy**

### **Overview**

One of GREEN's strategic goals is to cultivate and sustain safe, effective, and collaborative schools for its staff and students. This includes creating learning environments where students, staff and families feel valued, comfortable, and supported. Each of our schools must connect emotional, social, behavioral, cultural, and academic safety across all facets of the GREEN community, school structures, and school expectations for all members of its learning community.

In support of these goals, GREEN is committed to nurturing a culture of emotional safety where students feel a sense of belonging and are comfortable taking academic risks. Students who feel accepted, respected, included, supported, and understood by other members of their school community perform better academically and have greater motivation to learn. These students also experience fewer behavioral issues and higher social and emotional development. Creating healthy and supportive connections within a school community strengthens attachment and is a significant factor in student achievement, mental health, and emotional well-being.

Nationally, suicide is one of the leading causes of death among high school students. There has been a consistent trend in the past decade of increased suicide attempts among teens across different demographic groups. The data also indicates that students who experience mental health and substance abuse issues are more likely to complete treatment when interventions are offered in the school setting.

GREEN is in a unique position to develop positive school climates, including whole school, small group, and student-specific strategies to help students who may experience suicidal ideation or engage in suicidal behavior. We reaffirm our collective belief that student safety is a vital foundation of successful schools and student success.

All school personnel and students are asked to assist in creating a Culture of Care in which students feel comfortable seeking help for themselves or friends. Students are encouraged to tell any staff member if they or a friend are feeling suicidal or need help. While confidentiality and privacy are important, students should know that when there is risk of suicide, safety comes first. We strongly encourage anyone in need of help to reach out to the following resources for support:

## Important Resources

- ◆ **Mental Health America of Greenville County: (864) 271-8888 or Text Crisis Line at 839863 (TEXTME)**
- ◆ **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 parentheses (TALK)**
- ◆ [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- ◆ **The Trevor Lifeline: 1-866-488-7386 [www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now](http://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now)**

## Plan Components

Preventing and responding to suicidal behavior among students is a complex task requiring collaboration between school, home, and community resources. GREEN's Youth Suicide Prevention and Intervention Plan consists of policy guidelines that shall be issued and periodically revised by the Executive Director or their designee. The Plan is comprised of the following elements:

- ◆ **Prevention Awareness**  
Risk factors, warning signs, screening, and identification.
- ◆ **Intervention and Collaboration**  
Development of proactive intervention and collaboration with parents, students, community mental health resources, and other stakeholders to develop, expand, and assess protocols and procedures, and make essential referrals.
- ◆ **Response**  
An organized response in the aftermath of a suicide to facilitate the healing of individuals from the grief and stress of suicide loss and/or to mitigate other negative effects of exposure to suicide.
- ◆ **Training of Staff and Students**  
Training shall include but not be limited to: Prevention awareness (risk factors, warning signs), identification, reporting, interventions, referrals, data collection, and evaluation of efforts, outcomes, and success.
- ◆ **Evaluation and Data Collection**  
Analyze and monitor systemic and individual assistance provided to at-risk students.

## Implementation Responsibility

Everyone in the GREEN community is needed to implement the Youth Suicide Prevention and Intervention Plan, including educators, staff, students, parents/legal guardians, and volunteers. At

each school, students, parents/legal guardians, staff, and volunteers shall be provided with methods to report concerns about students.

The Executive Director or their designee shall be responsible for the Network-wide coordination and development of the Youth Suicide Prevention and Intervention Plan, including periodic revision of the Guidelines portion of the plan.

The school principal or their designee will be responsible for coordinating and implementing the Plan at each school. The school psychologist or other appropriate individual in each building will also act as the point of contact in each school for information relating to suicide prevention and intervention. All staff members are expected to report students they believe to be at risk of suicide or self-harm to the principal or their designee.

## **Student Grievance Policy**

### **Complaint Process**

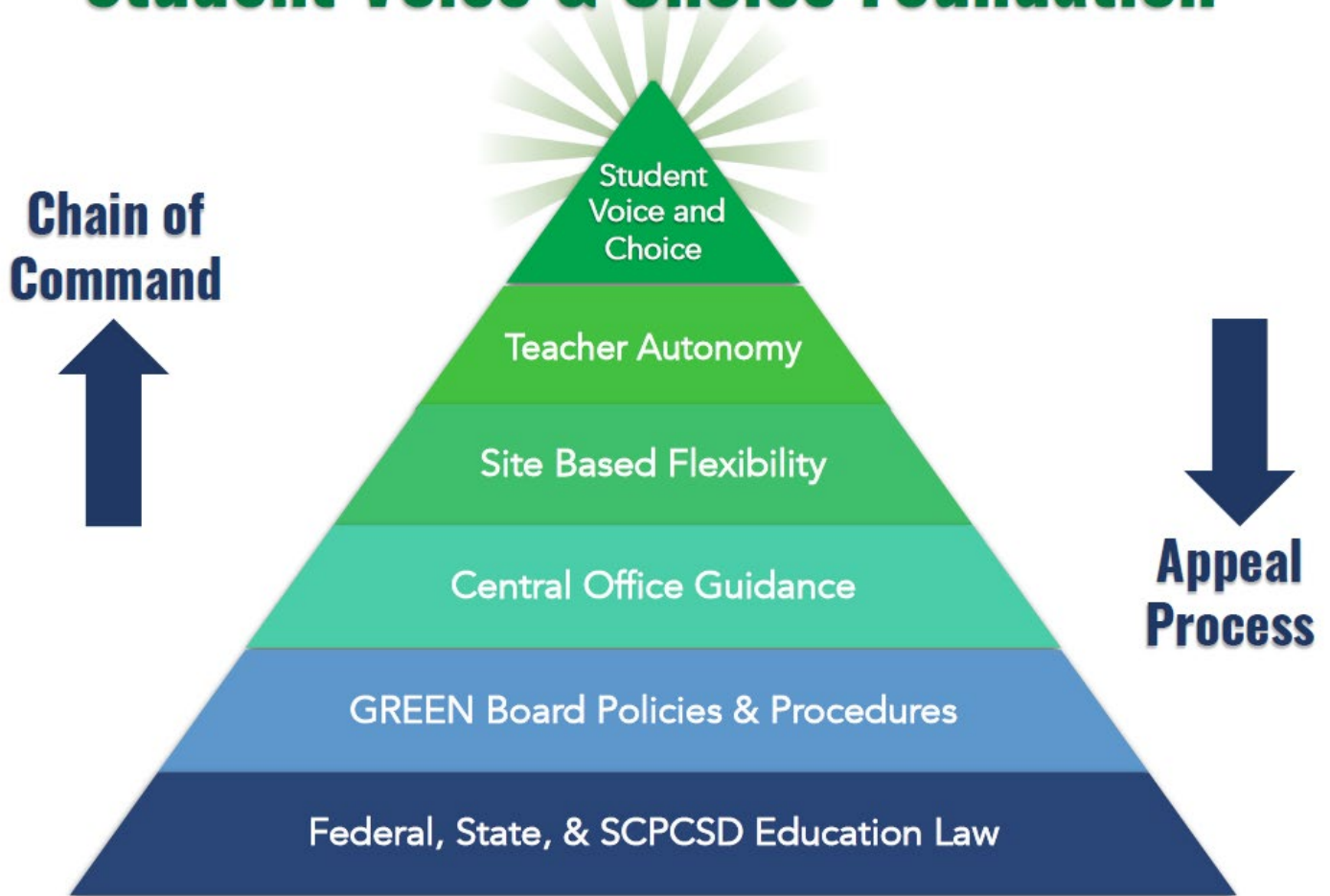
GREEN prides itself on the quality of the teaching and care provided to its students. All members of the School community should contribute to a respectful and inclusive learning environment. Staff, students, and/or parents/legal guardians may raise concerns about any issues that could affect a student's well-being and/or academic performance and work together to resolve them. In rare cases where an issue cannot be resolved informally, an official written complaint can be registered by a parent/legal guardian with the School's administration. The School will keep all grievance matters confidential to the extent permitted by law.

Complaints will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the Governance Committee. Exceptions are complaints that concern Governing Board actions or operations.

The proper channeling of complaints concerning instruction, discipline, or learning materials is as follows:

1. Teachers
2. Principals
3. Executive Director
4. Governing Board

# Student Voice & Choice Foundation



## **Tobacco-Free Campuses and Facilities**

GREEN is a tobacco-free campus. The use or supply of any tobacco product or alternative nicotine product by any person on any GREEN property is strictly prohibited. This policy applies to staff, students, and campus visitors. This prohibition applies to all school buildings, school facilities, campuses, school vehicles, and any other school property owned or operated by the School. This policy also prohibits the use of any tobacco product or alternative nicotine product at school-related or school-sanctioned events whether on or off school property. This policy also prohibits the use of any type of electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) as well as any form of smokeless tobacco or vaping product.

Additionally, the Youth Access to Tobacco Prevention Act of 2006 states that youth under the age of 18 may not purchase, attempt to purchase, possess, or attempt to possess a tobacco product or an alternative nicotine product or present or offer proof of age that is false or fraudulent for the purpose of purchasing or possessing a tobacco product or an alternative nicotine product.

Violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as to school disciplinary action.

### *Legal References:*

*United States Code of Laws, as amended: Pro-Children Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C.A. Section 7181, et seq. § 16-17-490 - Contributing to the delinquency of a minor.*

*§ 16-17-500 - Youth Access to Tobacco Prevention Act of 2006; unlawful to supply tobacco or alternative nicotine products to minors.*

*S.C. Charter Schools Act of 1996, § 59-40-10, et seq.*

*S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended, § 59-67-150 - Smoking on school bus prohibited.*

## **Field Trips**

The GREEN Board of Directors recognizes the educational value of school-supported field trips when used in a manner intended to enhance teaching and learning and as a means of enriching curriculum and providing instructional experiences.

### **Definition**

For purposes of this policy, a field trip is defined as any school-supported learning excursion by a group of students away from the school premises, under the supervision of staff, whether during the regularly scheduled school year or during vacation periods. All field trips are always extracurricular and not a part of an approved course of study. Field trips are conducted for the purpose of offering an educational experience not available in the classroom or school. Participation in such trips is entirely voluntary. No extra credit will be awarded for participation and there shall be no loss of credit for not attending a field trip.

All GREEN field trips must follow the procedures described in the policy below.

## Types of Field Trips

GREEN Charter Schools recognizes the following types of field trips:

### 1. School-Supported Educational Field Trips

School-supported educational field trips should be an extension of the classroom learning experience. Pre-teaching and thoughtful planning should always be part of any given field trip. This category of trips also includes competitive/performance field trips by academic, athletic (excluding regularly scheduled interscholastic athletic contests), and performing arts teams. These include overnight field trips.

### 2. School-Supported Recreational Field Trips

School supported recreational field trips such as class trips are offered on a voluntary basis and are designed as a social and/or recreational activity. Participation may be limited to the members of the class or sponsoring club for which it was designed. These include overnight field trips.

### Trips Unrelated to GREEN

The GREEN Board of Directors assumes no liability or responsibility for non-school supported trips/tours. Individuals who plan trips/tours that are not school supported must notify parents/legal guardians and students that the trip is not associated with GREEN Charter Schools. The trip planners must clearly indicate in writing that they are serving as private agents or private individuals. The preparation for non-school supported trips shall not take place during school hours. Additionally, no school materials or school branding may be used in reference to such trips/tours.

## Approval of Field Trips

All school-supported field trips require **prior written administrative approval**. All requests must specify a clear purpose for the field trip and, in the case of school supported educational field trips, the relationship of the trip to the class curriculum. Additionally, requests must include the dates of the trip, the place(s) to be visited, the method of transportation, the costs of the trip, provisions for safety, and details regarding supervision (including the names of any supervising adults).

- All **in-state field trips** require the written approval of the **school leader at least 30 days** in advance of the departure date.
- All **out-of-state field trips** require the written approval of the **Executive Director or their designee at least 60 days** in advance of the departure date.
- All trips involving **travel outside the United States** require the written approval of the **Executive Director and the Board Chair at least 90 days** in advance of the departure date.

The approval of all field trips shall be conditional. Approval may be revoked at any time by the Executive Director or their designee or by the school leader if a change in circumstances, whether man-made or natural, warrant cancellation in the interest of the safety of students and staff. It is the responsibility of parents/legal guardians to obtain trip cancellation insurance. GREEN Charter

Schools is not responsible for refunding students for any cancelled trips or for pursuing reimbursement from travel agents or trip insurance carriers under any circumstances.

## **Guidelines**

- A. All field trips shall originate and terminate at a location approved by the school principal.
- B. Written approval from the parent/legal guardian is required for participation in all field trips by the timely submission of the Field Trip Permission Form.
- C. Students must be accompanied on each field trip by GREEN teachers and/or certified staff who must exercise reasonable care for students' conduct and safety.
- D. The school principal or their designee is responsible for developing a plan for the administration of medication or the provision of accommodation in accordance with applicable law for any student requiring such assistance on the trip. Applicable Medication Administration Permission Forms must be completed by the parent/legal guardian prior to the trip period.
- E. Any field trips involving swimming or water access must receive special written approval from the Executive Director or their designee.
- F. There shall be a ratio of one chaperone per ten (10) students for each field trip, unless otherwise determined by the principal in writing.
- G. The School reserves the right to deny the participation of any student on any field trip based upon a record of inappropriate behavior and/or poor attendance.
- H. The acceptance of any gratuities, discounts, and/or gifts for personal use resulting from field trips is discouraged.

## **Transportation**

The use of privately owned or leased vehicles of any type to transport students to and from field trips is strictly prohibited. Staff, parents/legal guardians, or volunteers who use their own vehicle in such circumstances risk being held personally liable for any injury sustained by the student(s) while in the vehicle.

## **Fundraising for Field Trips**

Only those fundraising activities which adhere to GREEN policy and are approved in advance in writing by the Executive Director or their designee may be used to defray the costs of a school-supported field trip.

## **Access to Field Trips**

- Students may be assessed for the cost of the field trip, including transportation, lodging, meals, and any additional trip-associated fees. However, school-supported educational field trips which involve a fee of any kind will be open to every student. No student shall be denied the right to participate in a field trip because they are unable to pay. The principal is responsible for determining the costs associated with the trip and must create plans for assisting students who lack funds to participate.
- No student shall be denied the right to participate in a field trip due to a disability. The principal is responsible for ensuring equal accessibility in all aspects of the trip for all students.

## Non-Attendance

- Parents/legal guardians may deny the request for their student to participate in a field trip and arrangements will be made for the student to remain at school on the day(s) of the trip.

## Field Trip Student Code of Conduct

The following rules apply to all school supported field trips:

- Students must abide by the GREEN Code of Conduct while on the trip.
- Students must follow the GREEN Dress Code while on the trip unless otherwise specified.

## Field Trip Chaperones

**ALL INDIVIDUALS MUST RECEIVE SCHOOL APPROVAL PRIOR TO VOLUNTEERING AT ANY GREEN CAMPUS OR FOR ANY GREEN-SUPPORTED EVENT, WHETHER ON OR OFF CAMPUS. ANY "LEVEL 2" FUNCTION THAT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN WILL REQUIRE A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK WHICH CAN TAKE UP TO TWO WEEKS TO PROCESS. INTERESTED VOLUNTEERS SHOULD THEREFORE PLAN ACCORDINGLY.**

To ensure the safety of our students, GREEN Charter Schools requires additional security checks for school volunteers. All volunteers must submit the **GREEN Charter Schools Volunteer Application** which is available on our website and at each campus. They must then receive clearance from the school before volunteering at any GREEN campus or chaperoning any GREEN field trip.

All volunteers at GREEN are identified by two different categories: **Level 1** or **Level 2**.

**All field trip chaperones must be cleared as Level 2 volunteers by the School to participate in the trip, regardless of the destination.**

**Level 1:** This level requires the presence and supervision of a GREEN employee at all times. Level 1 volunteers must have a National Sex Offender Registry check conducted every time they volunteer at the school. Level 1 volunteers may volunteer in classrooms and participate in school activities on campus if GREEN staff members are present. Level 1 volunteers must be 18 years of age or older.

**Level 2:** This level allows volunteers to interact with students without a GREEN employee present. Level 2 volunteers must have a National Sex Offender Registry check conducted every time they volunteer at the school. Additionally, a State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) criminal background check will be conducted which will be kept on file by the school for one (1) year. Parents/legal guardian must notify the school if any arrest occurs during that period. Level 2 volunteers must be 21 years of age or older.

Parents/legal guardians may be approved as chaperones if their Level 2 SLED background check reveals: Arrests where criminal charges were dropped or dismissed as evidenced by an expungement order or an entry of nolle prosequi; a single misdemeanor; minor traffic violations, or convictions for which a full pardon has been granted. **The final decision as to whether a parent/legal guardian may chaperone a field trip rests with the Executive Director or their designee.**

The selection of volunteers and chaperones for field trips is at the discretion of the teacher/school administration. Other criteria in addition to clean background checks may be considered when selecting chaperones, such as frequency of previously attended field trips, parent/legal guardian conduct, and availability/scheduling. GREEN Charter Schools reserves the right to deny chaperones participation in any field trip at any time.

Chaperones must exercise mature judgment when supervising children and shall respect each student's rights and privacy. It is essential that confidentiality is maintained, and that student/parent/legal guardian contact information is not shared. Chaperones should discuss any concerns directly and exclusively with the supervising teacher/staff.

## **6000 INSTRUCTION**

### **Tutoring**

It is the policy of GREEN Charter Schools that its teachers are prohibited from providing private paid tutoring services to any GREEN students, whether they are in their class or not, and regardless of whether compensation is involved. This policy is intended to prevent conflicts of interest and ensure that all students are evaluated fairly and impartially.

### **Curriculum Development**

Curriculum is a standards-based sequence of planned experiences where students practice and achieve proficiency in content in applied learning skills. As used in this Manual, curriculum is defined as the process, attitudes, skills, and knowledge that is taught and learned at the appropriate levels. Curriculum is the central guide for all educators as to what is essential for teaching and learning, so that every student has access to rigorous academic experiences.

Planning of the curriculum takes place in five (5) general phases which include framing, lesson planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. These stages include proper definition of goals, measurability of the learning objectives, and valid assessments.

GREEN Charter Schools recognizes the need and value of a systematic and ongoing program of curriculum review. The School encourages and supports its professional staff in its efforts to identify and review new curricular ideas, develop and improve existing programs, and evaluate all instructional programs. The Director of Teaching and Learning is responsible for the oversight of a continuous curriculum development and implementation process. Curriculum writing will be continuous, and full reviews will take place across regular cycles.

### **Curriculum Research**

The School requires that all curriculum developed and/or adopted by GREEN be based on current research relative to how students learn most effectively. Resources to be consulted include, but are not limited to, the School's charter, local or area universities, the SCDE, the Association of Curriculum Development (ACSD), and similar national, state and/or local curriculum organizations. Every effort will be made to ensure that the School's curriculum is current and based on sound

educational research findings. GREEN’s curriculum shall fulfill the vision and mission of the School and at its core should be STEM and Renewable Energy focused.

## **Curriculum Map**

The Director of Teaching and Learning or their designee will ensure that a current year-at-a-glance and/or curriculum map identifying the instructional objectives to be met at each grade level exists and is followed accordingly. The curriculum map will be updated as necessary, and teachers and students will have access to it and to other tools/resources that accompany the curriculum.

## **Health and Safety Instruction: Erin's Law and Gavin's Law**

At GREEN Charter Schools, we prioritize the safety and well-being of our students in concert with the laws of South Carolina. In 2014, the State of South Carolina passed Act 293, known as “Erin’s Law,” as part of health and safety education for its public schools. The purpose of Erin’s Law is to ensure all students receive preventive instruction during the academic school year, so they know how to stay safe from and how to report any incidents of sexual assault.

The South Carolina Department of Education created instructional units based on Erin’s Law in support of new legislation that amended the Comprehensive Health Education Act. South Carolina Code of Laws Section 59-32-20 (B) was amended to read that the State Board of Education through the South Carolina Department of Education “shall select or develop instructional units in sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention, with separate units appropriate for each age level from four-year-old kindergarten through twelfth grade.”

In 2023, the State of South Carolina passed Act 54 of 2023 known as “Gavin’s Law.” The legislation addresses acts that involve “threaten(ing) to release, exhibit, or distribute a private image of another in order to compel or attempt to compel the victim to do any act or refrain from doing any act against” that person’s will. Convictions can be punished by up to 20 years in prison if the victim was a child or a vulnerable adult, and up to five (5) years for the first conviction if the victim is an adult.

Gavin’s Law also requires that schools collaborate with the State Department of Education, the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, and the Attorney General’s office to implement a policy to educate and notify students of the law, which includes adequate notice to students, parents/legal guardians, the public, and school personnel of the law and the dangers of sexual extortion. The Department of Education recommends Gavin’s Law be taught as part of the Erin’s Law curriculum with age-appropriate instruction on the dangers and consequences of sexual extortion.

In line with our commitment to the safety and well-being of our students, GREEN Charter Schools has implemented the following policies, as required by Erin's Law, S.C. Code Section 59-32-20 and 59-32-30(G), and Gavin's Law, S.C. Code Section 16-15-430, to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students:

1. Prevention Education:

- **Age-Appropriate Curriculum:** We will incorporate age-appropriate prevention education programs into our curriculum that address child sexual abuse, assault, exploitation, and extortion. These programs will be tailored to different grade levels to ensure students receive the information in an age-sensitive manner.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** We will regularly conduct awareness campaigns to educate students, parents/legal guardians, and staff about the signs, risks, and prevention of child sexual abuse, bullying, and extortion. These campaigns will seek to foster a culture of openness, trust, and mutual support within our School community.

## 2. Reporting Mechanisms:

- **Safe Reporting Channels:** We will establish multiple safe and confidential reporting channels, such as trusted staff members, anonymous hotlines, and/or online platforms, to encourage students to report any incidents of abuse, bullying, harassment, or extortion without fear of reprisal.
- **Prompt Response:** Upon receiving any such reports, we will ensure a prompt and thorough investigation, adhering to all legal requirements and protecting the privacy of all parties involved to the extent legally possible.

## 3. Staff Training and Support:

- **Professional Development:** All School staff, including teachers, administrators, and support personnel, will receive regular training on recognizing and responding to signs of child sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, and extortion. This training will equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to support students effectively.
- **Supportive Environment:** We will foster a supportive environment where students feel comfortable reaching out to trusted adults. Staff members will be trained to listen, believe, and respond empathetically to students who disclose abuse, bullying, harassment, and/or extortion.

## 4. Community Collaboration:

- **Partnerships:** We will collaborate with local law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and mental health professionals to ensure a coordinated response to incidents of child abuse, bullying, harassment, and extortion. Together, we will work towards preventing such incidents and supporting affected students.
- **Parental Involvement:** We will actively engage parents and legal guardians through regular communication, workshops, and resources, to create a united effort in promoting student safety and well-being.

By implementing this policy, GREEN strives to ensure the safety, well-being, and success of all students. Together, we can create a nurturing environment where every student feels protected, valued, and empowered to thrive.

*Legal References:*

*Erin's Law, S.C. Code of Laws, § 59-32-20 and 59-32-30(G).*

*Gavin's Law, S.C. Code of Laws, § 16-15-430.*

## **State Standards Alignment**

Standards are concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at specific stages of their education. GREEN schools will follow the SCDE's State Standards, and its teachers will incorporate them into their respective content areas. Teachers will ensure proper planning for consistency in covering all standards. The School will also ensure that all textbook and curricular materials utilized by GREEN align with South Carolina's State Standards.

## **Textbook Adoption**

The Director of Teaching and Learning or their designee shall oversee a committee of teachers and administrators to review textbook offerings in specific instructional areas. The committee will submit its report together with its recommendation to the Director of Teaching and Learning or their designee who will consider the committee's report and make a final decision.

## **Challenged Materials**

The Director of Teaching and Learning or their designee has the ultimate responsibility for establishing the School's curriculum and for purchasing the instructional and/or media materials to be used in educating its students. While the School recognizes the right of students to free access to the many different types of books and instructional materials available, it also recognizes the right of teachers and administrators to select books and other materials in accordance with current trends in education and the School's established curricula.

It is the policy of GREEN Charter Schools to require that books and other instructional materials shall be chosen for values of educational interest and the enlightenment of all students. Instructional materials shall not be excluded based on the writer's racial, nationalistic, political, or religious views. Every effort will be made to provide materials that present all points of view concerning international, national, and local issues of our times. Books, or other instructional or media materials of sound factual authority, shall not be prescribed nor removed from library shelves or classrooms. based on partisan or doctrinal approval or disapproval. The School will strive to provide stimulating, effective materials that are aligned to the students' abilities and maturity levels.

Instructional or media materials used in GREEN's educational program shall consist of various types of print and non-print materials. Despite the care taken to select those materials deemed to be educationally useful, occasional objections to the selection of instructional materials may be made by parents/legal guardians. If an objection is raised, it should be directed to the Director of Teaching and Learning or their designee.

## Lesson Plans

At GREEN, we ask our educators to personalize both their instruction and their expectations. We expect them to challenge our most capable students while ensuring that those with a preparation gap or a learning obstacle advance. We ask them to meet the needs of every learner in their care. As we acknowledge the daunting effort this requires, our charge is to meet this same challenge along with our educators. At the very least, we must continuously demonstrate that our Culture of Care and personalization of support for our staff equals that which we ask them to provide for our students and families - this is at the heart of our Parallel Process.

GREEN strives to support its teachers in the preparation for and organization of instruction. Asking all teachers to prepare in the same manner regardless of content area, years of experience and expertise, and the developmental age of their students undermines the spirit expressed in our staff sandbox, our vision, our foundational documents, and our entire strategic plan. Formal lesson plans are therefore not mandated. This does not mean that teachers should ever arrive to class unprepared or unorganized. They must meet or exceed the level of expectations they have of their students to be ready to learn.

As their leaders, we must adapt our support and expectations for all GREEN educators. When anyone is struggling with employing our effective instructional practices, being organized for class, or creating curiosity and motivation to learn for our students, we must intervene and provide supports, tools, modeling, and clear expectations that raise the level of instructional efforts. This may include using formal written planning tools where warranted. This also does not mean that any of our teachers can avoid planning. It requires us to respect our teachers and allow them to plan in a manner most effective for them, their students, and their content.

This approach to preparing for instruction will foster real discussions between our instructional coaches and educators who can discuss what works and does not work in preparing for instruction. It will also allow our instructional coaches to connect teachers who possess planning skills to teachers who have needs. This simple expression of trust comes with an expectation as well. We expect our teachers to study their content and stay excited for this work. Educators who arrive to class motivated to learn and share their new learning embody our best efforts and stimulate curiosity and motivation to learn among students.

GREEN employs a system known as Effective Instructional Strategies. Twenty-seven approaches are presented under eight strategies. With few exceptions, classroom instruction needs to encompass a strategy listed within that resource, regardless of content. We must make effective use of our instructional time so that our educators never cease preparing and engaging their students.

## Testing Policy and Procedures

### Scope

The Executive Board of GREEN Charter Schools shall ensure that all mandatory assessments administered by or through the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and/or GREEN Charter Schools (GREEN) are administered with the utmost integrity and security.

## Test Administration/Security Protocol

All mandatory assessments administered to students by or through the SCDE or GREEN shall be administered in accordance with all state law and regulations. Any individual found to have violated any such state laws or regulations or any associated guidelines may be subject to liability, criminal proceedings (resulting in fines and/or imprisonment), termination, suspension, and/or revocation of administrative and/or teaching credentials.

School Testing Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that all procedures specified in the operating manuals governing the mandated assessment programs are adhered to as required. State or school materials which are the same or very similar to those utilized in any mandated testing program shall not be used for census testing or preparation in the grades included in the state- or district-mandated program(s), except on testing dates specified by the SCDE or GREEN. Except during test administration periods, all tests and test materials, including observational answer keys, video tapes, completed observation sheets, and examinee answer documents, shall be kept under lock and key in such central locations as the School Testing Coordinator and/or Principal may designate. The key(s) shall be under the control of the School Testing Coordinator and/or Principal. During test administration periods, all secure test materials shall be kept under lock and key at the testing locations and the key shall be under the control of the Principal or their designee(s).

Each school year, the Principal shall designate one individual in each school who shall be solely responsible for procuring commercial tests used in testing programs administered by or through the SCDE or GREEN. The name of the individual so designated shall be provided annually to the SCDE or SCPCSD in writing, as required.

Prior to or during test administration, no GREEN employee may knowingly or willfully do the following:

- Provide examinees access to test questions prior to testing.
- Copy, reproduce, or use in any manner inconsistent with test security regulations all or any portion of any secure test booklet.
- Coach examinees during testing or alter or interfere with examinees' responses in any way.
- Make answer keys available to examinees.
- Fail to follow security regulations for the distribution and return of secure tests as directed or fail to account for all secure test materials before, during, and after testing.
- Participate in, direct, aid, counsel, assist in, encourage, or fail to report any of the acts prohibited in this policy.

Any knowing involvement in the presentation of forged, counterfeit, or altered identification to obtain admission to a test administration site for any tests administered by or through the SCDE shall be considered a breach of test security within the meaning of Section 59-1-445 of the South Carolina Code of Laws. Any individual(s) who knowingly cause(s) or allow(s) the presentation of forged, counterfeit, or altered identification in an attempt to enable admission to any test administration site may forfeit all opportunities to retake the test(s).

## Technology Usage During Testing

**The use of all technology while taking State Assessments is strictly prohibited.** This policy applies to all forms of technology, including but not limited to cell phones, smart watches, laptops, iPads, computers, personal electronic devices such as smartwatches and smart eyewear, and all school-issued technology. It also includes any technology that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays a message, or otherwise summons or delivers a communication to the possessor, unless the technology is required for test administration or by a student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). The South Carolina EOCEP Testing Administrator Manual (TAM) states that the school must have procedures in place for the collection of all electronic devices prior to the beginning of testing to prevent and minimize testing violations.

## Student Conduct During Testing

Students may not turn on or use cellphones or any electronic devices during state testing. All devices should be turned off and be placed out of sight for the entire duration of state testing each day. Teachers shall collect all devices, confirm they are powered off, and place them in a location within the classroom before testing begins. During the reading of testing instructions, teachers will once again ask all students to turn in any remaining cell phones/devices.

*Exception: Students who possess a device that has received prior approval for a medical need/situation. A Monitor will be assigned to a class that has this exception. Such students shall be seated in close proximity to the Testing Administrator and/or Monitor.*

When students are finished with testing, they must ensure that they have closed out of the state testing program and closed their Chromebooks. If applicable, students who are no longer testing may not have access to technology until all state testing is completed for the day.

## Student Violations

Any devices seen or turned on during testing will be confiscated. Such devices will not be returned until the end of the day and/or until the time when the testing violation investigation has been concluded. Students in violation of the Technology Usage Policy found herein may be subject to disciplinary action.

## Teacher/Staff Conduct During Testing

During all testing periods, teachers/staff will not have access to any technology device. The mode of communication will be via Hallway Monitors. No technology should be seen or powered on during testing times in any testing location.

*Exception: Staff members who possess a device that has been given prior approval by the administration for a medical need/situation or to ensure safe operation of the school. The device should be used for that purpose only and any other use will be in violation of this policy. The main office staff and/or site managers may have access to technology during testing periods.*

## Teacher/Staff Violations

Any incident involving a test security violation by a teacher/staff member will be documented. The teacher/staff member may face additional disciplinary action if continued violations occur. The violation will be handled as outlined in the SC Testing Administration Manual, which could result in suspension, termination, and/or prosecution.

*Legal Reference:*

*S.C. Code of Laws, Section 59-1-445.*

## Reporting Student Progress

The School believes that parents/legal guardians are an integral part of their children's education. To keep them informed, students' progress will be formally reported a minimum of eight (8) times per year. Midway through each marking period, a progress report will be sent home with students. At the end of each quarter, report cards will be distributed documenting student progress.

GREEN shall also utilize an online grading system. Using this system, teachers will update student grades at least weekly so that parents/legal guardians can access their child's records and stay apprised of their progress.

## Retaking a Course

The Uniform Grading Policy (UGP) of the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) allows students in grades 9-12 to retake a course under the following conditions:

- The student earned a grade of D or lower.
- The course is the same level of difficulty (unless the same level is not available).
- The course must be retaken during the current academic year or no later than the next academic year, or before the next sequential course (whichever comes first).
- The student's transcript will reflect all courses taken and the grade earned.
- Only the highest grade earned in a retaken course will be used in calculating the student's GPA.

The UGP also allows a student who has taken a course for a unit of high school credit prior to the ninth-grade year to retake the course under the following conditions:

- The course may be retaken regardless of the grade earned.
- The course is the same level of difficulty.
- A student who retakes a high school credit course from middle school must complete it by the beginning of the second year of high school or before the next sequential course (whichever comes first).
- The student must complete the entire course again (not a subset of the course such as through credit or content recovery).
- If the course being retaken has an EOC exam, the exam must be retaken.
- The student's transcript will reflect all courses taken and the grade earned.

- Only the highest grade earned in a retaken course will be used in calculating the student's GPA.

*Reference:*

*South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy, South Carolina State Board of Education, May 14, 2019.*

## **Exceptional Student Instruction**

### **Acceptance of All Students**

As a public school in South Carolina, GREEN is required by law to admit all students, based on space availability. This includes students with exceptional educational needs.

### **Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE)**

Federal law guarantees students with disabilities a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE). FAPE is guaranteed under both the Individuals with Disabilities and Education Act (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Under the IDEA, special services and accommodations shall be included in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, they are included in a Section 504 Plan. A child who is found eligible under either the IDEA or Section 504 will receive services and/or accommodations specifically tailored for them to make progress in school.

### **Section 504 Plans**

Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance. A 504 plan typically includes accommodations and sometimes services a student's needs to learn in the general education setting with their peers and is provided without additional charge to the family.

### **Consideration of a 504 Plan**

GREEN will consider a 504 plan for accommodations if a School-Based Leadership Team feels that a child may have a disability which would meet the criteria for such a plan. This can occur when a teacher identifies a student who is having difficulties, a parent requests a team to consider the needs of a student, or if a medical report has been submitted identifying a student as having a disability.

To be eligible for a 504 plan, the student must meet two (2) separate criteria: The student must have a disability and the student's disability must substantially limit a major life activity. In the context of school, this life activity can include tasks such as learning, communicating, and thinking. It can be related to schoolwork, such as a problem with executive functioning, to participating in a school activity, such as a severe allergy, or the need for physical accommodations. In the first instance, the 504 Plan might relate to written assignments and due dates. In the second instance, the 504 Plan might include accommodations that allow the student to eat safely with friends during lunch and snack time.

## **Meeting to Consider Implementation of a 504 Plan**

If the School-Based Leadership Team recommends that a student be considered for a 504 plan, the Director of Special Services or their designee will coordinate a meeting among the student's teachers and a school specialist. The teacher will also ensure that the parent/legal guardian has been notified and invited to the meeting. During this meeting, team members will utilize SCPCSD policies to consider whether the student's disabilities meet the qualifications for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If so, the team will formulate a 504 plan and identify the accommodations necessary to help the student succeed in the school environment. Forms from the SCPCSD will be used for both determination and the actual 504 plan.

## **Individualized Education Programs**

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a program of education designed to provide supports and services for a child's individual needs. It is based on analysis of the child's academic performance and behavior and is meant to provide the support needed to progress academically. IEPs generally include special services such as reading or math intervention, direct instruction from a special educator, speech or other therapies, and also accommodations, such as extra time, as well as specialized placements in special education-specific settings.

The School-Based IEP team must determine whether the student's disability negatively affects their performance in school. If a student is found ineligible for an IEP and the parent/legal guardian suspects otherwise, the right to appeal exists.

## **IEP Meetings**

The parent/legal guardian and the school will agree on where and when to have the IEP meeting. Meetings are typically held at school during regular school hours and must be conducted within 30 calendar days of when your child is found eligible for special education services.

Parents/legal guardians must agree to the program, in writing, before the school may conduct your child's first IEP. The IEP must be reviewed at least once every 12 months and revised as necessary.

Parents/legal guardians may ask for an IEP meeting at any time if they feel that changes need to be made to their child's educational program. Teams may choose to meet near the end of a grading period to discuss the student's progress and to make changes to the IEP, as needed.

## ***Legal Reference:***

*U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Free Appropriate Public Education for Students with Disabilities: Requirements Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Washington, D.C., 2010.*

## Child Find Policy

Child Find is a component of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that requires states to identify, locate, and evaluate children with disabilities, regardless of the severity, who may be in need of special education services.

Upon request, GREEN Charter Schools is required to evaluate a child for eligibility for special education services. A request for evaluation is known as a referral. When the school receives a referral, the school will appoint an Evaluation Planning Team to determine if the child has a disability and needs special education services. The school locates, identifies, and evaluates all children with disabilities who are enrolled at GREEN. A staff member who reasonably believes a student may be a child with a disability has a legal duty to refer the child, including a homeless child, to the LEA in which the child is enrolled. Before referring the child, the person making the referral must inform the child's parents that the referral will be made. Others, including parents, who reasonably believe a child is a child with a disability may also refer the child, including a homeless child, to the school or LEA in which the child is enrolled.

A referral must be made in writing and include why the person believes the student is a child with a disability. A referral may be made by contacting the GREEN Director of Special Services or their designee.

This notice will be displayed on the GREEN website and in the front office.

Procedures for referring students who may be suspected of having a disability:

### A. Referrals Initiated by the School

1. A staff member who believes that a student may have a disability will first refer the child to the GREEN Charter Schools MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) Team. The MTSS Team consists of the following members: Special Education Coordinator, RTI Coordinator, School Guidance Counselor, ESOL Coordinator, MTSS Coordinator, school Administrator, Reporting Source (teacher, RTI administrator, etc.). The team will review and discuss the current intervention that has been implemented in the classroom, instructional strategies, work samples, assessments, student progress, and academic concerns.
2. After the MTSS team has reviewed and discussed the data presented, the team will then determine whether the student will be referred to the Eligibility Planning Committee or the RTI Interventionist.
3. If the student is referred to the Eligibility Planning Team, RTI interventions will also be implemented to provide academic and behavior support using research-based interventions and collecting progress monitoring data. Progress monitoring will be reviewed with parents /legal guardians every four-six (4-6) weeks.
4. Upon acceptance of the referral packet, an evaluation planning meeting will be held to determine if additional information is needed. The school then has 60 days to complete the evaluation (including any standardized or academic testing deemed necessary).
5. On or before the 60-day deadline, the eligibility team will meet to review the evaluation results and determine eligibility for special education services.

6. If a child is determined to be eligible for special education services, the IEP team will convene a meeting within 30 days of the student being found eligible in order to develop an IEP for the child.

## **B. Referrals Initiated by Parents**

1. A parent request for a formal evaluation must be in writing and emailed to GREEN's Director of Special Services.
2. The Director of Special Services will conduct a parent interview to discuss the parent's/legal guardian's concerns and options regarding the student's educational needs.
3. The parent will complete the Child Intake Form.
4. The process will continue as described above.

### **What areas of concern are assessed at Child Find?**

- Academic Readiness Skills
- Achievement Skills
- Cognitive Ability
- Communication/Speech/Language
- Hearing /Vision
- Motor Skills
- Social/Emotional and Behavioral Skills
- Daily Living Skills

### *Legal Reference:*

*34 CFR § 300.111.*

## **Multilingual Learners**

GREEN is committed to identifying and assessing the educational needs of students whose native or home language is one other than English. The School offers a Multilingual Learners Program (MLP) for Multilingual Learners (MLs), students who are limited in their English proficiency. The goal of this program is to provide additional English language assistance, enabling students to be successful in all classes.

### **Home Language Assessment**

Upon being accepted to the School, the Director of Special Services or their designee will ensure that each student's records are reviewed to confirm that a home language survey/assessment has been completed, and if it has not, will ensure the survey is completed by the student's parents/legal guardians within the first two (2) weeks of enrollment. Students will be assessed using the state-approved Oral Language Proficiency and Norm-Referenced Test to qualify for placement in the program. If the test results indicate either limited oral or limited cognitive academic English ability, the student will be provided with additional English language support.

## Services

The School will also take steps to ensure that to the maximum extent practicable, the interests of ML students are included in programs and services that are offered to the entire student body. The Director of Special Services will ensure that all legal requirements are followed in the instruction and services provided to students who qualify as MLs.

## Instructional Time

The statutory school term in South Carolina is 190 days annually and must consist of a minimum of 180 days of instruction for a minimum of 6 hours per day, or 30 hours per week, including lunch, for grades K-8 and excluding lunch for grades 9-12. There are only three (3) exceptions to this instructional time requirement:

- Partial days missed because of extreme weather conditions, or other disruptions to the extent allowed by the State Board of Education (SBE).
- Days waived by the local board or the SBE after three (3) days have been made up due to snow, extreme weather conditions, or other disruptions; and
- Days reduced to not less than three (3) hours for not more than three (3) days each school year.

*Legal Reference:*

*SC Code Ann § 59-1-425.*

## eLearning Days

Unforeseen occurrences such as severe weather, power failures, and public health threats may disrupt GREEN operations and necessitate eLearning Days. The School believes that every student deserves access to rigorous, relevant, and engaging learning opportunities whether through in-person or remote instruction. Advance communication from each school will be given to families prior to any eLearning days. Expectations and guidelines regarding schedules, access to assignments, and attendance will be in place and made easily accessible to students, parents, and teachers. Families experiencing difficulty with connectivity should contact their student's teacher for support. The teacher will then reach out to the GREEN IT Department via the Ticket System for assistance.

The South Carolina Department of Education requires 200 minutes (or 3.5 hours) of instruction on eLearning Days for grades K-8, with an additional 2 hours for individual work completion and studying.

## Expectations for Online Conduct

All school rules and procedures apply when students are participating in any online assignments or forums. When interacting online, students are required to act appropriately toward teachers and classmates as they would in a traditional classroom environment. The following guidelines apply:

- Students will be present and engaged when participating in live lessons.

- Students' microphones should be muted until asked to speak.
- Students will address themselves and each other by their teacher-approved preferred name.
- Any form of bullying or harassment on eLearning platforms will be treated as cyberbullying and subject to disciplinary action.

## 7000 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

### Supervision of Students

Employees are expected to always supervise students in the school building and at all other times in other parts of the campus, including, but not limited to lunchrooms, outside play areas, carpool lines, computer labs, or any after-school activity location where students are present. Staff members must always account for all students under their care while on campus or while engaged in school-sponsored trips and activities. When staff is supervising students after school hours following field trips, practices, or other events, staff must remain present until all students leave the campus with an authorized adult.

### Mandated Reporter Policy

#### Definition

A mandated reporter ("reporter") under South Carolina law is an individual who, due to their profession or role, is legally obligated to report any suspected child abuse or neglect learned of in their professional capacity to the appropriate authorities. Mandated reporters are individually responsible for reporting any incidents of suspected abuse or neglect. **All GREEN staff members are deemed mandatory reporters under South Carolina law due to the fact that they have a unique opportunity to observe and interact with children.**

#### Making a Report

Mandated reporters must report suspected abuse or neglect when, in their professional capacity, they receive information giving them reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health has been, or may be, adversely affected by abuse or neglect. A decision to report must be based upon a reasonable belief that a child has been, or may be, abused or neglected. Thus, mandatory reporters need not have conclusive proof that a child has been abused or neglected prior to reporting abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

Reporters are legally obligated to report suspected instances of abuse to child welfare agencies (the South Carolina Department of Social Services) or to local law enforcement in the county where the child resides or where the alleged incident occurred. If the alleged perpetrator is the child's parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child, DSS is responsible for investigating the report. If a law enforcement agency receives a report of this nature, the information will be forwarded to DSS. When the alleged perpetrator is someone other than the child's parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, law enforcement has primary responsibility for investigation as

these cases do not fall under the authority of DSS. In these situations, mandated reporters are required to report to the appropriate law enforcement agency. If the alleged perpetrator's identity or relationship to the child is unclear or unknown, the report should be made to DSS. In the event of an emergency, reporters may choose to contact law enforcement.

Under this policy, GREEN staff members/reporters who observe or receive information giving rise to a suspicion of potential child abuse or neglect must concurrently report the observation or information received to their direct supervisor and to the GREEN School Safety Coordinator, prior to commencing further inquiry or investigation. However, reporting to a supervisor and/or the School Safety Coordinator does not relieve a mandated reporter of their individual duty to report any suspicions to DSS/law enforcement, and the duty to report is not superseded by an internal investigation within an institution, school, facility, or agency. All GREEN staff members/reporters should personally ensure any required report is actually made.

The reporter's obligation is not considered fulfilled until they have made a report to the appropriate authorities. If a reporter fails to report when required, that person is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction, may be fined up to \$500 or imprisoned for up to six months, or both. The School Safety Coordinator will concurrently analyze, assist, and facilitate reporting by all reporters.

## **Protections for Mandated Reporters**

The State of South Carolina provides both civil and criminal immunity to those reporting suspected child abuse or neglect, provided that such persons have acted in good faith. Immunity covers full disclosure of all the facts that led the person to reasonably believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected.

*Legal References: S.C. Code Ann. §§ 63-7-310, 390, 410.*

## **School Safety Reporting**

### **Purpose**

This policy establishes procedures to ensure that the GREEN School Safety Coordinator (Coordinator) is notified of and exercises oversight over all alleged reportable safety, security, and/or criminal incidents that may have occurred on any GREEN campus, including mandated reporting under South Carolina Code of Laws § 63-7-310. Additionally, this policy designates the GREEN School Safety Coordinator as the official liaison between GREEN Charter Schools and all School Resource Officers (SROs) assigned to all GREEN campuses, including acting as a liaison with their respective law enforcement agencies across South Carolina.

### **Notification Requirement**

All GREEN Charter School administrators will notify the School Safety Coordinator upon identification or receipt of any reportable incident, prior to commencing further inquiry or investigation. The

School Safety Coordinator will analyze, assist, and facilitate reporting by all reporters, including but not limited to notification of DSS, the Officer, or law enforcement, depending on the individual fact.

### **Oversight Responsibilities**

The School Safety Coordinator shall oversee the investigation, response, and resolution of all reportable incidents, ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws. In those cases where a criminal investigation by law enforcement is involved, the Coordinator is responsible for providing updates of any investigation directly to the Executive Director and their designee as information is available.

### **Liaison Responsibilities**

The Coordinator shall serve as the official liaison between GREEN Charter Schools and all School Resource Officers (SROs) assigned to any GREEN campuses, including acting as a liaison with their respective law enforcement agencies.

### **Training and Compliance**

The Coordinator will facilitate communication, coordination, and joint training between all GREEN campuses and law enforcement to enhance school safety protocols.

- The School Safety Coordinator shall assist in training school administrators on mandated reporting requirements and procedures for handling safety and security incidents.
- Each school shall designate a safety team staff member to serve as the point of contact with the Coordinator.

### **Reporting and Evaluation**

The Coordinator shall provide regular updates to the Executive Director and/or their designee summarizing incident data, law enforcement coordination, and ongoing safety initiatives.

### **Policy Enforcement**

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or administrative review, consistent with applicable employment policies and legal requirements. Compliance with mandated reporting laws is not only a legal obligation but a fundamental responsibility to protect the health and safety of all students at GREEN.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws § 63-7-410, any person required to report a case of child abuse or neglect, who knowingly fails to do so, is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction, may be fined not more than \$500 or imprisoned for not more than six months, or both.

*Legal References: S.C. Code Ann. §§ 63-7-310 and 410.*

## **Policy for Transporting Students Off Campus**

Faculty and staff members may not transport any GREEN student(s) to an off-campus location except in the case of an off-campus event for which the student's parent/legal guardian has been advised and has given prior written consent. Any faculty or staff member seeking an exception to this rule must consult with their school principal. **GREEN Charter Schools accepts no liability for staff members who transport students in their personal vehicle.**

## **Campus Visitors**

Visitors who are on school business are welcome at GREEN; however, immediately upon entering the school grounds, they must press the outside buzzer at the front entrance of each school to request entry. If granted, they must identify themselves to front office staff, state the nature of their visit, present a valid driver's license for identification purposes, and sign the visitor's log. They will then be given a temporary badge identifying them as a visitor. Anyone failing to comply with this procedure will be asked to leave the campus immediately. If the visitor does not leave after a warning, law enforcement will be notified, and the violator will be prosecuted for trespassing.

It is the responsibility of all staff members to monitor the halls to ensure that all visitors have properly checked into the office. Any individual who does not have an appropriate visitor badge must be escorted back to the main office to ensure they are signed in.

## **School Safety Protocols**

Schools in South Carolina are required by law to conduct **at least two (2) fire drills, two (2) active fire drills, two (2) active shooter/intruder drills, and two (2) severe weather drills with at least one (1) of each drill conducted each semester.** GREEN also mandates that each campus conducts **a minimum of eight (8) fire drills each academic year.** It is the responsibility of ALL ADULTS on each campus to participate in ALL DRILLS - these drills are an opportunity to supervise, protect, and prepare our students and staff in the event of a real emergency. ALL ADULTS on campus must monitor and supervise the movements of all students from the beginning to the end of each drill.

Teachers should be familiar with the safety plans posted in each classroom. During any emergency, teachers should remain calm and help keep the students calm. Roll call sheets should be kept with the teacher to ensure all students have been accounted for. A complete list of emergency procedures is contained in a separate manual which is kept in each classroom. It is the responsibility of each staff member to familiarize themselves with the location, contents, and procedures of the Emergency Preparedness Plan. Any questions regarding emergency procedures in general should be referred to a supervisor.

All campuses maintain an evacuation plan to be used in case of fire or other emergency situations. This plan will be reviewed annually by GREEN's administrators for effectiveness. All students and staff members will be made aware of the plan, and maps highlighting escape routes will be posted in all school rooms. The principal or their designee shall be the lead on these drills. After completion,

the drills must be logged in a notebook with the date and type of drill listed as well as any applicable notations.

## **Intruder Lock Down Procedures**

All GREEN campuses follow an emergency Intruder/Lock Down Procedure. These plans will be reviewed continually for effectiveness and to ensure compliance by all school personnel. All staff and students will be made aware of the procedures. The procedures will be practiced at least twice per year, and documentation of such will be maintained by the School.

*S.C. Code Ann. § 59-17-160(B) and (C).*

## **School Safety Guidance**

- All School staff must inspect all exits daily to ensure that stairways, doors, and other exits are working properly and are unblocked.
- On the day of the drill, the emergency drill alarm should be sounded on the school fire alarm system. All students and staff should become familiar with the sound of the alarm and know what action to take when it sounds.
- All School staff should be familiar with the school's fire protection system, including the location of fire alarm pull stations and sprinklers.
- Every room in the school should have a map posted identifying two (2) ways out of the room.
- In schools with open floor plans, exit paths should be obvious and kept free of obstruction. On the day of the fire drill, everyone in the school must participate.
- Students with specific needs should be assigned an adult or a student friend to assist them. Fire drills are a good opportunity to identify who among the student population requires extra assistance.
- Once everyone has safely exited the building, they should remain outside at a predetermined location until the 'all clear' has been given to re-enter the school.
- Teachers shall utilize rosters to ensure that every student is present.
- Fire drills should be held both at expected and at unexpected times, and under varying conditions to simulate the conditions that can occur in an actual emergency.
- School fire drills are a model for students to use in their homes. Encourage students to practice their escape plans at home - just as they do at school.

**S.C. Code Ann. § 59-17-160(B)** requires the governing body of each charter school to adopt a policy and program for school facility fire and safety, including inspections. In order to comply with the requirement to include inspections in the adopted policy and program, each charter school must contact the local fire department or fire code official responsible for code enforcement within its jurisdiction. The local fire department that responds to an emergency at the school facility is often the local authority having jurisdiction for inspections. The School is required to identify the name of

the entity that will be performing fire inspections for each facility and the frequency at which each facility will be inspected.

**S.C. Code Ann. § 59-17-160(B)** also requires that all policies and programs designed to ensure school facility fire and safety must be adopted in open meetings in which the public may provide comment on the terms of the policies and programs; include routine self-assessments; and be published on the School's website in a prominent location that is easily accessible to the public.

**Additionally, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-17-160(C)** requires each charter school to submit its fire and safety policy and program to the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and to the SCDE. The OSFM and the SCDE will collaboratively review the school policies and programs and, within one hundred twenty (120) days of the receipt of a policy or program, jointly provide written comments to the School on how the policies and programs may be improved.

*Legal Reference:*

*S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-17-160(B) and (C).*

## **Prohibition Against Firearms and Weapons**

GREEN takes threats of violence very seriously and strictly prohibits any type of workplace violence. **Any acts or threats of physical violence, including but not limited to intimidation, harassment, and/or coercion, which involve or affect students, staff, parents/legal guardians, visitors, or others, or which occur on School property will not be tolerated.** Acts or threats of violence include conduct which is sufficiently severe, offensive, or intimidating to alter the employment conditions or to create a hostile, abusive, or intimidating work environment.

Any use or possession of weapons, whether illegal or not, is strictly prohibited on School property at all times. This includes knives, guns, martial arts weapons, or any other object that could be used as a weapon. Violations of this policy by any individual on GREEN property will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, legal action, or the involvement of law enforcement as necessary.

## **The Gun-Free Schools Act**

Additionally, in adherence to the federal Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) and South Carolina Code of Laws § 59-63-235 and § 59-63-240, any student who possesses, uses, or transfers a firearm on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity will be recommended for consideration of expulsion for one (1) calendar year. A firearm is defined as any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive. The term firearm also includes any explosive, incendiary device, poison gas, bomb, or grenade.

*This guidance provides information concerning State and local responsibilities under the Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA), which was reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110), as Section 4141 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). This guidance addresses changes made as a result of the NCLB reauthorization.*

## Unscheduled School Closures & Weather Closings

GREEN families and staff will be notified by the school administration of any unforeseen school closures. In the event of inclement weather, the decision to close schools will be made by the Executive Director or their designee in conjunction with the school principal. In most situations involving inclement weather, GREEN will follow the same closures as the local county school districts. Parents/legal guardians should monitor their emails and local news outlets.

## Threat Assessments

1. Threat assessment procedures are intended to prevent violence and involve both assessment and intervention. Threat assessment involves **determining whether a student poses a threat of violence** (i.e., if they have the intent and means to carry out the threat).
2. A threat is an **expression of intent to physically or sexually harm someone**. This expression may be spoken, written, or gestured. Threats can be expressed directly or indirectly to the victim or to others, and threats may be explicit or implied. Threats may involve weapons, including, but not limited to, guns or explosive devices.
3. A threat to harm others can be **transient** (i.e., an expression of anger or frustration that can be quickly or easily resolved) or **substantive** (i.e., serious intent to harm others that involves a detailed plan and means).
4. **All GREEN schools shall develop and implement** threat assessment procedures that are clearly communicated to staff and families.
5. A school threat assessment is **conducted by a multidisciplinary team** of trained professionals, including a school mental health professional, administrators, and a school resource officer or local law enforcement.
6. A threat assessment involves **evaluation and classification of the threat** (i.e., transient versus substantive) and **decides on the appropriate response and intervention**, including notification and involvement of parents/legal guardians and law enforcement. It should also include a suicide risk assessment as these students are often also suicidal.
7. **There is NO profile** of a student who will cause harm. There is no easy formula or profile of risk factors that accurately determines whether a student is going to commit a violent act. The use of profiling increases the likelihood of misidentifying students who are thought to pose a threat.
8. Most students who pose a substantive threat **indicate their intentions** in some way. Examples include statements to friends, ideas in written work, drawings, and postings on social media that threaten harm. **Students and parents/legal guardians are highly encouraged to immediately report to the administration any statements, postings, or behavior by classmates indicating a potential intent to cause harm to others.**
9. **Again, it is crucial to act quickly** if you are concerned about a threat. Steps to take can include contacting the appropriate school administrator, the school crisis team leader, the school-employed mental health professional, or local law enforcement immediately. It is their job to determine next steps, including potentially contacting named intended victims.
10. This threat assessment is a component of a **comprehensive approach** by GREEN Charter Schools to maintain a safe school environment which offers both physical and psychological safety.

## *Legal References:*

*Cornell, D., & Sheras, P. (2005). Guidelines for responding to student threats of violence. SoprisWest.*

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## **Violence-Free Workplace**

GREEN takes the safety of its students and staff very seriously. It is GREEN's policy to provide a school environment and workplace that is safe and free from all threatening and intimidating conduct. Therefore, the School will not tolerate violence or threats of violence of any form on GREEN campuses, at school-related functions, or outside of work if it affects the workplace. This policy applies to all employees, students, guests, vendors, and persons doing business with the School.

It will be a violation of this policy for any individual to engage in any conduct, verbal or physical, which intimidates, endangers, or creates the perception of intent to harm persons or property. Additionally, any student, parent/legal guardian, or staff member who learns of a potential threat of violence on school grounds is obligated to report this information immediately to the school principal and Executive Director.

### **Examples of prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:**

- Physical assaults or threats of physical assault, whether made in person or by other means (e.g., in writing, by phone, via social media, or email).
- Verbal conduct that is intimidating and has the purpose or effect of threatening the health or safety of a student or staff member.
- Possession of firearms or any other weapon, including but not limited to knives with blades more than three (3) inches in length, and explosives, on school property, in a vehicle being used on school business, in any school-owned or leased parking facility, or at any school-related function.
- Any other conduct or acts which the administration believes represents an imminent or potential danger to the safety and security of students and/or staff.

## **Accidents and Injuries**

In the event of an accident or injury sustained on School grounds by a student, the following procedures shall be followed:

- ◆ In cases involving serious injury, staff shall call 911 immediately.
- ◆ DO NOT MOVE the injured person except to remove him/her from immediate danger.
- ◆ Assess the extent of the injury; attempt no treatment for which you are not certified.
- ◆ Err on the side of caution.

- ◆ Send another adult or a student to notify the office staff and School Nurse. Do not leave the injured person alone or only with students.
- ◆ Provide first aid as necessary within your certification and qualifications.
- ◆ Ensure that the office staff notifies the student's parent/legal guardian.
- ◆ Ensure that anyone who witnessed the accident fills out an accident report.
- ◆ A staff member shall accompany the injured student if transported by means other than by family.
- ◆ A staff member shall meet and update the family at the hospital.
- ◆ Staff should immediately update school administration as to what transpired.

## **Student Records**

All information contained in student records, including information in the electronic database, is private and confidential and maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). These records are the property of GREEN, whose responsibility it is to secure the information against loss, defacements, tampering, or use by unauthorized persons.

FERPA is a federal law that affords parents/legal guardians the right to have access to their children's education records upon request, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the records. When a student turns 18 years of age, or enters a post-secondary institution at any age, the rights under FERPA transfer from the parents/legal guardians to the student ("eligible student").

Access to student records by school employees is severely restricted. Only those employees having a job responsibility requiring continued access are authorized to access the records. Each employee requesting to see a student file must have a specific need for information found within and must sign a log indicating they have accessed the information. Each employee working with or having access to confidential records must be informed and acknowledge that most personally identifiable student information is strictly confidential and only those individuals having a direct, legitimate educational interest in that student may view, access, or otherwise make use of such information.

GREEN staff members should not speak about the content of student records in hallways or public areas. The information about children contained in their records is confidential and must not be discussed in the outside community. Additionally, no child's files are to be taken off school premises.

## **Release of Student Records**

Each request to release student records shall be handled separately; blanket permission for the release of information shall not be acceptable. The consent shall be given in writing and shall specify the records to be released and to whom they are to be released.

Consent to release student records may be deemed given under the following circumstances:

- ❖ The consent is given by the student's parent or legal guardian except when a student reaches the age of eighteen (18), at which time their consent and not that of their parent/legal

guardian shall be obtained in order to release the information. A student who meets the foregoing requirements shall consent to parental access to their records if they so choose.

- ❖ Under compulsion of law: Courts, law enforcement agencies, or other agencies subpoenaing such records.
- ❖ When data is for outside purposes and is released in such a format that no individual student is identifiable.
- ❖ When the Executive Director or their designee determines that the release of specific information as described by FERPA is in the best interests of the student, provided such information has not been disallowed by the parents/legal guardians.

It is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to keep the school office informed and current regarding any changes of names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, etc. so that important student information may be received from or provided to the parent/legal guardian in a timely manner for the benefit and well-being of the student.

*Legal References:*

*South Carolina Code of Laws §30-1-10. et seq.*

*The FERPA Statute at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and the FERPA regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.*

## **Records Retention Policy**

FERPA does not govern the retention or disposition of education records. South Carolina public schools must comply with the South Carolina Department of Archives and History's General Records Retention Schedule for School Records. It requires each institution to maintain student records for a minimum of six (6) years from graduation or termination.

In each instance in which a student's record is transferred out of the organization, the school shall retain a complete copy of the student's academic record, together with all other confidential information and reports.

*Legal Reference:*

*S.C. Code Regs. § 62-20.*

## **GREEN Charter Schools Acceptable Use Policy**

***Please note that Policy outlined below is the School's Acceptable Use Policy in its entirety and applies to all GREEN staff, students, and families.***

## **Overview**

At GREEN Charter Schools, we recognize that technology is an essential component of the educational process. These guidelines are provided for students and staff at GREEN Charter Schools to inform them of their responsibilities while using school-owned electronic devices or personal electronic devices while on GREEN property. All users shall make efficient, ethical, and legal use of the network resources and devices. Any violations of these guidelines may subject the user to appropriate disciplinary action, denial of access to the Internet, and loss of privileges to use a GREEN-owned device.

Access to the GREEN network and school electronic devices provides connections to other computer systems around the world, therefore, users (including the parents/legal guardians of students who are users) should understand that neither GREEN nor any members of its staff control the content of the information available on these systems. The School will make every effort to monitor and restrict ready access to known objectionable sites. However, the School does not condone the use of controversial or offensive materials and shall not be held responsible for such use. GREEN is committed to protecting our students, employees, partners, and the School from illegal or damaging actions taken by individuals, either knowingly or unknowingly.

Internet and Intranet systems, including computer equipment, Chromebooks, software, operating systems, storage media, network accounts providing electronic mail, WWW browsing, and FTP, are the property of GREEN Charter Schools. These systems are to be used by our students and staff during normal hours of operation for educational purposes and to serve the School's interests. As such, there is no expectation of privacy, and all users should understand that technology resources at GREEN are a privilege and should not be abused under any circumstances.

## **Purpose**

This agreement outlines the responsible use of computer equipment at GREEN. These rules comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) enacted by Congress in 2000 to address concerns about children's access to obscene or harmful content over the Internet and to protect students. Inappropriate use may also expose GREEN Charter Schools to risks such as virus/malware and brute force attacks, as well as other forms of ransomware which could compromise our network systems and services and create legal issues.

## **Scope**

This agreement applies to the use of information, electronic and computing devices, and network resources used to conduct GREEN business or interact with internal networks, the Internet, and business systems, whether owned or leased by GREEN, the student, the parent/legal guardian, the employee, or a third party. All students, staff (including permanent, part-time, and temporary), contractors, consultants, and volunteers of GREEN Charter Schools are responsible for exercising good judgment regarding the appropriate use of information, electronic devices, and network resources in accordance with School policy and in adherence to federal and state law. This policy applies to all equipment that is owned or leased by GREEN Charter Schools.

## Guidelines

### Responsible Use

Under no circumstances is a student or employee of GREEN authorized to engage in any activity that is illegal under local, state, federal, or international law while utilizing GREEN networks or equipment. GREEN reserves the right to take immediate action regarding activities that (1) create security and/or safety issues for GREEN, its students, employees, schools, network, or computer resources; or (2) expend GREEN resources on content which GREEN determines to lack legitimate educational purpose; or (3) expose students or staff to content the School deems inappropriate.

The lists below are not exhaustive but attempt to provide a framework for activities that fall into the category of unacceptable use.

### System and Network Activities

#### The following activities are strictly prohibited:

1. Violating the rights of any person or entity protected by copyright, trade secret, patent or other intellectual property, or similar laws or regulations, including, but not limited to, the installation or distribution of "pirated" or other software products that are not licensed for use by GREEN Charter Schools.
2. Unauthorized copying of copyrighted material including, but not limited to, digitization and distribution of photographs from magazines, books, or other copyrighted sources, copyrighted music, and the installation of any copyrighted software for which GREEN or the end user does not have an active license.
3. Accessing inappropriate material on School-provided networks which may include tasteless material, pornographic imagery, sexually explicit or suggestive material, illegal movie websites, or the like.
4. Staff may not place any stickers, decals, or additional markings on GREEN-issued devices.
5. Using "VPNS," "Proxies," or any other form of software or website intended to mask a device's identity or circumvent security and/or content controls at GREEN. Installing such software on a personal device connected to the Students, Staff, Provisioning, and/or Guest networks is strictly prohibited.
6. Introduction of malicious programs into the network or server (e.g., viruses, worms, Trojan horses, e-mail bombs, etc.).
7. Revealing an account password to others or allowing the use of your account by others. This includes family and other household members when work is being completed at home.
8. Using a GREEN computing asset to actively engage in transmitting material that is in violation of sexual harassment policies and laws.

9. Creating security breaches or disruptions of network communication. Security breaches include, but are not limited to, accessing data of which the employee/student is not an intended recipient or logging into a server or account that the student or employee is not expressly authorized and/or directed to access. For this section's purposes, "disruption" includes network sniffing, pinged floods, packet spoofing, denial of service, and forged routing information for malicious purposes.
10. Port scanning or security scanning is expressly prohibited unless prior notification and approval is received from GREEN's IT Manager or their designee.
11. Utilizing any form of network monitoring.
12. Circumventing user authentication or security of any host, network, or account.
13. Using any program/script/command, or sending messages of any kind, with the intent to interfere with, or disable, a user's terminal session, via any means, locally or via the Internet or Intranet.

## **Email Communication & Privacy**

When using school resources to access and use the Internet, users represent the School. All chats and emails are logged and monitored, and there should be no expectation of privacy. **All web traffic, email messages, and chat messages are logged and audited periodically.**

GREEN reserves the right to disclose any electronic activity, including electronic communications to law enforcement officials or third parties, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law. GREEN will fully cooperate with local, state, or federal officials in any lawful investigation concerning or relating to any illegal activities conducted through GREEN Systems. By accessing any data network at GREEN with a personal device, the end-user agrees to reveal the device's IP address, device name, and any content upon request to the GREEN Administration, including to the IT Manager.

### **The following activities are strictly prohibited:**

- Sending unsolicited email messages, including the sending of "junk mail" or other advertising or solicitation material to individuals who did not specifically request such material (email spam).
- Any form of harassment via email, telephone, or paging, whether through language, frequency, or size of messages.
- Use of profanity, or any other explicit/suggestive language/imagery.
- Solicitation of email for any other email address, other than that of the poster's account, with the intent to harass or to collect replies.
- Creating or forwarding "chain letters," "Ponzi," or other "pyramid" schemes of any type.

## Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

- Students are prohibited from using cell phones/personal electronic devices in any capacity or for any purpose during designated school hours without prior teacher or administration approval. This includes, but is not limited to, during clubs, and after-school care. Failure to follow cell phone procedures may result in confiscation of the cell phone. Parents may retrieve the phone from the administrator who confiscated it or from the main office at the end of the day. This same policy applies to smart watches. GREEN will not be held responsible for the theft, loss, or damage to cell phones or other electronic devices brought onto its property.
- Staff and students are not permitted to connect their cell phones or personal devices to any GREEN data network. This includes digital picture frames and other personal electronic devices.
- The responsibility to keep electronic devices secure rests with the individual owner. GREEN, its staff, volunteers, or employees, will not be liable for any device which is stolen or damaged on campus.
- If a device is stolen or damaged, it must be reported to the school office immediately.
- It is recommended that appropriate skins (decals) and other custom touches be used to physically identify your **Personal Device (Not School Owned Devices)**. Additionally, protective cases for technology are strongly encouraged.
- These electronic devices have educational and monetary value. Students are prohibited from trading or selling these items to other students on school property, including on school buses and during field trips.
- Each student is responsible for their own device, including set-up, maintenance, charging, and security.

## GREEN Chromebook Guidelines

1. The use of GREEN-issued Chromebooks and the GREEN network must support education.
2. Students and families must follow all guidelines set forth in this document and by school staff.
3. All rules and guidelines are in effect before, during, and after school hours for all school Chromebooks whether on or off campus.
4. Students are required to keep their Chromebooks in good condition. If the Chromebook breaks or is damaged, the parent/legal guardian student will be held responsible for the cost of repair/replacement.
5. Students are expected to report any damage to their device as soon as possible. This means within 24 hours of the damage occurring if off-campus and immediately if on-campus.
6. Students who identify or are aware of a potential security issue on their Chromebook are expected to convey the details to their teacher without discussing it with other students.

7. Students are expected to notify a staff member immediately if they come across information, images, or messages that are inappropriate, dangerous, threatening, indicate harm to themselves or others, or make them feel uncomfortable.
8. Students may only log in under their assigned GREEN username. Students may not share their passwords with other students at any time. While a parent/legal guardian may be aware of the password for supervision purposes, the student is responsible for all actions associated with the Chromebook and its use. No other family member should have access to the password.
9. Students may not loan Chromebook components to any other person (including family members) for any reason; Students who do so will be held financially responsible for any damage or loss of components.
10. Students are responsible for charging the Chromebook fully at the end of each day. The student is responsible for placing the Chromebook in a safe location and ensuring that the power cord is connected to the Chromebook each evening.
11. Chromebooks are to be stored on a desk or table. Books and/or binders and other items should never be placed on top of a Chromebook. Chromebooks should never be placed on the floor when at school or at home.
12. Chromebooks should never be out or open if a student is consuming food or drink.
13. Chromebooks should not be left in vehicles.
14. Chromebooks should be completely shut down before traveling.
15. Students are not permitted to place any stickers, decals, or additional markings on GREEN-issued Chromebooks.
16. Students are not permitted to use the Webcam on the Chromebook for “personal use.” Webcams should only be used for educational purposes. Parents/legal guardians are responsible for supervising students' use of webcams.
17. Students should not use their Chromebooks to watch streaming content such as movies for personal use or to interact with others on any form of social media.

## **Chromebook Damage Policy**

### **Accidental Damage vs. Negligence**

Accidents happen. There is a difference, however, between an accident and negligence, with the latter potentially leading to disciplinary action and/or financial reimbursement to the school. Damages to Chromebooks caused by a student's failure to follow the guidelines set forth in this manual will be deemed negligence. If the Chromebook is deemed to be intentionally or negligently damaged by the student, the student/parent will be held financially responsible for the cost of repair/replacement, and the student may also be subject to disciplinary action if appropriate. Parents/legal guardians will be notified of the repair cost and invoiced. Costs can include the Chromebook, charger, fees/taxes, case/cover, and associated licenses.

## Enforcement of Acceptable Use Agreement

### Student Non-Compliance with the Acceptable Use Agreement

The guidelines set forth in this document outline the general behaviors that are acceptable and non-acceptable while utilizing GREEN-owned equipment and wireless networks. We also understand that there are times a student may unintentionally violate these guidelines. We will thoroughly investigate each incident and consider both intent and impact as we determine consequences.

### Consequences for Non-Compliance

The utilization of electronic devices at GREEN is a privilege. The following disciplinary measures may be taken at the discretion of the GREEN Administration and/or the IT Manager if a student is found to be in violation of this Acceptable Use Agreement on either a personal device or a school-owned device:

- The student's personal device and GREEN-owned device access may be suspended for a period ranging from one (1) day through the rest of the school year.
- Students may also face disciplinary action consistent with the GREEN Student Code of Conduct, including In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, and Expulsion.

## Parent/Legal Guardian Responsibilities

GREEN Charter Schools makes every effort to equip parents/legal guardians with the necessary tools and information to ensure the safe and responsible use of GREEN-issued Chromebooks in the home. **There are several responsibilities assumed by the parent/legal guardian under this Responsible Use Agreement. These include:**

- 1. Sign the Responsible Use Agreement**
- 2. Accept Liability**

The parent/legal guardian and student are responsible for the cost of repairs or the replacement value of the device as of the date of the loss if the property is:

- Not returned
- Intentionally damaged
- Damaged due to negligence
- Lost or stolen. This must be reported to the School administration immediately. In cases involving theft, a police report will also be required.

## Fundraising

The Executive Director or their designee must approve all fundraising activities at GREEN. All fundraising requests must first be sent in writing to the principal and must identify the plans for the fundraiser and the purpose for any funds raised. The principal will then forward the request to the Executive Director or their designee.

### Fundraising Committees

Each GREEN school will create a fundraising committee at the start of the school year that will work together in the planning and oversight of all fundraising events. The committee must include the principal, office manager, and any additional representatives requesting to fundraise, including staff, parents, and/or students.

### Types of Fundraising Activities

Permissible fundraising activities include, but are not limited to, bake sales, car washes, etc.

### Guidelines

- All GREEN campuses will keep fundraising campaigns to a minimum so as not to impair the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational program.
- Student participation in fundraising activities is completely voluntary.
- All fundraising activities involving students must ensure their safety and be supervised by GREEN staff or approved volunteers.
- All fundraising campaigns conducted within the school must be in support of specific student activities or projects that support the educational mission and vision of GREEN.
- Approved fundraising activities may not be conducted during school hours without the approval of the principal.
- Activities involving alcohol or high-risk elements are prohibited.
- Students/staff/parents/organizations may not solicit personal contributions to meet the basic needs of the school or to finance extracurricular activities.
- The sale, distribution, or advertisement of services, written materials, or items from private sources on school premises without the express written permission of the principal is prohibited.
- Fundraisers that involve the sale of food and/or beverages on the school campus during school hours must meet the competitive food nutrition standards also known as the Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards. Food and/or beverages that do not meet the standards may only be sold if not done so in competition with school meals in the food serving area during meal service. The standards do not apply to items sold during non-school hours, on weekends, or at off-campus fundraising events.

## **Financial Management**

All fundraisers must follow a detailed budget approved by the fundraising committee of each campus. All funds collected must be documented and deposited in the designated school account, with regular financial reports provided to the Director of Finance or their designee by the fundraising committee.

## **Donations and Sponsorships**

Any donations to the school or sponsorship of school events must align with GREEN's mission and be approved by the Executive Director or their designee. Donors will be recognized in a manner consistent with school policies and all donations must be compliant with tax regulations.

## **Legal and Regulatory Compliance**

Fundraising activities must comply with all relevant laws and regulations, including obtaining all necessary permits and insurance coverage.

## **Communication and Promotion**

Any promotional materials utilized for fundraisers must be approved for accuracy and adherence to GREEN brand guidelines by the Director of Growth and Communications or their designee. Communication regarding fundraising goals and results shall be clear and consistent and approved by the principal.

## **PVO/PTO**

Any fundraisers conducted by a school's PVO/PTO are separate and apart from any GREEN-approved fundraisers. Each PVO/PTO is a non-profit organization which has no legal affiliation with the School.

## **Photographs of Students**

### **Portraits**

GREEN will sponsor a formal portrait day for students at each of its campuses. A company which best meets the needs of our families at a reasonable cost will be selected by school administration. Parents/legal guardians will be given the option to purchase these photographs. These photographs may also be utilized in the campus yearbook.

### **Photographs**

Throughout the year, School staff may take pictures of events occurring during the school day. If a parent/legal guardian prefers that their child not be photographed, they may submit written notification of their request to their school principal.

Additionally, photographs may periodically be used for promotional purposes for the School. Every attempt will be made to receive permission from the parent/legal guardian prior to the publishing

of promotional materials which include photographs of students. GREEN reserves the right to incorporate these pictures via electronic media. Children will not be identified by name.

## **No Solicitation Policy**

GREEN Charter strictly prohibits soliciting for any cause on School property. Any person found violating this policy shall be considered a trespasser and will immediately be referred to law enforcement.

## **Gifts**

All GREEN staff are considered public employees and as such, may not accept gifts related in any manner to their position at the School. S.C. Code of Laws Section § 8-13-710 states that any public employee who accepts gifts valued at more than \$25 in a day or \$200 in aggregate for the year must file a Statement of Economic Interests with the South Carolina Ethics Commission. Note that this policy includes anything of monetary value received by the employee, including, but not limited to, tickets, trips, meals, and merchandise.

*Legal Reference:*

*S.C. Code of Laws Section § 8-13-710.*

## **Volunteers**

**ALL INDIVIDUALS MUST RECEIVE SCHOOL APPROVAL PRIOR TO VOLUNTEERING AT ANY GREEN CAMPUS OR FOR ANY GREEN-SUPPORTED EVENT, WHETHER ON OR OFF CAMPUS. ANY "LEVEL 2" FUNCTION THAT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN WILL REQUIRE A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK WHICH CAN TAKE UP TO TWO WEEKS TO PROCESS. INTERESTED VOLUNTEERS SHOULD THEREFORE PLAN ACCORDINGLY.**

To ensure the safety of our students, GREEN Charter Schools requires additional security checks for school volunteers. All volunteers must submit the **GREEN Charter Schools Volunteer Application** which is available on our website and at each campus. They must then receive clearance from the school before volunteering at any GREEN campus or chaperoning any GREEN field trip.

All volunteers are identified by two different categories: **Level 1 or Level 2.**

**All field trip chaperones must be cleared as Level 2 volunteers by the School in order to participate in the trip, regardless of the destination.**

**Level 1:** This level requires the presence and supervision of a GREEN employee at all times. Level 1 volunteers must have a National Sex Offender Registry check conducted every time they volunteer at the school. Level 1 volunteers may volunteer in classrooms and participate in school activities on campus if GREEN staff members are present. Level 1 volunteers must be 18 years of age or older.

**Level 2:** This level allows volunteers to interact with students without a GREEN employee present. Level 2 volunteers must have a National Sex Offender Registry check conducted every time they

volunteer at the school. Additionally, a State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) criminal background check will be conducted which will be kept on file by the school for one (1) year. Parents/legal guardian must notify the school if any arrest occurs during that period. Level 2 volunteers must be 21 years of age or older.

Parents/legal guardians may be approved as volunteers if their Level 2 SLED background check reveals: Arrests where criminal charges were dropped or dismissed as evidenced by an expungement order or an entry of nolle prosequi; a single misdemeanor; minor traffic violations, or convictions for which a full pardon has been granted. **The final decision as to whether a parent/legal guardian may volunteer at the School chaperone a field trip rests with the Executive Director or their designee.**

The selection of volunteers and chaperones for field trips is at the discretion of the teacher/school administration. Other criteria in addition to clean background checks may be considered when selecting volunteers, such as frequency of participation, parent/legal guardian conduct, and availability/scheduling. GREEN Charter Schools reserves the right to deny volunteer participation at any time.

Chaperones must exercise mature judgment when supervising children and shall respect each student's rights and privacy. It is essential that confidentiality is maintained, and that student/parent/legal guardian contact information is not shared. Chaperones should discuss any concerns directly and exclusively with the supervising teacher/staff.

## **Parent Volunteer Organization Guidelines**

As part of the work by GREEN Charter Schools to provide high-quality education across South Carolina, guidelines have been developed to facilitate parental involvement at each of our schools. Please note that any Parent Volunteer Organization (PVO)/Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), regardless of whether it is registered as a non-profit organization, is a separate entity and shall not be governed by or directed by GREEN, its Board members, or the Executive Director or their designee. However, any PVO/PTO associated with GREEN is expected to work in conjunction with the School to best serve its students and the educational program offered. The School reserves the right to restrict any parental activity on its campuses and/or refuse to recognize any PVO/PTO or other parental group that does not align with our mission, vision, or strategic plan.

GREEN believes that parents/legal guardians are our students' first educators, and it is our privilege to walk alongside them to support their children in achieving their dreams as they positively impact the world. The School also recognizes that each developmental stage in a student's education requires a different level of parental and school support based on the academic and developmental level of our students, with greater independence acquired over time. It is our intent that the PVO/PTO at each of our schools be personalized to meet the needs of its families and school leadership. This allows each campus to work collaboratively to establish the manner in which it enlists the support of its parents and to achieve harmony among all members of the learning community. Again, each campus is different and may choose to create a formal PVO/PTO, an informal PVO/PTO, or even various parent task forces based on emerging needs.

## **The School offers the following PVO/PTO Guidelines for parents and school leaders:**

The purpose of a PVO/PTO is:

- To promote the welfare of children at school, at home, and in the community.
- To continually raise the level of support and academic expectations at the School.
- To uphold all laws that provide for the protection and care of children.
- To strengthen the relationship between home and school, encouraging cooperation between teachers and parents in the educational process.
- To promote and support all efforts to raise the quality and awareness of GREEN.

Although the School is not formally or legally connected to any PVO/PTO organizations, it does offer the following components and structure to best serve the mission and vision of GREEN:

- The PVO/PTO shall be recognized as non-commercial, non-sectarian, and non-partisan.
- Any PVO/PTO established on a GREEN campus shall be separate and apart from any other PVO/PTO at the School.
- Bylaws should be drafted that expressly state the purpose and structure of each campus' PVO/PTO.
- Each PVO/PTO should have an election process resulting in elected board members with length of terms specified.
- All financial procedures should be clearly written and adhered to and at least two (2) board member signatures should be required on any financial transaction.
- Each PVO/PTO should seek to align the talents/interests of its parents with the needs of its school community.

## **Public Records Requests**

As a “public body,” GREEN is committed to conducting business in an open manner and making it possible for the public to have access to records in accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Under the FOIA, the School has 10 business days (excluding weekends and holidays) to notify the requester of its determination as to the public availability of the public record requested. Following that notification, the School has 30 calendar days to actually produce the records relative to the FOIA request.

*Legal Reference:*

*SC Code of Laws, § 30-4-10 et seq.*

## **News Media Inquiries**

School staff must direct all media inquiries to the Executive Director or their designee. News media must have permission from the Administration before talking with students or teachers. Any employee who intends to write or publish an article, paper, or other publication referencing the School must first have approval from the Executive Director or their designee.

## Video/Audio Use by the School

GREEN may use video or audio surveillance to monitor halls, classrooms, and common areas to ensure the safety of students and faculty. Additionally, this video or audio surveillance may be used for evidence in disciplinary situations, as well as for remote viewing or monitoring of various school activities, entrances, and school parking areas. Viewing requests by parents/legal guardians may be refused or limited where viewing would be an unreasonable invasion of a third party's personal privacy or would give rise to a concern for a third party's safety. No other requests for viewing will be honored. Approved viewings must be done in the presence of the principal or designee.

## Animals on Campus

No pets or animals are allowed on any GREEN campus at any time unless cleared in advance in writing by the administration. (Please see *Special Events* below.)

## Special Events

Special events involving animals must be approved by the school principal at least two (2) weeks prior to the event. If the event is approved, a list of all animals to be present must be sent home to parents/legal guardians to ensure that no students have allergies to the animals. If a student has allergies to an animal, the teacher is responsible for finding another environment for that student and providing similar opportunities to learn as the students who do not have allergies.

## Classroom Pets

Teachers are permitted to have classroom pets only if the pet pertains to the curriculum being offered. Prior to bringing the pet into the classroom, the school principal must give written approval to the teacher, and the teacher shall obtain signed consent forms from the parents/legal guardians of all students with access to the classroom. These forms must be submitted to the principal prior to bringing the animal(s) into the School.

GREEN requires that all animals be treated with the utmost care to teach the importance of kindness to all creatures. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that all animals are treated well and ethically and not treated as toys by students. The animal must have adequate room in any enclosure to live and thrive and must always have sufficient food and water, including when School is closed on nights, weekends, and holidays. The teacher will be responsible for the care, cleaning, and well-being of all classroom pets. The principal has the right to ask that the animal be removed at any time. Any abuse of a classroom pet will be deemed a disciplinary infraction.

## **8000 BUSINESS**

GREEN Charter Schools believes that the quantity and quality of learning programs it operates are directly dependent on the funding provided and the effective and efficient management of those funds. Therefore, achievement of the School's purposes can best be accomplished through excellent

fiscal management. To achieve this, a system of accounting practices and procedures is necessary for the School to account for the receipt and disbursement of funds in an accurate and efficient manner as well as to safeguard the School's assets. Inherent in the governing process of GREEN is an understanding that school employees who are entrusted with public funds are expected to safeguard those funds and assets and expend them in a manner that is efficient, economical, and effective to achieve the purpose for which they were provided to the School.

The Board and Administration of GREEN Charter Schools are charged with supervising the financial affairs of the School. Numerous procedures have been developed to help safeguard all funds and to ensure that the School's financial activities are maintained with high standards and comply with federal and state laws and regulations.

In those regards, the GREEN Finance Department is charged with providing:

1. A centralized, standard accounting system in accordance with prescribed regulations;
2. Control over revenues and the disbursement of funds as prescribed by law and Board policies;
3. Appropriate financial records and reports as required by regulations and policies; and
4. The safekeeping of school assets.

## **Control Procedures**

Control procedures encompass those policies and procedures that the administration has established to provide reasonable assurance that specific school objectives will be achieved. Control procedures pertain to:

1. Proper authorization of transactions and activities.
2. Segregation of duties to reduce the possibility that any one person could be able to perpetrate and conceal error or irregularities in the normal course of their duties. A sound segregation of duties entails assigning different people the responsibilities of authorizing transactions, recording and reconciling transactions, and maintaining custody of assets.
3. Design and use of adequate documents and records to help ensure proper recording of transactions and events, such as monitoring the use of pre-numbered documents.

These objectives are pursued through a sound internal control structure, which is carefully established and meticulously followed by the Finance Department. The School's internal control structure is comprised of the accounting system, control procedures, and internal control systems.

## **Internal Control Systems**

Internal controls are the mechanisms, rules, and procedures implemented by the School to ensure the integrity of its financial and accounting information, promote accountability, and prevent fraud. The GREEN Finance Department is charged with:

1. Providing adequate safeguards over access to and use of assets and records, such as secured facilities and authorization for access to computer programs and data files.

2. Conducting independent checks on performance and proper valuation of recorded amounts, such as clerical checks, reconciliations, comparisons of assets with recorded accountability, computer-programmed controls, administrative review of reports that summarize the detail of account balances, and user review of computer-generated reports.
3. Reviewing expenditures to ensure allowability of costs for the fund being utilized (as described in the grant document and in the SDE yearly *Funding Manual*), reasonableness of purchase and receipt of goods and/or services for achieving the program objectives, and availability of funds as planned in the budget. This includes reviews of salary expenditures to ensure appropriate staff are being utilized for achieving program objectives and as planned in the budget. This review is documented by signoffs by the appropriate fund manager on forms and reports such as:
  - a. Purchase orders
  - b. Check requests
  - c. Purchasing card transaction summaries
  - d. Expense reports
  - e. Time sheets
  - f. PARS and certifications
  - g. Invoices
  - h. Employee Positions and Pay reports
  - i. Contractor services contracts
  - j. Other forms and/or reports may be required in addition to those listed above.
4. Maintaining an Equipment Management System that includes:
  - a. Detailed property records
  - b. Documentation of periodic physical inventory
  - c. Controls to prevent loss, theft, and damage

## Accounts Payable

All invoices approved for payment must be received in Accounts Payable ([ap@scgreencharter.org](mailto:ap@scgreencharter.org)) by the end of the day Monday. Checks are written and ready for distribution on Thursday of every week. Occasionally, holidays or other circumstances may warrant an altered check run date. If this is necessary, an email will be sent from the Finance Department with information regarding the altered schedule.

## Files and Record Management

Accurate and reliable records are essential for meeting GREEN's legal and financial obligations and for managing the affairs of the School. All books and records must reflect in an accurate and timely manner all business transactions. The Director of Finance or their designee is responsible for all financial record keeping and must fully disclose and record all assets and liabilities, and must exercise diligence in enforcing these requirements

## Operational Safeguards

The responsibility for safeguarding, accounting, and managing the school funds for GREEN Charter Schools rests solely with the Executive Director. The Executive Director may delegate these duties to the Director of Finance or their designee, but the responsibility and accountability remain with the Executive Director.

## Financial Statements

The Director of Finance will prepare monthly financial reports for the GREEN Board. In addition, the revenues and expenditures will be reviewed monthly.

## Procurement Code

Any product, service, or other expenditure of School funds must be processed in accordance with the GREEN Charter Schools' Procurement Policy. Where procurement involves the expenditure of federal assistance or contract funds, the School shall also comply with applicable federal law and regulations, including those that are not otherwise contained herein.

## Solicitation Methods, Competition, and Price Reasonableness

Competitive Price and Reasonableness must be followed, and orders must not be artificially divided so as to constitute a small purchase. The School is not required to conduct business with the vendor quoting the lowest price. The School is required to conduct business with the "responsible" vendor quoting the lowest price that can meet the actual requirements of the School. Any award of business will be based upon the original request communicated to the vendor.

## Guidelines for Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

- a) Purchases up to \$10,000: No competitive quotations required if prices are considered reasonable by the Purchase Approver.
- b) Purchases from \$10,000.01 - \$25,000: Must have WRITTEN quotes from a minimum of three (3) qualified suppliers. Documentation of the quotes must be attached to the purchase request. When prices are solicited by telephone, the suppliers must furnish written evidence of their quotations to be considered.
- c) Purchases exceeding \$25,000: Must have WRITTEN solicitation for WRITTEN proposals from qualified suppliers. The solicitation must include a method for evaluating the proposals received if the award is made based on other factors in addition to price. Final purchase must be approved by the Executive Director or their designee.

For further reference, please see the link to the District's Procurement Training: [SCPCSD Procurement Training](#).

## Cooperative Purchasing

The School may either participate in, sponsor, conduct, or administer a Cooperative Purchasing

program for the procurement of supplies, services, or construction with one or more Public Procurement Units (PPUs), in accordance with an agreement entered into between the participants. Such Cooperative Purchasing may include, but is not limited to, joint or multi-party contracts between PPUs, including use of school contracts. The School shall, prior to conducting procurement activities, explore the availability of satisfying its needs through utilization of pre-existing contracts between the School and private vendors and shall use such arrangements if cost effective and otherwise advantageous to the School. The School may procure supplies, services, or construction items through the contracts established by the General Services Division of the State of South Carolina.

### **State Term Contracts**

The School has access to contracts established by the State of South Carolina. These should be utilized when economic and feasible. The state contract number entered on the requisition should be the same as the state contract number provided on the purchase order. It is highly recommended that vendors list the specific state contract number on their quote.

### **Sole Source Procurement**

A purchase order may be approved when the purchase approver determines that only one source exists for the required item or service. This determination must be documented in writing. Sole Source purchases will only be authorized based on the following criteria:

1. There is lack of competition for the product or service.
2. It is a unique, one-of-a-kind product or service.
3. The product:
  - A. Has patented or proprietary rights that provide superior capabilities not obtainable from similar products, and
  - B. Is not marketed through other wholesalers, distributors, or other sources whose competition could be encouraged
4. The product is an exempt item or service. (*See list below*).
5. The product is curriculum-based or a standardized item.

### **Emergency Procurement**

The Emergency Procurement method may be used when there is an immediate threat to the health, welfare, safety of people and/or property or when the immediate threat may lead to a serious disruption of School operations. The Executive Director and/or their designee shall determine if such an emergency exists. Emergency Procurements must be done with as much pricing competition as is practicable under the circumstances.

### **Surplus Property, Equipment, Material, and Supplies**

School property may be declared surplus by the Executive Director or their designee, in consultation with other school administrators, when it is deemed unusable for school purposes, is obsolete, or the costs to repair or to refurbish the property in order to return it to public use would exceed the value of similarly used equipment with a remaining useful life. Surplus property may be disposed of by

public auction, competitive sealed bidding, or public sale. When an attempt is made to dispose of surplus goods through one or more of these methods and the goods are not sold, the goods will be discarded in a means of disposal most advantageous to the School.

## **Accounts Payable Policies and Procedures**

Only valid accounts payable transactions based on documented vendor invoices, receiving reports, or other approved documentation are recorded as accounts payable. Vendors and suppliers are paid as their payment terms require, taking advantage of any discounts offered.

### **Contracted Services**

IRS Form W-9 must be completed by all individuals or organizations performing contracted services for GREEN. Transactions for these services must be flagged in the accounting system as a 1099 invoice. This process will ensure that a Form 1099 is produced for these vendors.

### **Invoices**

All invoices must be submitted to [ap@scgreencharter.org](mailto:ap@scgreencharter.org) for processing. Invoices must contain the date of purchase, name and address of vendor, quantity and description of goods or services rendered, and the amount. The Director of Finance Office or their designee will review the invoice to confirm that the goods or services outlined on the invoice have been received by GREEN before signing off on the invoice. The Director of Finance or their designee will then process the invoice in a timely manner.

### **Recurring Monthly Invoices**

Any recurring monthly invoices may be processed without signatures. Only vendors that have active contracts or agreements on file with the Finance Office will be considered recurring. The Finance Office must review all recurring monthly invoices to ensure that the invoice matches the cost outlined in the contract.

The Finance Office and any approved subcontractor are responsible for the following to ensure that best practices and procedures are met:

- Maintaining records of all purchase orders
- Entering all accounts payable information in GREEN's accounting software
- Writing all checks for GREEN, including special services, and maintaining all information in GREEN's accounting software
- Providing expenditure records monthly as requested
- Maintaining accurate account ledgers
- Preparing monthly financial statements as requested
- Maintaining files on accounting data
- Reconciling accounts payable bank statements monthly

## **Banking Policies**

The School's Finance Department will follow the following banking policies:

- All school bank accounts must be in the name of the School. The Director of Finance or their designee may choose the financial institution at which to hold official accounts, taking into consideration fees and charges and access to a branch for secure depositing of funds.
- All bank accounts must be reconciled monthly through the bank reconciliation process.
- All unreconciled items identified during the completion of the monthly bank reconciliation process must be investigated and corrective action taken.
- All stale checks identified during the completion of the monthly bank reconciliation process must be investigated and corrective action taken.

## **Purchasing**

### **Purchasing Manual**

Any product, service or other expenditure of School funds must be processed in accordance with the School's Procurement Policies. The level of competitive solicitations varies by the total potential dollar amount to be expended.

### **Minority Business Enterprise**

GREEN follows established practices that ensure that small and/or disadvantaged businesses and businesses owned and operated by minorities and/or qualifying individuals are afforded the opportunity to participate fully in the procurement process. The School operates in a manner that will enhance the opportunity for small, minority, and disadvantaged firms and individuals to participate in being awarded contracts and to enhance capital ownership and overall local and state economic development.

## **Equipment Acquisition and Disposal Policy**

### **Fixed Asset Control**

Proper control procedures will be followed by the School for all capital asset acquisitions, transfers, and dispositions to ensure internal control of capital equipment and to assist in reporting. The Director of Finance or their designee are responsible and accountable for all furniture, equipment, machinery, and any other capital assets used by the School and will maintain a control system for all capital assets. The Director of Finance or their designee will assist and evaluate the capital asset control procedures.

### **Acquisitions**

All purchases of assets costing more than \$10,000 and authorized within the annual operating budget must be approved by the Director of Finance or their designee. A Requisition Request Form must be completed and approved for all purchases. This Request is to be attached to all purchase orders or check authorization forms submitted to the School's Finance Department. All purchases for items over \$10,000 must include a completed purchase order, with the form indicating that the item is a capital purchase. When the Finance Department enters the records into the School's accounting system, the item will be recorded in the official school inventory documentation as well. School

management may source the vendor for the purchase of the capital asset or can submit the request to solicit bids to the Director of Finance or their designee for assets costing \$10,000 or more.

Any internally constructed or donated equipment will be reported to the Finance Department if the item costs or has a Fair Market Value of \$1,000 or more. A complete description of the property, date manufactured or received, number of items, cost or estimated value, and a statement that it was internally constructed or donated will be included on the organization's in-kind contributions log/records.

### **Dispositions**

Capital assets may be sold or traded in for new equipment. An Asset Disposition Form must be completed and approved by the Director of Finance or their designee. Upon approval, the school may advertise the property for sale or submit a list to the Finance Department for sale and disposition. After completion of the sale, the Asset Disposition Form must be submitted to the Finance Department, and the item will be transferred out of the inventory records. The item will then be deleted from the asset records and any gain or loss incurred shall be recorded.

Worn-out or obsolete property with no cash value will be reported to the Finance Department on the Asset Disposition Form with a description of the item, the serial number, and the condition. The Finance Department will then inspect the item prior to it being removed from the School and discarded. The asset will then be removed from the asset records.

Any asset that is lost, stolen, or damaged will be reported in writing as soon as possible. The item description, asset/inventory number, and other information about the lost item should be included in the report. The Director of Finance or their designee will determine the proper course of action and will notify the School's insurance carrier and any outside authorities if deemed appropriate. If not recovered, the asset will be removed from the asset records.

### **Inventory Control Log**

Upon any acquisition, the Director of Finance or their designee is responsible for assigning and attaching asset number labels to the property which can be readily located and then adding the item to the Inventory Control Log. The log will display the label number, the date the inventory was purchased, the date it was labeled, its cost or Fair Market Value, its location, a description, and the date the item was disposed of, if applicable. The Inventory Control Log shall be reviewed on an annual basis to verify its accuracy and include notes to indicate the condition of each item as well as the signature of the person conducting the inventory and the date. Any discrepancies must be reported to the Director of Finance or their designee for resolution.

### **Federal Program Equipment Inventory Control Procedure Log**

The School maintains detailed records of all government-furnished inventory, identifying and segregating all property and equipment acquired through government contracts.

## Surplus Property, Equipment, Materials, And Supplies

School property may be declared surplus by the Executive Director or applicable school principal, in consultation with other School Administrators and Department Heads, when it is deemed unusable for School purposes, is obsolete, or the costs to repair or to refurbish the property in order to return it to public use would exceed the value of like used equipment with remaining useful life. Surplus property may be disposed of by public auction, competitive sealed bidding, or public sale. When an attempt is made to dispose of surplus goods through one or more of these methods and the goods are not sold, the goods will be discarded in a means of disposal most advantageous to the School.

## Additional Purchasing Policies

For purchasing transactions not fully addressed by the above policies and procedures or covered by another School policy, GREEN Charter Schools will apply the following in order:

1. The published policies of its sponsor, the South Carolina Public Charter School District (SCPCSD).
2. The published policies of the individual school's geographic school district.

## Credit Card Policy

For those employees assigned a GREEN-issued credit card, School procurement costs can be minimized by placing both the authority to buy and the means to pay for low value goods or services with authorized employees. This expedites small value purchases, reduces the reliance on petty cash and staff reimbursements, and reduces the number of small payment transactions processed through Accounts Payable. GREEN therefore issues a certain number of credit cards at the discretion of the School Administration to specified employees who frequently incur legitimate School business expenses. The Director of Finance will set monthly spending limits based on need and available budgets.

**At all times, employees using assigned School credit cards must adhere to the following guidelines:**

- Accept full personal responsibility for the safekeeping of the card.
- Do not permit anyone else to use the credit card even if they are a GREEN employee.
- Ensure that all purchases are at a fair and reasonable price.
- Immediately report lost or stolen credit cards to the Finance Department for bank notification.
- Do not under any circumstances use the School credit card to obtain personal credit cards or loans.
- May not exceed the credit limit.
- May not use the card for unauthorized charges, which include, but are not limited to:
  - Cash advances
  - Personal or non-business expenditures of any kind
  - Alcohol purchases of any kind
  - Meals in excess of per diem limits
  - Additional unauthorized expenditures such as entertainment, gifts, or other prohibited expenditures

Employees using the School credit card will be required to sign a declaration authorizing GREEN to recover from the employee's salary any amount incorrectly charged. Breaching of the credit card policy may lead to disciplinary action against the employee involved, up to and including termination of employment, and where applicable, the involvement of law enforcement. In all cases of misuse, GREEN Charter Schools reserves the right to recover any monies impermissibly obtained by the card user.

## Receipts

It is the credit card user's responsibility to obtain receipts from the merchant each time the credit card is used. Each authorized GREEN credit card holder is responsible for submitting all receipts associated with the charges on their assigned credit card after the purchase is made. The Finance Department will review all credit card statements to ensure that all receipts associated with the statement are on file. The failure to provide receipts or credible explanations for unsupported charges could result in the cancellation of the card, deduction of the amount spent from the card user's salary, or other discipline, up to and including termination.

## Expense Reimbursements

Most expenditures should be made via a Purchase Order submitted through the Finance Office. In the event the normal process for purchasing supplies or services is not feasible, GREEN staff can seek reimbursement for certain goods or services which they purchased using a personal payment method. **All such purchases must be approved in advance in writing by the Principal or their designee. Purchases made with a personal payment method cannot exceed \$1,000.** The employee is responsible for submitting all appropriate expense reimbursement documentation, including any receipts or proof of purchase.

**Employees must submit expenses as soon as they occur, and no later than twenty (20) business days from the day of purchase.** The processing time for a reimbursement is twenty (20) business days.

## Grant Application and Management Policy

### Overview

The purpose of the Global Renewable Energy Education Network's (GREEN's) Grant Application and Management Policy is to ensure alignment of all grant applications submitted by GREEN staff, thereby increasing grant-related revenue, limiting the Network's grant-related legal liability, and improving the efficiency and impact of programs and services funded through grants.

### Policy Statement

To ensure consistency and accountability in securing and managing grant funds, all grant application proposals must first be submitted in writing by the applicant to their direct supervisor. If approval to proceed is received from the supervisor, the applicant shall then submit this written approval

along with the application proposal to GREEN's Director of Growth and Communications or their designee to receive permission to apply for the grant. This permission must be given in writing. The Director of Growth and Communications or their designee shall oversee all requests, application submissions, acceptances, and post-award and closeout requirements, including programmatic and financial reporting, in conjunction with GREEN's Director of Finance or their designees and with the assistance of the applicant as requested. The Finance Department has sole authority for the drawdown of funds and must review/approve financial reports prior to submission.

### **Applicant Roles and Responsibilities**

Applicants are responsible for conducting all grant-related activity including, but not limited to: planning for grant acquisition; preparation and submission of grant proposals including proposals for continuing current awards; grant writing; preparing departmental budget revision requests to accept grant funds; preparing any agenda items to accept grant awards; developing grant implementation plans; managing grant programs and projects; preparing and submitting programmatic reports to grantors; and properly closing out grant projects as detailed in the grant agreement or award letter that delineates the terms and conditions of the grant. Failure to conduct these grant-related responsibilities may result in discipline, up to and including termination. Applicants shall be assisted with the technical and fiscal management of the grant by the Director of Growth and Communications and the Director of Finance.

### **Application Submission**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that each grant application submitted on behalf of GREEN Charter Schools or one of its individual schools is aligned with an established Network priority, meets GREEN Charter Schools' expectations of document quality, has matching funds available if required by grantor, and has considered the means for continuation of the project or program after the grant period has ended.

### **Award Notification, Review, and Acceptance**

Grant agreements are legal contracts. It is the applicant's responsibility to conduct the project and/or activities associated with the grant to accomplish its objectives, while adhering to all the terms and conditions prescribed by the grantor. Failure to do so increases GREEN's exposure to legal liability and compromises current and future grant funding.

### **Summary**

Any GREEN staff member who proceeds with a grant application, regardless of the designation of the grantor (federal, state, local, or other agency), without the written approval of both their immediate supervisor and the Director of Growth and Communications or their designee, will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

## **Crowdfunding Fundraisers**

GREEN recognizes the desire for teachers to enhance their classrooms through online crowdfunding websites. These are to be considered fundraisers and must follow the School's Fundraising policy. Prior written approval for all crowdfunding fundraisers must be requested and received from the Director of Finance or their designee.

## **State Investment Policy**

GREEN follows the provisions of state law pertaining to authorized investments by public entities.

### *Legal References:*

*Chapter 35 of Title II (State Consolidated Procurement Code), South Carolina Code of Laws (1976).*

*SC Code § 6-5-10 (2012).*

## **9000 FOOD SERVICES**

GREEN recognizes that students require nutritional food and beverages to grow, learn, and maintain good health and shall adhere to all federal and state guidelines and regulations pertaining to these Child Nutrition Programs. The School provides a food service program for school breakfasts and school lunches that meets the dietary specifications of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, as periodically amended, and applicable state laws and regulations.

Students at GREEN may purchase a nutritional lunch and/or breakfast in the school cafeteria or may bring one from home. The cost for student breakfast and lunch will be announced at the beginning of the school year and can be paid in advance via an online payment system. For students needing free or reduced breakfast and/or lunch, please see below for information on the Free and Reduced Meal Program.

## **Free and Reduced Meal Program**

GREEN follows the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) Guidelines mandated by law. Under these programs, all student meals that meet specific nutritional requirements are supported by federal monies. Students from households with qualifying income may receive their meals free or at a reduced price. Applications and a complete copy of this policy are available from the School's Director of Finance or their designee.

In accordance with federal law, the School will make a public announcement and notify parents/legal guardians of the eligibility criteria for free and reduced-price meals and provide information regarding how a household may make an application for these benefits. Such notice and application will be distributed at the beginning of each school year.

## Eligibility Guidelines

For school officials to determine eligibility, the household must provide the following information on the application: (1) A SNAP or TANF case number certifying the household is currently eligible for either of these assistance programs and an adult household member signature or (2) names of all household members, the name and last four digits of the social security number of the adult household member signing the application form, current income by source for each household member, and a signature of an adult household member certifying that the information provided is correct. Foster children may also be eligible for these benefits regardless of household income.

If a household member becomes unemployed or if household size changes, the household should contact the school to file a meal application. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

The School's Director of Finance or their designee will review all applications to determine eligibility. Parents/legal guardians dissatisfied with the ruling may appeal the decision to the Director of Finance or their designee. Formal written requests for eligibility reconsideration should be sent to the Executive Director.

## Preventing Overt Identification

Overt identification encompasses any action that could result in a child being recognized as potentially eligible to receive free or reduced-price school meals. A child's eligibility status will not be disclosed at any point in the process of providing free or reduced-price meals, including notification of the availability of free or reduced-price benefits; certification and notification of eligibility; provision of meals in the cafeteria; and at the point of service. The names of those eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals will not be published, posted, or announced in any manner. Additionally, the information on rosters and computer screens at the point of sale is coded.

Students eligible for free or reduced-price meals will not be required to:

- Work for their meals
- Use a separate lunchroom or other service area
- Go through a separate serving line
- Enter the lunchroom through a separate entrance
- Eat meals at a different time
- Eat a meal different from the one sold to children paying the full price
- Use a method of payment or distribution of tickets or tokens different from the method used by children paying full price

The School shall ensure that, in the operation of the free and reduced-price meals and/or free milk programs, no student shall be discriminated against because of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy or disability, or any other basis prohibited by law.

Menus items will not differ at different school sites based on the percentage of free and reduced-price students in the population. For example, a school with an 80% free and reduced-price population will not receive reduced choices or different menu choices than a school with a 25% free and reduced-price population.

## **Charging Meals**

The School uses an automated prepayment system for student meal accounts. Students whose accounts have insufficient funds, and who do not bring a meal or other funds to school to pay for meals, may charge meals to their meal accounts. Students will be informed of their right to purchase a meal, which excludes a la carte items, for any school breakfast, lunch or other meal offered by the School, even if the student's account has insufficient funds.

GREEN prohibits publicly identifying or shaming a student for any unpaid meal charges, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Delaying or refusing to serve a meal to the student;
- Designating a specific meal option for the student; or
- Otherwise taking any disciplinary action against the student.

## **Collection of Unpaid Meal Charges**

The School's efforts to recover amounts owed due to the charging of meals must not have a negative impact on the student involved and shall focus on the adults in the household responsible for providing funds for meal purchases. The School shall consider whether the benefits of potential collections outweigh the costs that would be incurred to achieve those collections.

For purposes of this policy, "delinquent debt" refers to unpaid meal charges.

The School may contact the parents/legal guardians of students who charge meals to their meal accounts to collect the delinquent debt. The first such communication will be made in writing, by mail or e-mail, after ten (10) meal(s) have been charged. Subsequent written and verbal communications with parents/legal guardians concerning delinquent debt will be made by the building administrator or their designee, as may be necessary and appropriate. All communications regarding unpaid meal charges shall be made directly and discreetly to parents/legal guardians. All written communications shall include information regarding the application for free or reduced-price meals, information on local food pantries, the Department of Social Services' supplemental nutrition assistance program, and a link to any community services available. In the event a student's unpaid meal charges are equal to or more than the cost of thirty (30) meals, the parents/legal guardians of the student will be referred to the Director of Finance or their designee for resolution to ensure the student is well fed.

GREEN shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws and other federal or state requirements concerning the collection of unpaid meal charges, including but not limited to requirements relating to delinquent debt and "bad debt," as defined by federal law, and record-keeping relating thereto. The School may accept gifts, donations, or grants from any public or private sources for the purpose of paying off any unpaid charges for school lunches, breakfasts, or other such meals.

## **Dissemination of Policy**

This policy shall be provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households transferring to GREEN during the school year. This policy shall be provided to all School staff responsible for its enforcement. In addition, school social workers, nurses, the homeless liaison, and other staff members assisting children in need or who may be contacted by families with unpaid meal charges shall be informed of this policy.

The School shall maintain, to the extent required by law, documentation of the methods used to communicate this policy to households and School staff responsible for policy enforcement. GREEN shall provide this policy to the South Carolina State Department of Education during Administrative Reviews.

### *References:*

*7 C.F.R. Part 210 National School Lunch Program.*

*7 C.F.R. Part 220 School Breakfast Program.*

*7 C.F.R. Part 245 Determining Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals and Free Milk in Schools.*

*U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Policy Memo SP 46-2016, "Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policy," July 8, 2016.*

*U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Policy Memo SP 47-2016, "Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments," July 8, 2016.*

*U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Policy Memo SP 57-2016, "Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A," Sept. 16, 2016.*

## **Accommodations for Persons with Dietary Disabilities**

A child with a dietary disability will be provided with reasonable dietary accommodations when that need is supported by a written medical statement from a licensed physician. The statement must clearly identify the child's:

- Dietary Disability
- Major life activity or bodily function affected by the disability
- Diet prescription
- Food or foods to be omitted from their diet
- Reasonable food or choice of foods that must be substituted in his or her meals

## **Non-Severe Food Allergies and/or Food Intolerance**

The School Food Authority (SFA - in this case, GREEN) is not required to make food substitutions for children with non-severe food allergies or food intolerances, who do not have a disability. The School

may choose to make reasonable food substitutions, at its discretion, for individual children who do not have a disability, but who are medically certified as having special medical or dietary needs. Determinations are made on a case-by-case basis. Any accommodation must meet the mandated meal pattern. A medical statement for a child who does not have a disability must be signed by a licensed physician, physicians' assistant, or nurse practitioner.

In accordance with USDA regulations, for students with lactose intolerance or a non-life-threatening milk allergy, no other beverage can be substituted for milk except a lactose-free beverage that meets the nutritional requirements of milk.

SFAs are not required to make food substitutions based on food choices or food preferences.

### **Reasonable Accommodations for Persons with Limited English Proficiency**

GREEN's application for Free and Reduced Meals is available in both English and Spanish. Menus are also posted in both English and Spanish.

### **Training**

The Food and Transportation Manager at GREEN will provide annual training to the Food Services Child Nutrition Program staff in the following topics:

- Collection and use of data
- Effective public notification systems
- Complaint Procedures
- Compliance Review Techniques
- Resolution of noncompliance
- Requirements for reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities
- Requirements for language assistance
- Conflict resolution
- Customer Service

### **Customer Service**

All GREEN campuses are committed to treating all our customers with dignity and respect. Our goal is to provide excellent customer service regardless of race, age, color, sex, national origin, or disability.

### **Site Compliance Reviews**

During each school year, the GREEN Food Service Director and/or their designee will conduct site monitoring reviews for each meal program to ensure:

- There is no overt identification of students
- There is no disparate treatment based on anyone's protected class.

- An “And Justice for All” poster is prominently displayed at the site.

Any issues of non-compliance will require the issuance of a corrective action letter to the staff involved as well as a follow-up visit. Further follow-up or action may be warranted based on these reviews.

## **Conflict Resolution**

The GREEN Food Service Department recognizes the right of our customers to file a complaint. We also recognize that there may be occasions when conflicts may be resolved in-house. The Department is committed to exerting every effort in providing solutions when conflicts arise by seeking to listen to understand; demonstrating empathy and discovering needs; identifying barriers to a resolution and overcoming those barriers; turning problems into possibilities; and whenever possible, finding a win/win solution.

## **Professional Standards for Food Service Personnel**

GREEN Charter Schools believes that maintaining professional standards for its food service personnel across all campuses strengthens the ability of staff to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. Requiring proper qualifications to serve in GREEN’s Child Nutrition Programs improves the quality of school meals, reduces errors, and enhances program integrity.

GREEN shall comply with the professional standards for school nutrition personnel who manage and operate the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs which are contained in the regulations of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA), Public Law 111-296. These regulations, effective July 1, 2015, as amended, effective April 30, 2019, establish hiring standards for the selection of state and local school nutrition program directors and require all personnel in the school nutrition programs to complete annual continuing education/training.

The Food and Transportation Manager is responsible for the food and nutrition program and reports directly to the Director of Finance. The Director of Finance will develop administrative regulations that detail the required hiring standards and continuing education training for all GREEN food service personnel.

### *Legal Reference:*

*The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA), Public Law 111-296, effective July 1, 2015, as amended April 30, 2019.*

## **Financial Management of the Nonprofit School Food Service**

1. GREEN will maintain a nonprofit school nutrition and food service operation.
2. Revenues earned by the school nutrition and food services will be used only for the operation or improvement of NSLP/SBP/SMP.
3. Lunch and breakfast meals served to teachers, administrators, custodians, and other adults not directly involved with the operation of GREEN's nutrition and food services will be priced to cover all direct and indirect costs of preparing and serving the meals.

(Note: For meals with portion sizes equivalent to student meals, the adult meal price will be not less than the amount of reimbursement for a free-eligible meal, plus the value of commodity foods used in the meal preparation.)

4. GREEN will maintain effective control and accountability for and adequately safeguard all nutrition and food services' cash, real and personal property, equipment, and other assets, and ensure they are used solely for nutrition and food services purposes.
5. GREEN will meet the requirements for allowable NSLP/SBP/SMP costs as described in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87.
6. All procurement transactions for nutrition and food services goods and services will be conducted according to state, federal, and GREEN procurement standards using the applicable cost thresholds.
7. In the operation of its nutrition and food services program, GREEN will purchase food products that are produced in the United States whenever possible.

### **Nutrition and Menu Planning**

1. Meals and snacks served for reimbursement will meet the recommendations of the most current Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
2. Meals served for reimbursement will meet at least the minimum NSLP and SBP requirements for the food item and quantities.
3. Meals served for reimbursement will:
  - a. Meet all minimum and maximum calorie requirements by grade level;
  - b. Meet the maximum standards set for saturated fat;
  - c. Meet the maximum standards set for sodium by grade level; and
  - d. Meet the requirement for zero grams of trans fats.
4. GREEN will use the offer versus serve option when serving program breakfasts to high school students. High school students must take at least three of four food items, including a one-half cup of fruit or vegetable offered in program breakfasts.
5. GREEN will use the offer versus serve option when serving NSLP lunches to high school students. High school students must take at least three of five food items, including a one-half cup of fruit or vegetable offered in program lunches.
6. GREEN will use the offer versus serve option when serving program lunches to students below high school grades. Students below high school grades will be required to take a minimum of three of the five food items, including a one-half cup of fruit or vegetable offered in program lunches.
7. GREEN will use the offer versus serve option when serving program breakfasts to students below high school grades. Students below high school grades will be required to take three of the four food items including one-half cup of fruit offered in program breakfasts.
8. A copy of the Board Minutes adopting the offer versus serve option for students below high school grades for program lunches and/or for all students in GREEN for program breakfasts, as applicable, will be made available upon request.

## **Use and Control of Commodity Foods**

1. GREEN will accept and use commodity foods in as large a quantity as may be efficiently utilized in the reimbursable lunch and breakfast program.
2. GREEN will maintain necessary safeguards to prevent theft or spoilage of commodity foods.
3. The value of commodity foods used for any food production other than NSLP, SBP or snacks shall be replaced in the food service inventory.

## **General USDA NSLP/SBP/SMP Requirements**

1. No student may be denied a meal as a disciplinary action.
2. Breakfast will be served in the morning, at or near the beginning of the school day.
3. Lunch will be served between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
4. GREEN will provide substitute foods for students determined by a licensed physician to be legally disabled and whose disability restricts their diet. Substitutions will be provided only when a medical statement from the licensed physician is on file at the school. The medical statement must state the nature of the child's disability and how the disability affects the child's nutritional needs. It must provide a medical prescription for substitute foods or texture modification. GREEN will not charge more than the price of the school meal, as determined by the child's eligibility status, for substitute meals or foods.
5. The sale of minimally nutritious foods is permitted in restricted areas.
6. GREEN will ensure that potable (drinking) water is available to students, free of charge, for consumption in the place where meals are served during meal service.
7. The sale of foods other than FMNV (Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value) in competition with GREEN's lunch (NSLP) or breakfast (SBP) programs will be allowed in dining sites during lunch and breakfast periods with School approval only when all income from such food sales accrues to the benefit of GREEN's nutrition and food services or accrues to the School or School-supported student organizations.
8. GREEN will not use nutrition and food services funds to purchase FMNV for sale unless the proceeds from the sale of those foods are deposited into the nutrition and food services account in an amount sufficient to cover all direct and indirect costs relating to the purchase and service of the foods.

## **Record Keeping**

- All currently approved and denied confidential applications for free and reduced-price meals and free milk and all current direct certification documents will be maintained for three (3) years after the current school year. Records will be maintained longer in the event of an unresolved audit(s) until the audit(s) has been completed.
- All currently approved or denied confidential applications for free and reduced-price meals and free milk and all current direct certification documents will be readily retrievable by the school or site and made available to state or federal reviewers upon request.
- GREEN will maintain financial records that account for all revenues and expenditures of the nonprofit school nutrition and food services for three (3) years after the school year to which they pertain.

## **Employee Code of Conduct**

All employees engaged in the award and administration of contracts for programs supported by the Child Nutrition Program (CNP) funds must follow the Code of Conduct set out below. These programs include the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program.

GREEN employees and agents shall be governed by the following rules:

1. The purchase during the school day of any food or service from a contractor for individual use is prohibited.
2. GREEN employees shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of material monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to sub-agreements.
2. The removal of any food, supplies, equipment, or school property, to include records and recipe books, is prohibited without the written permission of the Director of Finance or their designee.
3. The outside sale of such items as used oil, empty cans, and the like will be sold by contract between GREEN and the outside agency.
4. Individual sales by any employee to an outside agency or other GREEN employee are prohibited.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

No employee, officer, or agent of GREEN may participate in the selection, award, or administration of any contract supported by Child Nutrition Program funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, is involved. To ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate an unfair competitive advantage, any person that develops or drafts specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations, bids, requests for proposals, contract terms and conditions, or other documents for use by the Child Nutrition Program in conducting procurement shall be excluded from competing for such procurements. Such persons are ineligible for such procurements regardless of the procurement method used.

Conflicts of interest arise when a School employee:

- Has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for the award;
- Is an employee, officer, or agent of the firm selected for the award;
- Has a member of the immediate family who is an employee, officer, or agent of the firm selected for the award;
- Is about to be employed by the firm selected for the award; or
- Has a member of the immediate family who is about to be employed by the firm selected for the award.

## **Resolution of Controversies**

Any actual or proposed supplier aggrieved in connection with a proposed purchase should send written communication detailing the issue to the Executive Director or their designee.

1. The protest shall be in writing.

2. The protest shall be delivered within 10 days of the action which is being aggrieved.
3. A hearing will be scheduled within 15 days of receipt of the protest.
4. The proposed purchase will be delayed until the protest is resolved unless the delay will disrupt the meal service to students. If it is determined that the purchase is necessary, an emergency shall be declared by the Director of Finance or their designee and emergency purchase procedures will be followed until protest resolution.
5. The decision of the Executive Director or their designee shall be in writing and shall be delivered to the aggrieved supplier with proof of delivery required.
6. The aggrieved supplier shall be notified that an appeal of the hearing officer's decision is possible. The appeal request should be made in writing and addressed to the Executive Director or their designee.

### **Public Access to Procurement Information**

1. Procurement information shall be a matter of public record to the extent provided in the Freedom of Information Act.
  2. All bids/offers will be taken under advisement. Between the time an IFB/RFP is opened and awarded, it may be viewed by any company or individual who entered a response to the proposed intent to purchase.
  3. Any supplier providing information as a part of a proposal or offer shall stamp each page or sealed envelope, which they consider proprietary information as "not for public release."
  4. If GREEN receives a request to release this marked information, the supplier shall be notified within 24 hours and given ten (10) working days to obtain a court order to stop the release.
  5. In ten (10) working days, the party requesting the information shall be provided with a copy of the court order or instructions on when the information may be reviewed.
  6. After acceptance, procurement information is available to the public, except as noted above.
- Failure of any employee to abide by this Code of Conduct could result in a fine, suspension, or dismissal.

### *Legal Reference:*

*SC Code of Laws, § 30-4-10 et seq.*

### **Competitive Food Services**

For purposes of this policy, "competitive food" refers to any foods sold or dispensed to children at school other than meals served through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school meal programs. The sale or distribution of competitive food at the School must meet established nutritional guidelines to ensure the health of students.

The following guidelines apply to Competitive Food Services:

- GREEN will permit vending machines and the sale of competitive foods for middle and high school students.

- The Food and Transportation Manager shall ensure that foods from vending machines and other non-cafeteria/competitive foods are sold in compliance with federal and state guidelines and GREEN's policy.
- Schools will be allowed to offer/sell non-cafeteria/competitive foods to students on campus for 30 minutes before breakfast and the first lunch period, and for 30 minutes after breakfast and the last lunch period.
- The sale of beverages to students from any source, including, but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fund-raising activities on school grounds, whether or not school-sponsored, shall be restricted to milk, non-dairy drinks such as soy or rice milk, 100% fruit juices, vegetable juices, or a combination of such juices. These beverages contain only water or vegetable juice and water. All allowed beverages must fulfill the requirements specified in federal regulations regarding artificial sweeteners, flavoring, caffeine, and portion size.
- The School shall make available in GREEN schools for purchase by students nutritious and low-fat foods which shall include, but shall not be limited to, low-fat dairy products and fresh or dried fruit at all times when food is available for purchase during the regular school day in schools.

The Executive Director or their designee is authorized to close a cafeteria or discontinue the sale of competitive foods if not correctly operated.

### **Food Sales Other than the National School Lunch Program**

Only food or drinks that meet the minimal nutritional values and requirements for a la carte foods set by the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (Section 17 of Public Law 95-166 amending Section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966) regulations may be sold or made available for sale in any school of GREEN's, however, the sale of such food is prohibited from 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after the close of the last lunch period at that school. No vending machine that distributes food or drink shall be accessible to students during those hours unless the food or drink being sold meets the minimal nutritional values specified and fulfills the requirements of USDA requirements. When any food is available during the day, nutritious, low-fat foods and drinks, as defined by state law, must also be available for purchase by students during the regular school day.

Promotional candy sales shall be limited to the period before the beginning of the school day and after the close of the school day. Such sales require the approval of the school Principal. The sale of food or drinks anywhere on campus from 30 minutes before and after the end of the last lunch period is regarded as being competitive with the National School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program. Food or drinks that do meet or exceed the minimal nutritional values of the USDA and which are sold during the period above are, however, not considered as being competitive with those programs. These may be sold during the above-mentioned times, but all profits from such sales must accrue to the food service account.

The Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture has approved a list of competitive foods that may be sold. The listing of categories of foods of less than minimal nutritional value shall be used as a guide to sales of competitive foods and drinks in the schools, with the understanding that the USDA may modify the listing.

## Categories of Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV)

Federal regulations define four categories of FMNV, listed below, that cannot be sold during the USDA meal periods.

1. Soda Water
2. Water Ices - As defined by 21 CFR 135.160 FDA regulations - except when water ices that contain fruit or fruit juices are not included in this definition.
3. Chewing Gum - Flavored products, regular and sugarless, from natural or synthetic gums and other ingredients that form an insoluble mass for chewing.
4. Certain Candies - Processed foods made predominantly from sweeteners or artificial sweeteners with a variety of minor ingredients which characterize the following types:
  - A. Hard candy, such as sour balls, fruit balls, candy sticks, lollipops, starlight mints, after-dinner mints, sugar wafers, rock candy, cinnamon candies, breath mints, jaw breakers, and cough drops.
  - B. Jellies and gums, such as gum drops, jellybeans, jellied and fruit-flavored slices, and "Gummi-Bear" type products.
  - C. Marshmallow candies.
  - D. Fondant, such as candy corn, and soft mints.
  - E. Licorice is a product made mostly from sugar and corn syrup which is flavored with an extract made from the licorice root.
  - F. Spun candy.
- G. Candy-coated popcorn is a product made by coating popcorn with a mixture made predominantly from sugar and corn syrup.

The federal definition of FMNV does not include any other competitive foods or beverages of low nutrient density (e.g., cake, cookies, chips, chocolate, and sweetened beverages) except for the categories listed above.

## GREEN Charter Schools Wellness Policy on Student Nutrition and Physical Activity

### Policy Statement

GREEN Charter Schools is committed to fostering a school environment that promotes and protects students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. The School will implement policies and programs that support wellness, nutrition, and physical activity while complying with all federal and state requirements, including Section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296).

### Policy Leadership and Public Involvement

- The Principal or designee at each school will oversee compliance with the Local Wellness Policy (LWP).

- The GREEN Charter Schools Wellness Committee will be established to oversee policy implementation, monitoring, and updates.

The Wellness Committee will include:

- School administrators
- Food service directors
- School nurses
- Physical education teachers
- Parent-teacher organizations
- Student representatives
- Community stakeholders

The Wellness Committee will meet at least twice per year to evaluate and update wellness initiatives.

## **Nutrition Education and Promotion**

### **Goals:**

- Integrate Nutrition Education into Curriculum:
  - Nutrition education will be part of the health curriculum and integrated into other subjects (e.g., science, physical education).
  - The school will use evidence-based strategies for nutrition education.
- Promote Healthy Eating Habits:
  - School-wide campaigns will encourage healthy eating.
  - Monthly newsletters will provide nutrition tips for students and families.
- Support Food Literacy:
  - Hands-on activities (e.g., cooking demonstrations, school gardens) will be promoted.
  - Partnerships with local farms and food providers will be encouraged.

## **Standards for Foods and Beverages**

- **Foods Sold on Campus**
  - All foods sold during school hours (vending machines, a la carte, school stores, and fundraising) must meet USDA Smart Snacks Standards. Refer to the USDA Smart Snacks Standards page:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/guide-smart-snacks-school>
  - Exempt fundraising activities must be documented and limited per state requirements.
- **Foods Served but Not Sold**
  - Foods provided at school (e.g., classroom celebrations, snacks) must align with U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- A list of approved healthy snacks will be made available to parents and teachers.
- GREEN discourages using food or beverages as rewards or punishments.
- **Marketing of Food and Beverages**
  - Only foods and beverages meeting Smart Snacks Standards may be marketed on school property.
  - Advertising for unhealthy food choices will not be permitted in school publications, posters, or events.

## **Physical Education and Physical Activity**

### **Goals:**

- **Comprehensive Physical Education Curriculum**
  - All students will participate in standards-based physical education programs.
  - The curriculum will be developmentally appropriate, emphasizing movement skills, fitness, and cooperative play.
- **Daily Physical Activity**
  - The school will work toward providing at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily through PE, recess, and other activities.
  - Recess and physical activity breaks will be incorporated into the school day.
- **Promote Active Lifestyles**
  - The school will support walking and biking programs where feasible.
  - After-school physical activity programs will be encouraged.

## **Public Notification & Engagement**

- The Wellness Policy will be available on the school's website and included in student handbooks.
- The school will provide annual updates on policy progress via newsletters, meetings, and online announcements.
- Parents, students, and the community will have opportunities to provide feedback through surveys and meetings.

## **Policy Monitoring and Accountability**

- **Annual Evaluations**
  - The Wellness Committee will conduct annual assessments of policy implementation and effectiveness.
  - Schools must document progress on nutrition, physical activity, and wellness goals.
- **Triennial Assessments**
  - Every three years, GREEN Charter Schools will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the policy.
  - The assessment will include compliance checks, stakeholder input, and progress updates.
  - Results will be shared with the public via the school website and presented to the

Governing School Board.

- Record Keeping
  - Documentation will include meeting minutes, policy updates, and wellness program activities.

### **Additional School-Based Wellness Activities**

- GREEN Charter Schools will implement activities that support wellness, including:
  - School-wide wellness events (e.g., health fairs, walk-a-thons).
  - Hydration initiatives (access to free drinking water).
  - Social-emotional wellness programs that promote mindfulness and stress management.

### **Next Steps for Implementation:**

- Form the Wellness Committee and schedule the first meeting.
- Update school website with policy details and public input opportunities.
- Provide training for staff on Smart Snacks compliance and nutrition education.
- Develop a tracking system for annual and triennial evaluations.

## **Non-Discrimination Statement**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
  - U.S. Department of Agriculture
  - Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

- 1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
  3. **email:**  
[Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## **Civil Rights Guidance and Complaint Process**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and the USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and any institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by the USDA. GREEN shall administer these programs in accordance with these regulations and policies.

### **Handling Complaints**

Any person alleging discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability has the right to file a complaint. GREEN will provide a USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form upon request. Complaints may be made to federal, state, or local agencies. They may also be made in another format or verbally. When a complaint of program discrimination is received by a SFA, it must notify either the SCDE or the USDA within five (5) working days of receipt of the complaint.

A program discrimination complaint must be filed no later than 180 days from the date the complainant knew or should have known of the alleged discrimination unless the time for filing is extended by the USDA.

### *Legal References:*

*National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Act Amendments of 1974.  
42 US code § 1773.*

*Americans With Disabilities Act.  
Food and Nutrition Service Instruction 113-1.*

*Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.*

*Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.*

*§ 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.*

*The Age Discrimination Act of 1975.*

# 10000 TRANSPORTATION

## School Bus Safety

The safe transportation of students while using GREEN Charter Schools buses is of paramount importance to the School. All behavioral policies within this Policy Manual are also applicable to students while on school-provided transportation. All federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the operation of buses and vehicles used to transport students shall be observed by drivers, students, and staff.

Students will receive instruction for safe loading, riding, unloading, and emergency evacuation procedures. The Executive Director or their designee may file criminal charges of trespass against any person who unlawfully enters a school bus where entry is not approved or where the individual does not have written approval from the School.

## School Bus Drivers

No person may operate a GREEN Charter Schools bus without completing all required training and maintaining the appropriate certification as required by state law.

### *Legal References:*

*S.C. Code of Laws, as amended, § 59-67-470.*

*South Carolina Department of Education Regulations 43-80, § XIV*

## Transporting Students with IEPs

All eligible students with disabilities will be provided with bus transportation by the School between home and the special education program. Transportation for a student with disabilities will be provided between schools if the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team determines that such transportation is necessary as a related service due to the student's disability. Eligibility must be stated in the student's IEP.

## Employee Use of School Vehicles

GREEN Charter Schools vehicles may be utilized by employees for school-related purposes such as professional development, workshops, conferences, school functions, site visits, etc. They are located at the GREEN Central Office at 1440 Pelham Road in Greenville. If any issues arise with a School vehicle, employees should contact the Director of Finance or their designee. Prior to the use of a School vehicle, a copy of the employee's driver's license must be on file with the GREEN Human Resources Department.

## Reserving a School Vehicle

In order to reserve a GREEN vehicle, staff must contact the Executive Assistant/Board Clerk at to check availability and make arrangements for pick up. Any employee using a GREEN vehicle must record the starting and ending mileage for the trip and must use the gas card assigned to the vehicle.

## Vehicle Maintenance

All maintenance of School vehicles is the responsibility of the GREEN Food and Transportation Manager. This includes but is not limited to:

- Oil changes
- Engine tune-ups
- Tires
- Minor body repairs

## Accidents/Violations

All authorized users of GREEN vehicles are required to abide by all city, state, and federal traffic laws. Any accidents or violations are solely the responsibility of the vehicle operator. Employees must report all accidents/violations within 24 hours of the incident to the Director of Finance.

## 11000 FACILITIES

## Access to Facilities

All GREEN campuses have video systems set up for security purposes. It is GREEN's policy that all exterior doors to all School facilities **must be locked at all times without exception.** Doors may not be propped open under any circumstance. Visitors should activate the buzzer on the outside of the building to request admission by administrative personnel. Upon entry, all visitors must show proper identification and have their names entered on the Visitor Log. They will then receive a visitor identification tag which must be worn for the entirety of their visit, and they must also be accompanied by a staff member at all times while on the premises. Any vendors visiting School premises must follow the same procedure.

**All classroom doors, classroom windows, exterior school doors, and school windows MUST remain locked AT ALL TIMES.** Door panes and windows should never be covered. Outside gates must also remain locked unless the area fenced off is in use. Once the activity is over, the gate must be relocked by a staff member. **It is incumbent upon school staff to remain vigilant throughout the school day to ensure that intruders cannot access the school building.**

All School facilities have alarms systems installed. Alarms should be set by the last person leaving the building each day (a staff member or a member of the cleaning service). The Facilities Manager is the staff contact for any issues with the alarms.

## **Access Cards and Key Distribution and Control**

Access Cards to the appropriate campus buildings will be issued to employees at the beginning of the school year and may be collected at the termination of the school year. **Access cards should be worn with the Employee Identification Card at all times for safety reasons. Under no circumstance are the cards to be shared with anyone other than a supervisor.**

Additional access cards and keys will be issued by the Facilities Manager on an as-needed basis, with prior approval from the Executive Director or the Facilities Manager. Employees are responsible for their access cards and any keys assigned to them. If lost, employees may be held responsible. When utilizing access cards/keys to enter the building during non-business hours, the employee is responsible for ensuring the building is properly secured at all times.

**It is each employee's responsibility to be always alert to safety and security issues. Anyone on campus without proper identifying name tags should be confronted and/or reported to an administrator immediately. Every employee should actively monitor hallways and outside passages during class changes.**

## **Facility Maintenance**

All major facility maintenance issues (e.g., water line failure/leaks, power failure, septic issues, HVAC problems) should be reported immediately and directly to the Facilities Manager or their designee by school administration. Minor problems should be reported by the school principal on a Maintenance Request Form. The Facilities Manager or their designee will review the problem, make repairs, and record the date on which repairs were completed.

## **Safe Storage**

All tools are to be stored in a location that can be locked and is only accessible by Facilities staff.

## **Hazardous Materials**

It is the responsibility of the GREEN Facilities Manager to ensure that all chemicals and materials used in the care and maintenance of School buildings are stored, labelled, and recorded in a safe and appropriate manner. They must ensure that all appropriate documentation is kept referencing the purchase, use, storage, and disposal of any substances designated as hazardous by local, state, and federal authorities. All flammable liquids are to be stored in clearly marked storage containers in an area accessible only by Facilities staff.

## **Playgrounds**

Each school may have a designated playground area. Principals shall work with the Facilities Manager to determine appropriate areas for the recreation of students. Facilities staff will also assist with any maintenance/safety issues and/or additions/changes to the playgrounds.

## **Parking**

GREEN employees may park only in those areas designated for employee parking. If an employee is parked in an area not designated as employee parking, they will be asked to move their car immediately. If an employee consistently parks in a non-designated area, they will be put on notice and continuous infractions could lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Staff is asked to use courtesy and common sense when parking at all GREEN locations to avoid accidents, personal injury, and damage to vehicles. All cars are to be locked. GREEN does not assume any liability for any loss or damage to vehicles while on school property.

## **Entering and Leaving School Premises**

New GREEN employees will be informed about proper entrances and exits for all staff, as well as given applicable information about access cards, security codes, and the proper procedure for entering and leaving the building. Employees may not enter GREEN property after normal business hours for any reason without the approval of their supervisor. Failure to obtain such approval may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **Inspection of Packages**

GREEN reserves the right to inspect all packages or closed containers brought into or taken out of any School facility or campus.

## **Energy Conservation**

GREEN is committed to serving the development of conscientious citizens are aware of growing energy demands and their impact on our world. All GREEN employees and students are expected to assist with our goal of energy conservation, including adhering to the following practices:

- Turn off lights when not in your room or office.
- Shut down desktop computers and turn off monitors at the end of each workday.
- Close and lock all doors and windows.

## **Facility Use by Others**

Permission for non-school organizations to use GREEN facilities may only be given in writing by the Executor Director or their designee.

## **DISCLAIMER**

**NOTHING IN THIS POLICY MANUAL IS INTENDED TO CREATE, NOR SHALL IT BE INTERPRETED TO CREATE, A CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT, OR ANY PART OF A CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT, EITHER EXPRESS OR IMPLIED. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GREEN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ITS EMPLOYEES IS STRICTLY THAT OF "EMPLOYMENT AT-WILL," MEANING**

THAT THE RELATIONSHIP IS FOR NO SPECIFIC DURATION AND IS IN NO WAY GUARANTEED AND MAY BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME BY THE EMPLOYEE OR THE EMPLOYER OR WITHOUT CAUSE, AND WITH OR WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

The provisions of this policy manual are subject to change at any time by the GREEN Charter Schools Board with or without notice or additional consideration. This policy manual replaces any prior manual issued by GREEN Charter Schools.