

***The Rock Academy of Nashville
Employee Handbook***



***Dr. Ahmed White, Founder
Lekita Sims, Co-Founder
Founded August 2025***





Welcome Letter

Welcome to The Rock Academy (TRA) family! On behalf of our entire leadership team and as the Founder and Co-founder of The Rock Academy, we are thrilled and honored that you have chosen to join us on this transformative journey.

*The Rock Academy was established with a clear mission: to re-engage disconnected youth and ensure their success in the post-secondary pathway of their choice. Our purpose is to create a safe and supportive space for at-risk and chronically absent youth, providing them with a fresh opportunity to thrive and succeed. **Our motto, "We love you, we believe in you, and there is absolutely positively nothing you can do about it!",** embodies the heart of our work.*

As an employee of The Rock Academy, you play an essential role in upholding our mission and values. We value your expertise, dedication, and passion, and we are proud to have you as a part of our team. Together, we will make a profound impact on the lives of the students we serve.

Thank you for believing in our vision and for your commitment to excellence. Let us work together to create a supportive and empowering environment where every student and staff member can flourish.

Welcome aboard!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ahmed White".

*Dr. Ahmed White, Founder
Executive Director & CEO*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lekita Sims".

Lekita Sims, Director of Operations

Rock Academy's Mission:

The Rock Academy aims to re-engage disconnected youth, ensuring they succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice.

Website: www.therockacademynashville.org **Email:** help@therockacademynashville.org **Phone:** (615) 596-1082

301 Northcreek Blvd #164, Goodlettsville, TN 37070



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Employment HR Policies

Equal Opportunity Employment

The Rock Academy (“TRA”) is an equal opportunity employer. We afford equal employment and advancement opportunities to all qualified individuals. TRA shall not fail or refuse to hire, and shall not discharge any individual, or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment on the basis of any of the following characteristics: race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, citizenship status, military/veteran status, medical condition, or any legally protected status. This policy extends to all employees and all aspects of the employment relationship, including hiring, training, transfer, promotion, compensation, benefits, and termination. Additionally, TRA shall not discriminate against an applicant based on grade level taught where that expertise is not relevant or required for the position.

To comply with applicable laws ensuring equal employment opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities, TRA will make reasonable accommodations for the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or an employee unless undue hardship would result. To request an accommodation, please speak with your immediate supervisor or the Executive Director.

Employment Postings

1. All employment postings and recruitment materials made available to applicants or employees, whether printed or electronic, will include the following statements:

Equal Opportunity Employer: The Rock Academy is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate in its hiring or employment practices on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, religion or disability. Discrimination in recruitment, examination, appointment, training, promotion, retention, discipline or any other employment practice based on a person’s race, gender, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or disability is a form of discrimination and will not be condoned. Any persons having questions about the The Rock Academy’ compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Tennessee Human Rights Act or any other Civil Rights laws should contact the Office of Employee Relations, The Rock Academy.

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Non-Discrimination: It is the policy of The Rock Academy to afford all persons, regardless of their actual or perceived race, religion, color, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry or gender (including gender identity, expression, and appearance) equal rights and opportunities in all of its educational institutions. Questions, concerns, complaints and requests for additional information regarding Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may be forwarded to The Rock Academy ADA/Section 504 Compliance Coordinator.

2. No employment posting shall include a preference, limitation, or specification related to any protected class under the law unless a bona fide occupational qualification has been established and documented in the official job description.

Retaliation: The Rock Academy shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because the employee or applicant has opposed any unlawful, discriminatory employment practices or participated in the investigation of any complaint related to unlawful, discriminatory employment practice.

Hiring and Interviewing

At The Rock Academy, we know that we are vetting candidates while candidates are also vetting us. Because of that, we use our hiring season to both understand fit, readiness, and potential of our applicants, and also sell The Rock Academy as a great place to work. Due to this, we strive to have a hiring process that:

- o Is timely and clear so that candidates and the school team knows what to expect
- o Provide high-quality customer service to internal and external stakeholders
- o Is rigorous. We only move on with high-quality candidates
- o Ensures candidates and school team feel valued and included
- o Screens for our values and assesses potential

Hiring Goals

One of the most fundamental goals of staffing a successful school is ensuring complete alignment with the strategy, vision, and mission of the community. Simultaneously, it is absolutely critical that schools are fully staffed by summer break, so we do not leave our students short-changed. We believe that there are several goals for hiring season that will help us attain this vision:

- 90% of candidates will complete the interview process within four weeks
- 100% of staff seats are categorized as returning or not returning annually by February
- 97% of positions are hired annually for by June 1st
- 70% of new hires will share similar identity markers as the student population we serve
- 100% of candidates will be interviewed using the same structured interview questions and rubrics

Process to Hire

At The Rock Academy, we believe that having a rigorous and aligned hiring process will allow us to hire the best teachers for our students. We also know that running an excellent hiring experience

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will both motivate people to accept offers and bolster our brand. We believe two ways to do this is by:

1. being transparent with our candidates about the steps in our process, and
2. moving them through the process in four weeks or less

HR Procedures

1. ***Applications/qualifications:*** All candidates for hires must complete an application. Criminal history record checks and fingerprinting of applicants are required. Assessments which require a minimum score for hire may be required for some positions of employment.
2. ***Certification:*** All employees filling a position that requires certification, must maintain certification in order to remain employed with TRA. Candidates must submit valid licenses for those positions where valid licenses are required at time of application. Failure to obtain, recertify or renew licensure may result in suspension or termination of full-time employment with TRA. It may also result in a change in compensation rate depending upon the role of the employee. Teacher applicants with revoked licenses or certificates according to the Tennessee Department of Education shall not be hired.
3. ***Interviewing:*** The hiring manager/principal and their interview panel will review selected candidates and schedule interviews with qualified candidates.
4. ***Compensation:*** The compensation of employees shall be determined annually by the Executive Director or designee. At the beginning of each school year, the ED, Board Finance Chair, and CFO creates scales for Certificated, Administrative, Support - Nonexempt and Support - Exempt positions. The basis of each scale is the previous year's scale and any relative change approved by the Board and subsequently funded by the budget.
5. ***Forecasting:*** ED or Principals may schedule meetings with their HR Partner in February to forecast vacancies for the coming year. The ED or principal should prepare for this meeting by reviewing the school staffing and enrollment projections, identifying known vacancies and outlining any anticipated resignations/retirements.
6. ***Offers of Employment:*** Human Resources staff are the only personnel who may extend an official offer for employment. Following the successful screening and interviewing of a candidate, hiring managers may extend an offer for employment using the method outlined by Human Resources. The appropriate HR staff member shall notify the candidate and offer a conditional position based on the approval of all criminal background, educational and licensure checks. The hiring manager will be notified at the time of the offer extension and receive notice of the candidate's decision. If the candidate does not accept, the hiring manager must restart the candidate selection process.
7. ***Recruiting and Screening:*** Recruiting and screening efforts are continuous throughout the school year due to the needs for filling current and future vacancies. Human Resources is responsible for sourcing and screening candidates to fill vacancies. Recruitment efforts include but are not limited to the following: *College/university job boards, External job boards, Fliers Recruitment fairs for external candidates, Recruitment fairs for internal candidates/displaced employees, Social media, Radio and print advertising, Web advertising*
8. ***Selection:*** Hiring managers may assemble an interview panel to assist with the candidate interview process. Upon completion of the interview the principal should advise the candidates that they will discuss their selections with HR and that HR will contact them if selected for advancement.
9. ***Payroll:*** TRA processes payroll bi-weekly (every other week). The bi-weekly payroll is referred to as "TRA Payroll." There are times when interim payments, reversals, etc. need to be processed outside of the regular bi-weekly schedule. These special payroll runs are

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referred to as “TRA Express Pay.” Tennessee is a reimbursement state for State and Federal grant funded expenses, which means State and Federal funds are typically paid to the grant recipient after the expenses have been incurred. It is critically important for State and Federal grant funded payroll expenses to be posted as quickly as possible so that these amounts can be included in monthly reimbursement requests submitted to the State. Posting/expensing cannot occur while the actual payroll process is running. The posting/expensing process is sequential meaning each payroll has to be posted/expensed in the order of processing. In other words, multiple payrolls can’t be posted/expensed at the same time. Despite the fact that payroll files are typically prepared several days prior to each pay date, posting/expensing cannot occur until after the actual pay date has passed.

Employment At Will

Tennessee is an “at will” state, and unless stated otherwise, TRA employees have an “at will” relationship with The Rock Academy. This means:

- You are employed for an indefinite/unspecified time period, and
- Either you or TRA may terminate your employment at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice.

Nothing contained in this handbook, employment applications, memos, or other materials will alter the at-will employment relationship or otherwise restrict TRA’s right to terminate an employee at any time for any reason.

Categories of Employment

TRA complies with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and all applicable federal and state wage and hour laws.

Non-Exempt Employees

Non-exempt employees are entitled to receive overtime pay at a rate of one and a half times their regular rate for all hours worked beyond forty (40) hours in a workweek. Their pay is typically stated in hourly terms. Non-exempt employees must accurately report hours worked each day and may not work “off the clock.” Working overtime without prior approval may result in disciplinary action.

Exempt Employees

Exempt employees are not compensated for overtime (i.e., hours in excess of 40 in a workweek). Their pay is typically stated in terms of a monthly or annual salary.

Employment Classifications

- **Full-time:** Employees working 30 or more hours per week.
- **Part-time:** Employees working fewer than 30 hours per week.

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- **Temporary Employment:** Employees hired for a specific time frame and not eligible for benefits.

Background Checks and Fingerprinting

To ensure the safety and welfare of students and staff, **The Rock Academy (“TRA”)** shall require criminal history background checks and fingerprinting for all applicants for employment in teaching positions and any other positions that require proximity to children or regular access to students.

In accordance with *T.C.A. § 49-5-413*, no individual shall be employed by TRA, contracted by TRA, or permitted to come into direct contact with students or enter school grounds when students are present until a criminal history background check has been completed and reviewed.

Scope of Background Checks

At a minimum, TRA shall require the following background checks for applicable employees, contractors, and volunteers:

- **Fingerprint-based criminal history check** conducted through:
 - The **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**, and
 - The **Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI)**;
- A search of the **Tennessee Sex Offender Registry**;
- A review of **Department of Children’s Services (DCS)** records;
- A search of the **Department of Health Abuse Registry**; and
- Any additional criminal history databases required by state or federal law.

Disqualifying Offenses

Pursuant to *T.C.A. § 49-5-413*, individuals convicted of certain offenses are prohibited from employment or service in positions that involve direct contact with students or presence on school grounds when students are present. TRA shall strictly adhere to all statutory prohibitions and requirements related to disqualifying offenses.

Responsibility and Compliance

As a single-site public charter school authorized by the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (TPCSC), The Rock Academy is responsible for:

- Establishing and maintaining required accounts with approved fingerprinting and background check vendors;
- Notifying applicants, employees, contractors, and volunteers of background check requirements and procedures;
- Ensuring that all required background checks are completed, reviewed, and cleared **prior to the individual beginning service**; and
- Maintaining documentation verifying completion and compliance in accordance with state and federal law.

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Oversight and Auditing

TRA shall maintain records of all completed background checks and shall make such records available for review upon request by the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission or other authorized oversight entities, consistent with applicable law.

Falsification or Failure to Comply

Falsification of information related to background checks or failure to comply with required screening procedures may result in withdrawal of an employment offer, termination of employment, or immediate removal from service.

Immigration Law Compliance

Employment offers are contingent upon verification of the employee's authorization to work in the U.S. Employees must complete a Federal I-9 Employment Eligibility Form and provide supporting documentation before employment begins.

Absences

Employees are expected to maintain reliable attendance. When an absence is necessary, employees must notify their supervisor as early as possible. When a teacher is unable to attend school due to illness, approved personal days, approved conferences, professional development, or workshops, the department coordinator is to be notified at the earliest possible time. Instructional staff must maintain substitute plans that include class rosters, lesson plans, schedules, and instructional materials. These plans must be reviewed and updated regularly.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to have available general plans for three days including:

1. Class list for each of your classes
2. Lesson plans for each of your classes
3. Needed instructional materials for your substitute
4. Your daily schedule, including duties, etc.

These folders should be reviewed monthly to ensure lesson plans, class rosters, and duties are up-to-date. If it is not possible to secure a substitute, the department coordinator will make arrangements with the designated assistant principal's secretary for classes to be covered internally. Teachers may be asked to substitute for a class during a student contract period. As a last resort, a teacher may be asked to substitute for a class during a planning period.

Paid absences for professional purposes require advance approval. Unapproved absences may result in pay deductions consistent with applicable law. Absences other than those described above will not be allowed with pay.

A deduction will be made for each eight (8) days of absence at the rate of 1/188 of the teacher's salary or at the rate of the substitute's pay, at the discretion of the Academic Leader. Teachers

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accompanying students on field trips or otherwise acting in a normal teaching capacity will not be considered absent.

ACCOUNTABILITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be supervised by its Board of Directors (*sometimes referred to herein as the Board*), which shall exercise in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation all of the rights and privileges legally exercisable by the Corporation as a corporate entity, except as may otherwise be provided by law, the Charter, or these Bylaws. The Board of Directors, as the governing body of the Corporation, shall have the authority to receive, administer, invest and distribute property on behalf of the Corporation in accordance with the provisions set forth in these Bylaws. The following provisions define the structure, responsibilities, and powers of the Board of Directors:

Powers and Responsibilities:

1. Leadership and Oversight

- Appoint and remove the President/CEO of the Corporation, subject to the limitations of the Bylaws.
- Prescribe the powers and duties for officers in alignment with the Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, and applicable law.

2. Policy and Governance

- Oversee the management of the Corporation's affairs.
- Establish policies to guide operations, ensuring alignment with the Corporation's mission and legal requirements.

3. Operational Authority

- Designate locations for Board meetings and change the Corporation's principal office as needed.
- Borrow money and manage financial obligations for the Corporation's purposes, including executing necessary legal documents.

4. Resource Management

- Manage all funds and property, real and personal, received by the Corporation, ensuring effective and ethical stewardship.
- Create trusts, foundations, and subsidiaries as deemed necessary, appointing their governing officials.

Board Structure:

- The number of Directors of the Corporation shall be between 3 and 11, with at least one member being a parent of a current student of the school. The exact number of Directors shall be determined by the Board pursuant to current needs. Starting on July 1, 2025, Directors shall serve staggered terms of 3 years and until successors are elected and qualify. Directors may serve up to three consecutive terms.
- Directors must be at least 18 years old and not hold public office.

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- Directors will not receive compensation for their service as Directors. Directors may receive reimbursement for expenses actually and reasonably incurred (a) on behalf of the Corporation or (b) in the course of performing Director duties.

Meetings and Decision-Making:

- The Board shall hold regular meetings (at least 10 times annually), at times and dates determined by the Board as set forth in an annual meeting calendar.
- All meetings will be held in compliance with T.C. A. § 8-44-102 et. seq., which states that all meetings of any governing body are declared to be public meetings and must be open to the public at all times. Rock Academy will ensure that meeting locations and times are as accommodating as possible to its school community, and will encourage and welcome parents, staff, and community stakeholders to attend.
- Notice of the date, time, location, of both regular and special meetings shall be delivered to each Director and posted on the school's website at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting. Notice must include the agenda and relevant meeting details including the purpose of our business to be transacted at the meeting.
- In the provisional bylaws, the presence of all Directors serving shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting. Once charter authority is granted, the presence of half of all of the Directors shall constitute a quorum.
- Each Director shall have one vote. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the vote of a majority (more than 50%) of Directors participating in a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the action of the Board.

Resignation and Removal:

- A Director may be removed with or without cause by the affirmative vote of a majority of all Directors then serving.
- A Director may resign at any time by providing written notice to the Board. Resignation shall be effective upon the delivery of notice unless the notice provides that it will be effective at a later time or upon the occurrence of an event.
- The Directors may fill any vacancy on the Board by following the Board-approved nomination and selection process

Commitment to Excellence:

The Board of Directors is dedicated to upholding the mission of The Rock Academy, ensuring effective governance, and fostering a supportive environment for all stakeholders. Together, we strive to empower our youth and advance the Corporation's goals.

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS:

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enforces Federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. These laws protect employees and job applicants against employment discrimination when it involves:

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- Unfair treatment because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.
- Harassment by managers, co-workers, or others in the workplace, because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.
- Denial of a reasonable workplace accommodation that the employee needs because of religious beliefs or disability.
- Retaliation because the employee complained about job discrimination, or assisted with a job discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

Drug & Alcohol-Free Workplace

The Rock Academy maintains a drug- and alcohol-free workplace to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff. The possession, use, distribution, or impairment from illegal drugs or alcohol during work hours or on school property is prohibited. Employees may be subject to drug and alcohol testing in accordance with applicable law. Employees performing safety-sensitive duties may be subject to additional testing requirements.

Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

TRA complies with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Eligible employees may take up to twelve (12) workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a twelve-month period for qualifying reasons, or up to twenty-six (26) weeks for military caregiver leave.

FMLA leave may be taken consecutively or intermittently when medically necessary. Employees may be required to use accrued paid leave concurrently with FMLA leave.

Annual Paid Time Off

Leave Type	Leave Supplied
Holidays	Regular school holidays & school vacations not designated as professional development, including Spring Break, Winter Break, and the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Summer dates are not included here and are explained below.
Summer Time Off	Annual holidays and school approved dates on the school TRA calendar are paid time off for school closure. The remainder of the summer is considered full-time work weeks.
Sick Time	10 days total.
Personal Days	5 days total annually with a cap of 15 days (120 hours.)
Bereavement Leave	3 days for immediate family matters.
Jury Duty	10 days. After that, any remaining jury duty days will be unpaid. (Maximum number of days taken will be defined by the court.)

Paid Parental Leave (TN-Compliant)

The Rock Academy provides six (6) workweeks of paid parental leave following the birth, stillbirth, or adoption of a newly placed minor child. Leave must be taken within twelve (12) months of the

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qualifying event. Paid parental leave may be taken consecutively or in increments of no less than one (1) week, subject to approval. TRA will comply with TDOE reimbursement requirements through ePlan.

Performance Evaluation

All employees will participate in a formal performance evaluation system designed to promote continuous improvement, accountability, and professional growth. Evaluations may include observations, feedback conferences, student outcome data (where applicable), and professional practice measures.

Personnel Records

TRA maintains personnel records in compliance with state and federal law. Records include applications, contracts, certifications, evaluations, background check clearance, background authorization and disclosure form, INS form I-9, I-9 documentation, such as driver's license, social security card, and/or passport, verification of background check completion (*including TBI, Department of Children's Services, Department of Health, and sex offender registry*), and other cumulative information needing verification or related to employment. Employees may review their personnel files upon request, excluding confidential materials.

All information in the employee personnel file shall be job related. Health insurance and medical records shall be maintained separately. No material of a derogatory nature will be placed in the central office personnel file of a teacher without the teacher's prior knowledge of the content of the material and the date of placement in the file. Upon request by the teacher, his/her response may be attached to the material. Employee records are public records except for information deemed confidential by law, and shall be available for public inspection during regular business hours;

1. Employees may request to view their file at any time by contacting the HR Manager designated for their school or office or the Executive Director.
2. The HR Manager or Executive Director will arrange a convenient time for the viewing of the electronic file, and will log in to the document storage system and remain with the employee while the review is taking place.
3. Employees may request copies of information from their file (*transcripts, etc.*) by contacting the HR Manager.
4. Requests from non-employees to view an employee record must be made through the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (*TPCSC*) in accordance with **T.C.A. §10-7-504**. A record of the person requesting to inspect the files and the date of inspection will be maintained by that office, and requestors may be charged for copies of files based on the rates determined by that office.
5. TPCSC will forward authorized requests for employee files to the Executive Director or HR Manager.
6. Requests for an employee record from Metropolitan Government of Nashville Department of Law or from any organization with a subpoena or other legal request should be forwarded to the Executive Director.

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7. **Investigative Files:** In the event an employee becomes subject to an investigation by TRA, the investigative file will not be maintained in the electronic personnel record. Documents outlining employment related actions that result from the investigation may be added to the electronic personnel record. Active investigation files are not generally available for review.

Progressive Discipline

TRA uses progressive discipline to address performance or conduct concerns when appropriate. Discipline may include verbal counseling, written warnings, suspension, or termination. TRA reserves the right to bypass progressive steps depending on the severity of the issue.

Whistleblower Protection

TRA encourages employees to report illegal, unethical, or unsafe conduct. Employees who report improper governmental activity or violations of law are protected from retaliation, intimidation, threats, or adverse employment action. Employees who believe they have experienced retaliation may pursue remedies available under Tennessee law.

Workplace Violence & Hostile Situations (Zero Tolerance)

TRA maintains a zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence, threats, intimidation, weapons, or aggressive behavior. This policy is especially critical given TRA's commitment to serving at-risk youth. Violations may result in immediate removal from campus and termination.

No Fraternization with Students

Any inappropriate relationship, communication, or fraternization between employees and students is strictly prohibited. Violations will result in immediate termination and may result in licensure action or criminal investigation.

Student Privacy After Separation

Upon separation from employment, employees immediately lose access to all student records, systems, and confidential information. Former employees are prohibited from accessing student data under any circumstances. TRA will notify the Charter Commission within forty-eight (48) hours when applicable.

GRIEVANCE & HARASSMENT

TRA fosters a workplace free from discrimination and harassment. We do not tolerate harassment of any kind by any employee. This policy applies to all employee actions and relationships, regardless of position or gender.

Conduct constitutes harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is a term or condition of employment.

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- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for personnel decisions, including appraisals, promotion, salary increases, and termination.
- The behavior creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Employees experiencing or witnessing harassment must report it immediately to the Executive Director or the HR Manager. All complaints will be investigated promptly, objectively, and confidentially. Retaliation against employees for reporting harassment or participating in investigations is strictly prohibited.

Employee-Related Complaints and Grievances

Employees of authorized charter schools are not employees of the Commission or the State of Tennessee. All employee-related complaints and grievances shall be handled by each authorized charter school. Each authorized charter school shall adopt a policy to handle employee-related complaints and grievances in accordance with all federal and state laws, and a plan to regularly notify employees of their rights. Employees of The Rock Academy are not employees of the State of Tennessee or the Charter Commission. All employee-related complaints and grievances shall be addressed internally. The Rock Academy wants to provide an environment where everyone is comfortable and free from any type of harassment rather it be bullying, sexual, racial, verbal, or physical. Any employee who has a complaint concerning harassment, disciplinary action, termination, demotion, denial of promotion or merit increase, layoff, or discrimination based on a category recognized by federal and local civil rights or cited in the TRA Policies & Procedures, may have the right to file a grievance act. The Rock Academy is an at will organization. Any type of undesirable or unwanted language, gestures, or physical contact, which compromises a safe work environment, will not be tolerated.

TRA has adopted a formal grievance process to ensure concerns are handled fairly, consistently, and in compliance with applicable law. Employees will be informed of grievance procedures and timelines, and retaliation for filing a complaint is prohibited.

No employee will be discriminated against, harassed, intimidated or suffer any reprisal as a result of filing a grievance or participating in the investigation of a grievance. Employees should attempt to resolve the problem informally with their supervisor as soon as possible. However, if an employee feels that he/she is being subjected to any of the above actions, that employee may appeal directly to the Executive Director of TRA. If a solution cannot be reached, the employee may present a formal complaint, in writing to the Board Chair.

All complaints will be handled in a timely manner with respect to your individual privacy. As a goal, The Rock Academy attempts to resolve a complaint within 10 working days from the time of its initiation. If complaints are made regarding other staff members, please be prepared for mediation when necessary for resolution after an investigation has been completed. If an extension of the time limit becomes necessary, all involved parties will be notified.

Rock Academy's Mission:

The Rock Academy aims to re-engage disconnected youth, ensuring they succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice.

Website: www.therockacademynashville.org **Email:** help@therockacademynashville.org **Phone:** (615) 596-1082

301 Northcreek Blvd #164, Goodlettsville, TN 37070



Title IX - Civil Rights

Title IX is a federal civil rights law passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. This law protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Title IX states that: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Title IX applies to any institution receiving federal financial assistance from the Department of Education, including state and local educational agencies. Educational programs and activities that receive federal funds from the Department of Education must operate in a nondiscriminatory manner. Also, a recipient may not retaliate against any person for opposing an unlawful educational practice or policy, or because a person made charges, testified or participated in any complaint action under Title IX.

How to File a Complaint

Employees who experience or witness harassment must report the conduct immediately to the Executive Director. All complaints will be promptly, thoroughly, and impartially investigated. Retaliation against any individual who reports harassment or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Online: You may file a complaint with Office of Civil Rights (OCR) using OCR’s electronic complaint form at the following website:

<https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws>)

Mail or Facsimile: You may mail or send by facsimile information to the address or phone number available at the link above. You may use OCR’s “[Discrimination Complaint Form](#)” or write your own letter. If you write your own letter, please include:

- The complainant’s name, address and, if possible (although not required), a telephone number where the complainant may be reached during business hours;
- Information about the person(s) or class of persons injured by the alleged discriminatory act(s) (names of the injured person(s) are not required);
- The name and location (city and state) of the institution that committed the alleged discriminatory act(s); and
- A description of the alleged discriminatory act(s) in sufficient detail to enable OCR to understand what occurred, when it occurred, and the basis for the alleged discrimination.

Email: You may email OCR’s “[Discrimination Complaint Form](#)” or your own signed letter to ocr@ed.gov. If you write your own letter, please include the information identified above. For those without current email accounts, Internet access may be freely available from your local public library, and free email accounts are available from several large providers.

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Note: A recipient of federal financial assistance may not retaliate against any person who has made a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an OCR matter or to interfere with any right or privilege protected by the laws enforced by OCR. If you believe that you have been retaliated against for any of these reasons, you also may file a complaint with OCR. If you have a Title IX complaint you can file your complaint by clicking the link below or contact the designated Title IX Coordinator for assistance.

<https://publicportal.eeoc.gov/Portal/Login.aspx>

Closure/Virtual Status for Inclement Weather or Other Emergencies

Inclement Weather Days

Inclement weather or other emergencies affecting the ability of TRA to safely transport students, or otherwise adversely impacting the ability of TRA to open schools or keep students safely in school for the full school day may warrant the declaration of virtual status for one or more days, or in certain circumstances, the full closure of schools. Official communication regarding the status of schools will be via local media and other methods of communication available to the district (call-out system, social media, email, etc.) and initiated by the TRA Communications Office as directed by the Director of Schools. Delayed School Opening If school opening time is delayed, school employees will adjust their arrival times based on the number of hours the student schedule is adjusted. For example, if school opening time is delayed two hours, school employee report time is two hours later than the regular report time. Supervisors for transportation and nutrition workers may adjust the reporting time based on operational needs and should communicate that directly to employees.

Full School Closure

In circumstances which impact both the ability to physically open schools and the ability to deliver services in a virtual environment, the Director of Schools may declare a full school closure. In the event of a full school closure, no school-based staff except principals and other 12-month school-based staff will report unless directed to do so by their supervisor. School-based employees as noted above will be compensated for the first five days in a school year that there is a full school closure (not a virtual status day). TRA will grant unpaid leave to school employees for any days in excess of five days of full school closure. These employees will be expected to work any extended calendar days necessary to complete the academic year and will be compensated accordingly for the extended calendar. Teachers who are unable to report when schools are open or in virtual status will be charged a personal day for their absence. If they do not have a personal day remaining, the day will be unpaid. If schools are fully closed, teachers will not be charged leave of any type, including pre-approved leave. Teachers on an unpaid leave of absence will not be charged leave for the day but will continue in unpaid status.

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Employees Who May Be Required to Work

In order to respond to security or facility maintenance issues or to ensure continuity of other critical operations during inclement weather or emergency situations, certain employees may be required to report even when the Support Hub is in virtual status or fully closed. These employees will be notified by their direct supervisor and those eligible for overtime will receive compensation for hours worked in the manner in which overtime is normally earned in that department (either paid overtime or compensatory time). All hours worked, including those in excess of regularly scheduled hours, should be entered into the appropriate timekeeping system during the pay period in which the work occurred.

Travel During Inclement Weather or Other Emergency

Whether to travel to and from work in inclement weather or any other emergency becomes the personal decision of the employee, and each employee should make a personal judgement pertaining to his or her own safety. Employees making the personal decision not to travel when their work location is open during inclement weather or other emergencies may take a paid personal or vacation day, or if they do not have a personal or vacation day accrued, may take leave without pay. The deduction will be taken during the payroll period in which the absence occurs, or if payroll has already been processed, in the following payroll period.

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The Rock Academy of Nashville

Employee Handbook Signature of Receipt

I, _____, acknowledge receipt of The Rock Academy Employee Handbook. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and adhere to the policies and procedures outlined within. I agree to uphold the mission and values of The Rock Academy and to contribute to its supportive and empowering environment.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Media Release Consent

I, _____, grant permission to The Rock Academy to use my name, image, and likeness in photographs, videos, and other media for educational and promotional purposes. I understand that these materials may be used in publications, presentations, websites, and social media platforms associated with The Rock Academy. I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product or the use to which it may be applied. I release The Rock Academy from any liability arising from the use of these materials.

Check One:

I give my consent.

I do not give my consent.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

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