SENDERO
School of Academics and Career Preparation

STAFF HANDBOOK

2026–2027

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1405 S. SOLANO, LAS CRUCES, NM 88001
(575) 527-5916 • SENDEROPREP.COM

This handbook is reviewed and updated annually or as needed.

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How to Use This Handbook

This Staff Handbook describes the policies, procedures, and expectations that apply to employees of Sendero Prep (the operating name of Sendero School of Academics and Career Preparation). It is intended to be read alongside, and kept consistent with, the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook, since many policies — attendance, discipline, technology use, safety, and communication — apply to staff and students as one shared school community rather than as two separate sets of rules.

This Handbook may be amended, revised, supplemented, or rescinded at any time, with or without advance notice, at the discretion of the Governing Board or its designee. Only the Executive Director or an individual expressly authorized in writing by the Governing Board may approve a change to this Handbook; no informal statement, practice, or representation by any other staff member modifies its terms. If any provision of this Handbook conflicts with the Sendero Prep Governing Board Policy Manual, an individual employee's written contract, or applicable federal, state, or local law, the Policy Manual, the individual contract, and the law govern, in that order, unless the law requires a different result.

Sendero Prep is committed to reviewing and updating this Handbook at least once each year, before the start of each school year, so that it reflects current law, current Governing Board policy, and the school's current programs and staffing structure.

Every Sendero Prep employee is required to sign the Handbook Acknowledgment found at the very end of this document, confirming receipt and understanding of its contents. A signed copy should be returned to the Executive Director or designee for the employee's personnel file within 14 days. If any significant changes are made, a new signature page is required that will include references to the significant changes that have occurred.

SECTION I

OVERVIEW

Sendero Prep's mission, governance, and the working environment we ask every employee to help build.

I. Overview

A. Mission

To develop the academic potential and personal character of each student by engaging and valuing the student, family and community partnerships. Students will work to prepare for and meet the challenges of a post-secondary or workforce environment for a globally diverse society.

B. About Sendero Prep

Sendero Prep is the operating name of Sendero School of Academics and Career Preparation, a New Mexico state-chartered public school authorized by the Public Education Commission (PEC) and supported by the Charter Schools Division (CSD) of the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED). As a state charter school, Sendero Prep operates as its own Local Education Agency (LEA) rather than as part of a traditional school district, which means Sendero Prep's Governing Board and Executive Director carry direct responsibility for the school's academic program, staffing, budget, and compliance with state and federal law.

Sendero Prep's academic model is built around Career and Technical Education (CTE) Project-Based Learning (PBL), and a robust Student Learning Community (SLC) advisory program. Students work through hands-on career pathways — including Construction, Agriculture , Business Management, Teaching and Training, and Health Science — toward paid internships, work-based learning placements and Dual Credit. Student Learning Community classes are focused on developing career and social emotional skills as well as work-place expectations. Section II (Academic Program) describes this model, along with the school's Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS), in detail.

C. Governance and Administrative Authority

The Sendero Prep Governing Board is the school's policy-setting body and is ultimately accountable to the Public Education Commission for the school's performance under its charter contract. The Governing Board adopts and maintains school policies that govern school operations at the board level; this Staff Handbook implements, and must remain consistent with those policies.

Under the New Mexico Charter Schools Act, the Executive Director, as Sendero Prep's head administrator, holds the statutory authority to employ, fix the salary of, assign, and terminate or discharge all employees of the school. No Governing Board member or other Sendero Prep employee may initially employ, or approve the initial employment of, a person who is the spouse, parent, parent-in-law, child, child-in-law, sibling, or sibling-in-law of a Governing Board member or of the Executive Director. Any employee who becomes aware of a potential nepotism or conflict-of-interest concern should raise it with the Executive Director (or, if the concern involves the Executive Director, with the Governing Board president) before any employment decision is made.

D. Designated Coordinators

The staff members listed below (or their successors) are Sendero Prep's designated points of contact for the legal compliance areas noted. This table is kept consistent with the Designated Coordinators table published in the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook, so families and staff receive the same information.

Role	Name / Title	Contact
Title IX Coordinator	Matt Sandoval Executive Director	575-527-5916 matt@senderoprep.com
Section 504 Coordinator	Valery Ratliff-Parker Principal	575-527-5916 v.ratliff-parker@senderoprep.com
McKinney-Vento Liaison (Students Experiencing Homelessness)	Lori Santistevan McKinney-Vento Liaison	575-527-5916, lori@senderoprep.com
Safe Schools / Bullying Point of Contact	Matt Sandoval Executive Director	575-527-5916 matt@senderoprep.com
Special Education Coordinator	Robert Burnett Special Education Coordinator	575-527-5916 robert.burnett@jmpacademy.com

Staff who receive a report, complaint, or disclosure that falls within one of these areas — whether from a student, family member, or colleague — should route it promptly to the applicable coordinator in addition to following any other reporting duty described elsewhere in this Handbook (see Section III).

E. Modeling Workplace Expectations for Students by Staff

Sendero Prep teaches every student fourteen workplace expectations across every classroom, project, and internship placement. Staff cannot credibly hold students to these expectations without modeling them consistently themselves. Every employee, regardless of position, is expected to demonstrate these same fourteen expectations in their daily work.

Workplace Expectation	What This Looks Like for Staff
1. Show up on time.	Report to duty on time and meet posted deadlines for lesson plans, grading, and required documentation.
2. Effort matters.	Bring full effort to instruction, student support, and collaborative work — not just the minimum required.
3. Follow directions.	Follow lawful directions from supervisors and comply with school, state, and federal requirements.
4. Do as you are asked.	Complete assigned duties fully and follow through on commitments made to colleagues and administration.
5. Listen and observe.	Practice active listening with students, families, and colleagues, and stay alert to safety and well-being concerns.

6. Work with others.	Collaborate in PLCs, cross-pathway planning, and schoolwide initiatives rather than working in isolation.
7. Communicate effectively and appropriately.	Communicate professionally and promptly with students, families, and colleagues, in person and in writing.
8. Meet deadlines.	Submit grades, plans, and required documentation by the deadlines set by PLCs, administration, or by law.
9. Solve problems.	Bring solutions, not just concerns, and apply the same problem-solving mindset taught to students.
10. Follow through.	Complete tasks and commitments without needing repeated reminders.
11. Take care of resources.	Use and maintain classrooms, school facilities, equipment, technology, and materials responsibly and report damage or loss promptly.
12. Use technology as a tool, not a toy.	Model purposeful, professional technology use consistent with the Acceptable Use Policy (Section VII).
13. Dress appropriately.	Dress in a way that is clean, professional, and appropriate to your role — including safety gear required for a CTE pathway, lab, or work site
14. Use time wisely.	Significant planning time is allocated for work to be completed during contract hours - structure your planning time to ensure you are ready for class and meetings.

F. Employee Expectations and Working Environment

The following expectations apply to every Sendero Prep employee. They are not exhaustive of everything expected of staff, but they describe the working environment Sendero Prep is committed to building and maintaining.

1. Honesty

As an employee of a public charter school, you serve in a position of public trust and are compensated with public funds. Your actions must be honest and above reproach. Misrepresentation of facts or falsification of any record — including personnel records, medical documentation, leave requests, grades, or attendance records — will not be tolerated and may result in discipline up to and including discharge.

2. Communication

All employees are expected to communicate openly and professionally with administration, colleagues, students, and families. Sendero Prep encourages staff to raise concerns directly with the colleague involved first; if a concern is not resolved, staff should bring it to their supervisor or the Executive Director. Retaliation against any employee for using these communication channels in good faith is prohibited.

Sendero uses email as a primary point for the communication of important information. This information could include critical academic, safety, schedule, training or meeting information. Employees are expected to check and read their emails daily. Newsletters will be updated weekly throughout the school year. The newsletter is initially sent out in an email that contains a link to a running document of all newsletters from the current instructional year.

3. Professionalism and Positivity

Staff model the culture Sendero Prep wants for its students. A consistently professional, solutions-oriented attitude — on campus, at internship sites, and when representing the school off campus — supports both student learning and a healthy workplace for colleagues.

4. Personal Responsibility

Every position at Sendero Prep carries responsibility for performing assigned duties promptly and well: respecting duty hours, completing required paperwork and reporting on time, maintaining a clean and organized classroom and workspace, responding to communications, and asking for help when needed.

5. Respect

Sendero Prep is committed to a workplace where every staff member, student, and family is treated with courtesy and consideration, regardless of role, background, or point of view.

6. Focus on Solutions

Staff are expected to bring forward concerns or challenges with a growth mindset and solution-oriented proposals to overcome challenges or concerns. Staff are expected to use scheduled collaboration time productively rather than as an outlet for unresolved complaints. Ideas for improving Sendero Prep are welcome and should be raised with administration.

7. Safety as a Priority

All staff are expected to follow safety rules and procedures at all times, including wearing a visible staff identification badge while on campus. Any adult on campus without staff or visitor identification should be asked whether they need assistance and directed to the front office to sign in, consistent with the visitor procedure described in the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook.

All staff must be familiar with the Safe School Plan (emergency operations plan), which is reviewed and practiced at staff meetings and training. The Safe School Plan is for staff reference only and must not be shared outside of Sendero Prep staff. Section VII (Health, Safety, and Emergency Procedures) addresses specific safety, emergency-response, and reporting procedures in more detail.

SECTION II

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The CTE and Project-Based Learning model, SLC, MLSS supports, attendance work, and the daily instructional expectations we hold each other to.

II. Academic Program

A. Instructional Model: Career and Technical Education and Project-Based Learning

Sendero Prep's academic program is built around two integrated approaches: Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Project-Based Learning (PBL). Rather than treating career preparation as an addition to a traditional academic program, Sendero Prep organizes instruction so that rigorous academic content is delivered through real career pathways and projects. Every staff member — whether teaching a core academic subject, a CTE course, or providing student support — shares responsibility for connecting classroom learning to Sendero Prep's vision : every student graduates with a program of study, a work-based learning experience, and a documented plan for college, career, and life beyond high school.

Staff are expected to design and deliver instruction that integrates project-based, real-world tasks; to collaborate across content areas and pathways so that projects connect academic standards to workplace application; and to help students prepare for paid internships, work-based learning placements, and/or Dual Credit classes, as they progress through their program of study.

B. CTE Pathways and Work-Based Learning

Students choose among Sendero Prep's CTE pathways: Construction, Agriculture, Business Management, Teaching and Training, and Health Science. Staff assigned to a CTE pathway are responsible for maintaining current knowledge of applicable industry certification requirements, cultivating and maintaining employer and internship partnerships appropriate to their pathway, and coordinating with the [Work-Based Learning Coordinator / CTE Director] on internship placement, workplace and all school safety requirements, and required documentation for students in paid internships or work-based learning experiences.

C. Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS)

Sendero Prep uses New Mexico's Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS) framework to organize academic and behavioral support across four tiers, moving from schoolwide prevention to intensive, individualized intervention:

- **Tier 1 —** core instruction and schoolwide prevention available to every student.
- **Tier 2 —** targeted, individualized support for students showing early signs of academic or behavioral risk.
- **Tier 3 —** intensive, closely monitored intervention for students with significant, persistent needs.
- **Tier 4 —** specialized, wraparound support and case management for students with the most significant needs, coordinated with outside agencies where appropriate.

Sendero Prep's Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are the primary structure through which staff review data and coordinate MLSS supports. Teachers have structured common planning time built into

the daily schedule and dedicated to PLC collaboration; during this time, staff use early-warning-system data to identify students needing support, monitor the effectiveness of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, and coordinate with special education, and bilingual/EL staff.

To keep this work manageable and effective, Sendero Prep differentiates staff roles supporting MLSS — some staff serve as an attendance-focused point of contact for a student, while others serve as an academic-intervention point of contact, so that no single staff member is responsible for every dimension of a struggling student's support at once.

Students receiving special education services, Section 504 accommodations, or English Learner supports receive services embedded within this same MLSS structure rather than as a separate track. Staff supporting these students should coordinate directly with the Special Education Coordinator or casemanager, the Section 504 Coordinator, and bilingual/EL staff identified in the Designated Coordinators table in Section I.D.

D. Attendance: Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Consistent with New Mexico's Attendance for Success Act and the attendance framework published in the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook, Sendero Prep tracks all student absences and uses a tiered, data-informed system to identify and support students before absences become chronic (“chronic absence” means missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason). Staff share the following responsibilities at each tier:

- **Tier 1 — Whole-school prevention.** Every staff member contributes through engaging instruction, strong relationships, and consistent family communication.
- **Tier 2 — Individualized prevention (5% to less than 10% of school days missed).** The assigned staff member or Attendance Team contacts the family and discusses attendance history, the effects of absence, and available supports with the student.
- **Tier 3 — Intensive intervention (10% to less than 20% of school days missed).** Administration provides written notice and holds a family meeting; the assigned staff member establishes an individualized intervention plan and monitors attendance at least weekly, using an attendance contract where appropriate.
- **Tier 4 — Chronic absenteeism (20% or more of school days missed).** A Student Advocate/Case Manager coordinates specialized, non-punitive wraparound supports, which may involve interagency coordination (for example, with CYFD or a juvenile probation office) consistent with state law.

Staff assigned students shall take attendance for each class during the first fifteen minutes of class. This information is not only vital for student attendance data and tracking, but also serves student safety purposes in case of an emergency.

New Mexico law prohibits using out-of-school suspension or expulsion as a response to unexcused absences; staff should always pursue the engagement and intervention strategies described above instead. The school's current Attendance Improvement Plan describes additional detail on

data-monitoring cadence, specific staff assignments, and interagency coordination for Tier 4 students, and should be reviewed alongside this section each year.

E. Grading, Assessment, and Progress Reporting

Staff are responsible for maintaining accurate, current gradebooks in PowerSchool, submitting weekly grades by end of day Sunday , and following Sendero Prep's credit system (described in Section 3 of the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook) when documenting student progress. Lesson plans should be submitted to administration upon request and should reflect Sendero Prep's project-based, standards-aligned instructional model.

F. Staff Meetings, Collaboration Time, and Calendar

All staff are expected to attend staff meetings, PLC/collaboration time, and professional development sessions as scheduled by administration or designated PLC leads.

G. Lesson Plans and Preparing for Substitutes

Every classroom teacher is responsible for preparing and maintaining written lesson plans that reflect Sendero Prep's project-based, standards-aligned instructional model. Lesson plans serve three purposes: to guide the teacher's own instruction and pacing, to support colleagues who may co-teach or step into the classroom, and to demonstrate to administrators that instruction is intentionally designed serving as an instructional record.

1. General Lesson Plan Expectations

- Plans are submitted to administration upon request.
- Plans identify the standards and address the seven essential design elements of the Project Based Learning “Gold Standards” as described in the PBL framework
- Plans describe how the lesson connects to the current project or unit, and how student learning will be checked at the end of the lesson.
- Plans include planned accommodations and modifications for students with IEPs, 504 plans, and English Learner designations, based on current information from the Special Education Coordinator, Section 504 Coordinator, and bilingual/EL staff.

2. Substitute Lesson Plans

Every teacher is expected to maintain a current set of substitute-ready lesson materials — either as part of the regular lesson plan file or as a separately designated “sub folder.” The purpose is to keep instruction moving whenever the teacher is absent, planned or unplanned, without leaving a substitute to improvise. Substitute materials should include:

- The class schedule for each period, including any duty assignments (lunch duty, hallway, arrival/dismissal).
- Seating charts and a roster with any relevant medical alerts, safety plans, or behavior support notes routed through the appropriate administrator or nurse.

- The lesson or activity to be completed that day, all supplies, materials, copies ect. written clearly enough that a qualified adult who is not a content specialist can carry it out.
- Information on classroom routines (bathroom, hall passes, technology use, emergency drills).
- Contact information for the neighboring teacher or team member designated as the substitute's first point of contact for questions.

REMINDER

A teacher who knows in advance that they will be absent must submit lesson plans to the receptionist and any updated substitute materials before the absence begins. For unplanned absences, the “sub folder” must be current and immediately accessible to the receptionist.

H. Providing Tutoring and Additional Student Assistance

As part of their regular duties, each teacher shares responsibility for providing tutorial support to students in their courses, in coordination with Sendero Prep's MLSS process (Section II.C). Students who are failing, in danger of failing, or otherwise flagged through the school's early warning system are prioritized for tutorial support. It is the teacher's responsibility to notify the family when a student is falling behind and to document the intervention through the MLSS process.

NO PAID TUTORING OF CURRENT STUDENTS

A Sendero Prep employee may not accept payment from a student or family for tutoring, coaching, or academic support of a student currently enrolled in that employee's class or under that employee's supervision. This applies during the school day and outside of it, on and off campus. Doing so is treated as both a conflict of interest under Section VII and a violation of the NMPED Code of Ethics (Appendix C, Standard 1) and may result in discipline up to and including discharge.

I. Executive Director's Expectations of Teachers

The following expectations describe the daily instructional practices Sendero Prep asks of every teacher. They are not exhaustive of a teacher's role, but they describe the floor rather than the ceiling — what any Sendero Prep classroom should look like on a typical day.

1. Daily Practice

- Arrive on time and prepared to teach or participate in PLCs at the start of contract time.
- Be at the classroom door to greet students and monitor hallways.
- Take attendance within the first 15 minutes of every class.
- Begin each class with a clear learning goal that students can see and reference throughout the period.
- Actively supervise students at all times when they are in your care and when you are on break; do not leave the classroom unattended (see Section III).

- Check for understanding throughout the lesson and adjust in real time; do not wait until the end to discover students did not follow.
- Post and enforce consistent classroom procedures for entry, transitions, materials, technology use, and dismissal.
- Return graded work and provide feedback as aligned with standards-based mastery practice.
- Check and read email daily.
- Respond to colleagues, administration, students, and family communications within one working day, or, when a substantive response takes longer, acknowledge receipt within one day.

2. Instructional Preparation

- Bring lesson plans, materials, and assessments before class begins; do not use instructional time for setup that could have been done in advance.
- Maintain a current gradebook in the school's Student Information System (Section II) and update it weekly by the end of day Sunday.
- Participate actively in PLC and collaboration time (Section II), using data to identify students who need additional support.

3. Classroom Culture

- Model the workplace expectations for students in your everyday practice (Section I).
- Use restorative and positive-behavior strategies as the first response to behavior concerns, consistent with the discipline framework in the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook, before moving to exclusionary responses.
- Treat every colleague, administrative, student, and family conversation, regardless of how difficult, as a partnership rather than a confrontation.

4. Student Support

- Teachers are responsible for knowing which students on their rosters receive IEP, ELL, or 504 services. Teachers are expected to review IEP, ELL, and 504 accommodations.
- General education and special population staff are expected to collaborate on planning with both lessons and IEP, 504, and ELL student plans.
- Teachers are expected to respond to IEP and reevaluation survey requests within two weeks of receiving the notification from special education staff.

J. Parent-Teacher Conferences and Family Communication

Sendero Prep staff will reach out to parents or guardians to communicate both positive and negative behaviors. Teachers are expected to initiate contact with families whenever a student's academic performance, IEP, attendance, or behavior calls for it — waiting for a family to reach out is not sufficient.

- Use the school phone or email to communicate with parents and guardians; do not communicate with students or families through personal phone numbers, personal email, or personal social media.
- Document significant family conversations (in-person, phone, or written) briefly in an email to administration so that administration and other staff supporting the student can see the history.

- When a home language other than English is used by the family, coordinate with front office staff for translation and interpretation.

K. Grades, Progress Reporting, and Grade Changes

Grades are a significant record of a student's academic progress and, in a career-connected school, a meaningful signal about workplace readiness. Sendero Prep expects grades to be assigned accurately, based on the standards and evidence identified in each course's project path, and consistent across sections of the same course.

1. Gradebook Practice

- Keep the gradebook current — grades entered on a weekly basis and reflecting the assessment evidence, not estimated after the fact.
- Do not weight participation, effort, or behavior separately from the academic standards being measured; concerns about behavior are addressed through the school's discipline process, not the gradebook.
- Provide timely feedback to students and families, so that a report-card grade never comes as a surprise.

2. Grade Change Policy

Once posted, a final grade will be changed only for one of the following documented reasons: a calculation or data-entry error; new assessment evidence submitted within the deadlines established by the project scoring rubric or by administration; completion of an approved incomplete-grade contract within the timeline (purple form); or correction of a grade assigned in error under an accommodation, modification, or IEP requirement. Any grade change is approved and documented by an administrator; a teacher does not change a posted final grade on their own.

3. Academic Integrity

A teacher who identifies academic dishonesty — cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of authorship (including inappropriate use of generative AI), or fabrication of data — should follow the process described in the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook, document the incident, and communicate with the family. A single instance of academic dishonesty does not by itself justify a failing grade for the course; it can justify a zero on the affected assignment and, for repeated instances, further action through the discipline process.

L. Attendance at School Activities

Beyond the regular school day, Sendero Prep asks staff to participate in and attend school activities as reasonably possible — CTE showcases, Family Engagement Nights, student performances, and community events tied to Sendero Prep's mission. Staff presence signals support to students and families and is part of what makes Sendero Prep a community rather than a building. Specific attendance expectations for particular events will be communicated by administration in advance

Staff members using school facilities for a school-related club, organization, or activity outside of the regular schedule must receive advance permission from the Executive Director or a designated administrator in writing, consistent with Section VII (facilities use).

SECTION III

EMPLOYMENT

Hiring, equal opportunity, harassment and Title IX, background checks, personnel records, and mandatory reporting.

III. Employment

This section describes the terms on which Sendero Prep hires, retains, supports, and holds accountable its employees — the legal duties Sendero Prep owes every employee (equal opportunity, reasonable accommodation, freedom from harassment) and the duties every employee owes Sendero Prep in return (honest disclosure at hiring, clearance of a background check, timely licensure, mandatory reporting).

A. Equal Employment Opportunity

Sendero Prep is an equal opportunity employer. Consistent with the New Mexico Human Rights Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable law, Sendero Prep does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition, spousal affiliation, marital status, citizenship status, genetic information, military or veteran status, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local law. This policy applies to every aspect of employment, including recruitment, hiring, compensation, benefits, training, promotion, transfer, discipline, and termination.

Any employee who believes they have witnessed or experienced discrimination in violation of this policy should follow the reporting procedure described in Section III, below.

B. Employees with Disabilities

Consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and applicable New Mexico law, Sendero Prep does not discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability who can perform the essential functions of their position, with or without reasonable accommodation. An employee who needs an accommodation for a physical or mental disability should contact the Executive Director or designee. Sendero Prep will engage in a timely, interactive process to identify whether a reasonable accommodation exists that would allow the employee to perform the essential functions of the position without imposing an undue hardship on Sendero Prep. Requests for accommodation, and any related medical information, are treated confidentially and maintained apart from the employee's general personnel file (see Section III).

C. Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy

1. Policy Statement

Sendero Prep is committed to a workplace and school community free of unlawful harassment and discrimination. Every employee is expected to treat colleagues, students, families, vendors, and visitors with professionalism and respect. This policy applies to all Sendero Prep employees, contractors, and volunteers, and to conduct on campus, at any school-sponsored activity, and at any internship or work-based learning site.

Sendero Policy 13.04 -“Every student has the right to have access to a public education. No student will be subject to discrimination, harassment or obstacles to his/her democratic right to benefit from a public education.

Sendero School of Academics and Career Preparation will not allow any discrimination based on religion, culture, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, political beliefs or disability. This also includes marital status and pregnancy. Sendero Prep will observe all provisions of Section 504, and the *“Americans with Disability Act”* (ADA) of 1990.”

2. Discrimination and Harassment Described

Harassment includes unwelcome verbal, physical, or visual conduct directed at a person because of a characteristic protected under Section III that is severe or pervasive enough to interfere with a person's work, education, or participation in a school program, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

3. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature. Examples include, but are not limited to, sexually suggestive comments or jokes, unwanted physical contact, displaying sexually explicit material, and conditioning any employment or educational benefit on submission to sexual conduct.

4. Employee-Student Boundaries

Romantic or sexual relationships or conduct between a Sendero Prep employee and any student are strictly prohibited under all circumstances, regardless of the student's age or apparent consent. Section VII (Standards of Conduct) describes Sendero Prep's professional boundaries policy in full; a violation of that policy is also a violation of this Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy and triggers the mandatory reporting duties described in Section III.

5. Title IX: Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Sendero Prep does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any education program or activity, consistent with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations (34 C.F.R. Part 106). Any employee who experiences, witnesses, or receives a report of sex discrimination or sexual harassment — involving a student, employee, or any other person — must notify the Title IX Coordinator (see the Designated Coordinators table in Section I.D) in addition to any other reporting duty described in this Handbook. Sendero Prep will offer supportive measures to any student or employee who reports harassment, even absent a formal complaint, and will follow a grievance process that provides prompt and equitable resolution. Retaliation against anyone who reports, participates in, or cooperates with a Title IX investigation is strictly prohibited.

6. Reporting and Complaint Process

- **Employee Responsibilities.** Every employee shares responsibility for a workplace free of harassment and discrimination. If you experience or witness conduct that may violate this policy, report it — do

not assume that conduct between a student and an adult is acceptable or “consensual,” and do not stay silent out of concern that you may have misread the situation.

- **Reporting Complaints.** Bring concerns directly to the Executive Director in every case, and to the Title IX Coordinator as well whenever the concern involves sex discrimination or sexual harassment. A complaint may be made verbally, but the complainant will be asked to complete a written incident report to support the investigation.
- **No Retaliation.** Sendero Prep will not tolerate retaliation against any employee who reports harassment or discrimination in good faith, or who participates in an investigation. Retaliation is itself grounds for discipline, up to and including discharge.
- **Investigation and Response.** Sendero Prep will investigate every report promptly and as confidentially as circumstances allow, which may include interviews with the complainant, the individual accused, and relevant witnesses. All parties are expected to cooperate; providing false information during an investigation is itself grounds for discipline.
- **Appeal Procedure.** An employee dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint may appeal in writing to the Executive Director within five (5) working days of the decision; if still dissatisfied, the employee may appeal to the Governing Board within five (5) working days of the Executive Director's decision.
- **Final Decision.** The Governing Board's decision is the final level of internal review and will be provided in writing within five (5) working days of the appeal.

7. Violence in the Workplace

Threats or acts of physical violence, intimidation, or coercion involving Sendero Prep, or occurring on Sendero Prep property or at a school-sponsored event, are strictly prohibited. Examples include hitting or shoving another person, threatening a person or their family or property, destruction of school property, harassing phone calls or messages, stalking or surveillance, and unauthorized possession of a weapon (see Section VII for Sendero Prep's weapons policy). Any employee who becomes aware of a threat or act of violence must report it immediately to the Executive Director.

D. Religious Accommodation

Sendero Prep will make reasonable efforts to accommodate an employee's sincerely held religious beliefs and practices where doing so does not create an undue hardship or interfere with the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the position. An employee requesting a religious accommodation should contact the Executive Director and may be asked to provide supporting information.

E. Background Checks, Fingerprinting, and Employment History

QUICK REFERENCE

- The FBI fingerprint background check happens once, at the point Sendero Prep offers an applicant employment.
- Sendero Prep may, at its discretion, require an additional background check for cause — this is Sendero Prep policy, not a statutory renewal cycle.
- Volunteers and contractors with unsupervised student contact go through the same background-check process.

1. Purpose and Policy Statement

Consistent with NMSA 1978, § 22-10A-5, and related New Mexico law, Sendero Prep obtains and reviews applicant employment histories and background checks — including a fingerprint-based FBI records check — for every applicant offered employment, and for volunteers and contractors (or contractors' employees) who may have unsupervised contact with students on Sendero Prep property or at school-sponsored events, including online learning. Sendero Prep is committed to staffing its programs with qualified, ethical employees and to providing a safe environment for students, staff, and visitors; this policy exists to protect the school community from individuals whose history of ethical misconduct or criminal conduct presents an unreasonable risk of harm.

2. Persons Affected

This policy applies to all applicants for employment and to volunteers, contractors, and contractors' employees who may have unsupervised contact with students, whether on Sendero Prep property or during a school-sponsored event, including online learning. Failure or refusal to cooperate with these requirements disqualifies an applicant from employment, volunteering, or contracting with Sendero Prep.

3. Use of Information; Non-Discrimination Safeguards

No applicant is required to disclose their criminal record before being offered a position contingent on a satisfactory background check. Information discovered through this process will be used only to evaluate an applicant's suitability for employment, volunteering, or contracting, consistent with the New Mexico Criminal Offender Employment Act, and will not be used to discriminate against an applicant on any basis protected by law.

4. Disqualifying Ethical Misconduct and Criminal Convictions

An applicant may be disqualified from employment, volunteering, or contracting based on ethical misconduct (defined in Section III, below) or a felony or misdemeanor conviction involving moral turpitude that directly relates to the position. Convictions for offenses such as those involving child abuse or neglect, sexual misconduct, an improper educator-student relationship, or child pornography are presumed to disqualify an individual, given the unreasonable risk such conduct poses to students, employees, and visitors. Before withdrawing an offer of employment, volunteer service, or a contract based on this information, Sendero Prep will give the individual an opportunity to respond, as described in Section III, below.

5. Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

Background check records are confidential, shared only with individuals authorized to be involved in the applicable employment or contracting decision, and maintained separately from an employee's general personnel file. The Executive Director must immediately report to the New Mexico Public Education Department any known felony or misdemeanor conviction involving moral turpitude of a licensed school employee, contractor, contractor's employee, or volunteer, as required by law, and must investigate and report any finding of ethical misconduct to NMPED within the timeframe required by law — including immediate reporting where the finding involves sexual misconduct with an adult or child. No separation agreement between Sendero Prep and a departing employee may limit or eliminate this reporting obligation.

6. Timing; Discretionary Additional Checks; Adverse Action and Opportunity to Respond

Consistent with NMSA 1978, § 22-10A-5, a background check is completed once, at the point an applicant is offered employment (or, for an applicant initially licensed within the preceding 24 months, Sendero Prep may rely on the FBI record already on file with NMPED rather than requesting a new one). New Mexico law does not require a recurring background check for a current employee. Sendero Prep may, at its discretion, require an employee to submit to an additional background check at any time based on a reasonable, articulable suspicion that new information exists that would place students or other employees at an unreasonable risk of harm; this is a matter of Sendero Prep policy rather than a statutory mandate. If Sendero Prep is considering an adverse action based on background check results, the individual will receive written notice of the specific reasons and an opportunity — generally five (5) business days — to respond with relevant information, such as evidence of a misidentified record, evidence of rehabilitation, or context regarding the circumstances, before a final decision is made.

7. Fingerprints and Records

Applicants will be informed that their fingerprints will be used to obtain an FBI records check for purposes of determining suitability for employment, volunteering, or contracting. Sendero Prep will not transfer background check results to any third party except as required by law.

8. Definitions

- **Applicant / Finalist —** an individual offered employment, or considered for a volunteer or contractor role, contingent on a satisfactory background check.
- **Background Check —** verification of an applicant's licensure, employment, education, and criminal/sex-offender history, including an FBI fingerprint-based records check for anyone who may have unsupervised contact with students.
- **Ethical Misconduct —** a discriminatory practice on a protected basis; sexual misconduct or a sexual offense prohibited by Chapter 30, Article 6A or 9 NMSA 1978; fondling of a child or student; or other licentious, enticing, or solicitous behavior reasonably likely to result in inappropriate sexual contact with, or to induce prohibited behavior by, a child or student.
- **Moral Turpitude —** conduct that gravely violates accepted standards of honesty, justice, or morality.

- **Unsupervised Access —** access to or contact with a student, for any length of time, without a licensed staff member, a background-checked volunteer, or the student's adult relative or guardian present.
- **Volunteer / Contractor —** a person serving Sendero Prep without compensation, or a person or entity performing services under contract, who may have unsupervised contact with students.

F. Immigration Law Compliance

Consistent with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, as amended, every new employee must complete Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility as a condition of employment. Sendero Prep does not discriminate against any employee or applicant based on citizenship or immigration status except as required to verify eligibility to work, and does not tolerate retaliation against an employee who raises a good-faith question about immigration law compliance.

G. Licensure Requirements

Every staff member required to hold a current license, endorsement, or certification issued by the New Mexico Public Education Department or another licensing body — including teachers, educational assistants, special education ancillary staff, counselors, social workers, coaches, administrators, and school nurses/health assistants — is responsible for obtaining and maintaining that credential and for providing current documentation to the Executive Director or designee by any state-mandated deadline. An employee who does not hold the required license, endorsement, or an approved waiver by the applicable deadline may not be paid for work requiring that credential until it is obtained, and may be subject to cancellation of their contract consistent with New Mexico law.

Consistent with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), families have the right to request information about a teacher's licensure status and must be notified in writing if their student has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable licensing requirements for the grade level and subject taught. See Appendix D of the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook for the notification letter used to fulfill this requirement.

H. Personnel Records

1. Contents of the Personnel File

Sendero Prep maintains a personnel file for each employee, which may include the employment application and supporting qualifications, professional licenses and endorsements, official transcripts, the employee's contract, references, the signed Handbook acknowledgment, performance evaluations, documentation of professional development, and any documented complaints, findings, or disciplinary action.

2. Separate Confidential File

Certain records are maintained separately from the general personnel file, including medical records, the I-9 form, workers' compensation records, health records, drug testing records (if any), and records of

equipment issued to the employee. Background check records described in Section III.E are also maintained separately.

I. Work Schedule

1. Duty Hours

During regular school hours, staff are required to ensure students are supervised at all times. This includes during class time, passing periods, as well as before and after school transition times. Staff are also expected to supervise students during classroom breaks and activities that occur outside the classroom.

2. Classroom Coverage

A teacher who must leave their classroom during instructional time must arrange coverage in advance with administration; classrooms may not be left unsupervised.

3. Absence or Lateness

An employee who will be late or absent must notify their supervisor as far in advance as possible. Unauthorized or excessive absence or lateness may result in discipline, up to and including termination or non-renewal, as described further in Section VIII.

An employee who is absent for three (3) consecutive days may be required to present a written excuse from the employee's physician. If the supervisor notes a pattern to the absences, or determines that absences are considered to be excessive and disruptive to the operations of the school may result in a disciplinary measure, up to and including loss of employment as a consequence to this infraction.

4. Severe Weather and Emergency Conditions

Sendero Prep will communicate delays, early releases, or closures through ParentSquare and the school website, consistent with the notification method described in the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook. Staff reporting expectations during a delay, early release, or closure will be communicated by administration and apply the same way regardless of role unless otherwise specified. During a shelter-in-place or lockdown, staff should follow the exact procedures and terminology described in Section VII (Health, Safety, and Emergency Procedures) and in the Safe School Plan, which match the definitions published in the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook.

J. Building Access and Use

Non-administrative building key cards allow access to the building from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. Access to Sendero Prep facilities outside of normal duty hours must be authorized in advance by administration. Staff granted access privileges or keys are responsible for following all safety and security procedures described in this Handbook and may not share access with any person not employed by Sendero Prep.

K. Professional Development and Staff Training

All staff are expected to attend required professional development, staff meetings, and trainings, including those related to the school's instructional model (Section II), evaluation system (Section VI), mandatory reporting (Section III), and safety procedures (Section VII). New employees must complete mandatory-reporter training and any other legally required training within the timeframe set by administration; all staff complete refresher training annually.

L. Reporting Child Abuse, Neglect, and Ethical Misconduct

> **MANDATORY REPORTING**
>
> Every Sendero Prep employee is a mandatory reporter under New Mexico law. If you know or reasonably suspect that a child has been abused or neglected — or that a child has been subject to ethical misconduct by school personnel — you must report it immediately, using the procedures below. Failure to report is a criminal matter and a matter for discipline up to and including discharge.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

New Mexico law requires any school employee who knows or has a reasonable suspicion that a child is abused or neglected to report the matter immediately to a local law enforcement agency, the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), or, for a child residing in Indian country, a tribal law enforcement or social services agency. This is a mandatory, nondiscretionary duty; it is not the reporting employee's responsibility to investigate or confirm the suspicion before reporting. As soon as practicable after making the report, the employee must also notify the Executive Director or designee. Failure to report known or reasonably suspected abuse or neglect may result in criminal liability and discipline, up to and including discharge.

Reporting Ethical Misconduct

Consistent with NMSA 1978, § 22-10A-5.1, any Sendero Prep employee, volunteer, contractor, or contractor's employee who knows or has a reasonable suspicion that a child has been subject to ethical misconduct by school personnel must immediately report the matter to the Executive Director or to the New Mexico Public Education Department. “Ethical misconduct” is defined in Section III.E.8, above. Some ethical misconduct will also constitute child abuse; where both apply, the reporting employee should follow the child abuse and neglect reporting procedure above, in addition to this ethical misconduct reporting procedure. Upon receiving a report of ethical misconduct, the Executive Director or designee will notify NMPED by telephone immediately, follow up with a written report to NMPED within 48 hours, and notify the reporting employee in writing within five (5) calendar days that the matter is under review.

M. Hiring Standards

The quality of Sendero Prep's staff determines the quality of the education students receive. Recruitment, hiring, and retention decisions are made with that principle in mind. Consistent with New

Mexico's Charter Schools Act, the Executive Director holds the statutory authority to employ, assign, and terminate staff (see Section I); the Governing Board hires and evaluates the Executive Director.

Staff selection is based on the criteria below, weighted appropriately for the role being filled:

- Strong academic preparation and appropriate licensure or credentials for the position.
- Professional competence and demonstrated knowledge of instructional or role-specific practices.
- Ability to advance Sendero Prep's mission and CTE/PBL model.
- Alignment with the Graduate Profile (Section I) as an example for students.
- Cultural competence and ability to serve a diverse student community, including students with disabilities, English Learners, and students experiencing homelessness.
- Ability to utilize technology and associated platforms to perform work expectations.
- Emotional maturity, professional attitude, and evidence of being able to work as part of a team.

Attention is paid, among other factors, to the candidate's academic records, prior teaching or work experience, evaluation history from prior employers, professional references, and, for any position with unsupervised student contact, a satisfactory background check (Section III).

N. Employee Duties and General Compliance

Every Sendero Prep employee is expected to comply with the standards of conduct set out in this Handbook and with any other policies, regulations, and administrative directives that apply to their role. Violation of Sendero Prep policies, regulations, or lawful administrative directives may result in disciplinary action, including discharge or non-renewal, as described in Section VII (Discipline Process) and Section VIII (Termination and Discharge).

O. Verification of Employment

Sendero Prep responds to verification-of-employment requests for current and former employees consistent with the following practice. Absent written authorization from the employee (or former employee) on a form provided by Sendero Prep, the school will verify only dates of employment, position held, and full-time-equivalent rate. With written authorization, additional information — including compensation, eligibility for rehire, and, where required by law, information about ethical misconduct or a related finding — will be released. Requests should be directed to the Executive Director or designated business office contact.

Sendero Prep will respond to reasonable requests for information about a former employee from another prospective public school employer within the timeline required by NMSA 1978, § 22-10A-5, when the requesting school has documented that the former employee has been offered employment and has provided written authorization.

P. Reassignments and Transfers

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the Executive Director based on the operational and instructional needs of Sendero Prep. Extra-curricular and supplemental-duty assignments may also be assigned, reassigned, or ended at any time.

Sendero Prep employees interested in an open position within the school are encouraged to apply. Selection is based on Sendero Prep's needs and the candidate's qualifications and performance history; Sendero Prep may fill an internal opening with an external candidate where doing so best serves the students and the mission. The Executive Director's criteria for approving reassignments and internal transfers are consistent with Sendero Prep's equal-opportunity commitments (Section III).

Q. Extra Duties and Supervision Responsibilities

Sendero Prep operates with a lean staff, which means that non-classroom supervision — arrival, dismissal, hallway and passing periods, common areas during lunch, and coverage during colleagues' planning time — is a shared responsibility. Every certified and paraprofessional staff member is expected to perform reasonable extra-duty assignments as directed by administration and to do so in a manner that reflects the workplace expectations they are asking students to model. Extra-duty assignments will be made consistent with New Mexico law and any applicable contract terms.

R. Notification to Parents Regarding Teacher Qualifications

Consistent with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and applicable New Mexico law, Sendero Prep will notify families in writing if their student has been assigned or taught, for four or more consecutive weeks, by a substitute teacher or another person not fully qualified to teach the grade level or subject area. Families may also request, at any time, information about a teacher's licensure status, degrees, and any relevant certifications; requests should be directed in writing to the school office. The notification letter used to fulfill this requirement is in Appendix D of the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook.

SECTION IV

WAGE AND SALARY

How pay is determined, paid, and administered — including attendance, payroll operations, and timekeeping.

IV. Wage and Salary Policies

This section describes how Sendero Prep determines pay, administers payroll, and expects employees to manage their time. It covers three related but distinct topics: compensation (how the salary schedule is set and applied); payroll operations (pay periods, deposits, deductions, W-2 delivery, and how errors are corrected); and employee attendance and punctuality (an aspect of job performance handled here because it is closely tied to pay and to timekeeping).

Sendero Prep's compensation for licensed positions is anchored to the NMPED three-tier license salary schedule (see Section IV). Payroll operations, including pay-period cadence and specific paydays, are set annually and inserted into Section IV. Employee attendance and punctuality standards are described in Section IV; leave benefits that entitle an employee to protected time away from work are separately described in Section IX.

A. Equal Opportunity in Compensation

Sendero Prep structures employee compensation to attract, motivate, and retain qualified staff without regard to any characteristic protected under Section III. Sendero Prep prioritizes its resources toward maintaining a compensation position that is competitive within the local public education market.

B. Basis for Determining Pay

The Governing Board adopts a salary schedule each year based on Sendero Prep's budget, applicable law, and, for licensed positions, the New Mexico Public Education Department's mandated three-tier license salary schedule. A licensed employee's placement on the schedule reflects their licensure level, education, and verified employment history on file with Sendero Prep; new employees are expected to submit current license documentation, official transcripts, and signed verification-of-employment forms from prior employers no later than their first contract day.

An employee who advances to a new licensure level (for example, from Level 1 to Level 2, or Level 2 to Level 3) must provide a copy of the new license, with a current-year start date, to be eligible for the new pay rate. Evidence of advancement received by October 1 will be processed retroactive to July 1 of the current school year; evidence received after October 1 will take effect the following school year.

C. Pay Periods and Paydays

Sendero pay per periods occur on the 15th and 30th of the month. If a regularly scheduled payday falls on a holiday or weekend, employees will be paid on the last working day before the scheduled date. An employee who identifies an error in their pay should report it to the Executive Director or business office immediately; overpayments must be returned to Sendero Prep, and Sendero Prep will work with the employee on a reasonable repayment arrangement.

D. Direct Deposit

Sendero Prep encourages, and may require, direct deposit of pay into the employee's financial institution account. Employees may update their direct deposit information at any time through the business office.

E. Mandatory Deductions from Pay

Sendero Prep will withhold federal and state income tax, Social Security and Medicare contributions, and contributions to the New Mexico Educational Retirement Board (ERB), as required by law, along with any court-ordered garnishment. Deductions are itemized on each pay stub; an employee who wants to change their withholding elections should submit a new W-4 form to the business office.

F. Travel and Per Diem Reimbursement

Employees will be reimbursed for authorized travel and per diem expenses consistent with the New Mexico Per Diem and Mileage Act and its implementing rule, 2.42.2 NMAC. Prior written authorization is required before incurring an expense for which reimbursement will be requested; failure to obtain authorization in advance may result in denial of the reimbursement request.

G. Employment Classifications

1. Exempt and Non-Exempt

Consistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act, positions are classified as exempt (generally salaried positions not eligible for overtime, such as teachers and administrators) or non-exempt (eligible for overtime pay for hours worked beyond 40 in a workweek). An employee's classification is noted in their job contract; questions about classification should be directed to the Executive Director.

2. Full-Time and Part-Time Employees

An employee's full-time or part-time status, and any resulting benefit eligibility, is communicated at the time of hire and noted in the employee's contract or offer letter.

H. Employee Attendance and Punctuality

Reliable attendance and punctuality are essential expectations of every Sendero Prep position and are treated as an aspect of job performance. Consistent tardiness or unplanned absence disrupts instruction, forces colleagues to cover on short notice, and undermines the workplace expectations Sendero Prep asks students to internalize.

1. Reporting an Absence or Late Arrival

An employee who will be absent or late must notify the front office and administration as far in advance as possible, following the email notification established by administration. The employee must also complete the leave request form prior to their absence.

2. Tardiness

Tardiness is arriving after the scheduled start of the workday (8:15 am). Occasional tardiness happens; repeated tardiness is treated as a performance concern and may be addressed through the discipline process (Section VII).

3. Attendance Records

Sendero Prep maintains records of employee attendance. An employee who believes their record is incorrect should raise the concern with administration in writing so it can be reviewed and corrected.

4. Response to Excessive Absence or Tardiness

Excessive unscheduled absence or tardiness — whether or not any single instance would independently justify discipline — may result in progressive response, from a coaching conversation to a written warning to more serious action, consistent with Sections VII and VIII.

I. Wage and Tax Statements

Sendero Prep will provide each employee an IRS Form W-2 no later than January 31 of each year for the prior calendar year's earnings, consistent with federal law. An employee who has not received their W-2 by mid-February should contact the business office to request a reissue.

SECTION V

GOVERNING BOARD POLICIES

How this Handbook relates to the Governing Board's authority, meetings, and volunteer policy.

V. Governing Board Policies

A. Relationship to the Governing Board Policies

As described in “How to Use This Handbook” at the front of this document, this Staff Handbook implements, and must remain consistent with, the Sendero Prep Governing Board policies. Where a provision of this Handbook conflicts with the policies, an individual employee's written contract, or applicable law, the Governing Board policies, the contract, and the law control, in that order, unless the law requires a different result. Staff with questions about a specific board policy should contact the Executive Director, who can provide access to the current policies.

B. Governing Board Meetings and the Open Meetings Act

The Sendero Prep Governing Board conducts its business consistent with the New Mexico Open Meetings Act. Regular and special board meeting notices are posted on the Sendero Prep website at least 72 hours in advance (or, in an emergency, with the shorter notice period permitted by law). Staff are welcome to attend open board meetings and should direct any agenda item request to the Executive Director in advance of the meeting.

C. School Volunteers

Consistent with Section 11 of the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook, volunteers who serve on a recurring basis must complete a volunteer information form, review applicable school policies, complete required training, and pass a background check consistent with Section III.E of this Handbook before volunteering; a streamlined process applies to volunteers assisting with a single short event. Staff who work with volunteers are responsible for confirming that a volunteer has completed the applicable process before permitting the volunteer to have any unsupervised contact with students.

SECTION VI

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS AND EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS

Educator evaluation, professional development plans, coaching cycles, and staff development requirements.

VI. Performance Reviews and Educator Effectiveness

A. Educator Evaluation: Elevate NM

Sendero Prep evaluates instructional staff using the New Mexico Public Education Department's current educator evaluation framework — Elevate NM (for teachers). Every site administrator who conducts evaluations of instructional staff must earn and maintain an Elevate NM Calibration Certificate on the schedule required by NMAC. Instructional employees are evaluated at least annually, and evaluation results are a factor in decisions about continued employment, contract renewal, and professional growth planning.

B. Annual Professional Development Plans

Consistent with 6.69.4.10 NMAC, each teacher and their supervising administrator will establish a professional development plan with measurable objectives no later than 40 school days after the first day of the school year. The plan will be based on the department's teaching competencies and indicators, the teacher's most recent annual evaluation (if applicable), and confirmation that the teacher is certified and endorsed to teach the subject(s) and grade level(s) to which they are assigned.

C. Observation, Feedback, and Coaching

Sendero Prep is committed to a regular, non-evaluative observation and feedback cycle to support teacher growth, in addition to the formal evaluation process described above. Staff are expected to engage openly in this process, as growth-oriented feedback is a core part of Sendero Prep's commitment to instructional quality.

D. Evaluation of Non-Instructional Staff

Non-instructional employees are evaluated at least annually based on the criteria in their job contract, using a process focused on continuous improvement. As with instructional staff, evaluation results may be considered in decisions about continued employment, promotion, or compensation.

E. Licensure Advancement

Sendero Prep supports licensed staff in advancing through New Mexico's tiered licensure system (Level 1 to Level 2 to Level 3) and will process a resulting pay-rate change consistent with Section IV, above, once current documentation is received. Documentation of licensure advancement must be finalized and received by the school prior to October 1st for the pay to be effective that school year. If documentation is received after the deadline the new pay scale will begin the following school year. Staff pursuing licensure advancement should contact the Executive Director for information about the New Mexico Public Education Department's requirements at each level.

F. Staff Development Requirements

Sendero Prep is committed to a coordinated professional learning plan grounded in the school's mission, the results of educator evaluation, and current instructional priorities. Staff development is not optional — it is a condition of employment and is one of the ways Sendero Prep meets its charter obligations to students, families, and the Governing Board.

1. Annual and Ongoing Requirements

All staff complete an annual coordinated professional learning plan implemented with fidelity throughout the year, consistent with NMAC 6.65.2 (or its successor rule). The plan will include, at minimum:

- Orientation, covering this Handbook, the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook, the Safe Schools Plan, and role-specific procedures.
- Ongoing PLC and collaboration time embedded in the regular schedule (Section II).
- Any professional development required by NMPED for the employee's licensure level, endorsements, or role.
- Specific training on Sendero Prep's CTE/PBL model and MLSS framework, for all staff who work with students in an instructional capacity.

2. Mandatory Legal-Compliance Training

Every Sendero Prep employee, regardless of role, completes annual refresher training on the topics below. New employees must complete this training within six (6) weeks of their start date.

- Mandatory reporting of child abuse, neglect, and ethical misconduct.
- Anti-racism and racial sensitivity
- Bullying, anti-harassment and discrimination, including Title IX obligations.
- FERPA and Student-Record Confidentiality.
- Blood-Borne Pathogens
- IDEA Procedural Safeguards and Child Find
- Educator Code of Ethical Responsibility

3. Coaching and Observation Cycle

Beyond the formal evaluation described in Section VI, Sendero Prep is committed to a regular, non-evaluative observation and feedback cycle for instructional staff. The purpose of the cycle is professional growth, not evaluation ratings; the two are kept intentionally separate so that a coaching visit does not carry the weight of a formal observation.

4. Documentation and Records

Documentation of completed professional development, including agendas, sign-in records, and certificates of completion, is maintained by the Executive Director or designee. Records are used both to demonstrate compliance with state requirements and to inform future planning.

SECTION VII

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The professional expectations, discipline framework, and safety practices that apply to every Sendero Prep employee.

VII. Standards of Conduct

This section describes the day-to-day standards Sendero Prep asks every employee to meet — in interactions with students and families, in the use of school time and resources, and in personal conduct that affects the school. Some standards restate legal or ethical duties that apply regardless of what this Handbook says (the NMPED Code of Ethics, FERPA, workplace-safety law); others reflect Sendero Prep's own commitments about how a career-connected school should feel and function.

The section covers, in order: professional boundaries with students (A); dress and appearance (B); technology and social media (C); drug-free workplace (D); weapons (E); nepotism and conflicts of interest (F); confidentiality and student records (G); the discipline process, including the enumerated basis for disciplinary action (H); complaints and grievances (I); the NMPED Code of Ethics reference (J); health, safety, and emergency procedures (K); the acceptable-use expansion (L); expanded conflicts of interest (M); additional conduct standards (N); and communication norms (O).

A. Professional Boundaries: Staff/Student Interaction Policy

Sendero Prep staff are responsible for maintaining clear, professional boundaries with students at all times, both on and off campus. The purpose of this policy is not to prevent genuine, positive relationships between staff and students, but to prevent conduct that could lead to, or be reasonably perceived as, misconduct. A useful test when uncertain whether conduct is appropriate: would you be comfortable if a colleague, supervisor, or the student's family were present?

1. Prohibited Conduct

- Any romantic or sexual relationship, comment, or contact with a student, regardless of the student's age or apparent consent.
- Giving a student a gift of a personal or intimate nature, or giving gifts to one student that are not offered to similarly situated students.
- Being alone with a student behind a closed door or in a location away from school without another adult present and without parent/supervisor permission.
- Being in a personal vehicle with a student.
- Communicating with students through personal (non-school-issued) email, phone numbers, or social media accounts.
- Discussing personal, intimate, or inappropriate topics with a student, or seeking emotional support from a student.
- Individual attention toward a particular student outside of legitimate academic or advising need.
- Remarks about a student's physical appearance or development.

2. Cautionary Conduct

- Giving a student a ride to or from school or a school activity without proper qualifications.

3. Recommended Practice

- Keep doors open, or remain within view of others, when meeting individually with a student.
- Communicate with students only through school-issued accounts and only about school-related matters.
- Keep parents informed when a significant concern arises involving their student.
- Ask a colleague or administrator for guidance whenever a situation feels uncertain.
- Transportation of students should occur with the use of a school vehicle and with authorized drivers.

4. Duty to Report

Any employee who reasonably suspects that another staff member has crossed the boundaries described in this handbook, or who is aware of student behavior suggesting a student may be at risk, must immediately report the concern to the Executive Director, consistent with Section III (Reporting Child Abuse, Neglect, and Ethical Misconduct).

B. Dress Code and Personal Appearance

Sendero Prep staff serve as workplace-readiness role models for students preparing for internships and careers (see the Graduate Profile, Section I). Staff should dress in a way that is clean, professional, and appropriate to their role — including any additional safety gear required for a CTE pathway, lab, or work site — and that would not be out of place at a professional workplace or internship site. Consistent with Section VI of the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook, staff dress standards will never be less than what is expected of students.

C. Technology, Social Media, and Acceptable Use

Staff use of Sendero Prep technology, and any use of personal technology for school-related purposes, is governed by the same Acceptable Use Policy referenced in Section 10 of the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook. All users must use technology for legitimate educational purposes; must not access, create, or share defamatory, obscene, threatening, or illegal material; must respect copyright; and must understand that school email and network activity is not private and may be monitored.

Staff must communicate with students only through school-issued accounts and platforms, and never through personal email, personal phone numbers, or social media. When posting on personal social media, staff must not disclose confidential student or school information, must make clear that personal views are their own, and must not post content that could reasonably embarrass Sendero Prep, its students, or its staff. Misuse of technology may result in loss of technology privileges and discipline, up to and including discharge.

D. Drug-Free Workplace

Sendero Prep is committed to a drug- and alcohol-free workplace. Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug, or possessing, using, or distributing alcohol or an illegal drug on school property or at a school-sponsored event, is prohibited and may result in discipline, up to and including discharge.

E. Weapons and Workplace Safety

Consistent with the Gun-Free Schools Act and New Mexico law, possession of a firearm, explosive, or other weapon on Sendero Prep property, at a school-sponsored activity, or in a vehicle used for school business is prohibited, except as authorized by law for licensed security personnel. See Section III for Sendero Prep's workplace violence policy and Section VII, below, for building safety and emergency-response expectations.

F. Nepotism and Conflicts of Interest

Sendero Prep's nepotism policy is described in Section I. More broadly, every employee must avoid situations that create an actual or potential conflict of interest — including personal relationships, outside employment, or a financial interest that could influence, or appear to influence, a decision made on behalf of Sendero Prep. An employee who becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest must disclose it to the Executive Director (or, if the concern involves the Executive Director, to the Governing Board president) as soon as practicable. Employees may not accept a gift, gratuity, or favor from a vendor, student, or family with a market value exceeding $100, other than educational awards, honoraria, plaques, or similar recognition.

G. Confidentiality and Student Records (FERPA)

Staff routinely have access to confidential student and personnel information and must protect it accordingly. Student education records are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and may be shared only with school officials who have a legitimate educational interest, or as otherwise permitted by law; staff should direct any request for student records from outside the school to administration. Employee personnel information is likewise confidential and may be shared only on a need-to-know basis, consistent with Section III.

H. Basis for Disciplinary Action and the Discipline Process

Sendero Prep addresses employee conduct and performance concerns through a fair, consistent process designed to correct problems where possible and to protect students, staff, and Sendero Prep's mission where correction is not achievable. This section describes what may result in discipline, how the process generally works, and when the just-cause and protest procedures in Section VIII apply.

1. Basis for Disciplinary Action

Depending on the severity of the concern and any prior history, conduct that may result in discipline — up to and including discharge — includes, but is not limited to, the following. Any of these may also constitute just cause for termination or discharge of a licensed employee under Section VIII. The list is organized by category for readability, not by severity; the seriousness of a specific incident depends on its facts.

Student Safety and Welfare

- Any conduct crossing the professional boundaries described in Section VII, including any romantic or sexual contact or communication with a student.
- Failure to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or ethical misconduct as required by Section III.M.
- Leaving students unsupervised (Section III) or failing to complete assigned supervision responsibilities.
- Neglect of duty or failure to complete assigned instructional responsibilities.
- Tutoring or otherwise providing paid academic support to a currently enrolled student under the employee's supervision (Section II).

Discrimination, Harassment, and Workplace Safety

- Harassment, discrimination, or retaliation prohibited by Section III.
- Threats or acts of physical violence, intimidation, or coercion (Section III).
- Possession of a weapon on school property (Section VII).
- Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug; possessing, using, or distributing alcohol or an illegal drug on school property or at a school-sponsored event (Section VII).

Integrity and Trust

- Dishonesty, including falsification of any school record — personnel records, timesheets, grades, attendance records, medical documentation, leave requests, background-check information, or licensure documentation.
- Theft of school property, student property, or property belonging to another employee; unauthorized removal of school-owned materials or equipment.
- Fraudulent or improper use of school facilities, equipment, funds, purchasing procedures, or reimbursement processes.
- Conflicts of interest, gifts, or outside employment inconsistent with Section VII.F and the NMPED Code of Ethics.
- Breach of confidentiality, including disclosure of student education records in violation of FERPA (Section VII) or disclosure of personnel or business information not authorized by law or by administration.

Performance and Compliance

- Any violation of this Handbook, the Sendero Prep Governing Board policies, the NMPED Code of Ethics (Appendix C), an employee's contract, or applicable state or federal law.
- Insubordination — refusal to follow a lawful directive from a supervisor or administrator, or repeated failure to complete assigned duties after having been notified of the expectation.
- Excessive unscheduled absence or tardiness (Section IV); job abandonment as defined in Section VIII.H.
- Misuse of Sendero Prep technology, including violating the Acceptable Use Policy (Section VII), viewing or distributing pornographic or violent content on school systems, or using school technology to conduct personal business without authorization.

Broader Categories

- Any conduct on school property, at a school-sponsored event, or in a school-related context that would reasonably subject Sendero Prep to loss of its charter, loss of funding, or legal liability, or that gravely damages public confidence in the school.
- A criminal conviction, or credible allegation of a criminal offense, that is directly related to the responsibilities of the employee's position or that is otherwise disqualifying under the background-check policy in Section III.
- Any other conduct rationally related to an employee's competence, conduct, or the proper performance of their duties.

2. Range of Response

Depending on the severity and pattern of the concern, Sendero Prep may respond with coaching, a documented performance conversation, a written warning, a performance improvement or commitment plan, administrative leave (with or without pay), non-renewal, or discharge. Some violations — including those involving student safety, ethical misconduct, workplace violence, or serious dishonesty — may warrant immediate suspension or discharge without progressing through each step.

I. Complaints and Grievances

Employee Grievance Resolution Procedure 13.06.06

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a procedure for the reporting and resolution of legitimate employment-related concerns of the employees of this school at the earliest possible time and with the least possible expense, disruption and friction. The Governing Council recognizes that most personnel difficulties encountered by employees arise from a lack of communication. This procedure is designed to provide a formal mechanism for promoting or restoring such communication so that problems may be resolved before far more serious difficulties result.

Mediation will always be an acceptable form of resolution at any step in this process. Mediation may be requested by either party at any time, but will only be utilized by mutual agreement of the parties. The costs of mediation shall be shared by the parties or the school, at the discretion of the principal, may bear the total costs of mediation. All efforts will be made to locate and acquire the services of a person trained in mediation to act as a mediator. The parties must agree on the selection of the mediator.

B. Definitions and Limitations

1. "Grievant" shall mean an employee who is personally and directly affected by a condition for which he or she seeks a resolution.
2. A "grievance" shall be an allegation by an employee that the treatment he or she has received from a supervisor is unfair or improper, or that there has been a violation, a misinterpretation or an inequitable application of Governing Council policy, administrative rules, or procedures, that directly and adversely affects the grievant. A single grievance may

be submitted jointly by more than one grievant.

3. "Resolution(s)" shall be the proposed written decision by the appropriate administrator(s), grievance review committee or Governing Council, in response to the grievance.
4. "Parties in interest" shall be the grievant and the supervisor or other Employee(s) of the school whose conduct or actions are the subject of the grievance.
5. The following situations are not covered by this grievance procedure and are therefore not grievable under this policy.
   a. the discretionary act(s) of professional judgment relating to the evaluation of the work performance of any employee by his or her immediate supervisor, including the issuance of a Professional Growth Plan to address substandard work performance;
   b. any personnel decision made by the Executive Director or principal, including, but not limited to, a refusal to re-employ, a discharge, a demotion, or any other action directly and adversely affecting the employment of an employee;
   c. any personnel decisions made by the Executive Director or Principal relating to conducting a special employee evaluation, reductions in force, issuance of a Professional Development Plan, evaluations of licensure, performance of investigations of misconduct, placement on administrative leave with pay, transfer, reassignment and assignment of duties and responsibilities.
   d. any personnel decisions made by the Executive Director related to personnel actions regarding amendments to employee's contracts, employment agreements, and/or special increments addendum.
   e. situations in which the Executive Director, Principal and Governing Council are authority to act;
   f. situations in which the remedy for the alleged violation exclusively resides in some person, agency, or authority other than the Executive Director, Principal or Governing Council;
   g. situations as to which a different procedure or remedy has been provided by the Governing Council through policy, procedure or practice;
   h. situations as to which the procedure within the School is prescribed by state or federal authority; and
   i. situations involving a grievance by a contractor with the School.
6. A grievance cannot be filed by a former employee after the effective date of resignation, termination or discharge of employment.
7. Failure of the grievant to follow the procedure in the succeeding steps as listed below, use of improper petition forms, or use of a bypass procedure through any other means not listed in this process shall

render the grievance null and void at the discretion of the Executive Director or Principal.

8. Should a grievant file a Charge of Discrimination with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Human Rights Division of the New Mexico Department of Labor or file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights for the U.S. Department of Education regarding matter to be grieved, the grievance will be dismissed without further action. The seeking of other remedies permitted by law or by a union collective bargaining agreement will render a grievance under this Policy null and void.
9. Once the grievance has been resolved or rejected, it may not be reinstituted by the same grievant.
10. A grievance is interpreted to be an unresolved individual issue rather than a group complaint. At no time may the grievance procedure be used as a ploy for "grieve outs" or multiple grievances at one time period by either individuals or groups – formal or informal.
11. At the discretion of the Executive Director, a grievance may be placed into grievance process at any step appropriate due to the alleged facts of the grievance or where the level of management would be unable to resolve the grievance.

C. General Procedural Requirements

1. A grievance must be initiated at Level 1, as provided in Section D, within ten (10) work days of the date upon which the grievant became aware of the circumstances which gave rise to the grievance.
2. No persons shall suffer retaliation, recrimination, discrimination, harassment, or be otherwise adversely affected because of his or her use of this grievance procedure.
3. Whenever possible, any grievance conference or hearing at any level shall be scheduled during a mutually convenient time that does not conflict with the regularly scheduled school program.
4. A grievant requiring the attendance and testimony of other employees shall have the right to bring such witnesses as are willing to testify in his or her behalf, and any necessary substitutes or released time shall be provided and the expense borne by the school when hearings must be scheduled during the school day.
5. A separate file shall be maintained by the school for grievances. All documents produced during the processing of a grievance shall be filed therein. All parties shall maintain confidentiality with regard to the proceedings and the resolution of the grievance shall not be made public unless agreed to by the grievant and the Executive Director, or unless the grievant pursues the matter beyond this policy. Nothing in the policy shall prevent the school from using information from a grievance in defense of any legal action initiated against the school, its administrators

or employees.

6. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to limit in any way the ability of the school and the grievant to resolve any grievance by informal means, and nothing herein shall be construed as requiring resort to the formal procedures when grievable problems arise.
7. A grievant may terminate the process at any level if he or she indicates in writing a desire to do so, accepts the resolution at that level, or fails to pursue his or her grievance by filing at the next level within the specified time limit.
8. All grievances shall be filed and processed on grievance forms prepared by the school and available in the office of the Executive Director. 9. The time limits at any level may be extended by mutual agreement between the grievant, on one hand and the supervisor, Executive Director, principal, review committee or governing council on the other.
10. Under this policy, the grievant has no right to representation at any step of the grievance process. The supervisor or administrator hearing the grievance at any level may permit at his or her discretion representation of the grievant or permit the electronic recording of the meeting at their respective level of the grievance only.
11. Except as otherwise provided herein, unless a party can demonstrate prejudice arising from a departure from the procedures established in this policy, such departure shall be presumed to be harmless error.

A. <u>Procedural Steps</u>

Level 1 (Informal Conference)

Prior to the filing of a formal written grievance, the grievant shall first discuss his or her grievance with his or her immediate supervisor in a good faith attempt to resolve the grievance prior to the filing of a formal grievance. In the case of a claim of sexual harassment in which the grievant's supervisor is the subject of the claim, the grievant may initiate the grievance at the next supervisory level above that of the subject supervisor.

<u>Level 2</u> (Supervisor)

If the grievant is not satisfied with the discussion and disposition of his or her grievance at Level 1, he or she may file a written grievance with his or her immediate supervisor within ten (10) work days of the disposition. The immediate supervisor shall communicate his or her proposed resolution in writing to the grievant within five (5) work days from the filing of the written grievance. Although no hearing or conference is required at this level, the immediate supervisor shall have the discretion to require a hearing or conference and gather such evidence prior to the preparation of the decision as he or she, in his or her discretion, feels would assist in any appropriate

resolution of the grievance. The hearing or conference, if any, shall be as informal as possible and shall be conducted as the immediate supervisor, in his or her discretion, feels is appropriate for a full understanding of the grievance, the position of the grievant and the evidence supporting that position.

Level 3 (Executive Director)

If the grievant is not satisfied with the resolution of the grievance at Level 2, or if the supervisor fails to issue a proposed resolution within the time limit set forth above, the grievant may file the grievance with the Executive Director, within five (5) working days after the resolution was rendered or was due, if none was received. The Executive Director shall conduct a closed informal hearing with the parties in interest to the grievance within five (5) working days after receipt of the grievance. The hearing by the Executive Director shall be as informal as possible and shall be conducted as he or she feels is appropriate for a full understanding of the grievance. The Executive Director shall have the right to ask any questions of the interested parties as he or she deems necessary. Within five (5) working days following the hearing, the Executive Director shall render his or her written proposed resolution to the grievant. In arriving at his or her decision, the Executive Director has complete discretion in fashioning such relief, if any, as it believes in appropriate, regardless of the relief requested. In all matters related to personnel decisions, the decision of the Executive Director with regard to the grievance shall be final.

Level 4 (Governing Council)

In instances in which determination of the grievance turns upon interpretation or construction of a Governing Council policy or decision, if the grievant is not satisfied with the resolution of the grievance at Level 3 with regard to the specific issues available for Level 4 review, the grievant may make a written request to the Executive Director for a hearing with the governing council within five (5) working days after the Executive Directors resolution was rendered or was due, if none was received.

The Governing Council shall schedule an informal hearing within five (5) working days of receipt of the grievance. The procedure for the hearing shall be as follows:

1. Each party in interest to the grievance shall have the opportunity to present oral statements limited to ten (10) minutes each. The presentation shall be limited to a review of evidence previously presented to the Executive Director, unless the governing council, in its discretion, allows new evidence to be presented during the hearing. Evidence may not be cross-examined by the other party in interest.
2. Since grievances are “personnel matters” related to the employee, the hearing may be conducted in an executive session, if the grievant so requests and the governing council votes to close the hearing. The grievant may demand that the hearing be held in open session, in which case the hearing must be open.

3. The governing council may make such inquiries of any party in interest as it deems necessary or appropriate.
4. The governing council shall render a written decision within a reasonable time. In arriving at its decision, the governing council has complete discretion in fashioning such relief, if any, as it believes is appropriate, regardless of the relief requested.

This grievance procedure does not apply to matters covered by a more specific process elsewhere in this Handbook, including harassment/discrimination complaints (Section III.C.6), Title IX complaints, or termination/discharge protests (Section VIII).

J. Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

Every Sendero Prep employee who holds a license issued by the New Mexico Public Education Department is bound by the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession, 6.60.9 NMAC. The full regulatory text is reproduced in Appendix C of this Handbook. All staff — licensed and unlicensed alike — are expected to act consistently with the spirit of that Code: honesty, respect, fairness, and the protection of students' safety and well-being above all other considerations.

K. Health, Safety, and Emergency Procedures

All Sendero Prep staff share responsibility for a safe campus and must be familiar with, and practice, the procedures below in addition to the Safe School Plan referenced in Section I.

1. Illness and Injury

Staff should be alert for signs of illness or injury in students and report them promptly to the school nurse/health assistant or another designated staff member. For a serious accident, injury, or sudden illness: administer first aid; call for help and to notify parents; if indicated, call emergency services; and complete an incident report. Only designated employees may administer medication to a student, and only with a written order from the student's healthcare provider, written parent/guardian permission, and medication in its original, labeled container, consistent with Section 9 of the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook.

2. Emergency Procedures

Sendero Prep maintains and practices emergency procedures for events such as fire, severe weather, and lockdown/shelter-in-place situations, using the same definitions published in the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook:

- **Shelter-in-place —** exterior doors are locked and students/staff remain inside with normal activity continuing until an all-clear is given; families may not enter the building during a shelter-in-place.
- **Lockdown —** all doors are locked, lights and activity are minimized, and students/staff wait quietly for further instructions; families may not enter the building during a lockdown.

During any emergency, staff should follow the directions of administration and first responders, account for all students in their care, and direct family inquiries to the school's official communication channels rather than answering phone calls, consistent with Section 9 of the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook.

3. Reporting Safety Concerns

Any staff member who identifies a potential safety hazard, security concern, or unsafe condition should report it immediately to administration. Any accident or injury occurring during work, however minor, must be reported the same day so that appropriate first aid, investigation, and workers' compensation documentation can be completed (see Section IX).

4. OSHA Compliance and Everyday Safety Practices

Sendero Prep complies with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act and applicable state safety requirements. Every employee is expected to follow common-sense safety practices in day-to-day work:

- Lifting: bend at the knees, keep the load close to the body, and ask for help with anything heavy or awkward rather than risking injury.
- Ladders and step stools: use the right tool for the job; do not stand on chairs, desks, or student furniture.
- Materials handling: store materials safely, keep aisles and exits clear, and clean up spills promptly.
- Electrical safety: report frayed cords, overloaded outlets, and damaged equipment; do not attempt repairs beyond your qualifications.
- Fire prevention: keep flammable materials away from heat sources; know the location of the nearest extinguisher and evacuation route.
- Personal protective equipment: staff must wear the PPE required for CTE pathway work and ensure students are wearing appropriate PPE at all times when conducting corresponding CTE and classroom activities, lab activities, or maintenance tasks.
- Safety Data Sheets: know where SDS records are maintained for any chemical or product used on campus.

5. HIPAA Awareness

Certain staff — the school nurse or health assistant, counselors, and others handling protected health information — may encounter information governed by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). All staff who receive health-related information about a student or colleague are expected to treat it as confidential and to share it only with individuals authorized to receive it and only for a legitimate school purpose.

6. Visitors in the Workplace

All visitors to Sendero Prep must report to the main office, present identification, and receive a visitor's badge before proceeding elsewhere on campus. Staff who encounter an adult on campus without staff or visitor identification should ask whether they need assistance and direct them to the front office. This

includes vendors, delivery personnel, guest speakers, and family members visiting for a scheduled meeting.

7. Leaving the Building

Staff members are expected to be on campus during contract time to include prep periods. All staff must check out and in at the front office anytime they leave campus during contract hours. There is a staff sign in and out Google Form that must be completed upon departure and again when returning. Leave requests must be submitted when a staff member is going to be out of the building for more than one hour. This leave request is completed using the leave request Google Form.

8. Purchasing and Reimbursements

All purchasing on Sendero Prep's behalf must follow the procurement procedures established by the business office — including prior authorization requirements, use of approved vendors where designated, and submission of receipts. Staff should not purchase goods or services with the expectation of reimbursement. Personal purchases may not be combined with school purchases.

9. Key and Access Security

Staff are responsible for the security of issued keys and key cards. Lost or stolen keys and key cards must be reported to administration immediately. Do not share keys or key cards with any person not employed by Sendero Prep, and do not prop open, disable, or bypass security-relevant doors, locks, or systems.

10. Personal Property

Employees who bring personal property to Sendero Prep do so at their own risk. Sendero Prep is not responsible for damage to or loss of personal items, including electronics, vehicles, and belongings left in classrooms or common spaces. Do not leave valuables unattended.

When using personal belongings, decorations, and furniture in the classroom, staff should ensure that the learning environment continues to model professionalism and workplace expectations.

L. Employee Acceptable Use of Technology

Section VII.C describes the overall Acceptable Use Policy. The subsections below expand on specific expectations.

1. Email and Voice Mail

Sendero Prep email and voice mail systems are provided for school business. Every message sent from a Sendero Prep account is treated as a Sendero Prep communication and may be subject to disclosure under the Inspection of Public Records Act. Do not use Sendero Prep email or voice mail for personal messages that would embarrass you or Sendero Prep if forwarded or disclosed, and do not use personal email or messaging accounts to conduct Sendero Prep business.

2. No Expectation of Privacy on School Systems

An employee has no expectation of privacy in any file, message, or activity created, sent, or received using Sendero Prep technology or on Sendero Prep's network, including school email, voice mail, cloud storage tied to a school account, and browsing on school networks. Sendero Prep may access, monitor, and disclose this information without further notice consistent with law.

3. Restrictions on Use

- Do not use school technology to view, download, display, store, or print pornographic, obscene, threatening, or unlawful material.
- Do not use school technology to conduct personal business, run a private enterprise, or campaign for a political candidate.
- Do not install unauthorized software, connect unauthorized devices, or attempt to bypass Sendero Prep's security or filtering.
- Do not use personal devices or technology to record or capture images in any area where students may be present.
- Do not use another employee's account or password.

4. Employee Use of Social Media

When posting on personal social media, staff must not identify themselves in a way that implies they speak for Sendero Prep, must not disclose confidential student or personnel information, and must not post content that could reasonably embarrass Sendero Prep or interfere with the education or safety of students - including posting images or videos of students. Sharing Sendero social media posts on personal accounts is allowable. Nothing in this policy limits speech protected by the First Amendment or by New Mexico law; the policy addresses conduct that materially harms the school or its mission.

5. Electronic Media with Students

ONE-WAY RULE

Communicate with students only through school-issued accounts, school-managed platforms, and school-approved channels. Do not exchange personal phone numbers, personal email addresses, personal social media handles, or direct messages of any kind with a student, and do not “friend,” follow, or accept a friend/follow request from a current Sendero Prep student on personal social media. If a student initiates personal contact, tell them to use the school channel and inform your supervisor.

6. Telephone Usage

Sendero Prep telephones are provided for school business. Personal calls during instructional or duty time should be brief and limited to matters that cannot wait. Personal mobile devices should be silenced during instructional time and not used in ways that distract from teaching or supervision. This reinforces the expectations that are placed on students at Sendero regarding cell phone use and Yondr pouches.

M. Conflicts of Interest (Expanded)

Section VII sets the general rule. The subsections below apply that rule to specific situations that come up in a school setting.

1. Non-School Activities

Participation in outside civic, religious, or community activities is welcome and encouraged. Staff should be alert, though, to situations where an outside activity puts them in a position where their loyalty to Sendero Prep could be reasonably questioned — for example, taking a leadership role in an organization that regularly does business with the school. Disclose potential conflicts to the Executive Director.

2. Outside Employment

Sendero Prep does not prohibit outside employment, but outside employment must not conflict with your Sendero Prep duties, must not use confidential information you obtained through Sendero Prep, and must not impair your ability to perform your Sendero Prep role. Notify the Executive Director in writing before beginning outside employment, and re-notify when the outside employment changes materially.

3. Gifts

Consistent with the NMPED Code of Ethics (Appendix C, Standard 2), no Sendero Prep employee may accept a gift, gratuity, or favor with a market value exceeding $100, other than approved educational awards, honoraria, plaques, trophies, or similar recognition. Small tokens of appreciation from a family or student (a card, a modest end-of-year gift) are appropriate to accept; nothing that could reasonably be seen as influencing the employee's judgment is.

When students receive awards and/or incentive prizes, staff are not allowed to purchase these items from students. Staff members should not purchase goods, services, or personal items directly from individual students unless the purchase is part of a school-approved fundraising activity, CTE program, student enterprise, or other activity authorized by school administration.

N. Additional Conduct Standards

1. Non-Disclosure of Confidential Information

Confidential information obtained during Sendero Prep employment — student records; personnel information; the School Safety Plan; contract, financial, or strategic information; and information covered by attorney-client privilege — remains confidential after the employment relationship ends. Do not disclose, use for personal benefit, or transfer to a new employer any confidential information obtained during employment with Sendero Prep.

2. Copyrighted Materials and Fair Use

Respect copyright in instructional materials, media, and software. Do not copy or distribute copyrighted material beyond the limits of fair use, and do not use software or media on Sendero Prep systems that Sendero Prep is not licensed to use.

3. Use of Personal Vehicles for School Business

Sendero Prep does not require employees to use personal vehicles for school business. An employee who volunteers to use a personal vehicle for school-related travel is responsible for maintaining their own valid driver's license and current auto insurance. Mileage reimbursement, when authorized in advance, is provided consistent with Section IV. Transporting students in a personal vehicle is not permitted.

5. Solicitation and Distribution

Sendero Prep is a public school and its facilities are not available for outside solicitation. Employees may not sell products or services to colleagues, students, or families during work time; may not distribute non-school printed or electronic materials on campus without the Executive Director's approval; and may not use Sendero Prep email or communication systems for outside fundraising or promotional purposes.

6. Public Appearances and Speaking as a Sendero Prep Representative

An employee speaking publicly to the media, at a community forum, at a professional conference — must be clear about whether they are representing Sendero Prep. Media inquiries about Sendero Prep should be directed to the Executive Director; do not agree to a media interview about Sendero Prep, its students, or its staff without the Executive Director's authorization.

7. Parking

Staff should park in designated staff parking areas. Do not park in visitor spaces, fire lanes, or spaces reserved for accessibility unless properly permitted. Sendero Prep is not responsible for damage to vehicles parked on school property.

8. Off-Duty Political and Associational Activities

Sendero Prep employees retain their full rights as citizens to participate in political and associational activities on their own time and using their own resources. This right does not include using Sendero Prep time, facilities, technology, students, or students' contact information to campaign for a candidate, promote a political cause, or advance a personal ideological interest, consistent with the NMPED Code of Ethics (Appendix C, Principle II).

9. Tobacco and Vaping

Sendero Prep is a tobacco- and vape-free workplace. Use of tobacco, e-cigarettes, or vape products — including in personal vehicles on school property — is prohibited on school premises and at school-sponsored events.

10. Searches and Drug/Alcohol Testing

Sendero Prep reserves the right to search school property in the employee's use, including desks, lockers, files, computers, and network storage. Personal property, including a personal vehicle on school property, may be searched only with reasonable suspicion of a violation of school policy or law. Drug or alcohol testing may be required as a condition of employment for certain positions, following a work-related incident where reasonable suspicion exists, or where required by grant or contract terms.

11. Possession of Dangerous Substances

In addition to the drug and alcohol policy in Section VII.D and the weapons policy in Section VII, no employee may bring any hazardous, explosive, incendiary, or otherwise dangerous substance onto Sendero Prep property except as required for a legitimate instructional or facilities purpose, properly labeled, and stored consistent with applicable safety requirements and Safety Data Sheets.

12. Theft

Any employee who removes, retains, or uses any Sendero Prep property — including instructional materials, supplies, technology, and funds — without authorization is subject to discipline up to and including discharge and, where applicable, referral to law enforcement. This includes the unauthorized use of Sendero Prep credit or purchase authority for personal benefit.

O. Announcements, Distribution, and Contacting Administrators After Hours

1. School Announcements

Official school announcements come from administration through Sendero Prep's designated communication platforms. Staff who wish to include something in a schoolwide announcement should route it through the appropriate administrator with enough lead time for review.

2. Distribution of Non-School Materials

Distribution of non-school printed or electronic materials — flyers, community-organization notices, outside opportunities — on Sendero Prep property, in staff mailboxes, or through Sendero Prep communication systems requires advance approval from the Executive Director or designee, and is limited to content consistent with Sendero Prep's mission and its student community's needs.

3. Contacting Administrators After Hours

Staff who need to reach administration outside of normal working hours for a genuine emergency — a student safety concern, a serious incident, an urgent operational issue — should use the emergency contact procedure established at the beginning of the school year. Routine work matters should wait for the next school day.

P. School Financial Expectations and Procedures

Staff will participate in annual training on school financial expectations and procedures by the school business official. All staff are expected to attend and abide by the guidelines presented at said training.

SECTION VIII

TERMINATION AND DISCHARGE

The New Mexico School Personnel Act's due-process framework, adapted for Sendero Prep's operations as a state-chartered public school.

VIII. Termination and Discharge

This section implements the due-process framework required by the New Mexico School Personnel Act (NMSA 1978, Chapter 22, Article 10A) for licensed school employees, and describes Sendero Prep's parallel process for non-licensed employees. It should be read together with Section III (Employment Policies) and Section VII (Standards of Conduct), which describe the conduct standards that may lead to discipline, and with the contract distinction described in the "How to Use This Handbook" section at the front of this Handbook.

SECTION VIII AT A GLANCE

Two thresholds set what protection an employee has under the School Personnel Act (see NMSA 1978, §§ 22-10A-24 through 22-10A-26):

• Licensed employees are protected by just-cause requirements and a Governing Board hearing + arbitration process once they have completed more than two consecutive years of service.

• Non-licensed employees and licensed educational assistants receive the same protections after more than one year of consecutive service.

• Below those thresholds, employment ends for any lawful reason at the Executive Director's discretion; there is no protest right, though the employee may request a written statement of reasons.

Section VIII.B describes the limited-service track; Section VIII.C describes the extended-service track. Section VIII.D lists categories exempt from protest procedures regardless of length of service (military-fill instructors; licensed administrators; certain school-wide management roles).

A. Definitions

- **Termination —** for a licensed employee, non-renewal of a contract at the end of its term. For all other employees, the act of ending the employment relationship.
- **Discharge —** ending the employment relationship of a licensed employee, or an employee under contract, before the end of the current contract term.
- **Just Cause —** a reason for termination or discharge that is rationally related to an employee's competence, conduct, or the proper performance of their duties, and that does not violate the employee's civil or constitutional rights.

B. Employees with Limited Service

Sendero Prep may terminate a licensed employee who has not completed more than two (2) consecutive years of service (has not been reemployed under a third consecutive contract), or a non-licensed employee or licensed educational assistant who has not completed more than one (1) year of consecutive service, for any lawful reason the Executive Director deems sufficient, consistent with NMSA 1978, § 22-10A-24(A).

- **Non-contract employees (one year or less of service) —** employees who are not employed under a contract and have not completed more than one year of consecutive service are employed on an at-will basis and may be terminated at any time for any lawful reason. Written notice of termination will be provided.
- **Contract employees (two years or less of service) —** a licensed employee who has not completed more than two consecutive years of service and has not been reemployed under a third consecutive contract may be terminated through non-renewal of the contract, for any lawful reason the Executive Director deems sufficient.

An employee terminated or non-renewed under this subsection has no protest right under the School Personnel Act, but may request a written statement of the reasons for the decision. The request must be made in writing within five (5) working days of receiving notice of termination or non-renewal; the Executive Director will provide the written reasons within ten (10) working days of the request. The Executive Director's decision under this subsection is final and not subject to appeal.

C. Employees with Extended Service

A licensed employee who has completed more than two (2) consecutive years of service, or a non-licensed employee or licensed educational assistant who has completed more than one (1) year of consecutive service, with Sendero Prep may be terminated or discharged only for just cause. That employee is entitled to the following protest procedure, consistent with NMSA 1978, § 22-10A-24:

1. Request for Statement of Reasons and Opportunity to Address the Governing Board

An employee who receives a notice of termination or non-renewal may, within five (5) working days, request a written statement of the reasons from the Executive Director and simultaneously request an opportunity to address the Governing Board. The Executive Director will provide the written reasons within five (5) working days of the request.

2. Written Contention

The employee's opportunity to address the Governing Board will be granted if, within ten (10) working days after receiving the Executive Director's written reasons, the employee submits a written statement contending that the termination was not for just cause, including the facts and any supporting documentation or witnesses supporting that contention.

3. Hearing Before the Governing Board

The Governing Board will meet to hear the employee's statement no less than five (5) and no more than fifteen (15) working days after receiving the employee's written contention. At the hearing: a Governing Board designee will first state the reasons for termination and the factual support for those reasons, limited to the reasons already provided to the employee; the employee will then state their contention and supporting facts, consistent with their written submission; the Executive Director may offer rebuttal; each party may question witnesses; only evidence presented at the hearing will be considered; and no formal record of the hearing will be kept. The hearing will be conducted consistent with the Open Meetings Act, in closed session unless the employee requests an open session. The Governing Board will

notify the employee and the Executive Director of its decision in writing within five (5) working days of the hearing.

4. Appeal to Independent Arbitration

Either the employee or Sendero Prep may appeal the Governing Board's decision to an independent arbitrator, who will hear the matter de novo. The employee must submit a written request for appeal to the Governing Board president within five (5) working days of receiving the Governing Board's decision, stating the grounds for appeal. If the parties cannot agree on an arbitrator within ten (10) working days, either party may ask the presiding judge of the applicable New Mexico judicial district to select one; the arbitrator selected must be experienced in school employment matters and have no financial, personal, or other interest in the outcome. The arbitration hearing will be held within thirty (30) working days of the arbitrator's selection. The Governing Board bears the burden of proving, by a preponderance of the evidence, that just cause existed for the termination; if that burden is not met, the arbitrator will reverse the decision and order reinstatement. The arbitrator's written decision, issued within thirty (30) working days of the hearing, is final and binding on both parties and may be appealed only on grounds of corruption, fraud, deception, or collusion. Each party bears its own costs and fees unless the arbitrator assigns the arbitrator's own fees and costs to one or both parties.

5. Remedies and Reporting

The only remedies available to an employee reinstated through this process are reinstatement, back pay (offset by any interim compensation such as unemployment benefits), or both. Sendero Prep will report all terminations arising from this process to the New Mexico Public Education Department, consistent with NMSA 1978, § 22-10A-25.

D. Personnel Exempt from Protest Procedures

In addition to employees within the limited-service thresholds described in Section VIII.B, above, the protest procedures described in Section VIII.C do not apply to: certified school instructors employed to fill a position vacated by an instructor entering military service; persons employed as licensed school administrators; and non-certified employees employed primarily to perform school-wide management functions, consistent with NMSA 1978, § 22-10A-26.

E. Discharge of a Contract Employee Before the End of the Contract Term

A contract employee may be discharged before the end of their contract term only for just cause, following this procedure:

1. Notice of Discharge

The Executive Director will provide the employee written notice — by personal delivery with a signed, dated receipt, or by another method consistent with the New Mexico Rules of Civil Procedure — of intent to recommend discharge to the Governing Board. The notice will state the reasons for the recommendation and describe the employee's right to a hearing. If the Executive Director determines

the employee must be immediately removed from school premises pending the outcome of a hearing, the employee will be placed on paid administrative leave during that time.

2. Request for Hearing

The employee may request a hearing before the Governing Board by submitting a written request to the Executive Director within five (5) working days of receiving the notice of discharge. The hearing will be scheduled no less than twenty (20) and no more than forty (40) working days after the Executive Director receives the request, with at least ten (10) working days' notice of the hearing date provided to the employee.

3. Hearing Procedure

Sendero Prep bears the burden of proving just cause for discharge by a preponderance of the evidence, limited to the reasons stated in the notice. Sendero Prep presents its evidence first, followed by the employee; each party may call witnesses and introduce documents, and each may be accompanied by a representative of their choosing at their own expense. An official record will be kept at Sendero Prep's expense, and the employee is entitled to a copy. The Governing Board will issue a written decision within twenty (20) calendar days of the hearing, delivered by certified mail or personal delivery.

4. Appeal

Either party may appeal the Governing Board's decision to an independent arbitrator following the same process described in Section VIII, above, including the five (5) working day deadline to request appeal, the burden of proof resting with Sendero Prep, and the finality of the arbitrator's decision absent corruption, fraud, deception, or collusion. Compensation to a discharged contract employee ends as of the date of the Governing Board's final decision, subject to any pro-rata compensation owed for services already performed.

F. Reduction in Force and Furlough

Sendero Prep may need to phase out or eliminate a position, or reduce the number of positions in a category, due to budgetary or programmatic necessity. A reduction in force carried out consistent with Sendero Prep's Reduction-in-Force policy is just cause for termination. Sendero Prep may likewise implement a voluntary or involuntary furlough where necessary due to budgetary constraints, consistent with that same policy.

G. Administrative Leave Pending Investigation

Sendero Prep may place an employee on administrative leave, with or without pay, pending investigation of a suspected policy violation, performance concern, or allegation of misconduct. Administrative leave is not itself a disciplinary action and does not constitute a finding of wrongdoing.

H. Resignation, Job Abandonment, and Retirement

An employee who wishes to resign or retire should provide written notice to the Executive Director; licensed employees should generally provide at least thirty (30) days' notice, and other employees at

least fourteen (14) days' notice, consistent with New Mexico law and any applicable contract terms. An employee who fails to report to work or contact their supervisor for three (3) or more consecutive work days, without approved leave, will be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

I. Return of School Property

An employee separating from Sendero Prep for any reason must return all school property — including keys, access cards, technology, curriculum materials, and any other equipment issued during employment — before their final day. The value of any property not returned may be deducted from the employee's final paycheck to the extent permitted by law.

SECTION IX

BENEFITS AND LEAVE

Retirement, insurance, and the full slate of paid and unpaid leave available to Sendero Prep employees.

IX. Benefits and Leave

This section describes the benefits Sendero Prep provides to eligible employees and the leave available under state and federal law and under Sendero Prep policy. It is a summary written for orientation and everyday reference — the terms of an applicable insurance contract, retirement plan, or law govern in the event of any conflict with this summary.

The section is organized to move from ongoing benefits (retirement, insurance, workers' comp, unemployment) into the various forms of leave, starting with paid sick leave under the Healthy Workplaces Act (F) and the related Public Employee Caregiver Leave Act (G), and continuing through FMLA, parental leave, and the specific leave types recognized by New Mexico or federal law. Personal leave I and any additional paid time off Sendero Prep offers beyond legal minimums are described in R through X.

A. Retirement: New Mexico Educational Retirement Board (ERB)

Eligible employees participate in the New Mexico Educational Retirement Board (ERB) plan, with contributions from both the employee and Sendero Prep as required by law. Questions about ERB membership, contributions, or benefits should be directed to the business office or to ERB directly.

B. Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance

Sendero Prep offers group health, dental, and vision insurance to eligible employees, consistent with the plan documents made available during open enrollment.

C. Social Security

Sendero Prep and its employees contribute to Social Security as required by federal law.

D. Workers' Compensation

Sendero Prep maintains workers' compensation insurance covering injuries or illnesses arising in the course of employment. An employee who sustains a work-related injury or illness, however minor, must report it to their supervisor the same day, consistent with Section VII, so that appropriate care and documentation can be provided.

E. Unemployment Compensation

Sendero Prep participates in New Mexico's unemployment compensation program as required by law. Questions about eligibility or claims should be directed to the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions.

F. Paid Sick Leave

Eligible employees may use Sick Leave based on the FMLA. Employees may be required to furnish evidence that the Sick Leave absence is bona fide if the Executive Director reasonably suspects abuse or

after three (3) consecutive sick days. Certified Staff shall accrue a total of eight (8) days of sick leave per school year. Accrued Sick Leave time may be carried over from one year to the next, and shall accumulate without limit. Classified Employees will be charged either half day or a full day of sick leave. Sick Leave benefits will cease to accrue during FMLA status. An employee will continue accrual of Sick Leave benefits once a working condition is restored. Sick Leave entitlement will have no effect on employees who are on Military Leave.

G. Caregiver Leave

Consistent with New Mexico's Public Employee Caregiver Leave Act (NMSA 1978, § 10-16H-1 et seq.), which applies to public school employees, any accrued sick leave Sendero Prep provides extends equally to time needed to care for a covered family member, on the same terms and procedures that apply to an employee's own use of sick leave.

H. Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

Sendero Prep provides leave consistent with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to eligible employees — generally, those who have worked for Sendero Prep for at least 12 months and at least 1,250 hours in the preceding 12 months. Eligible employees may take up to 12 workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the birth or adoption of a child, the employee's own serious health condition, or to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition, among other qualifying reasons. An employee should request FMLA leave from the Executive Director as far in advance as possible for foreseeable leave, and as soon as practicable for unforeseeable leave. Accrued paid sick leave runs concurrently with FMLA leave where applicable.

I. Pregnancy, Parental, and Related Accommodations

Sendero Prep provides reasonable accommodations for pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions consistent with applicable New Mexico and federal law, and will engage in an interactive process with any employee who requests such an accommodation, consistent with Section III.

J. Bereavement Leave

Employees will be allotted a maximum of four (4) days of bereavement leave in the event of loss of an "immediate family member". Family members are defined as:

Spouse, Father, Mother, Son, Daughter, Sister, Brother, Grandchild, Grandmother, Grandfather, Father-in-law, Mother-in-law, Daughter-in-law, Son-in-law

K. Jury Duty and Court Appearances

Sendero Prep supports employees called to serve on a jury or to appear in court pursuant to a subpoena. An employee should notify their supervisor as soon as they receive a jury summons or subpoena so that coverage can be arranged, and should return to work whenever the court schedule permits.

L. Military Leave

Sendero Prep provides leave and reemployment rights to employees who serve in the uniformed services, consistent with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and applicable New Mexico law governing military and National Guard leave.

M. Religious Leave

An employee may request leave to observe a religious holiday consistent with Sendero Prep's Religious Accommodation policy (Section III).

N. Voting Leave

Sendero Prep will provide employees a reasonable opportunity to vote in accordance with New Mexico law, and will adjust an employee's schedule where needed to allow time to vote, provided the employee requests the adjustment in advance.

O. Domestic Violence Leave

Consistent with New Mexico law, an eligible employee who is a victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking (or whose family member is) may take leave to address related safety, medical, legal, or relocation needs; this leave may run concurrently with paid sick leave available under Section IX, above.

P. Sabbatical Leave

Sendero Prep may offer sabbatical leave to eligible licensed employees consistent with NMSA 1978, §§ 22-10A-35 through 22-10A-38, subject to Governing Board approval of a local sabbatical leave program.

Q. Administrative Leave

Sendero Prep may place an employee on administrative leave, with or without pay, under the circumstances described in Section VIII.

R. Personal Leave

Sendero Prep's personal leave allowance is 2 days per year. Certified Staff are employees who work full-time and are classified exempt (salaried) status. Certified Staff will be allotted two (2) days of Personal Time-Off (PTO) in a school year. Unused Personal Time Off will be converted into Sick Leave at the end of the school year. Requests for PTO must be approved in advance. Personal leave is distinct from sick leave and from any leave protected by a specific state or federal law, and is granted at Sendero Prep's discretion.

S. Short Leave and Absences of Less Than One-Half Day

An employee who needs to leave campus briefly during the workday for a medical, personal, or family reason should coordinate with their supervisor as far in advance as possible. Approval depends on ability

to arrange coverage; requests are handled case by case and are not automatically approved. Repeated short leaves that disrupt instruction may be addressed as an attendance concern (Section IV.I).

T. Medical Certification

For an absence of more than three (3) consecutive workdays due to the employee's own illness or injury, Sendero Prep may request medical certification supporting the absence and the employee's fitness to return to work. Medical certification is also required in connection with FMLA leave (Section IX.H). Medical documentation submitted to Sendero Prep is treated as confidential and is maintained separately from the personnel file (Section III).

U. Forfeiture and Carryover of Leave

Paid leave accrued carries over between contract years with no cap on sick days. Unused PTO will be converted to sick leave at the conclusion of the contract year. Upon termination or resignation unused leave will be forfeited by the employee with no compensation for unused days.

V. Maternity, Paternity, and Related Parental Leave

Sendero Prep supports employees welcoming a new child through birth, adoption, or foster placement. Depending on eligibility, an employee may use paid sick leave (Section IX), FMLA leave (Section IX), and any additional parental leave Sendero Prep provides, in combination. An employee anticipating parental leave should contact the Executive Director as far in advance as possible to plan coverage and to understand which forms of leave apply to their circumstances. Sendero Prep will provide reasonable accommodations related to pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, and related medical conditions consistent with Section III.B and applicable law.

W. Professional Leave

An employee may request professional leave to attend a conference, training, or professional development activity that supports Sendero Prep's mission. Requests should be submitted in writing to the Executive Director with enough lead time for consideration; approval depends on the value of the activity to Sendero Prep, the cost, and the ability to arrange coverage. Approved professional leave is paid time and is not charged against the employee's personal or sick leave.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

This glossary is kept consistent with Appendix C of the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook, with additional HR-specific terms added below.

- **ADA (in attendance contexts) —** Average Daily Attendance. (Note: "ADA" also refers to the Americans with Disabilities Act elsewhere in this Handbook; context indicates which meaning applies.)

- **Attendance for Success Act —** New Mexico's law requiring schools to track all absences and use a tiered intervention system to address chronic absenteeism.
- **Chronic Absenteeism —** Missing 10% or more of school days for any reason, excused or unexcused.
- **CTE —** Career and Technical Education.
- **Elevate NM —** New Mexico's educator and school-leader evaluation systems, based on the Danielson framework.
- **ERB —** The New Mexico Educational Retirement Board, which administers the retirement plan for public school employees.
- **Ethical Misconduct —** As defined in Section III.E.8 of this Handbook.
- **FERPA —** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the federal student-records privacy law.
- **FMLA —** The federal Family and Medical Leave Act.
- **LEA —** Local Education Agency; Sendero Prep operates as its own LEA.
- **MLSS —** Multi-Layered System of Supports, New Mexico's tiered framework for academic and behavioral support.
- **NMAC —** New Mexico Administrative Code.
- **NMPED —** The New Mexico Public Education Department.
- **NMSA —** New Mexico Statutes Annotated.
- **PBL —** Project-Based Learning.
- **PEC —** The Public Education Commission, Sendero Prep's chartering authority.
- **Graduate Profile —** Sendero Prep's Graduate Profile includes fourteen workplace expectations, taught across the curriculum and modeled by staff (Section I.E).
- **School Personnel Act —** NMSA 1978, Chapter 22, Article 10A, governing the employment of licensed and other school personnel in New Mexico, including the termination and discharge procedures described in Section VIII of this Handbook.
- **Section 504 —** The federal civil rights law prohibiting disability discrimination and requiring reasonable accommodations.
- **Title IX —** The federal law prohibiting sex discrimination in education programs and activities.

Appendix B: New Mexico State Law Quick Reference

This reference is for staff orientation; it is not a complete statement of the law and does not replace legal counsel. It mirrors Appendix E of the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook, with HR-specific statutes added below the line.

Topic	Citation

Charter Schools Act	NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-1 et seq.
Attendance for Success Act	NMSA 1978 § 22-12A-1 et seq.
Compulsory School Attendance Law	NMSA 1978 § 22-12-1 et seq.
Safe Schools for All Students Act (bullying)	NMSA 1978 § 22-35-1 et seq.
Rules of Conduct / Discipline Due Process	6.11.2 NMAC
FERPA	20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R. Part 99
Title IX	20 U.S.C. § 1681; 34 C.F.R. Part 106
Section 504	29 U.S.C. § 794; 34 C.F.R. Part 104
IDEA (Special Education)	20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.
McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.
Gun-Free Schools Act	20 U.S.C. § 7961; NMSA 1978 § 22-5-4.7
School Personnel Act	NMSA 1978 § 22-10A-1 et seq.
Charter School Employees / Nepotism	NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-10
Background Checks / Fingerprinting	NMSA 1978 § 22-10A-5
Ethical Misconduct Reporting	NMSA 1978 § 22-10A-5.1
Termination / Discharge Procedures	NMSA 1978 §§ 22-10A-24 through 22-10A-29
Sabbatical Leave	NMSA 1978 §§ 22-10A-35 through 22-10A-38
Educator Code of Ethics	6.60.9 NMAC
Educator Evaluation	6.69.4 NMAC; 6.69.8 NMAC
Healthy Workplaces Act (Paid Sick Leave)	NMSA 1978 §§ 50-17-1 through 50-17-12
Public Employee Caregiver Leave Act	NMSA 1978 § 10-16H-1 et seq.
New Mexico Human Rights Act	NMSA 1978 § 28-1-1 et seq.
Cannabis Regulation Act	NMSA 1978 § 26-2C-1 et seq.
Per Diem and Mileage Act	NMSA 1978 § 10-8-1 et seq.; 2.42.2 NMAC
Open Meetings Act	NMSA 1978 § 10-15-1 et seq.

Appendix C: NMPED Code of Ethics (6.60.9 NMAC)

The following is the full text of Title 6, Chapter 60, Part 9 of the New Mexico Administrative Code, "Licensure Requirements, Code of Ethical Responsibility of the Education Profession," current as of this Handbook's most recent revision. Because this text is New Mexico regulatory law rather than Sendero

Prep policy, it should be refreshed from the official New Mexico Administrative Code (nmonesource.com / srca.nm.gov) at each annual Handbook review rather than edited locally.

6.60.9.6 Objective

The PED seeks to make ethical values and ethical leadership an integral part of the day-to-day activities of schools, and holds all persons within the scope of this rule accountable for adhering to minimal standards of accepted professional conduct and ethical behavior. The PED accepts the recommendations of its professional practices and standards council and the ethics subcommittee that a code of ethics and standards of professional conduct applicable to the education profession will infuse the learning environment with choices and values designed to assist in shaping young minds into educated, responsible citizens.

6.60.9.7 Definitions

“Ethical misconduct” means behavior or conduct engaged in by a licensed or certified school employee that violates the minimal standards of accepted ethical behavior and professional conduct listed in the standards of professional conduct section of this rule, or that constitutes grounds for revoking licensure listed in 6.63.8 NMAC, except for failure to meet Level 3-A competencies.

6.60.9.8 Code of Ethics

We, professional educators of New Mexico, affirm our belief in the worth and dignity of humanity. We recognize the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, the encouragement of scholarship, and the promotion of democratic citizenship. We regard as essential to these goals the protection of freedom to learn and to teach with the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. We affirm and accept our responsibility to practice our profession according to the highest ethical standards. We acknowledge the magnitude of the profession we have chosen, and engage ourselves, individually and collectively, to judge our colleagues and to be judged by them in accordance with the applicable provisions of this code.

Principle I: Commitment to the student. We measure success by the progress of each student toward achievement of their maximum potential. We therefore work to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals. We recognize the importance of cooperative relationships with other community institutions, especially the home. In fulfilling our obligation to the student, we deal justly and considerately with each student; encourage the student to study and express varying points of view and respect their right to form their own judgment; conduct conferences with or concerning students in an appropriate place and manner; and seek constantly to improve learning facilities and opportunities.

Principle II: Commitment to the community. We believe that patriotism in its highest form requires dedication to the principles of our democratic heritage. We share with all other citizens the responsibility for the development of sound public policy. As educators, we are particularly accountable for participating in the development of educational programs and policies and for interpreting them to the public. In fulfilling our obligations to the community, we share responsibility for improving educational opportunities for all; recognize that each educational institution has a person authorized to interpret its official policies; acknowledge the right and responsibility of the public to participate in the formulation

of educational policy; evaluate through appropriate professional procedures conditions within a district or institution of learning, make known serious deficiencies, and take action deemed necessary and proper; assume full political and citizenship responsibilities, but refrain from exploiting the institutional privileges of our professional positions to promote political candidates or partisan activities; and protect the educational program against undesirable infringement, and promote academic freedom.

Principle III: Commitment to the profession. We believe that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the future of the nation and its citizens. We therefore exert every effort to raise educational standards, to improve our service, to promote a climate in which the exercise of professional judgment is encouraged, to demonstrate integrity in all work-related activities and interactions in the school setting, and to achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education. In fulfilling our obligations to the profession, we recognize that a profession must accept responsibility for the conduct of its members; participate and conduct ourselves responsibly in the development and implementation of policies affecting education; cooperate in the selective recruitment and orientation of new colleagues; accord just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession; refrain from assigning professional duties to nonprofessional personnel when not in a student's best interest; refrain from exerting undue influence based on the authority of our positions; keep the trust under which confidential information is exchanged; make appropriate use of time granted for professional purposes; interpret and use the writings of others and the findings of educational research with intellectual honesty; maintain integrity when dissenting by basing public criticism on valid, carefully evaluated facts; respond accurately to requests for evaluation of colleagues seeking positions; and provide applicants with an honest description of a position, its conditions of work, and related matters.

Principle IV: Commitment to professional employment practices. We regard the employment agreement as a solemn pledge to be executed both in spirit and in fact, consistent with the highest ideals of professional service. Sound professional personnel relationships with governing boards are built upon integrity, dignity, and mutual respect between employees, administrators, and local school boards. In fulfilling our obligations to professional employment practices, we apply for or offer a position on the basis of professional and legal qualifications; apply for a specific position only when known to be vacant, and refrain from underbidding or commenting adversely about other candidates; fill no vacancy except where the terms, conditions, and policies are known; adhere to and respect the conditions of a contract or appointment until legally terminated or ended by mutual consent; give prompt notice of any change in availability of service or status of applications; and conduct professional business through recognized educational and professional channels.

6.60.9.9 Standards of Professional Conduct — Preamble

We, licensed New Mexico educators, acknowledge that ethical values in our schools cannot exist without ethical leadership. It is our ultimate goal to educate children so that they may become productive citizens; we understand that our guidance and ability to provide choices has a profound effect on reaching this goal. In affording students and each other choices, we agree to consider the consequence of each choice, the moral value best exemplified by the recommended choice, and our position on the choice if it were applied to us. These principles apply equally to all licensed educators in all schools

except where they are uniquely applicable to public schools or where they conflict with principles of religious freedom.

Moral values are to ethical leadership what years of experience are to a successful educator. Abstract principles that espouse excellence do not easily equate into simple behavioral maxims; some foundational concepts can be embraced because they truly celebrate desirable moral values: respect for one's self and others, honesty and openness, the delicate balance between absolute freedom and safety, the equally delicate balance between confidentiality and the right to know, equality of opportunity, fairness to all, and personal integrity.

In the final analysis it is our consistent ethical leadership that wins the most allies and produces the best results. This code highlights our professional responsibilities, stimulates discussion of the professional implications of our ethical choices, and sets forth concrete behaviors appropriate for education professionals. It provides minimally accepted standards of professional conduct in education.

Standard I: Duty to the Student

We endeavor to stimulate students to think and to learn while at the same time we seek to protect them from any harm. Ethical leadership requires licensed educators to teach not only through pedagogical tools, but also through consistent and justifiable personal example. To satisfy this obligation, we:

- Comply with FERPA, IDEA, the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code, the Inspection of Public Records Act, the Public School Code, and the Children's Code in withholding confidential student records or personal/family information unless release is permitted or required by law;
- Do not discriminate, or permit students within our control to discriminate, against any other student on a protected basis;
- Avoid using our position to exploit or unduly influence a student into an illegal or immoral act or any behavior that would subject an educator or student to discipline;
- Tutor students only in accordance with local policy, with written parent/guardian permission, and at an approved place and time;
- Do not give a gift to one student unless similarly situated students receive or are offered gifts of equal value for the same reason;
- Do not lend a student money except in clear, occasional circumstances such as a student going without food or being unable to participate in an activity without financial assistance;
- Do not have inappropriate contact with any student on or off school property, including any form of sexual touching or romantic relations; unwelcome or age-inappropriate physical contact; open displays of affection toward students; or offering a ride to a student except where absolutely unavoidable;
- Do not interfere with a student's right to a public education by sexually harassing a student, or permitting students within our control to sexually harass another student, including unwelcome sexual advances or references, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment through such conduct.

Standard II: Duty to the Profession

The education profession has been vested by the public with an awesome trust and responsibility. To live up to that expectation, we must continually engender public confidence in the integrity of our profession. To satisfy this obligation, we:

- Do not make a false or misleading statement, or fail to disclose a material fact, in any application for educational employment or licensure, and do not misrepresent our professional qualifications;
- Do not assist unqualified persons into educational employment, or make false statements about the qualifications of anyone in or seeking educational employment;
- Do not permit or assist unqualified or unauthorized persons to engage in teaching or other school employment;
- Do not disclose personal, medical, or other confidential information about educational colleagues except as required or authorized by law, and do not knowingly make false or derogatory personal comments about a colleague (though constitutionally protected comment is not prohibited);
- Do not accept a gratuity, gift, meal, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, favor, or other item of monetary value exceeding $100, excluding approved educational awards, honoraria, plaques, trophies, and prizes;
- Avoid conduct connected with official duties that is unfair, improper, illegal, or gives the appearance of being improper or illegal;
- Do not sexually harass any school employee, visitor, or other person encountered in the course of official duties, and complete annual sexual-harassment-avoidance education through training, literature review, or consultation with school HR personnel;
- Do not engage in inappropriate displays of affection, even with consenting adults, on school property or at school events off campus;
- Do not use public school property for personal business without a supervisor’s permission, and use educational facilities and property only for their intended purposes;
- Do not discriminate against any school employee or other person encountered in official duties on a protected basis;
- Do not engage in outside employment that conflicts with public school duties, uses confidential information obtained through public employment, or impairs our physical ability to perform school duties;
- Do not alter or encourage alteration of any document connected with official school duties, testing, applications, or licensure with intent to conceal or confuse a fact;
- Do not misrepresent our identity or engage in false or deceptive test-taking or test-registering conduct in connection with any state board-approved teacher test;
- Do not breach test security, skip required testing procedures, or give any student, classroom, or school an unfair advantage on standardized or non-standardized testing, and do not assist students in obtaining services or benefits for which they do not qualify;
- Do not engage in violent, abusive, indecent, profane, boisterous, unreasonably loud, or otherwise disorderly conduct that disturbs the peace on school property or while representing the school off campus;
- Do not hold or continue to hold a position requiring licensure or certification we know we do not hold;

- Do not use school technology to view, download, display, store, or print pornographic, nude, or sexually explicit material;
- Do not engage in unprofessional conduct, including striking, assaulting, or restraining a student without valid reason; using inflammatory or derogatory language demonstrating bias on a protected basis; bringing firearms onto school property without authorization; possessing or consuming alcohol, or possessing or using illegal drugs, at school; being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at school; obstructing an investigation into unethical or illegal conduct; or engaging in favoritism toward a school employee or applicant based on a familial relationship; and
- Report any knowledge of inappropriate contact with a student or other school employee, as described above, to the local school authority within 30 days of obtaining that knowledge.

6.60.9.10 through 6.60.9.12 — Enforcement, Dissemination, and Reporting

The PED, through its Educator Ethics Bureau, may revoke, suspend, or take other appropriate action against an educator's license, or deny an application for licensure, for a finding of ethical misconduct following a hearing conducted under the Uniform Licensing Act. The PED disseminates this Code to all school districts, charter schools, and PED-accredited private schools, and notifies a school when final licensure action has been taken against one of its employees for a violation of these standards. Every school superintendent or charter school administrator has a duty to provide prompt written notice to the Educator Ethics Bureau after taking final action to discharge or terminate a certified or licensed employee, in whole or in part, for a violation of these standards of professional conduct.

Appendix D: Forms

The following forms are referenced throughout this Handbook and are maintained separately (in print or through the school's document platform) so they can be updated without revising the Handbook itself:

- Handbook Acknowledgment Form (also included at the end of this Handbook)
- Harassment / Discrimination / Retaliation Complaint Form
- General Employee Grievance Form
- Incident Report Form (student injury, illness, or safety incident)
- Leave Request Form (FMLA, personal, bereavement, military, religious, and related leave types)
- Background Check Consent and Authorization Form

Sendero Prep Handbook Employee Acknowledgment

This Handbook is a summary of the policies, benefits, and guidelines that apply to your employment at Sendero Prep. It does not cover every aspect of your employment, and it is your responsibility to read, understand, and abide by it, along with any other Sendero Prep policies and procedures referenced within it. Direct any questions about this Handbook to the Executive Director.

This Handbook contains guidelines for employees. The policies expressed in it are not an express or implied contract with Sendero Prep, and they do not create contractual obligations of any kind between Sendero Prep and any employee. This Handbook is not to be construed as containing binding terms and conditions of employment. Except as required by the New Mexico School Personnel Act for licensed employees under written contract, Sendero Prep retains the right to end an employee's employment at any time, consistent with New Mexico law and the New Mexico School Personnel Act.

This Handbook is the property of Sendero Prep. Every employee will be provided a copy and is required to read it and abide by it. While Sendero Prep intends to notify employees when a significant policy addition or change is made, this Handbook is subject to change at any time at Sendero Prep's sole discretion. When there is a conflict between this Handbook and the Sendero Prep Governing Board policies, or the school's charter, the policies and the charter govern.

In addition to the policies in this Handbook, every Sendero Prep employee is expected to become familiar with, and to adhere to, the Sendero Prep charter and Governing Board policies, and — because many of this Handbook's policies are shared with, or must remain consistent with, student- and family-facing policy — the Sendero Prep Student & Family Handbook as well.

Please sign, date, and return this page to the Executive Director (or designee) within 14 days of receipt for your personnel file. Retain a copy of the full Handbook for your own reference throughout the school year.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Sendero Prep Staff Handbook. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and become familiar with its contents, including but not limited to its policies on child abuse and neglect reporting, equal employment opportunity, anti-harassment and discrimination, drug-free workplace, conflicts of interest, employee complaints and grievances, termination and discharge, employee discipline, technology and computer use, and the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. I acknowledge that I had the opportunity to ask questions about any policy in this Handbook before signing below.

Employee Printed Name: _____

Position / Role: _____

School Year: _____

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____