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EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Hillary Elmore, Owner & Director

*Smart Start: South Campus
1954 Trumansburg Road (P.O. Box 856)
Trumansburg, NY 14886
607-387-1006
607-387-1031 (fax)*

[*hillary.smartstart@gmail.com*](mailto:hillary.smartstart@gmail.com)

Katelin Greule, Director

*Smart Start: North Campus
1966 Trumansburg Road (P.O. Box 856)
Trumansburg, NY 14886
607-387-3837
607-387-3839 (fax)*

[*kt.smartstart@gmail.com*](mailto:kt.smartstart@gmail.com)

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Introduction

Welcome and Purpose

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with Smart Start and provide you with general information about working conditions, benefits and policies affecting your employment.

The information contained in this handbook applies to all employees of Smart Start. Following the policies detailed within the handbook is considered a condition of continuous employment. The contents of this manual shall not constitute nor be construed as a promise of employment or as a contract between Smart Start and any of its employees. The handbook is a summary of our policies, which are presented here only as a matter of information.

You are responsible for reading, understanding and complying with the provisions of this handbook. Our objective is to provide you with a work environment that is constructive to both personal and professional growth.

At-Will Employment Statement

While we hope to have a long and profitable relationship with you, your employment with Smart Start is voluntary and is subject to termination by you or Smart Start at will, with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time.

While Smart Start may have a disciplinary system in place, this system does not have to be used—Smart Start may make the decision to terminate you without first taking these disciplinary steps.

None of the information provided in our policies should be interpreted to conflict with, eliminate or modify in any way your employment-at-will status with Smart Start.

No individual, except for an administrator can approve any kind of contractual agreement.

Mission Statement

Smart Start provides a structured, fun, and interactive learning environment for infants, toddlers, preschool, and school-age children. The program offers full-day care for children from 6 weeks to 5 years, and after-school and summer camps for Pre-K and Kindergartners.

It is our mission to provide a safe and encouraging learning environment where children can develop fundamental educational and practical life skills.

Our goal is to encourage all children to love learning. We teach children by combining learning opportunities with play, the outdoors, music, and crafts.

To fulfill this mission, we are committed to:

- Providing competitively priced child care and high-quality service

- Be up to date with new technologies that may benefit us
- Rewarding employee achievement
- Serving and supporting the community
- Building partnerships
- Exceeding customer expectations

Job Descriptions and Responsibilities

Lead Teacher

1. Demonstrates a sound knowledge and understanding of New York State OCFS Regulations and actively works to follow these guidelines. Should seek guidance in regards to any regulations that feel unclear.
2. Plans and implements meaningful curricula for the classroom
 - a. Develops and implements daily lessons including sensory activities, cognitive activities, and motor activities.
 - b. Provides developmentally appropriate activities and engages children during down-time.
 - c. Reads to children daily.
 - d. Utilizes learning centers and ensures materials are rotated in/out regularly.
3. Always maintains teacher to child ratio throughout the day.
4. Creates a classroom schedule.
5. Maintains accurate and up-to date records for each student.
6. Communicates daily with parents either in writing or verbally, and through the HiMama app.
7. Ensures all cleaning, sanitizing, and other organizational procedures have been discussed with classroom staff and are delegated to a staff member.
8. Ensures all classroom obligations are fulfilled including, but not limited to, cleaning, sanitation, and organization of the classroom.
9. Follows opening and closing staff obligations.

Teacher Assistant

1. Demonstrates a sound knowledge and understanding of New York State OCFS Regulations and actively works to follow these guidelines. Should seek guidance in regards to any regulations that feel unclear.
2. Assists the Lead Teacher as needed with curricula implementation and carrying out daily activities and centers (reads to children, engages children during down time).
3. Always maintains teacher to child ratio throughout the day.
4. Follows the classroom schedule as laid out by the Lead Teacher.
5. Follows the general guidance and direction of the Lead Teacher.

6. Is able to temporarily step into the Lead Teacher role when the Lead Teacher is absent.
7. Assists with communicating with families when the Lead Teacher is not available to do so.
8. Follows cleaning, sanitizing, and organizational procedures as delegated by the Lead Teacher.
9. Follows the guidance of the Lead Teacher in fulfilling classroom obligations including, but not limited to, cleaning, sanitation, and organization of the classroom.
10. Follows opening and closing staff obligations.

Opening Staff (Lead or Assistant)

1. Sets up room before children arrive and ensure class is ready to receive children.
2. Puts a new garbage bag in each garbage.
3. Ensures new cleaning solutions are hung up in the classroom.
4. Has water cups ready and available before children arrive.
5. Has activities prepared and ready for incoming students.
6. Ensures all toys, equipment, and other classroom materials are safely in place.

Closing Staff (Lead or Assistant)

1. Sprays down all toys and surfaces with provided cleaning solutions.
2. Takes out garbage/recycling.
3. Puts all water cups and dishes in the dishwasher.
4. Cleans baby bottles following proper wash, rinse, sanitize procedures.
5. Sanitizes any mouthed toys and teethers.
6. Tidy's up classroom, sweeps, vacuums, and mops as needed and as delegated on the classroom cleaning and sanitizing procedures.
7. Ensures all toys, equipment, and other classroom materials are safely in place.
8. Ensures all windows and exterior doors are locked

Administrative Assistant & Floating Substitute

1. Office filing and miscellaneous record keeping tasks.
2. Assists with the creation of school documents and newsletters.
3. Picks up mail upon request from the Trumansburg Post Office (must track mileage for reimbursement).
4. Picks up supplies and materials as necessary (must track mileage for reimbursement).
5. Assists in classrooms throughout the day, primarily in the Early Care rooms.
6. Substitutes for Lead or Assistant Teachers in classrooms as necessary.
7. Helps to clean and tidy common spaces and classrooms as necessary.

Substitutes & Floating Teaching Assistants

1. Substitutes and Floating Teaching Assistants are scheduled as needed in each of our classrooms to cover absent staff shifts and/or provide extra support to classroom staff.
2. Substitutes and Floating Teaching Assistants may have some regularly scheduled shifts, but are primarily on-call for unplanned absences.
3. While covering staff absences, refer to the 'Teacher Assistant', 'Opening Staff', and 'Closing Staff' job descriptions above for job duties.
4. While floating as additional support staff, employees in this role are expected to check in with staff in all classrooms to assist where they're most needed.
5. During down time, employees in this position help to clean and tidy common spaces and classrooms as necessary.
6. While floating as additional support staff, employees in this position should take their lunch break when classrooms are quietest (if possible).

Co-Director

Staff Management:

1. Demonstrates a sound knowledge and understanding of New York State OCFS Regulations and actively works to follow these guidelines and ensure staff are following the guidelines.
2. Schedules staff for regular shifts, a minimum of one month in advance.
3. Reviews and approves staff timecards and maintains accurate timecards and PTO records.
4. Assists staff in finding coverage for requested time of (planned or unplanned).
5. Submits payroll biweekly, documenting regular hours, overtime and paid time off accurately.
6. Communicates with staff regarding professional development requirements, and tracks staff professional development hours.
7. Plans and hosts staff development meetings, focusing on areas of improvement.
8. Tracks Lead Teacher's lesson plans and provides support to Lead Teachers regarding lesson planning and curriculum development.
9. Provides support and guidance to staff regarding daily classroom operation and child interactions.
10. Mediates issues or disagreements between staff members and facilitates positive communication and growth.
11. Assists the hiring process by reviewing potential applicants, communicating with potential employees, interviewing, and contacting references.
12. Assists in tracking and collecting new hire paperwork for staff.
13. Maintains accurate records on all staff, including observations, and verbal and written warnings.

14. Completes staff evaluations and meetings upon completion of a new staff's 90-day orientation period, and annually thereafter.

Parent Engagement:

1. Communicates and offers support to parents on a regular basis regarding Center changes or updates, UPK enrollment, immunization records, and answering individual questions or concerns. Meets with families in-person, as necessary, to address questions or concerns.
2. Develops a quarterly newsletter and distributes to families.
3. Meets with potential families, giving a tour of the facility and providing information about Smart Start's classrooms.

Center Tasks and Other Administrative Duties:

1. Tracks and submits subsidy hours to Tompkins, Seneca, Schuyler, Cortland, Tioga and Chemung County DSS.
2. Enters Dates of Service on required parent invoices on a biweekly basis.
3. Conducts monthly fire drill and safety inspections and semi-annual shelter in place drills.
4. Assists in developing and maintaining Health Care Plans.
5. Assists in maintaining accurate Medication Administration records.
6. Assists in tracking and collecting enrollment paperwork for new and existing children, including vaccination requirements.
7. Assists in classrooms throughout the day, and substitutes for absent staff as necessary.
8. Helps to clean and tidy common spaces and classrooms as necessary.

Infection Control and Cleaning Policies:

Classroom teachers and assistants are responsible for the general organization and tidiness of their designated classrooms. Smart Start follows the OCFS guidelines for cleaning. Classroom staff are responsible for the following cleaning procedures:

- 1) Equipment that is frequently used or touched by children on a daily basis must be cleaned and then sanitized or disinfected, using an EPA registered product, when soiled and at least once weekly. Spray must sit on surfaces for two minutes before being wiped down.
 - a. Tables used for eating must be cleaned after each use.
 - b. Changing tables and mats must be cleaned after each use.
 - c. Bathrooms tidied up daily and deep cleaned weekly.
 - d. Floors swept after each meal and at least once daily.
 - e. Carpets vacuumed as needed and at least once weekly.
 - f. Floors mopped as needed and at least once weekly.
- 2) Toys mouthed by children must be washed and disinfected using an EPA registered product before use by another child. Toys must be washed in warm soapy water then rinsed. Toys must then be soaked in a solution of tsp. of bleach to 1 gallon of water for 5 minutes.

- 3) Linens, blankets and bedding must be cleaned at least weekly and before use by another child. Cribs, cots, beds, mats and mattresses must be cleaned thoroughly between uses by different children and at least monthly
- 4) When more than one child in the program is being toilet trained, potty chairs must be emptied, cleaned and then sanitized or disinfected after each use with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered product that has an EPA registration number on the label.
- 5) Classroom staff are responsible for filling out the classroom cleaning checklist every day and turning it in to a supervisor each month.

*It is the expectation that each classroom splits cleaning responsibilities evenly among classroom staff.

*EPA registered products refer to the red (1 tbsp. of bleach to 1 quart of water) and green labeled (1/2 tsp. of bleach to 1 quart of water) bleach water spray bottles used at Smart Start. The red label spray is used to clean surfaces and areas that have or may come into contact with bodily fluids (urine, blood, feces etc.). The green label spray is used to clean surfaces and areas frequently touched by children or could come into contact with a child's mouth (toys, eating surfaces, furniture etc.). A different rag must be used for the green label bleach water and the red label bleach water. A clean rag must be used each day or anytime that it is visibly soiled.

Staff, and volunteers must follow current procedures in regards to infection control as they are updated by Smart Start and OCFS regulations.

Staff and volunteers must thoroughly wash their hands with soap and running water at the beginning of each day, before and after the administration of medications, when they are dirty, after toileting or assisting children with toileting, after changing a diaper, before and after food handling or eating, after handling pets or other animals, after contact with any bodily secretion or fluid, and after coming in from outdoors.

Staff and volunteers must ensure that children thoroughly wash their hands or assist children with thoroughly washing their hands with soap and running water when they are dirty, after toileting, before and after food handling or eating, after handling pets or other animals, after contact with any bodily secretion or fluid, and after coming in from outdoors.

Employment Policies

Employment Termination Policy

Termination of employment is an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization, and many of the reasons for termination are routine. Below are examples of some of the most common circumstances under which employment is terminated:

- Resignation—voluntary employment termination initiated by an employee.

- Termination—involuntary employment termination initiated by Smart Start.
- Layoff—involuntary employment termination initiated by Smart Start for non-disciplinary reasons.

If you wish to resign, you agree to notify an administrator of your anticipated departure date at least two weeks in advance. Of course, as much notice as possible is appreciated by Smart Start and your co-workers. This notice should be in the form of a written statement. Failure to report to work for the duration of your notice will result in revocation of any unpaid benefit time such as approved time off, holiday, or vacation pay.

If you fail to report to work for two consecutive days without informing management of the planned absence, we will assume that you have voluntarily resigned.

In the event your employment with Smart Start is terminated, any vacation or personal/sick time used in excess of accrued time will be deducted from your final paycheck.

Furthermore, upon signing the acknowledgement of receipt of this handbook (last page), you agree to any outstanding financial obligations owed to Smart Start being deducted from your final check. If your final check does not sufficiently cover the money owed to Smart Start, you will remain liable for that amount. Any unpaid tuition, including tuition fees as part of the one month's notice of termination of contract, will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck(s) upon termination of employment. See also: Direct Deposit Policy.

If you leave Smart Start in good standing, you may be considered for re-employment.

Except as required by law or by separate agreement, employee salary and benefits will end on the date of termination.

Upon resigning from Smart Start, please continue to provide us with an accurate address for at least one year for tax purposes.

Equal Employment Opportunity

It is our policy to provide an equal employment opportunity to all individuals. We are committed to a diverse workforce. We value all employees' talents and support an environment that is inclusive and respectful. We are strongly committed to this policy, and believe in the concept and spirit of the law.

We are committed to assuring that:

- All recruiting, hiring, training, promotion, compensation and other employment-related programs are provided fairly to all persons on an equal opportunity basis;
- Employment decisions are based on the principles of equal opportunity. All personnel actions such as compensation, benefits, transfers, training, and participation in social and recreational programs are administered without regard to any characteristic protected by state, federal or local law;

- Employees and applicants will not be subjected to harassment, intimidation, threats, retaliation, coercion or discrimination because they have exercised any right protected by law; and
- Reasonable accommodations will be made for disabilities and religious beliefs.

We believe in and practice equal opportunity. An administrator serves as our Equal Opportunity Coordinator and has overall responsibility for assuring compliance with this policy. All employees are responsible for supporting the concept of equal opportunity and diversity and assisting our Company in meeting its objectives.

Please contact an administrator with questions or concerns.

Scheduling and Time Tracking Policy

For all scheduling and time tracking needs, Smart Start uses Paychex Time and Attendance. New employees will be invited to Paychex upon hire, and will have access to scheduling through the Paychex Flex application.

Schedules are posted on Paychex Time and Attendance a minimum of one month in advance. Classroom assignments, regular hours and breaks are all listed under the Calendar section of Time and Attendance. You can sync your schedules and time off with your personal Google, Outlook, or iCal calendars by selecting ‘Calendar Settings’ under the Calendar portion of Time and Attendance.

- **Clocking In/Out:**

Employees can clock or out using the ‘Clock In’ or ‘Clock Out’ feature on the app under the “Dashboard” tab. The correct classroom assignment should be selected while clocking in or out. If it is incorrect, select ‘Edit’ and change the classroom assignment.

Employees can clock in when they are in the building and ready to begin their scheduled shift, no more than 15 minutes prior to their scheduled shift. Employees must clock out when their scheduled shift has ended and their classroom duties are complete.

Employees must clock out/in for scheduled breaks using the ‘Begin Meal’ and ‘End Meal’ buttons under the “Dashboard” tab.

If an error occurs while clocking in or out, or if a clock in/out is missed, employees can correct their time cards. To correct your time card, take the following steps:

1. Open Paychex Flex and under the Menu, select Time and Attendance
2. Scroll down to your Time Card and select Edit
3. Select the date and make the appropriate changes
4. Make a note of the error (ex. “Started shift at 7:30 am” or “ended shift at 4:30 pm”)
5. **Be sure to hit “Submit” after making your changes**
 - If you are unable to leave a comment, a note to an administrator must be made in writing (text message, email, written note).

- **Requesting Time Off:**

All requests for time off should be submitted using the Paychex Flex application. Requests for time off can be submitted using the following steps:

1. Under the Paychex Flex Dashboard, scroll down to Time Off
 - Your accrued PTO and Sick Time will be displayed here
2. Click 'View All', then select "Request Time Off"
3. Select the type of Time Off you'd like to request (PTO, Sick, or Unpaid; See also: Time Off Policy)
4. Select the date or date range.
5. Change the number of hours from 0.25 to the number of hours you're requesting, then the starting time of the Time Off requested. Time Off requests must be in 15 minute intervals (i.e. 1.25 hrs, 1.5 hrs, 1.75 hrs; .25=15 minutes, .5=30 minutes, etc.)
6. Add a note with a brief description.
7. Select 'Submit'.

If an employee is unable to request time off using the Paychex Flex application, a request must be submitted in writing to an administrator. Requests for PTO must be submitted a minimum of 5 days prior to a planned absence, or within 1 business day of an unplanned absence (see also "Time Off Policy").

- **Trading, Exchanging, or Offering Shifts:**

Smart Start employees are encouraged to find coverage for time off requested. If a coworker is available and agrees to cover a shift, please notify an administrator of the change and we will adjust schedules in Paychex Flex.

Orientation Period Policy

For all employees hired by Smart Start, the first 90 days of employment are considered to be an orientation period. During this time, the employee will undergo training and orientation as directed by the employee's supervisor. The employee's supervisor will also monitor the employee's performance during this time period.

During the first 90 days of employment, the employee is encouraged and expected to ask questions concerning his or her job responsibilities, and to determine if he or she is satisfied with the position. If the employee's job performance is found to be unsatisfactory by his or her supervisor at any time during the first 90 days of employment, the employment will be terminated.

All new employees will receive a confidential performance evaluation from their supervisor at the end of the orientation period. At that time, the employee will be eligible for employee benefits.

Performance Evaluation Policy

Smart Start is committed to providing you with feedback, both formal and informal, about your performance on the job. Employees will receive a formal evaluation at the end of their 90-day orientation period as well as annually from date of hire. Annual evaluations will be used to determine pay raise, strengths, areas of improvement, and goals. An administrator is responsible for providing ongoing performance feedback to each employee. In addition, your manager or supervisor may formally discuss and document your performance on a regular basis (generally annually). Specific performance problems may be addressed outside the performance appraisal cycle through either informal discussions or formal disciplinary action. Formal performance feedback becomes a permanent part of your personnel file.

A copy of the Employee Performance Rubric is provided to all employees at the time of hire. Employees should review this rubric upon receipt.

Please contact an administrator if you feel that an evaluation is due to you or would be helpful to you.

Overtime Pay Policy

Smart Start must compensate all hourly, non-exempt employees one-and-a-half times their regular wage rate for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours each week.

Employees who want to work more than 40 hours during a workweek must receive written authorization from their supervisor before working overtime.

Retirement 401k Plan Policy

Smart Start employees are eligible to make salary reduction contributions to a 401k plan after one full year of employment. Smart Start elects to make matching ADP test safe harbor contributions to the 401k account of each eligible participant as follows:

A traditional basic matching contribution in an amount equal to the sum of 100% of the amount of the Participant's Elective Deferrals that do not exceed 3% of the Participant's Compensation, plus 50% of the amount of the Participant's Elective Deferrals that exceed 3% but do not exceed 5% of the Participant's Compensation.

Smart Start uses the following financial institution to serve as the trustee, custodian, or issuer of our 401k: Paychex. Employees become eligible to begin contributing to their 401k after they have been employed by Smart Start for one consecutive year. Employees approaching the one-year mark will receive email alerts from Paychex and will see a notification on their online portal. After one year of employment, employees must opt-in to participate in the Paychex 401k.

To start or change your salary reduction contributions, you may do so through your online Paychex portal.

Pay Periods and Check Distribution Policy

Employees will be paid bi-weekly. If payday falls on non-workdays or holidays, employees will be paid on the last workday prior to the regularly scheduled payday. If an employee is absent on the date of paycheck distribution, his or her check will be held until he or she returns.

Paychecks will only be released to the individual whose name appears on the check, or to an individual whom the employee has designated and approved through written consent.

If an employee chooses direct deposit of his or her paycheck, he or she will have access to payroll information through Smart Start's payroll service provider.

Direct Deposit Policy

It is the policy of Smart Start to issue employee payments solely through electronic direct deposit. Direct deposit provides many benefits for employees, including greater security and faster access to funds. Checks will not be issued.

Employee payments will be electronically deposited directly into one or more checking or savings accounts designated by each employee. Accounts must be established with financial institutions, such as banks or credit unions that support direct deposit.

Temporary exceptions to this policy may be made for new hires, to provide adequate time to set up a direct deposit account. Exceptions may also be made for employees who provide evidence that they cannot obtain an account at a financial institution offering direct deposit.

An administrator will assist employees with completing the necessary documentation as well as answering any questions or concerns about direct deposit.

Tuition fees for any child(ren) enrolled at Smart Start by the employee will be automatically deducted from the employee's paycheck unless otherwise agreed upon in writing. Smart Start reserves the right to garnish wages for unpaid child care services rendered. Upon receipt of this handbook, you acknowledge that any tuition fees for child care services, as applicable, will be automatically deducted from your paycheck. Any unpaid tuition, including tuition fees as part of the one month's notice of termination of contract, will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck(s) upon termination of employment. See also: Employment Termination Policy.

NOTE: It is each employee's responsibility to review his or her payroll stub for accuracy of personal information and payment information. Employees must immediately notify Payroll Services or an administrator if there has been an overpayment of wages. Employees are not entitled to keep wage overpayments and Smart Start may recoup overpaid amounts from future payments.

NOTE: Employees must notify an administrator when there is any change to bank accounts that affect direct deposit. Changes must be received two weeks prior to the payday for which the change is to occur and must be made in writing using the Direct Deposit Authorization form.

As an employee of Smart Start, you are responsible for paying federal, state and local taxes. This includes income, Social Security and Medicare taxes, as well as New York State Disability and Paid Family Leave taxes. These taxes will be automatically withdrawn from each of your paychecks at a rate that is determined by the number of deductions you claim.

Time Away from Work

Smart Start expects that every employee will be regular and punctual in attendance. This means being in the preschool, ready to work, at the starting time each day. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on both co-workers and Smart Start. When you are unable to work due to illness or an accident, please promptly notify your Director. Leaving a message with another staff member, sending a text message, or leaving a voicemail does not constitute an accepted notification of absence. If you do not speak directly to a supervisor or receive a response acknowledging the expectation of your absence, you are expected to report to work at the time of your scheduled shift. If you do not report for work and Smart Start is not notified of your status, it will be assumed after two consecutive days of absence that you have resigned, and you will be removed from the payroll.

If you become ill at work or must leave the preschool for some other reason before the end of the workday, be sure to inform your supervisor of the situation.

You will be compensated for authorized absences according to the provisions described in this Manual. Authorized absences beyond the time allowed under that policy are authorized without compensation. See also: Paid Time Off.

In the event of severe weather, we may remain open for business. You are expected to report for work in severe weather if it is at all possible to do so safely. In the event we close due to weather, someone in your work group will contact you. Please keep your work group and supervisor informed on how to reach you on such occasions. See also Severe Weather Policy.

If you will be absent from work during standard working hours for any reason, you must contact your supervisor as soon as possible to avoid disciplinary action.

Smart Start understands the importance of work-life balance. For those employees whose lives do not allow a standard working schedule, alternative schedule options may be considered. Each situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Management will make all decisions about alternative working schedules, including the decision of whether an individual or an entire department will be adhering to a specific schedule.

Smart Start believes that employees should have opportunities to enjoy time away from work to help balance their lives. For this reason, we provide paid holidays and vacation to all employees.

Employees will receive paid time off during all scheduled holidays and vacations. Employees will be paid based on the average of their regular daily working hours up to but not exceeding 8 hours per day. Average working hours are calculated based on the 4 weeks prior to the holiday or vacation. Employees who do not follow a regular working hours schedule (i.e. Substitutes and Floating Teaching Assistants) will receive holiday and vacation pay based on the average working hours on that weekday for the four weeks prior. If a holiday does not fall on a typical day of employment for an employee, the employee will not be paid for that day. Employees will be notified of all paid holidays and vacations with a minimum of two weeks advance written notice. Yearly holidays and vacations that have been pre-determined will be posted for all employees. Questions regarding paid holidays and breaks should be directed to an administrator.

Smart Start understands that, at times, employees will need to be absent from work due to illness, medical appointments, or for personal leave. Because of this, we offer Paid Time Off (PTO) to all full-time employees with regularly scheduled working hours. Smart Start defines full-time employment as being regularly scheduled for 38 or more hours per week.

If you are unable to report for work because of illness or for any other reason, please contact your supervisor immediately. Explain the reason for your absence as well as when you expect to return to work. You must keep your supervisor updated regarding the status of your return at all times.

At the start of employment at Smart Start, new employees are placed on a three-month orientation period. Paid Time Off begins accruing at the start of employment, but is not available for use by full-time employees until the three-month orientation period has passed. Holiday and vacation pay is not available to employees in their orientation period. See also Orientation Period Policy.

Beginning after 90 days of continuous employment with Smart Start, all full-time employees are eligible to use Paid Time Off. PTO accrues at the rate of 8 hours per calendar month. Beginning the first month of full-time employment, you are allowed PTO to a maximum of 12 days per calendar year. PTO may not be carried over from year to year. PTO may be used in increments of 15 minutes or .25 hours (i.e. 1.25 hours = 1 hour and 15 minutes), up to 8 hours per day. Smart Start reserves the right to approve or disapprove any requested Paid Time Off.

Paid Time Off is split into two categories: personal leave and sick leave. Employees may use a maximum of 4 PTO days (32 hours) for personal leave and a maximum of 8 PTO days (64 hours) for sick leave. Personal leave is defined as any non-medical absence. Sick leave may be used for any medical appointments or illness (personal or familial).

Employees requesting time off must submit a request using the Paychex Flex application (for instruction on requesting time off using Paychex Flex, see Scheduling and Time Tracking Policy).

Requests for PTO must be submitted a minimum of 5 days prior to a planned absence, or within 1 business day of an unplanned absence.

Employees may use Paid Time Off up to, but not exceeding an 8-hour work day and/or a 40-hour work week. If a PTO request has been approved, but then exceeds the 8 hour work day or 40-hour work week when used, the number of PTO hours used will be modified to allow a maximum of 8 hours per day and/or 40 hours per week.

Employees must work their full scheduled shift the day prior to and the day following any scheduled or unscheduled holiday, vacation, or closure in order to receive holiday pay, vacation pay, or paid time off. Employees who have a pre-approved sick leave absence, (i.e. doctor's appointment) requested a minimum of one month in advance, may be excluded from this policy.

Smart Start reserves the right to deny holiday pay, vacation pay, and/or PTO to any employee. See also: Disciplinary Action Policy.

Smart Start reserves the right to request a doctor's note for any absence due to illness or any absence requested for a medical appointment.

Unpaid PTO that has accumulated will not be paid to employees upon termination of employment. If state law requires a different arrangement, Smart Start will comply with state law. Questions about Smart Start's Paid Time Off policy should be directed to an administrator.

Isolation Leave Policy

Smart Start follows the isolation pay guidelines provided by New York State. These guidelines are subject to change, but are currently as follows (August 2022):

Under current NYS guidelines, Smart Start employees are entitled to 5 days of paid time off if you are under a mandatory isolation period. An isolation period takes place when the employee receives a positive COVID test result (PCR test is required to verify results).

Employees under a mandatory isolation period are allowed up to 5 days of paid leave. This is not deducted from your regular PTO or sick time and is listed as Isolation PTO on your paycheck. Employees may qualify for the 5 days of sick leave up to three times and must provide positive PCR test results in order to qualify.

If you are under mandatory isolation beyond the 5 day period or you are caring for a child who is under mandatory isolation, you may qualify for COVID Paid Family Leave/Disability benefits through New York State. A Smart Start administrator can help you complete the paperwork to receive these benefits. Payments are typically disbursed within 18 days of sending in your completed application. If you do not qualify for COVID PFL, you can request to use sick leave by completing an Absence Request Form.

For more information regarding Paid Family Leave for COVID-19, visit <https://paidfamilyleave.ny.gov/COVID19>.

Jury Duty Policy

While it is the duty of every citizen to serve on a jury when called, Smart Start recognizes that this often means the loss of income. Smart Start provides jury duty leave to eligible employees in compliance with federal and state laws. Smart Start pays the jury fee, as outlined by New York State (currently \$40/day), for up to the first three days of jury service. New York State pays the difference between the jury pay and regular wages for days when you are unable to report to work because of jury service. For more information regarding jury service or payment from New York State, go to www.nyjuror.com or call 1-800-NYJUROR (1-800-695-8767). If state law requires a different arrangement, Smart Start will comply with state law. Questions regarding Smart Start's jury duty leave policy should be directed to an administrator.

The above statement applies provided that you:

- Show your supervisor your summons to serve on a jury prior to the time that you are scheduled to serve
- Furnish your supervisor with evidence of having served on a jury for the time claimed
- Were scheduled to work on the days you were required to serve on a jury

Jury absence will be noted on your time sheet or time card. Time spent on jury duty will not be counted as hours worked for the purpose of computing overtime pay. Up to three days of jury pay (\$40/day) will be noted on your paystub.

This benefit cannot be applied to any court appearance other than jury duty unless such appearance is related to your employment.

Parental/School Leave Policy

Smart Start understands that parental involvement with a child's education is a benefit not only to the parent and the child, but also the community. Because the ability to take time off of work to attend functions and meetings at your child's school is important, Smart Start provides parental and school leave to eligible employees in compliance with federal and state laws.

All employees are able to use up to six hours of their Paid Time Off each year to attend school functions, meet with school teachers and administration or assist in their child's classroom. If state law requires a different arrangement, Smart Start will comply with state law. Questions regarding Smart Start's parental/school leave policy should be directed to an administrator.

You are required to notify your supervisor ahead of time if you would like to use this type of leave. The ideal notice period is at least one week, but if this is not an option, it is expected that you will notify your supervisor as soon as possible

Workplace Conduct

Complaint Policy

Smart Start strives to openly communicate with all employees. Any concerns employees have should be promptly reported to management so that a solution may be devised.

Examples of some complaints employees may have:

- Suggestions for improvement
- Concerns about working conditions
- Issues with co-workers
- Concerns about treatment at work

When a complaint is voiced, management will do its best to remedy the situation. While every employee may not be satisfied with every solution, employee's input is valued and Smart Start wants to foster an environment where all employees feel comfortable reporting their concerns.

Please contact an administrator with all complaints.

Disciplinary Action Policy

Disciplinary actions may entail verbal, written and final warnings, and suspension and termination. All of these actions may not be followed in all instances. Smart Start reserves the right to exercise discretion in discipline. Prior warning is not a requirement for termination. Copies of written warnings are placed in your personnel file.

Smart Start reserves the right to take any disciplinary action Smart Start considers appropriate, including termination, rejection of holiday pay, vacation pay, or paid time off, or reduction in benefits at any time. In addition to those situations discussed elsewhere in this handbook, listed below are some examples where immediate termination or disciplinary action could result. This list is general in nature and is not intended to be all inclusive:

- Discourtesy to a customer, child, provider or the general public resulting in a complaint or loss of good will.
- Refusal or failure to follow directions from management.
- Failure to adhere to New York State Office of Children and Family Services Regulations for Child Care Centers.
- Breach of confidentiality relating to employer, employee, customer or provider information.
- Altering, damaging or destroying Smart Start's property or records, or another employee's property.
- Dishonesty.
- Providing false or misleading information to any Smart Start representative or on any Smart Start records, including the employment application, benefit forms, time cards, expense reimbursement forms, child documentation forms, and similar records.

- Fighting or engaging in disorderly conduct on Smart Start’s or a customer’s premises.
- Violations of any of Smart Start’s employment policies including, but not limited to, confidentiality, security, solicitation, insider trading, conflict of interest and code of conduct.
- Conduct or performance issues of a serious nature.
- Failure of a drug or alcohol test.

Intellectual Property Policy

While employed by Smart Start, classroom materials may be developed, printed, or otherwise created by employees as part of their job duties. Classroom materials may include, but are not limited to, lesson plans, lesson materials, print outs, art work, or craft materials. Any classroom materials created during regular business hours of Smart Start or created using materials provided by Smart Start, such as paper, lamination, or ink, are considered the intellectual property of Smart Start. All materials considered the intellectual property of Smart Start are owned by Smart Start and are to remain at Smart Start upon termination of employment.

Drug-Free Workplace Policy

We recognize alcohol and drug abuse to be potential health, safety and security problems. It is expected that all employees will assist in maintaining a work environment free from the effects of alcohol, drugs or other intoxicating substances. Compliance with this Drug-free Workplace Policy is made a condition of employment.

Employees are prohibited from the following when reporting for work, while on the job, on Smart Start or customer premises, or surrounding areas or in any vehicle used for Smart Start business:

- The unlawful use, possession, transportation, manufacture, sale, dispensation or other distribution of an illegal or controlled substance or drug paraphernalia
- The unauthorized use, possession, transportation, manufacture, sale, dispensation or other distribution of alcohol
- Being under the influence of alcohol or having a detectable amount of an illegal or controlled substance in the blood or urine (“controlled substance” means a drug or other substance as defined in applicable federal and state laws on drug abuse prevention)

Any employee violating these prohibitions will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Any employee convicted under any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring while on the job, on Company or customer premises or in any vehicle used for Company business must notify Smart Start no later than five days after such a conviction. A conviction includes any finding of guilt or plea of no contest and/or imposition of a fine, jail sentence or other penalty.

Drug and alcohol testing will be carried out in compliance with any applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Disciplinary action will be taken for drug-related crimes, regardless of whether they happened during working hours or on an employee's own time.

We recognize that employees suffering from alcohol or drug dependence can be treated. We encourage any employee to seek professional care and counseling prior to any violation of this policy.

Smoke-Free Environment Policy

Smart Start is a smoke-free environment. Smoking, chewing, use of e-cigarettes/pipes and other tobacco and nicotine products is not permitted at any time in Company work areas or vehicles, or in client work areas or vehicles.

Smoking is not permitted outside of the building or on Smart Start property.

Employees who smoke or use other tobacco products may only use these products during approved break times off the premises.

This policy applies equally to all employees, customers, and visitors.

Employee Conduct

Employee Conduct Overview

Smart Start employees are expected to uphold the following professional guidelines:

1. Working at all scheduled shifts. Employees should not present with excessive absences and absences should be reported to a supervisor at least one week ahead of time. Excessive absenteeism is defined as two or more unexcused absences per month.
2. Employees are expected to be in their classrooms and **ready to work** at the start scheduled shift. Employees should arrive a few minutes early if there are matters to tend to before shift begins.
3. Employees are expected to maintain confidentiality in matters concerning any children enrolled at Smart Start. Employee conversations should pertain to classroom matters rather than personal matters during the work day.
4. Employees are expected to maintain positive and professional relationships with other staff members at all times.

The first violations of the employee conduct policy will result in a verbal warning. The second offense will result in a written warning. Any offense thereafter will result in a meeting with administration to discuss the future of the employee's position. Any violation of the employee conduct policy may result in employee termination.

Standards of Conduct Policy

The work rules and standards of conduct for Smart Start are important, and Smart Start regards them seriously. All employees are urged to become familiar with these rules and standards. In addition, employees are expected to follow the rules and standards faithfully in doing their jobs and conducting business on behalf of Smart Start. Please note that any employee who deviates from these rules and standards will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

While not intended to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of rule infractions or misconduct that may result in disciplinary action.

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property
- Falsification of records
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Possession, manufacture, distribution, sale, transfer, dispensation or use of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
- Immoral actions or intimidating others
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of Company or customer property
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Smoking in the workplace
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment or touching
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice. Excessive absenteeism is defined as two or more unexcused absences per month.
- Unauthorized use of telephones or other Company equipment
- Using Company equipment for purposes other than business (e.g., playing games on computers or personal Internet usage)
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information
- Violation of personnel policies
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct

These rules apply to any and all interactions with customers, fellow employees or anyone else associated with the workplace.

General Electronic Usage Policy

The basic regulations for using any electronic device during working hours:

Employees are permitted to use their personal cell phones to communicate with families, update the HiMama App, and for lesson planning purposes. Time spent on cell phones may not interfere with

supervision requirements or meeting the needs of the children in the classroom. Cell phone use for lesson planning is only permitted if all children are asleep or classroom ratio is being met by other staff. Employees are not permitted to use their cell phones or any other device to access personal social media accounts during the day for any reason. Pictures or videos that have been taken on the Smart Start premises must never be posted or shared on any personal social media platforms. Any non-permitted cell phone or electronic use is documented on the employee's conduct log and may result in disciplinary action.

- Computers are for business use only
- Smart Start may access any information created, transmitted or stored on its information systems
- Copying or downloading software of any kind is prohibited without prior permission
- Internet is for business use only—incidental and occasional personal use is permitted
- Company proprietary information must be protected

Please use the tablets and computers responsibly and contact an administrator with any questions regarding appropriate usage.

Employee Conduct with Children

Employees are expected to maintain a friendly and warm demeanor with children at all times. Employees are expected to engage with children by getting down on the floor to play and interact with them. Lead Teachers and Teaching Assistants are expected to encourage independence and self-help skills. Employees should never label children in any way. Employees are expected to use positive and encouraging language when discussing children. Employees should always demonstrate patience with children and demonstrate an understanding for the developmental abilities of the children in the classroom.

As an employee of Smart Start, you agree to the following when managing behaviors in the classroom:

- Redirect. In a conflict, give an alternate toy or activity to one of the children competing for the toy. Have multiples of popular toys.
- Focus on "Do" rather than "Don't." For example, "We walk inside" instead of "Stop running inside."
- Offer choices: "You can either sit on the rug or at the table for story time."
- Encourage children to use friendly words rather than physical acts. For example, suggest using the phrase, "I was playing with that toy."
- Praise positive behavior. "Thank you for using your words."
- Model desired behaviors in order for the children to learn by example.
- Arrange the program space to positively impact children's behavior. For example, avoid large open spaces that might encourage children to run indoors.
- Listen to the children and respond to their needs proactively to achieve their goals. Keeping the children engaged with activities helps prevent conflict.

- For preschool and school-age children, involve the children in the development of the classroom rules and consequences.
- The program must apply all rules consistently and appropriately to the ages of the children and their developmental level and abilities.
- Any discipline used will relate to the child's actions and be handled without prolonged delay.
- A child may be separated briefly from the group, but only long enough to gain self-control and must be in view of, supervised, and supported by a director, group teacher, assistant teacher, provider, substitute, and/or assistant.
- Corporal punishment is prohibited.
- No child can be isolated in an adjacent room, hallway, closet, darkened area, play area of any other area where a child cannot be seen, or supervised.
- Withholding or using food, rest or sleep as punishment is prohibited.
- Methods of interaction that punish, demean or humiliate a child are prohibited.
- Any abuse or maltreatment of a child, either as an incident of discipline or otherwise, is absolutely prohibited. Any child care program must not tolerate or in any manner condone an act of abuse or neglect of a child by an employee, volunteer, any person under the programs control.
- Physical restraint is prohibited.

Employee Conduct with Parents

1. Employees are expected to listen and respond politely with parents in conversation. When communicating through writing employees are expected to respond tactfully and in a timely manner.
2. Both Lead Teachers and Teaching Assistants are expected to build professional and positive relationships with all families.
3. Employees should be available and approachable with all parents and families. Families should be encouraged to come to teachers and assistants with any and all matters.
4. Parents and families should be greeted politely by name each day.
5. Using the HiMama App for children:
 - The app is used to communicate diaper changes/toileting, feedings/meals, supply needs, and any activities that go on during the day. It is the expectation that classroom teachers and teaching assistants are communicating activities and adding photos to the app every day.

Incident Reporting for Children

The safety and security of all children at smart start is of highest priority. Any incident that occurs while a child is under the care of Smart Start staff must be documented. Minor incidents should be reported on the classroom Minor Injury/Illness log. Any incident that involves open wounds, major bumps, or requires medical attention must be documented on OCFS Form 4436 (Incident report for Child Day Care).

The program must immediately notify the parent and Office upon learning of the following events involving a child which occurred while the child was in care at the program or was being transported by the program:

- (i) death,
- (ii) serious incident,
- (iii) serious injury,
- (iv) serious condition,
- (v) communicable disease,
- (vi) transportation to a hospital.

If you are unsure if an incident report is required, seek guidance from your supervisor. Any incident both minor and major should be communicated to all classroom staff and the parents or caregivers of the child. All major incidents must be reported to an administrator and the parents or caregivers of the child. If an incident in the classroom results in an emergency follow the necessary emergency protocol.

Violence in the Workplace Policy

It is Smart Start's policy to provide a workplace that is safe and free from all threatening and intimidating conduct. Therefore, Smart Start will not tolerate violence or threats of violence of any form in the workplace, at work-related functions or outside of work if it affects the workplace. This policy applies to Company employees, clients, customers, guests, vendors and persons doing business with Smart Start.

It is a violation of this policy for any individual to engage in any conduct, verbal or physical, that intimidates, endangers or creates the perception of intent to harm persons or property. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Physical assaults or threats of physical assault, whether made in person or by other means (i.e., in writing, by phone, fax or email)
- Verbal conduct that is intimidating and has the purpose or effect of threatening the health or safety of a co-worker
- Any other conduct or acts that management believes represent an imminent or potential danger to workplace safety or security

Any employee who feels that he or she has been threatened should immediately report the incident to their supervisor and an administrator.

- If you observe anyone exhibiting threatening behavior or making threatening statements, warn others in the area and immediately notify an administrator—stay away from the person exhibiting the threatening behavior.
- Depending upon the level of concern, 911 may be called immediately.

- Never attempt to confront any person exhibiting threatening behavior.

If you have reason to believe that events in your personal life could result in acts of violence occurring at work, you are strongly urged to confidentially discuss the issue with an administrator so that a prevention plan can be developed.

Anyone with questions or complaints about workplace behaviors that fall under this policy may discuss them with a supervisor or an administrator. Smart Start will promptly and thoroughly investigate any reported occurrences or threats of violence. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employees. Where such actions involve non-employees, Smart Start will take action appropriate for the circumstances. Where appropriate and/or necessary, Smart Start will also take whatever legal actions are available and necessary to stop the conduct and protect Company employees and property.

Child Abuse and Maltreatment Policy

As an employee of a New York State licensed Day Care Center, **you are a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse and maltreatment.**

Abuse and maltreatment of children by any staff, volunteers, parents, or any other associate of Smart Start is strictly prohibited. Cases of suspected Child Abuse and Maltreatment must immediately be reported to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR).

To report suspected Child Abuse and Maltreatment, call the Child Abuse and Maltreatment hotline at 800-635-1522 and complete and submit form LDSS-2221A.

The following are the procedures which will assure the safety of a child who is reported to the SCR, as well as other children provided care in the program, immediately upon notification that a SCR report has been made:

The child day care program may take one or more of the following actions with regards to any staff or volunteer or other person who is the subject of a child abuse or maltreatment report involving a child while in attendance at the program:

- Take steps to keep the child, and other children in the program, from further harm.
- Obtain medical attention for the child if appropriate.
- Dismissal, suspension or transfer of any staff or volunteer or other person who is the subject of a child abuse or maltreatment report.
- Increased supervision over a person who is the subject of a report.
- Provision of instruction and/or remedial counseling to a person who is the subject of a report.
- Appropriate disciplinary action, provision of appropriate training and/or increased supervision of staff and/or volunteers pertinent to the prevention and remediation of child abuse and maltreatment.

Children in the care of Smart Start staff cannot be left without competent supervision at any time. Competent supervision includes awareness of and responsibility for the ongoing activity of each child. It requires that all children be within the caregiver's range of vision and that the caregiver be close enough to respond when redirection or intervention strategies are needed. Competent supervision must take into account the child's age as well as emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

Smart Start staff must maintain the minimum New York State requirement of children to provider ratios in each classroom dependent on age. Staff in the Early Care and Continuity classrooms must maintain a minimum ratio of 1 teacher/teacher assistant to 4 children unless all in classroom are over 18 months, in which case the ratio becomes 1 teacher/teacher assistant to 5 children. Staff in the Toddler classroom must maintain a minimum ratio of 1 teacher/teacher assistant to 5 toddlers. Staff in the Preschool classroom must maintain a minimum ratio of 1 teacher/teacher assistant to 7 preschool children unless the majority of the children in the classroom are 4 years old, in which case the ratio becomes 1 teacher/teacher assistant to 8 preschool children. Staff in the School-Age/After School (SACC) classroom must maintain a minimum ratio of 1 teacher to 8 SACC children unless all of the children in the group are 5 years or older, in which case the ratio becomes 1 teacher to 10 SACC children.

Recommended Strategies:

Supervision is basic to safety, the prevention of injury, and maintaining quality child care. Competent supervision is required when children are indoors, or out; whether playing or at rest. Supervision is a constant. Parents trust caregivers and teachers to adequately supervise their children at all times.

Effective supervision strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Know the children in your care: Does a child struggle with transitions? Is one child a risk taker? Do you have an introvert who likes to hide? Knowing the children in your care helps you anticipate their needs, and allows you to develop an individualized plan of supervision for those children.
- Stand in strategic positions so that children are always in range of vision: Program spaces (indoors and outdoors) should be designed with visibility that allows constant unobstructed adult supervision. Staff should circulate around the area so that their range of vision moves with the children.
- On the move: Supervision challenges most often occur during transition times, especially when the group moves from one area of the program to another. Establish and enforce simple safety rules. Consistent rules and procedures that are predictable help children feel safe and help the caregiver maintain structure.

Remind young children and practice the rules around transition times. Older children can help develop the rules. This can include a procedure for lining up to leave or re-enter the program. Assign children a line partner ("a buddy") so they look for each other when lining up.

Transition Periods:

Transitions are not limited to just the group's movement; they also occur when staff change within the room (breaks, change of shift, etc.). Caregivers must know who is in their care at all times. Arrival and

departure are other times that can be challenging for everyone. Parents and children often require staff attention. Sometimes a commotion increases the risk of lapses in supervision. It is critical that staff have a plan to maintain supervision of the children during times of increased activity.

Attendance:

Taking attendance is an ongoing process that continues throughout the day; it is not only recorded upon arrival/departure. The attendance should be updated whenever a child or staff member enters or leaves the group. Attendance is taken using the HiMama app. Children must immediately be checked in or out of the HiMama app upon arrival, departure, or transition to another space or room. Staff attendance or transitions must be entered into HiMama whenever a staff member is responsible for the supervision of all or part of the group.

Name-to-face attendance should be taken at regular intervals throughout the day, at every transition, and when leaving one area and arriving at another. Name-to-face attendance means saying the child's name aloud and then looking at the child's face. Simply counting heads can result in a mistake, as the same child may easily be counted twice. Regular attendance-taking accounts for the children presently in care and alerts the caregiver when a child is missing. If a child goes missing, the sooner the child is found, the better! Programs may use a reminder tone, or musical clock that sounds at timed intervals to remind staff to take attendance consistently throughout the day.

Harassment Policy

Smart Start strives to provide a work environment that is free from harassment. Therefore, Smart Start will not tolerate harassment based on age, race, gender, color, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, covered veteran status, sexual orientation, status with respect to public assistance and other characteristics protected under state, federal or local law. This conduct is prohibited in any form at the workplace, at work-related functions or outside of work if it affects the workplace. This policy applies to all employees, clients, customers, guests, vendors and persons doing business with Smart Start.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct toward an individual because of his or her age, race, gender, color, religion or other protected status when the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment that causes work performance to suffer or negatively affects job opportunities.

Types of prohibited harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Verbal or written comments related to a trait someone possesses, including name-calling, jokes, slurs, negative stereotyping or threats
- Explicit or degrading verbal comments about another individual or his or her appearance
- Nonverbal conduct, such as staring, leering or giving inappropriate gifts
- Physical conduct, such as assault or unwanted touching
- Visual images, in hard copy or electronic form, relating to a trait someone possesses (for example, cartoons, drawings or pictures)

Appropriate performance reviews, counseling or discipline by your manager do not constitute harassment.

If you feel that you are being harassed, take the following steps:

- Tell the harasser that his or her actions are not welcome and they must stop, if you feel comfortable enough to do so
- Report the incident immediately to an administrator
- Report any additional incidents or retaliation that may occur to an administrator

All reports will be investigated immediately and thoroughly. Complaints and actions taken to resolve complaints will be handled as confidentially as possible. Appropriate actions will be taken to stop and remedy such conduct, including interim measures during a period of investigation.

Retaliating or discriminating against an employee who reports a suspected incident of harassment or who cooperates in an investigation is prohibited. Employees who violate this policy or retaliate against an employee in any way will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Smart Start prohibits sexual harassment of all kinds. This policy applies not only to employees, but also to clients, customers, guests, vendors, children and anyone else doing business with Smart Start. All employees are required to complete sexual harassment training prior to employment and annually thereafter. Any employee who feels that he or she has been a victim of sexual harassment, or who believes that he or she has witnessed sexual harassment, should notify an administrator immediately and are encouraged to submit Smart Start's Sexual Harassment Complaint Form. Smart Start's Sexual Harassment Complaint form is attached to this document, and is also available upon request from an administrator.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of an individual's employment
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment

Sexual harassment includes many forms of offensive behavior, including the harassment of a person of the same gender as the harasser. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Unwelcome sexual flirtation, advances or propositions
- Explicit or degrading verbal comments about another individual or his or her appearance
- Any sexually offensive or abusive physical conduct

- The taking of or the refusal to take any personnel action based on an employee's submission to or rejection of sexual overtures
- Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the workplace, such as displaying pictures, posters, calendars, graffiti, objects, promotional material, reading materials or other materials that are sexually demeaning or pornographic.
- Hostile actions taken against an individual because of that individual's sex.
- Offering or granting better working conditions or opportunities in exchange for a sexual relationship
- Threatening adverse working conditions (like demotions, shift alterations or work location changes) or denial of opportunities if a sexual relationship is refused.
- Using pressure, threats or physical acts to force a sexual relationship.
- Retaliating for refusing to engage in a sexual relationship.
- Harassment or comments on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, self-identified or perceived sex, gender identity and the status of being transgender.

It is important to Smart Start that all employees are protected from harassment. Any incidents that are perceived as harassment will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken by Smart Start.

Information & Preschool Security

Medical Emergency:

- Upon discovering a medical emergency, call 911.
- Call the receptionist and page an emergency announcement, if possible.
- Stay with the ill or injured person, being careful not to come into contact with any body fluids unless properly trained and protected.
- Send one person to alert an administrator so she can notify family members of the ill or injured person.
- Employees in the immediate vicinity of the emergency, but not involved in the emergency effort, should leave the area.

Entry System Policy

Our buildings' entry systems, located at the lobby doors, require an individualized PIN to enter. Each employee will have their own entry code to access the buildings. Access to the buildings is limited to between 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you need to access one of the buildings outside of these hours, you will need approval from an administrator.

Your PIN will be the last 6 digits of your Social Security Number and is for your individual use ONLY. Please do not share your access code with others.

Video Surveillance Policy

Smart Start utilizes camera devices in all classrooms, office spaces, entryways, and outdoor areas of the school. The use of video surveillance is in place to protect the children and all members of the Smart Start community. Video footage is only accessible to Smart Start administrators and the Office of Children and Family Services upon request and is stored electronically.

Severe Weather Policy

Unless you are informed otherwise, always assume that Smart Start is open for business during normal hours. Use common sense and your best judgment, however, when traveling to work in severe weather. Some types of severe weather include blizzards, hurricanes and tornadoes.

If Smart Start is not going to open for the day, you will be contacted by phone and may be emailed. In most circumstances, if Smart Start closes due to inclement weather, employees are compensated based on their regular working hours.

If you arrive at work after the scheduled opening time, that time is unpaid unless a request for Paid Time Off is submitted within one business day and is approved by an administrator. You should always use your discretion in getting to work.

When potentially dangerous weather develops during the day and a decision is made by management to close, you will be compensated as if you had worked all of your regularly scheduled hours for that day. If you elect to leave prior to a decision being made by Smart Start to close early, that time will be unpaid unless a Paid Time Off request is submitted within one business day and is approved by an administrator. See also Paid Time Off policy.

Shelter in Place Policy

In the event of an emergency situation requiring children and staff to shelter in place, children will and staff will stay inside their classrooms or will relocate to the gym if necessary.

Staff will take attendance at the designated shelter in place location. During shelter in place drills, staff ensure there is an adequate supply of food, water, and medical supplies to sustain all children and staff for a 48-hour period. Shelter in place drills will be conducted semi-annually in December and June.

In the event of an emergency, staff will remain with children at all times. Staff will maintain their role as caregivers and the safety of all children will be their primary concern. Staff will notify parents as soon as possible of the emergency and will give further instructions for pick-up.

General Practices

Dress Code (General)

Smart Start believes that your pride in both yourself and Smart Start is reflected in your appearance and in the image you create. We feel that our business image is important and, therefore, request that our employees maintain standards of dress and appearance appropriate to both the organization as a whole and your individual position responsibilities. Dress, grooming, personal cleanliness and professional behavior standards contribute to the professional image we strive to present to our customers and visitors. Therefore, while performing duties for Smart Start, employees are expected to dress in attire appropriate to the business environment and to behave in a professional manner at all times to best represent our business.

Due to the nature of our business and our continuous client contact, the employees at Smart Start may follow a relaxed dress or “Business Appropriate” dress.

Our business appearance and image is important to us. However, we respect individual preference and choice in dress and appearance. We are confident that employees will use their best judgment in following our dress and attire guidelines. We ask that at all times employees make certain that their appearance is well groomed and clean and that clothing is appropriate, neat, clean and well-fitting. While relaxed business attire is acceptable within the stated guidelines, we want to be sure our environment does not jeopardize professionalism and productivity.

Appropriate Attire and Appearance Guidelines

Smart Start employees should dress professionally, appropriately, and comfortably for constant movement with young children.

Appropriate clothing includes dress shirts, dress pants, dressed-up jeans, dresses, skirts, comfortable (preferably flat) footwear.

Employees should have weather appropriate clothing for each season. Employees need to be prepared to take children outside throughout the year any day that falls within temperature guidelines.

Any questions about appropriate attire may be directed to an administrator.

Inappropriate Attire and Appearance Guidelines

- Any clothing item displaying an offensive comment or graphic illustration or logo clothing including sport teams, cartoon characters, etc., unless otherwise specified.
- Dirty, ragged, ungroomed, sexually provocative, revealing or see-through clothing or appearance.
- Cut-off shorts, jeans with holes, sweat shirts or pants, or other baggy clothing.
- Crop-tops, short shorts, short skirts or dresses.

- Any other attire or appearance Smart Start deems to be inappropriate in the business environment.

If an employee is unclear about dress and appearance guidelines, he or she is encouraged to consult with an administrator. If an employee reports to work in questionable attire or appearance, a notification and discussion will occur with the employee to advise and counsel him or her regarding the inappropriateness of the attire. Depending upon the circumstance, the employee may also be sent home with directions to return to work in proper attire. It is expected that any work time lost will be made up by the employee. Continued or frequent departures from these guidelines will not be permitted and employees who appear for work inappropriately dressed or groomed repeatedly will be subject to disciplinary action.

Professional Development Policy

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services' (NYS OCFS) Regulations for Day Care Centers mandates all employees with regular and substantial contact with children to complete professional development training.

All Smart Start employees must adhere to the following professional development requirements:

- A) Prior to start of employment, they must complete the **Foundations in Health and Safety e-learning course** (5 credit hours) provided free by ECETP (see link below).
- B) Prior to start of employment, and annually thereafter, they must receive an interactive Sexual Harassment Prevention Training (1 credit hour) provided free by Smart Start.
- C) Within the employees first month of employment, they must complete the NYS OCFS approved online **Mandated Reporter Training** provided free by ECETP or OCFS (see link below).
- D) Within the employees first month of employment, they must complete the NYS OCFS approved online **Identifying and Responding to Anaphylaxis: Elijah's Law** course provided free by OCFS (see link below).
- E) Within the employees first three months of employment, they must complete a NYS OCFS approved **Adult and Pediatric CPR/First Aid/AED** course (6-8 credit hours)
- F) Within the employees first **six months** of employment, they must complete a minimum of 15 approved credit hours of professional development. The above courses are included in the 15 required hours.
- G) Employees must complete a minimum of 15 approved credit hours each year of employment.
- H) Employees are expected to attend all staff development meetings
- I) Employees are expected to carry any professional development teachings into practice in the classroom setting.

It is the employee's responsibility to track all professional development hours. Copies of all training certificates must be provided to an administrator upon completion of each training course.

Professional development courses may be the financial responsibility of the individual employee, but will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. All courses which require payment must be reviewed by an administrator prior signing up for the course. If the course is not approved by an administrator prior to sign-up, Smart Start is not financially responsible for the course, and it may not count toward the required professional development hours.

Several courses, including the above **Foundations in Health and Safety** e-learning course, are provided at no cost by the Early Childhood Education Training Program (ECETP). Every employee must create an account with ECETP and can do so by logging onto <https://www.ecetp.pdp.albany.edu/mytraining/login.aspx> and clicking “Create a New Online ECETP Account.”

The online **Mandated Reporter** training, required within the first month of beginning employment with Smart Start, can be completed by doing the following: Login to your ECETP account (<https://www.ecetp.pdp.albany.edu/>), click the 'E-Learning' tab, then 'Register for E-Learning', click the ‘Mandated Reporter Training’ course. An alternate Mandated Reporter training is provided by OCFS and can be accessed by going to <http://nysmandatedreporter.org/TrainingCourses.aspx> and clicking “Register for Self-Directed Online Training”. If you haven’t done so already, you will need to create a new HSLC account.

The online **Identifying and Responding to Anaphylaxis: Elijah’s Law** training, required within the first month of beginning employment with Smart Start, can be completed by doing the following: Login to your ECETP account (<https://www.ecetp.pdp.albany.edu/>), click the 'E-Learning' tab, then 'Register for E-Learning', click the 'Identifying and Responding to Anaphylaxis: Elijah's Law' course.

Agency information you may need while registering for professional development courses can be found below.

Agency Name: Smart Start
Agency Address: 1954-1966 Trumansburg Road Trumansburg, NY 14886
Agency ID: 893412 & 892157

Any employee who does not adhere to the NYS OCFS professional development requirements is subject to disciplinary action which may include a probationary period or termination of employment. Any questions regarding acceptable professional development courses or access to courses should be directed to an administrator.

Open Door Policy

To foster an environment where employees and management feel comfortable communicating with and voicing concerns to one another, Smart Start uses an Open Door Policy. This policy means that all of the managers’ doors are open to all of the employees, and employees are free to talk with management at any time. Please consider the following in regard to this policy:

You are responsible for addressing concerns with a manager, from complaints to suggestions and observations. Addressing these concerns allows Smart Start to improve and explain practices, processes and decisions.

We recommend that you first discuss concerns with your immediate supervisor, but the Open Door Policy also gives you the option of discussing them with higher management and/or An administrator. All of these parties will be willing to listen to the issue and assist in a resolution.

Personnel Records Policy

Smart Start strives to keep accurate and up-to-date personnel records.

Prior to the start of employment with Smart Start, the following paperwork must be completed and approved by the employer and employee:

- Criminal Conviction Statement
- Qualifications Statement
- Statewide Central Register Database Check
- Staff Exclusion List Check
- Complete Reference Check of 2 References
- Finger Printing
- Tuberculin Skin Test and Medical Examination
- Payroll Documentation: W4, IT-2104, I9

Employee personnel files may include the following:

- Employee demographic information
- Job application
- Position description
- Resume
- Training records
- Salary history
- Disciplinary action records
- Performance reviews
- Coaching and mentoring records

To ensure the accuracy of your personnel records, please notify us immediately of the following changes:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Marital status
- Dependent status

- Tax status

Personnel records are confidential and are not available to anyone outside of Smart Start, unless you have personally authorized their release. A release may not be required when reporting certain information as required by law or when an authorized governmental agency inspects certain records. To obtain access to your records, contact an administrator.

A Comprehensive Background Check (CBC) and approval is required for all prospective Smart Start employees. The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) conducts the CBC and will complete their review of the following for prospective employees prior to employment: FBI and NYS Criminal History Check, Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment, NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs, NYS Sex Offender Registry, and Out-of-State checks if you have lived outside of NYS in the last 5 years.

The applicant's CBC will remain in effect for up to 5 years unless they have a break in service greater than 180 days.

Injury/Illness Reporting and Safety Policy

Smart Start wants to ensure that our employees remain safe and injury-free at all times. Smart Start intends to comply with all applicable safety laws. In order to guarantee that accidents are avoided whenever possible, we expect our employees to refrain from horseplay, careless behavior and negligent actions. It is Smart Start's policy to maintain a safe and secure working environment for all employees and clients.

While working, employees must observe safety precautions for their safety and for the safety of others. All work areas must be kept clean, and free of clutter and debris. Any hazards or potentially dangerous conditions must be corrected immediately or reported to a supervisor.

If you are involved in an accident, you must:

- Report the accident to an administrator immediately
- Obtain any necessary medical treatment
- Fill out an Accident Report, regardless of the severity of the injury
- If you must seek additional medical treatment, obtain your supervisor's consent before leaving the premises

Employees who fail to comply with this procedure may be subject to disciplinary action.

Time Card Regulations Policy

Smart Start requires that each employee maintain a time card of his or her hours of work using the HiMama application. This will keep a record of work attendance.

It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure their time card is completed accurately and in a timely manner. If log in or log out information is inaccurate, time submitted for payroll will be at the digression of administrators.

The app is used for both clocking in upon arrival and clocking out when departing. The expectation is that staff clock out at any point during the day if they leave the building. If a staff member is transferred to another classroom during the day, they must transfer their location on the app to reflect the classroom they are in.

Workers' Compensation Policy

Smart Start will provide workers' compensation, a type of accident and injury insurance, that compensates an employee for lost time, medical expenses and loss of life or dismemberment from an injury arising out of or in the course of work. Employees must report any work-related injury or disease immediately (or as soon as practicable) to their supervisor and an administrator so that the necessary paperwork can be completed in a timely manner. Please note that under state laws, employees who fail to report work-related injuries in a timely manner may see a reduction or denial of their workers' compensation benefits.

Employees returning to work from an injury or illness for which they were receiving workers' compensation must provide proof of rehabilitation or treatment from a licensed physician and verification that they are able to complete all job-related tasks. In the event that the employee returns to work under strict medical restrictions, Smart Start will make every reasonable effort to accommodate the employee's work ability and job responsibilities. Once a physician removes work restrictions, the employee is expected to perform his or her regular duties and will no longer receive workers' compensation benefits.



Sexual Harassment Complaint Form

New York State Labor Law requires all employers to adopt a sexual harassment prevention policy that includes a complaint form to report alleged incidents of sexual harassment.

If you believe that you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you are encouraged to complete this form and submit it to an administrator. You will not be retaliated against for filing a complaint.

If you are more comfortable reporting verbally or in another manner, your employer should complete this form, provide you with a copy and follow its sexual harassment prevention policy by investigating the claims as outlined at the end of this form.

For additional resources, visit: ny.gov/programs/combating-sexual-harassment-workplace

COMPLAINANT INFORMATION

Name:

Work Address:

Work Phone:

Job Title:

Email:

Select Preferred Communication Method:

Email Phone In person

SUPERVISORY INFORMATION

Immediate Supervisor's Name: Hillary Elmore- Director or Bridgette Duncan- Assistant Director

Title: Director

Work Phone: 607-387-1006

Work Address: P.O. Box 856 Trumansburg, NY

COMPLAINT INFORMATION

1. Your complaint of Sexual Harassment is made about:

Name:

Title:

Work Address:

Work Phone:

Relationship to you: Supervisor Subordinate Co-Worker Other

2. Please describe what happened and how it is affecting you and your work. Please use additional sheets of paper if necessary and attach any relevant documents or evidence.

3. Date(s) sexual harassment occurred:

Is the sexual harassment continuing? Yes No

4. Please list the name and contact information of any witnesses or individuals who may have information related to your complaint:

The last question is optional, but may help the investigation.

5. Have you previously complained or provided information (verbal or written) about related incidents? If yes, when and to whom did you complain or provide information?

If you have retained legal counsel and would like us to work with them, please provide their contact information.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



CERTIFICATE OF TRAINING

This is to certify that

Participated in

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION TRAINING

on _____

This training meets the following requirements:

Safety & Security Procedures (4)

1 CREDIT HOUR

Employee Signature

Hillary Elmore, Director

Receipt of Smart Start Employee Handbook

The Employee Handbook (sometimes referred to as a Personnel Policy Manual, or the “Manual”) is a compilation of personnel policies, practices and procedures currently in effect at Smart Start, an equal opportunity employer. The handbook and the information within it are confidential.

This handbook is designed to introduce employees to the organization, familiarize you with Company policies as they pertain to you as an employee, provide general guidelines on work rules, disciplinary procedures and other issues related to your employment, and to help answer many of the questions that may arise in connection with your employment.

This handbook and any other provisions contained herein do not constitute a guarantee of employment or an employment contract, express or implied. You understand that your employment is “at-will” and that your employment may be terminated for any reason, with or without cause, and with or without notice. Only an administrator or other authorized representative(s) of Smart Start has the authority to enter into a signed written agreement guaranteeing employment for a specific term. This handbook is intended solely to describe the present policies and working conditions at Smart Start. This handbook does not purport to include every conceivable situation; it is merely meant as a guideline and, unless laws prescribe otherwise, common sense shall prevail. Of course, federal, state and local laws will take precedence over Smart Start policies when applicable.

Personnel policies are applied at the discretion of Smart Start. Smart Start reserves the right to change, withdraw, apply or amend any of our policies or benefits, including those covered in this handbook, at any time. Smart Start may notify you of such changes via email, posting on Smart Start’s intranet, portal or website, or via a printed memo, notice, amendment to or reprinting of this handbook, but may, in its discretion, make such changes at any time, with or without notice and without a written revision of this handbook.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have received a copy of Smart Start’s Employee Handbook, and understand that it is your responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained within it and any revisions made to it.

Signature

Date

Please print your full name

Please sign and date one copy of this notice and return it to an administrator. Retain a second copy for your reference.