

**Employee Handbook**

**Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church**

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**Colorado Springs, CO 80918**

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[**www.stlukeskids.org**](http://www.stlukeskids.org)

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

[From SLCC Pastor 4](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923661)

[IMPORTANT INFORMATION 5](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923662)

SLCC’s Mission 6

General Ethics and Conduct

[Integrity and Standards of Conduct 6](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923667)

[Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) 6](file:///G:\\PeopleSvcs\\HR\\Employee%20Handbook\\2012%20Edition\\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc" \l "_Toc199923668)

[Unlawful](file:///G:\\PeopleSvcs\\HR\\Employee%20Handbook\\2012%20Edition\\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc" \l "_Toc199923668) Harassment 6

[Sexual Harassment 6](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923669)

[EEO/Harassment Complaint Procedure 7](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923670)

[Confidentiality of Information 7](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923673)

[Security of Client Information](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923674) 7

[Security of Employees’ Personal Information 8](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923676)

[EMPLOYMENT](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923679)

Employee Status 8

[Employee Assignments](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923683) 8

Background Checks and Fingerprints 8

Probationary Period 8

[Separation of Employment](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923683) 8

[Work Hours and Pay](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923691)

[Hours of Operation and](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923697) Work Schedule 9

[Overtime](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923700) 9

[Rates of Pay 9](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923695)

Paydays  [9](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923698)

[Timekeeping and Pay for Nonexempt Employees 9](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923701)

[Pay for Exempt Employee](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923698)(s) 9

[Benefits](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923706)

[Benefits Eligibility](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923707) 10

[Holidays 10](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923713)

[Paid](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923714) Time Off (PTO) 10

Sick Leave 11

[Childcare Discount. 11](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923713)

Additional Benefits 11

Leaves of Absence

[Bereavement Leave 11](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923721)

[Jury Duty](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923724) 11

[Military Leave](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923726) 12

[Performance Expectations](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923734)

Orientation 12

Health Statement 12

Licensing Regulations 12

Health & Safety Training 13

Performance Evaluations 13

Attendance 13

[Absenteeism Due to Illness 13](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923736)

[Tardiness 13](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923737)

[Inclement Weather 13](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923738)

[Personal Appearance 13](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923742)

Social Media Use 1[4](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923747)

Discipline 1[4](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923747)

[Dispute Resolution](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923748) 14

[Safety and Health](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923749)

Scheduled Breaks 15

Respite Breaks 15

Vehicle Operation 15

[Inspection and Search 15](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923750)

[Drugs and Alcohol 15](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923751)

[Smoking 16](file:///G:\PeopleSvcs\HR\Employee%20Handbook\2012%20Edition\DRAFT%202012%20EE%20Handbook%20Binder%20Edition.doc#_Toc199923752)

Weapons 16

Dear Saint Luke’s Team Member,

Welcome to Saint Luke’s Children’s Center (SLCC). We are glad to have you as part of our family.

Our goals for the children at our center include helping them to grow in faith in Jesus Christ, to grow in knowledge about the world around them, and to grow in self-worth as a special child of God. Our goals for employees are similar: to grow in faith, grow in knowledge, attain satisfaction from realizing what a very important job we have, and to have fun in the process. “Children are a gift from GOD.” (Psalm 127:3)

SLCC is pleased to offer families the highest standard of child care and education and complies with all federal and state regulations regarding its operation.

This Employee Handbook will help you understand your responsibilities and guidelines for working in this center, as well as the requirements of the Colorado Department of Human Services for Child Care Centers.

In closing, please remember that I personally consider you a valuable member of our team.  My office door is always open and I will strive to make myself available to be present, not only as your boss, but also as your pastor.

In Christ,

The Rev. Joshua J. Hansen

IMPORTANT INFORMATION **ABOUT THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

This handbook is designed to acquaint employees with Saint Luke’s Children’s Center (SLCC) and provide some information about working at SLCC. The handbook is not all inclusive, but is intended to provide employees with a summary of some of SLCC’s guidelines. This edition replaces all previously issued editions.

Employment with SLCC is at-will. Employees have the right to end their work relationship with SLCC, with or without advance notice, for any reason. SLCC has the same right. The language used in this handbook and any verbal statements made by management are not intended to constitute a contract of employment, either expressed or implied; nor are they a guarantee of employment for a specific duration. No representative of SLCC, other than the director or others authorized by the director, has the authority to enter into an agreement of employment for any specified period, and such agreement must be in writing, signed by the director or pastor of Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church and the employee.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question. After reading the handbook, employees who have questions should talk with the SLCC director or the pastor of Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church. In addition, the need may arise to change the guidelines described in the handbook; except for the at-will nature of the employment, SLCC reserves the right to interpret the guidelines or to change them without prior notice. The pastor may, at his discretion, delegate his responsibilities to a person of his choosing.

(March 2021 Edition)

**OUR MISSION**

Empowering God’s children.

**GENERAL ETHICS & CONDUCT**

Integrity and Standards of Conduct

In witness and service to our Lord God, and in the interest of providing a safe, nurturing environment for the children we serve at SLCC, we will conduct ourselves by taking a Christ-centered approach to serving others, while applying Biblical principles, standards, and practices as an organization and as individuals. SLCC employees will demonstrate Godly standards of conduct and personal integrity.

Above all, we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are emotionally damaging, physically harmful, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, or intimidating to children.

Since these are foundational concepts and practices, employees who ignore or do not comply with these standards of ethics and conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment with SLCC.

If an employee feels that the integrity or standards of conduct of any other employee are questionable, consult and apply the Conflict Resolution policy found in this Handbook.

Equal Opportunity Employment

SLCC promotes the hiring of qualified individuals without regard to race, color, gender, age, national origin, disability, military status, genetic information, or any other status protected by applicable state or local law, provided they meet the requirements established for the job. As a ministry of the Church, we do require our staff to be of Christian belief and agree with our statement of faith.

SLCC will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless making the reasonable accommodation would result in an undue hardship for SLCC or cause a direct threat to health and safety. Employees needing such accommodation are instructed to contact the SLCC Director.

This equal employment opportunity policy covers all employment practices, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

Unlawful Harassment

SLCC maintains an environment free of unlawful harassment based on any of the above-mentioned protected classes. Unlawful harassment includes verbal or physical conduct which has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. This policy applies to all employees, including supervisors, co-workers, and non-employees such as parents, family members, vendors, consultants, etc., in their relationship with SLCC or Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church.

Sexual Harassment

SLCC strives to maintain a safe and respectful work environment; we strongly oppose sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual conduct. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

* submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or relationship with SLCC;
* submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting an individual’s employment; or
* such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

All team members are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and business-like manner at all times. Inappropriate sexual conduct is expressly prohibited. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, sexually implicit or explicit communications whether in:

* Written form such as cartoons, posters, calendars, notes, letters, email, or text messages;
* Verbal form such as comments, jokes, foul or obscene language of a sexual nature, gossip or questions about another’s sex life, or repeated unwanted requests for dates;
* Physical gestures and other nonverbal behavior such as unwelcome touching, grabbing, fondling, kissing, massaging, and brushing up against another’s body.

Direct any questions regarding this policy to your supervisor or pastor of Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church.

EEO/Harassment Complaint Procedure

In keeping with a safe and respectful work environment, if an employee believes there has been a violation of the EEO policy or harassment based on the protected classes outlined above, including sexual harassment, he or she should use the following complaint procedure. SLCC expects team members to make a timely complaint to enable SLCC to promptly investigate and correct any behavior that may be in violation of these policies.

Report the incident to your immediate supervisor. If you feel you cannot go to your supervisor, report the incident directly to Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church’s pastor, deaconess or the lay vicar of the Church Council, who will ensure that the matter is investigated and that appropriate, corrective action is taken. The complaint will be kept confidential. SLCC and Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church have an open-door policy with respect to any type of harassment. If SLCC determines that a team member’s behavior is in violation of these guidelines, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the offending team member, up to and including termination of employment.

SLCC prohibits retaliation against a team member for filing a complaint as directed by these policies or for assisting in a complaint investigation. If a team member perceives retaliation for making a complaint or for his or her participation in the investigation, please follow the complaint procedure outlined above. The situation will be promptly investigated.

**Confidentiality of Information**

Security of Client Information

As a member of SLCC, you will have access to confidential information proprietary to SLCC and its clients, information that is not generally known to or accessible by the public. It would include, but is not limited to, names and contact information of our staff, volunteers, and children and their families. This non-disclosure applies during and after your employment. Any copying, reproducing, or distributing of confidential information in any manner must be authorized by the SLCC Director.

For those outside of SLCC who request to make contact with a staff member, it is acceptable to release only email address information (absent objections from the team member) or to relay the requestor’s contact information to the team member.

Security of Employees’ Personal Information

As an employer, during the normal course of business SLCC might acquire personal information, in written or electronic formats, regarding its employees. This information is to be secured in the personnel or confidential files in the SLCC Director’s office, and access will be limited only to those with a direct need to know and only as much as is needed to be known.

**EMPLOYMENT**

Employee Status

*Full-time Employee* - an employee normally scheduled to work at least 35 hours per week. Full-time employees are currently eligible for SLCC benefits.

*Part-time Employee* - an employee normally scheduled to work less than a 35-hour workweek. Part-time employees are currently ineligible for SLCC benefits.

*Temporary Employee* - an employee who is hired in a job established for a temporary period or for a specific assignment. Temporary employees are currently ineligible for SLCC benefits.

*Exempt Employee* - Exempt employees are not required to be paid overtime, in accordance with applicable federal wage and hour laws, for work performed beyond 40 hours in a workweek.

*Nonexempt Employee* - Nonexempt employees are eligible for paid overtime at one and one-half times their regular rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours per workweek or 12 hours in a work day.

Employee Assignments

While SLCC does not discriminate based on age, only staff who are 18 and older will be left alone with a group of children or work in the infant room in accordance with Colorado State law.

Background Checks and Fingerprints

Every employee must pass a background check and fingerprint check according to the regulations of the State of Colorado. SLCC will pay to obtain the fingerprints, for the processing of the fingerprints and background checks.

**Probationary Period**

There will be a 90-day initial evaluation period for all newly hired employees. Completion of the initial evaluation period does not guarantee further employment.

Separation of Employment

If you decide to leave SLCC, contact the SLCC Director to complete the “check out” procedures at separation of employment (timing, return of property, delivery of final paycheck, etc.).

**WORK HOURS and PAY**

Hours of Operation and Work Schedule

SLCC is open year-round except for holidays and scheduled staff work days. SLCC’s work week is from 12:01 a.m. Sunday through 12:00 midnight on Saturday, and its business hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on week days. Work hours are between 6:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. on week days, with the exception of announced special events, teacher work days, and required employee meetings.

While each employee’s schedule will be established at hire, the SLCC Director may at any time require additional hours or change schedules to meet the needs of SLCC. Written requests for changes in the schedule may be granted by the SLCC Director.

Overtime

SLCC does not normally schedule employees to work more than 40 hours in any given week or 12 hours in any given day. Employees must have prior approval from the director before working more than 40 hours in a week or 12 hours in a day. While an employee will be paid for all hours worked, any employee exceeding 40 hours in a week or 12 hours in a day without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action. Holidays and Paid Time Off (PTO) are not counted as hours worked in the computation of overtime.

Rates of Pay

Rates of pay will be set by the SLCC Director within pay ranges approved by the pastor in consultation with the SLCC Director.

Paydays

Paydays are every other Friday, 26 times each year. If the regular payday occurs on a holiday, the payday is the last working day prior to the holiday.

Timekeeping and Pay for Non-Exempt Employees

Time sheets are designed to meet the requirements of state and federal laws, which indicate that every employer must have an accurate record of the time that each nonexempt employee is on the job. Each nonexempt employee must report their entire time worked on a daily basis. At the end of a pay period, each employee will sign his or her own time sheet and submit it to the SLCC Director who is responsible for verifying each time sheet.

Pay for Exempt Employees

Exempt employees must be paid on a salary basis. This means exempt employees will regularly receive a predetermined amount of compensation each pay period on a weekly basis. SLCC is committed to complying with salary basis requirements which allows properly authorized deductions.

**BENEFITS**

Currently, SLCC sponsors a benefits program for all eligible employees. SLCC will periodically review the benefits and may make modifications to its benefits as appropriate to the Center's condition. SLCC reserves the right to modify, add or delete the benefits it offers.

Benefits Eligibility

Employees who work 35 hours or more each week are considered full time and eligible for benefits. Employees who work less than 35 hours each week are part time and not eligible for benefits with the exception of sick time.

Holidays

SLCC is closed in observance of the following holidays:

New Year’s Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Thursday and Friday

Christmas Eve and Day

New Year’s Eve

Full-time employees who will be paid for those holidays for which they would be regularly scheduled to work on the day on which the holiday is observed. Other school closures and holidays may be paid at the discretion of the Director in consultation with the pastor.

The holiday must be a normally scheduled workday for the employee. For example, if an employee normally works Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, he or she is not eligible to be paid for a holiday that falls on Friday.

Holidays that occur during an employee’s approved paid vacation/personal time are not counted as a vacation/personal day, but rather as a paid holiday. Holidays are not counted in the computation of overtime.

Paid Time Off

SLCC provides paid-time-off (PTO) for regular full-time employees to use when off work due to illness (if sick leave is used up), vacation, or a personal need. PTO is accrued according to the following service schedule:

Employed for:

6 months up to 3 years: 1 week/year – 1.54 hours per pay period

Beginning in 3rd year through 4th year: 2 weeks/year – 3.08 hours per pay period

Beginning in 5th year: 3 weeks/year – 4.62 hours per pay period

PTO accumulates up to a maximum of 100 hours. Employees are not eligible to earn any additional PTO once they have reached this accrual limit until they use all or a portion of their earned PTO.

With the exception of illness, requests to use PTO must be presented in writing to the Director a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of intended use. Approval of such requests is at the sole discretion of the Director in consideration of the needs of SLCC.

PTO pay may be taken if hours are needed in any given week to bring an employee up to 40 hours (they may not go over 40 hours). A terminating employee will be paid for unused, earned PTO.

PTO accumulates up to a maximum of 100 hours. Employees are not eligible to earn any additional PTO once they have reached this accrual limit, until they use all or a portion of their earned PTO.

If a paid holiday falls during an employee’s scheduled vacation, the holiday is not counted as a vacation day.

**Sick Leave**

Paid sick leave begins accruing on date of hire or January 1, 2021 – whichever is later), accrues to a maximum of 48 hours. Once any sick leave has been used/paid out, the sick leave will again begin accruing to the maximum of 48 hours. An employee cannot use more than 48 hours of sick time in one year. For any sick leave or PTO used for illness that is more than 2 days, a doctor’s note is required to return to work.

Employees may use accrued paid sick leave to be absent from work for the following purposes:

* The employee has a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition; needs a medical diagnosis, care, or treatment related to such illness, injury, or condition; or needs to obtain preventive medical care;
* The employee needs to care for a family member who has a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition; needs a medical diagnosis, care, or treatment related to such illness, injury, or condition; or needs to obtain preventive medical care;
* The employee or family member has been the victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or harassment and needs to be absent from work for purposes related to such crime; or
* A public official has ordered the closure of the school or place of care of the employee's child or of the employee's place of business due to a public health emergency, necessitating the employee's absence from work.

Childcare Discount

Fulltime employees will receive 15% off of usual tuition for their own children. Part-time employees are not eligible for this discount.

**Additional Benefits**

We provide the ability to enroll in AFLAC and Thrivent Financial if desired.

**LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

Bereavement Leave

If a death occurs in an employee’s immediate family (spouse, parent, child, step-child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild or mother/father-in-law,) SLCC will pay up to three days for both full-time and part-time employees taking leave during regularly scheduled work days.

If additional days off are needed due to the situation, employees may use their available PTO; if none is available, the employee may request time off without pay.

Jury Duty

We encourage employees to meet their civic responsibility when called for jury duty. A copy of the summons for jury duty must be presented to the SLCC Director.

SLCC will grant full pay up to $50.00 per day for the first three days of jury duty for employees regularly scheduled to work and who are nonexempt. Substitutes and temporary employees are not eligible for jury duty pay. Jury duty beyond three days is without pay from SLCC for nonexempt employees. However, beginning with the fourth day and thereafter, the juror is paid by the State of Colorado for state, district, or county courts. The employee is asked to contact the SLCC Director daily when jury duty is completed. The SLCC Director may require that the employee returns to work if needed.

Military Leave

SLCC will grant a military leave of absence if you are absent from work because you are serving in the U.S. uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). You must give the Director advanced notice of upcoming military service, unless military necessity prevents advance notice or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable.

You will not be paid for military leave. However, you may use any available accrued PTO to help pay for the leave.

If you are on military leave for up to 30 days, you must return to work on the first regularly scheduled work period after your service ends (allowing for reasonable travel time). If you are on military leave for more than 30 days, you must apply for reinstatement in accordance with USERRA and applicable state laws.

When you return from military leave (depending on the length of your military service in accordance with USERRA), you will be placed either in the position you would have attained if you had stayed continuously employed or in a comparable position. For the purpose of determining benefits that are based on length of service, you will be treated as if you had been continuously employed.

If you have questions about military leave, contact the SLCC Director for more information.

**PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS**

Orientation

All employees must go through orientation within the first two weeks of employment. Orientation will cover policies and guidelines related to SLCC as well as the procedures required by SLCC, the State of Colorado and Colorado Shines.

Health Statement

Within the first 30 days of employment, each employee will be required to submit a form signed by their physician stating that they are of good health and mind for working with children.

Annually thereafter, each employee will undergo a physical ensuring fitness for duty at the employee’s expense. Occasionally SLCC may schedule the services of an onsite nurse to complete these physicals.

Licensing Regulations

Employees are expected to have read and be familiar with the licensing rules governing childcare centers within their first 90 days of employment. The SLCC Director will address questions employees may have regarding any of the policies, guidelines, or regulations under which SLCC operates.

Health and Safety Training

Within the first 3 months of employment all teachers working with infants and toddlers must successfully complete training in CPR, First Aid, and Universal Precautions in compliance with state policies.

Performance Evaluation

Annual employee performance evaluations will be performed by the SLCC Director each year.

Attendance

Absenteeism Due to Illness

If an employee who opens SLCC will be out due to illness, it is requested that the Director be contacted the prior evening. If that is not possible, voice-to-voice contact must be made with the Director by 5:00 am.

An employee on any other shift is expected to phone the SLCC Director a minimum of 2 hours before the start of the shift.

If the SLCC Director is unavailable, direct contact must be made with the Assistant Director.

Tardiness

An employee is tardy any day that he or she arrives at work late without prior approval from the SLCC Director. A written warning will be issued to any employee who is tardy without notification 3 times within 60 days; further tardiness may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Inclement Weather

SLCC is an essential business serving people who are essential workers.  Therefore we make every effort to be open regardless of weather.  If the City of Colorado Springs is closed and SLCC decides to open, we will give those teachers who are able to navigate the roads and safely come to work a bonus of $50 per day in addition to their regular hourly wage for hours worked that particular day.  If SLCC is open and an employee cannot make it to work due to road conditions they will not be paid or they may use accrued vacation hours up to their regularly scheduled hours.    If SLCC closes pay will be at the discretion of the Pastor and Director.

Personal Appearance

SLCC expects our staff to maintain standards comparable with other professional childcare facilities and in accordance with the nature of our Christian environment. SLCC provides its staff with uniform smocks that should be worn during working hours, unless directed otherwise.

Basic hygiene is expected at all times. Hair must be neat, clean and in control. Fingernail length may not interfere with the completion of assigned tasks nor pose a health or safety risk to children or

co-workers.

Shoes must be worn at all times and must be clean and allow the teacher to run. The SLCC Director may require changes if it is felt the employee’s appearance is not up to SLCC professional standards.

Social Media Use

SLCC understands the value of social media; in fact, employees are encouraged to call or text the SLCC Director when they need help within their classrooms. Also acceptable is the use of mobile devices to share educational information such as appropriate music with the children in the classroom. Personal mobile devices may also be used by employees while children are napping.

All postings on a web site, blog, or social networking site on behalf of SLCC must be preapproved and sent by authorized employees. All other postings made by an employee on such a site are considered personal communications, must comply with all applicable laws including copyright and fair use laws, and employees are personally responsible for the content they publish. Postings by an employee concerning SLCC are not prohibited provided they comply with guidelines set forth below or elsewhere in this handbook. Employees publishing or posting regarding SLCC matters must include a disclaimer such as:  “The postings on this site are my own and don’t necessarily represent SLCC positions, strategies, or opinions.”

Refer to the “Confidentiality” section of this handbook for details about guarding SLCC, its employees, its children and their families or their names.

A blog, wiki, or social networking site is not the ideal place to make a complaint regarding alleged discrimination, unlawful harassment, or safety issues. Complaints to SLCC must be made consistent with the complaint and dispute resolution procedures in this handbook.

Nothing in this guideline is meant to impede or restrict any rights protected by federal law, including the right to engage in protected and concerted activity guaranteed by Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act.

Discipline

An employee’s conduct is a major factor affecting the health, growth, and safety of the children under SLCC’s care. It is also an important aspect of SLCC’s image within and presentation of Jesus Christ to the community.

When management finds an employee’s performance is unsatisfactory or an employee’s conduct is unacceptable, disciplinary action may be taken. The discipline may range from informal discussion with the employee to immediate discharge, depending on the seriousness of the situation. Any action taken by management in an individual case should not be assumed to establish a precedent in other circumstances.

Dispute Resolution

SLCC seeks to build a work team that is cooperative with and supportive of one another. We recognize, however, that disputes do sometimes arise. SLCC wants to address all disputes fairly and promptly.

Employees are encouraged to approach disputes using the communications principles set forth in Matthew 18 while applying persistent and concerted prayer. Ultimately it may become necessary for employees to enlist aid to settle a dispute according to God’s direction for His people (see 1 Corinthians 6:1-7).

If you have a work-related problem or concern, normally it should be discussed immediately with the SLCC Director, if it is appropriate. If you and the SLCC Director are not able to resolve the issue, you should request a meeting to discuss the matter with the Pastor or Deaconess of Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church. This normally should be done within ten working days.

However, if the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction at this level, you may appeal the matter within ten working days to the SLCC Advisory Team. The appeal should be presented in writing stating the nature of the problem.

If you still do not feel the problem has been resolved, you may make a written appeal within ten working days to the Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church Council, whose decision is final.

**SAFETY AND HEALTH**

**Scheduled Breaks**

When working an 8 hour shift, a fifteen minute break will be provided after each 4 hour period.

Respite Breaks

As precautionary measures, employees are urged to ask to be relieved from their classroom at any time that they are feeling stressed or need a break from the children.

Vehicle Operation

The right to drive a motor vehicle, owned, rented, leased, or borrowed by SLCC is a privilege and responsibility requiring a valid driver’s license. When operating or riding in a vehicle owned, rented, leased, or borrowed by SLCC, employees are required to use a seat belt. As a driver, it is the employee’s responsibility to see that all passengers are wearing seat belts and that the children are safely and properly restrained, and to comply with all of the laws of the state in which the motor vehicle is being operated while on SLCC business. The use of cell phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) for calls, texting, and internet usage is strictly prohibited while operating such a vehicle.

Inspection and Search

To help maintain a safe and healthy environment for the benefit and protection of all children and employees and to protect SLCC property, equipment, operations and clients, SLCC reserves the right to conduct inspections on SLCC premises.

Employees on the SLCC premises are subject to questions and search at SLCC’s discretion. SLCC reserves the right to inspect personal items carried by individual employees. If employees have personal items they would not like subjected to such inspection, these items should not be brought onto SLCC’s premises.

A SLCC-initiated search does not necessarily imply an accusation of theft or that an employee has broken a rule. Employees refusing to cooperate with or submit to search will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Drugs and Alcohol

SLCC is committed to a safe, healthy, and protected environment for its children, free from the effects of drugs and alcoholic beverages. All employees may be subject to random drug and alcohol testing. Employees using prescribed drugs altering their judgment and/or behavior should contact the Director to remove themselves from their regular work schedule until such time as they are able to work without increased safety risk, employee injury, and faulty decision-making. In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance or alcohol on SLCC premises or during SLCC time is strictly prohibited. Furthermore, working under the influence of alcohol, any substance controlled under of the Controlled Substances Act of 1970, or abuse of any other substance is prohibited. Employees working under the influence of any such substances will be immediately suspended from duty and may be subject to immediate termination.

Smoking

To maintain a safe and comfortable environment, smoking on SLCC and Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church property is strictly prohibited. Employees smoking in any nonsmoking area will be subject to disciplinary action.

Weapons

No firearms, personally-carried blades longer than three inches, or any other weapons are permitted on SLCC’s premises, or at any SLCC related activity.