# ABLE CHARTER SCHOOLS at Humphreys University

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# **Employee Handbook for 2021 - 2022**

Revised August 2021



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## References in the Employment Handbook to Policies on the ABLE Website:

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# 1 Introduction and General Employment Policies

#### Superintendent's Message

Welcome to a new academic year as ABLE enters its 11<sup>th</sup> year of operation and celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an independent charter school. Having spent the better part of a year and a half in the pandemic fog and distance learning, the anticipation and excitement and positivity attendant to our return to our important work is palpable.

We have grown from 35 high school students and 8 teachers in 2011 to 1,100 TK-12 students, over 50 faculty members, and over 100 total staff members. We thrive because of the inspired work YOU do and because our families love ABLE!

The revision and publication of the ABLE Employee Handbook is an annual August event. The handbook is approved by the ABLE Board of Directors. This year employees will frequently be directed to review written policies and information on the ABLE webpage. As policies and information are added to the website Employees will be informed via email. As edits are made to the handbook itself employees will likewise be informed. Please take time to review the various policies and procedures of ABLE as they become published and available to you. As employees, we are all responsible for following these policies and procedures as required by law and/or Board policy.

I am grateful for your dedication and continuous ability to inspire students, parents, and the ABLE community. Thank you for pursuing the glorious and rewarding work of preparing our children to be successful adults. There is no greater calling.

Have a great year!

Sincerely,

Clem Lee ABLE Superintendent

#### **About the Handbook and Policies**

ABLE strives to establish a workplace that facilitates both personal and professional development for its employees.

The provisions of this Employee Handbook constitute neither an employment contract in whole or in part nor a guarantee of employment for any specific duration. Rather, this Employee Handbook describes and references written policies, practices, and procedures for employees (collectively referred to as "policies"). ABLE reserves the right to change any or all of its policies in whole or in part at any time at its sole discretion.

Employees are expected to follow ABLE's policies and any amendments during the course of their employment, including policies referenced and posted on the ABLE website.

Whenever possible, new policies or changes to existing policies are shared with employees. New policies or changes to existing policies are effective when issued and are described in this handbook and/or posted on the ABLE website when they are updated or reissued. Employees are encouraged to recommend new policies or changes to existing policies; these suggestions should be presented to the Superintendent for consideration.

#### **ABLE Mission Statement**

ABLE Charter Schools will provide an innovative, technology-rich, personalized learning environment in which students will receive state of the art instruction empowering them to be independent, life-long learners and productive global citizens in preparation for college, career, and community life.

#### **ABLE Vision for Learning**

ABLE students will prosper in a safe and nurturing environment that provides:

- foundational academic success, excitement of inquiry and exploration, and stimulation of love for learning;
- exposure to the extraordinary diversity of greater Stockton and San Joaquin County;
- college preparatory coursework and early college opportunities;
- highly trained teachers who combine the best and most current instructional practices with a technology-rich learning environment;
- exposure to career pathways; and
- graduation requirements that embody high academic optimism and require real world engagement with preparation for post-secondary life.

#### **Organizational Chart**

The organization chart is published at least annually and made available on the ABLE website. Reporting protocols are made clear to new employees upon hire, and any questions may be referred to the designated supervisor. If you are ever unclear about your direct supervisor, feel free to ask. Please note that it is necessary and appropriate for employees to interact with administrative team members in the course of efficiently operating the school. The administrative team works closely with all employees as necessary; thus, interaction between administrative staff and employees should not be perceived as a breach of reporting protocols.

#### **Open Door Policy**

All members of the administrative team maintain an "open-door" policy (accessibility to others by office, phone, and e-mail) to facilitate timely and effective communication.

While keeping your supervisor in the loop on important matters, please feel free to communicate with any administrative staff member about ideas or concerns.

Respect for others and our desire for open dialogue help maintain the ongoing teamwork at ABLE. We encourage thoughtful and professional communication among all employees. Working as a team, we do not tolerate gossip, negativity, and talking about others in a harmful manner.

We believe in keeping employees up to date on school-related issues and providing information needed to perform their jobs well.

A work environment that encourages inclusion and the free-flow of information and ideas results in greater transparency and trust at the school.

#### **Classification and Terms of Employment**

Certificated employees include teachers, counselors, and administrators who are required to obtain California certification; whereas, classified employees are those who do not require certification. Administrators are employees designated by the Superintendent and the ABLE Board of Directors and may be certificated or classified.

The work year is set forth in the applicable employment agreement and reflects the current calendar for instruction and operations.

#### **At-Will Employment**

All ABLE employees are considered at-will employees subject to termination or rehire in accordance with their at-will-employment agreements and applicable law. ABLE may also modify the employment relationship at any time at its sole discretion.

#### **Personnel Records**

ABLE securely maintains confidential personnel records of employees that are directly related to employment with the schools. Each employee's personnel file contains information necessary to conduct business or comply with law.

Medical information, unrelated to work performance or attendance, is filed separately. This information is maintained as part of an employee's medical claims or workers' compensation files.

Every employee is allowed to inspect and make copies of his or her personnel records except documents maintained by ABLE on a confidential basis. Any employee wishing to inspect his or her personnel file should inform the Chief of Human Resources. A mutually convenient time for inspection will be scheduled with the employee.

After inspecting personnel records, an employee may believe that certain records are irrelevant, inaccurate, or obsolete. At that time, he or she may submit a written request to the Chief of Human Resources to remove the material from the file. Any changes in personnel files are brought to the attention of the Superintendent. If the material is not removed, the employee is permitted to place a written statement of disagreement in the file.

All requests from sources outside the school for personnel information concerning applicants for employment, current employees, and former employees shall be directed to the Chief of Human Resources. Only the following information is released: employment dates, positions held, and locations of job site. No further information is given without the written consent of the individual who is the subject of the inquiry or her or his representative.

In order to keep personnel records up-to-date, employees are urged to notify the Chief of Human Resources of any changes in the following: name, address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents, persons to be notified in the event of emergency, and medical history (allergies, medications, etc.).

When a change in the number of dependents or marital status occurs, the employee should request and complete a new W-4 form for income tax withholding purposes.

#### Background Checks, Tuberculosis (TB) Screening, and COVID Vaccination

To determine suitability for employment or continued employment, current law authorizes ABLE to check criminal conviction records of any employee or applicant for employment. New employees must be fingerprinted prior to employment with ABLE at a Live Scan certified screening vendor. Cost of the screening is paid by the employee. Upon receipt of a criminal background check, consideration will be given to the relationship between the conviction and the responsibilities of the position, and laws related to hiring school employees with criminal convictions. A relevant job-related conviction is grounds for non-selection of an applicant or termination of employment. ABLE requires all employees working on any campus to receive the Covid-19 vaccination.

Applicants for employment convicted of a criminal violation after they have applied or after they have begun employment should contact the Superintendent within five days of the conviction. Failure to report a conviction is grounds for discipline up to and including non-selection of an applicant or termination of employment.

Before a newly hired employee may begin working and then every three (3) years thereafter, school employees and specific volunteers are required by law to undergo a TB skin test. Upon completion, record of the passed TB test must be submitted to the Chief of Human Resources.

#### **Falsifying Application Materials**

Falsification of application materials is grounds for non-selection of an applicant or termination of employment, and at any time following discovery of the falsification.

#### **Equal Employment Opportunity**

ABLE affords equal employment opportunities to individuals regardless of their race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental handicap, or military service status; and will conform to all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Recruitment, hiring, and promotion of individuals in all job classifications as well as all other personnel actions (including but not limited to compensation, benefits, transfers, training, development, educational assistance, and social and recreational programs) will be administered consistently under this policy and all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

#### **Orientation and Training**

ABLE provides new employees with initial orientation appropriate to the specific job; and provides periodic inhouse training opportunities as deemed necessary. Training from outside resources is also provided on an asneeded basis and is subject to availability of funds. Employees are accountable for understanding and applying the content of mandatory orientations, professional development sessions, and/or trainings. Specific training is mandated by law for certain employees who are notified in advance and expected to complete the training within a required time period. The Chief of Human Resources serves as primary contact for employee training and development.

If you are a teacher with a provisional intern permit, a short-term staff permit, or an intern credential, please contact our Director of Curriculum and Instruction who can inform you about ways that ABLE can support your ongoing employment.

#### **Staff Meetings**

A variety of meetings are held at ABLE for employees. Employees are expected to attend all meetings in a timely manner, fully prepared and with a desire to listen and to contribute. ABLE strives to provide advance notice of these meetings to the extent possible. Meetings are also subject to change with as much notice as possible.

#### **Mandated Reporting**

All ABLE employees are considered mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect in accordance with Penal Code Section 11166. Mandated reporters must report knowledge or reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to a child protective agency immediately or as soon as practically possible by telephone followed by a written report sent within thirty-six (36) hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

Employees must complete an annual orientation regarding mandated reporting and provide documentation of completion to the Chief of Human Resources. New employees must also undergo an initial orientation within thirty days of hire.

To report suspected child abuse or neglect, call (209) 468-1333. More information is available at www.sjchsa.org.

#### **Evaluation of Employees**

ABLE employees are evaluated by their supervisor. Supervisors may perform periodic performance reviews as necessary, in addition to an annual evaluation. Timing of performance reviews may vary subject to the evaluator's discretion and the employee's performance.

Please note these evaluations can impact an employee's continued employment and the employee's rate of pay.

#### **Employee Resignations**

ABLE requests employees to submit any resignations in writing and to sign and submit them to the Chief Human Resources Officer at least thirty days (30) in advance of the intended date of separation. We are pleased when employees extend this timely courtesy for the purpose of maintaining continuous school operations to serve the students.

#### **Event Planning Process**

School events and activities, whether on or off campus, help engage students and give them the opportunity to learn new and unique things. They are a welcome break from the day to day classroom routine, and make learning more fun. To ensure that all events and activities are thoroughly planned, managed, and executed, and to minimize the burden on support staff and the administration, all events must go through the event planning procedures outlined below.

Every event or activity must have someone in charge including a faculty member, a staff member, or an administrator. They are referred to as the event advisor. Events can be sponsored through various groups at ABLE including the Student Body Council, an official club, a class, or a sports team. Events can also be initiated through an ABLE event advisor for a prescribed purpose and/or subset of the student body. An event

planning form is available from the front office and **must** be completed to initiate the event approval process. The event planning form must include criteria for student participation. This might include, but is not limited to, attendance, grades, attendance, and behavior.

The first step in running an event is the initial approval. Initial approval must be given at least three (3) weeks ahead of time for an event to take place. Once you receive initial approval, the event may be placed on the school's operational calendar and to schedule you for a logistics meeting prior to the planned event.

The logistics meeting is held approximately two (2) weeks before the event at which the written plans for the event are reviewed to ensure all required aspects are covered. At this point the event is either approved or not, and the advisor signs an acknowledgement that the advisor is responsible for setup, execution, and cleanup of the event. The event will not be scheduled without the logistics meeting.

If your planned event in **any way** involves money, you must maintain documentation showing that you met with the Chief Business Officer and Budget and Operations Officer to discuss the event including the method of payment (e.g., raising outside funds or using school funds). If school funds are used for any portion of the event, you must also submit a requisition form (available from the Chief Business Officer) and submit that form to the Chief Business Officer for required approvals.

The final step in the planning process (before you hold the event) is the preparedness review. This review is scheduled at the logistics meeting with the Director, and will take place approximately one (1) week before the event. This is a final systems check to make sure you are ready to go. Failure to attend this meeting results in the event being cancelled.

ABLE vehicle(s) for the event must be driven by an individual approved by ABLE for insurance purposes. Please confirm the driver's identity with the Chief Business Officer prior to the event.

#### **Shared Use of the Humphreys University Campus**

ABLE occupies the Humphreys University (HU) campus during the day. We occupy everything except the HU administration and office wing and law school. The administrations of both HU and ABLE meet frequently to help address any issues concerning our shared use of the campus. All ABLE employees at the HU campus must try to accommodate the needs of both schools.

The respect and positive dialogue discussed earlier in this handbook also apply to HU personnel. At ABLE, we are fortunate to work at this campus and to use its facilities. Accordingly, our ongoing collaboration with HU staff continues to be a positive experience for all. We pride ourselves in being ABLE at Humphreys University. Please read the following points carefully and seek clarification immediately from the Superintendent if you are unclear about this information concerning our shared use of the HU campus.

- Sharing a Classroom Many ABLE teachers on the HU campus share their classroom with a HU night class. Please leave the rooms tidy and clutter free at the end of the day. Likewise, HU professors are expected to return each room to its original condition at the end of class. If a HU professor leaves instructional materials in the classroom, please send the materials to the Superintendent or Chief Business Officer for safe keeping until they can be returned to the appropriate HU department.
- **Employee Interactions** At the HU campus, we expect ABLE employees to be courteous and professional to HU personnel at all times. If you experience an unresolvable conflict with HU staff, please report the incident immediately to the Superintendent.
- **HU Perimeter** Access to the HU campus will be controlled daily until 4:00 pm when HU staff will begin unlocking gates in preparation for HU evening classes. Students entering or leaving the HU campus during passing periods must do so through the south gate which remains open for this purpose.

Outside of passing period, students and all visitors to the campus must enter and exit through the east gate where they will sign in or out with an ABLE staff member stationed near Greg's Place. No other gates are to be used.

- Radios While on campus, teachers should start every day with a radio check as follows. Turn radio to channel 2 and say, "This is [your name]. Radio check." You will receive a response from someone, and now you know your radio is functional. If the radio fails to work, report it to your principal so staff can fix it. After the radio check, turn to channel 3 and leave it there and on, full volume, for the rest of the day. Emergency communications occur on channel 3, and your students should be trained to become silent when ANYTHING comes over the radio on channel 3. Office and educational staff use channel 2. Facilities staff use channel 4. Anytime you use 2 or 4, remember to change back to 3 and leave it on, full volume. When communicating an emergency situation, use channel 2. Clearly, calmly, and succinctly state the nature of the situation and the specific location. Remember that we have multiple of types of facilities, three cafeterias for instance.
- **Telephones** ABLE telephones allow you to dial out without dialing 9 and, of course, to call anyone on staff.
- **4:30 pm Exit** All ABLE students and teachers must exit the HU campus by 4:30 pm at the latest. Students are not to "hang out." Teachers and students are not to return to their rooms. Students and athletes waiting for rides are to do so on the ABLE side of the street. Exceptions to this rule must be cleared in advance and only by the Superintendent or one of the Assistant Superintendents.
- **ID Badges** All students and staff are required to wear their ID badges while on campus once they receive them after pictures are taken. HU students and staff also do so. Visitors are issued a visitor badge when they sign in.
- Greg's Place ABLE students must not use the vending machines in Greg's Place before school or during the school day. Students who violate this rule are warned and sent on their way. Repeat offenders are subject to discipline.
- **HU Staff Restrooms** The restrooms at the end of the HU faculty offices are designated for staff use only. ABLE provides its staff with a restroom key.

## 2 Harassment/Discrimination/Retaliation Prevention

#### General

An equal opportunity employer, ABLE prohibits harassment, discrimination, retaliation, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct by any employees including supervisors, managers and co-workers. This policy also applies to vendors, customers, independent contractors, unpaid interns, volunteers, persons providing services pursuant to a contract, and other persons with whom you come into contact while working.

ABLE is committed to providing a work environment free of harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and disrespectful or unprofessional conduct based on: race, religion (including religious dress and grooming practices), skin color, gender, pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, medical conditions, sex stereotype, gender identity, gender expression, transgender including transitioning or fully transitioned, sexual orientation, national origin including language use restrictions and possession of a driver's license issued to persons unable to prove their presence in the United States (Vehicle Code section 12801.9), ancestry, physical or mental disabily, genetic information/characteristics, marital status, registered domestic partner status, age, sexual orientation, military or veteran status, any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law or ordinance or regulation.

ABLE also prohibits discrimination, harassment, and disrespectful or unprofessional conduct based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics, or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics.

In addition, ABLE prohibits retaliation against individuals who raise complaints of harassment, discrimination, and disrespectful or unprofessional conduct, and against individuals who participate in workplace investigations.

#### No Harassment

Prohibited harassment (and disrespectful or unprofessional acts) include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations, comments, posts or messages;
- Visual displays such as derogatory and/or sexually-oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures;
- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work because of sex, race or any other protected basis;
- Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests or sexual advances as a condition of continued employment or to avoid some other loss, and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors;
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment; and
- Communication via electronic media of any type that includes any conduct that is prohibited by state and/or federal law or by school policies.

Sexual harassment does not need to be motivated by sexual desire to be unlawful or to violate this policy. For example, hostile acts toward an employee because of his or her gender can amount to sexual harassment, regardless of whether the treatment is motivated by sexual desire.

Prohibited harassment is not just sexual harassment but harassment based on any protected category described above. Prohibited harassment should be addressed in a manner that prevents a hostile work environment, as well.

#### **No Discrimination**

ABLE is committed to complying with all applicable laws providing equal employment opportunities. This commitment applies to all persons involved in school operations. ABLE prohibits unlawful discrimination against any job applicant, employee or unpaid intern by any employee of the school including supervisors, managers and co-workers. Race is broadly defined by state law including characteristics historically associated with race such as hairstyles.

Pay discrimination between employees of the opposite sex or between employees of another race or ethnicity performing substantially similar work, as defined by the California Fair Pay Act and federal law, is prohibited. Pay differentials may be valid in certain situations allowed by law.

Employees will not be retaliated against for inquiring about or discussing their wages with ABLE administrators. However, ABLE is not obligated to disclose information held in confidence such as wages of other employees.

#### No Retaliation

ABLE also prohibits retaliation by any managers, supervisors, or co-workers against any employee for filing a complaint or participating in any workplace investigation or complaint process. This policy also applies to whistleblowers who report fraud and illegal activities or are otherwise protected by law.

#### **Reasonable Accommodation**

To comply with applicable laws ensuring equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, ABLE arranges reasonable accommodations for the known physical or mental limitations of applicants or employees unless undue hardship would result.

Any job applicant or employee who requires an accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of the job should contact the Chief of Human Resources and discuss the need for an accommodation. ABLE will engage in an interactive process with the employee to identify possible accommodations, if any, that will help the applicant or employee perform the job. An applicant, employee or unpaid intern who requires an accommodation based on religious belief, practices and/or appearances such as clothing can also contact the Chief of Human Resources and discuss the need for any accommodation. If the accommodation is reasonable and does not impose an undue hardship, ABLE will make the accommodation.

ABLE prohibits retaliation against any employee for requesting a reasonable accommodation; and this policy applies to management, co-workers, and all other employees.

#### **Complaint Process**

ABLE strives to resolve employee complaints fairly and equitably and in a timely manner. A copy of ABLE's uniform complaint and format is available on its website. You can bring a complaint to the Chief Human Resources Officer or to another member of the administrative team with whom you feel comfortable reporting the matter. If you need assistance with your complaint, or if you prefer to make a complaint in person, our Chief Human Resources Officer can assist you. Please provide all known details of the incident or incidents, names of individuals involved, and names of any witnesses. It is a best practice to communicate your complaint in writing, but this is not mandatory.

ABLE encourages all individuals to report any incidents of harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct forbidden by these policies immediately so that complaints can be quickly and fairly resolved.

You also should be aware that the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing investigate and prosecute complaints of prohibited harassment, discrimination and retaliation in employment. If you think you have been harassed, discriminated against, or retaliated against for complaining or participating in an investigation, you may file a complaint with the appropriate agency. The nearest office can be found by visiting these agency websites at www.dfeh.ca.gov and www.eeoc.gov.

Supervisors refer all complaints involving harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or other prohibited conduct to the Chief Human Resources Officer so ABLE can address the complaint.

When ABLE receives allegations of misconduct, it immediately undertakes a fair, timely, thorough, and objective investigation of the allegations in accordance with applicable law. This process enables ABLE to reach reasonable conclusions based on the evidence collected. The Chief Compliance Officer may be consulted, as well.

ABLE maintains confidentiality to the extent possible. However, ABLE cannot promise complete confidentiality. The employer's duty to investigate and take corrective action may require the disclosure of information to individuals with a need to know.

Complaints will be responded to in a timely manner, kept confidential to the extent possible, investigated impartially by qualified personnel in a timely manner, documented and tracked for reasonable progress, given appropriate options for remedial action and resolution, and closed in a timely manner.

If ABLE determines that harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or other prohibited conduct occurred, ABLE initiates appropriate and timely corrective and/or remedial action. Any action depends on a review of the available facts and consultation with appropriate personnel. ABLE also takes appropriate action to deter future misconduct.

Any employee determined by the investigation to be responsible for harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees should also be aware that if they engage in unlawful employment acts such as harassment, the recipient of that misconduct can hold you personally liable and take you to court as well.

## 3 Employee Conduct and Employer Expectations

#### **General Conduct and Attire**

We expect our employees to act with courtesy, tact, and common sense at all times towards others. Discourteous treatment of others is not tolerated at ABLE. All interpersonal interactions are expected to reinforce ABLE's excellent reputation.

Employees must dress in a manner that is suitable for their working conditions. Clothing should project an appropriate appearance that sets a tone of respect for the school and others. Teachers dress in a manner that is, at the very least, consistent with the student dress code. In addition, ABLE expects its employees to maintain good personal hygiene.

#### **Staff Bulletins and Information**

Please read directives, bulletins and other information sent by ABLE staff and published on the website. E-mail should be checked and attended to regularly, and mailboxes should be checked daily.

#### **Professional Confidentiality**

If you are communicating information about students, please do so in private with appropriate staff members. Be as accurate, complete, and positive as you can be. The purpose of the conversation should be to solve a problem or to help a student. This is a matter of basic professionalism.

#### **Cell Phones**

Personal cell phones should not be used on campus in the presence of students except for specifically authorized school and/or administrative purposes.

#### **Social Media**

Employees are responsible for using social media (Facebook and Instagram etc.) in a manner that is professional and courteous. ABLE does not tolerate social media publications, photographs, or comments that might negatively impact job performance, or working relationships, or place ABLE in a bad light publicly. Employees are responsible for complying with the Social Media Policy available on ABLE's website.

#### **Personal Devices**

Employees may connect their personal devices to the ABLE network with the express permission of the Deputy Superintendent.

#### E-mail and Voicemail

Recognizing the value of e-mail and voicemail as tools of efficiency and productivity, the rule of thumb is not to engage in said communication that you *would not* want to read on the front page of the local newspaper. In this regard, please note the following:

- Messages are generally assumed to be private, but there is no guarantee. E-mail and voicemail files are like other institutional files and are subject to discovery linked to litigation as well as public information requests.
- All electronic and telephonic communication systems and all transmissions sent by, received from, or stored in these systems are the property of ABLE. As such, they are expected to be used only for jobrelated communications and are subject to examination and monitoring by the administration as deemed necessary.
- Employees are permitted to use passwords, access files, or retrieve stored communications only if they are expressly and previously authorized. All passwords are the property of ABLE.
- ABLE expects its employees to be thoughtful and to use appropriate etiquette when sending e-mail or leaving voicemail. Vulgar, profane, insulting, or offensive messages must be avoided. As a general rule, it is best to leave simple and straightforward messages in a positive tone. Reflect and think before you act.
- Be professional and accurate in e-mail or voicemail exchanges with parents and students. Straightforward directives and declarative sentences are best. Avoid prolonged back and forth exchanges, and avoid sarcasm, humor, and any tones of anger. In-depth discussions (e.g., grades and behavior) should be avoided in favor of personal conversations.

#### **Supervision of Students**

During distance learning, student attendance must be closely monitored during class time to help ensure that students stay for the entire class on a regular basis. On campus, students must be supervised at all times. Leaving students inside a classroom on campus, in the absence of adult supervision, is strictly prohibited.

#### **Advisors**

Students in grades 5-12 will be assigned an advisor to provide an additional level of oversight, support, and encouragement to facilitate each student's success and to help re-engage students with their school responsibilities as needed. Advisors monitor grades, attendance, and behavior on a regular basis; speak personally with each student frequently; assist students with any questions about student policies or procedures; serve as a contact for the student's parents; convene conferences with teachers and/or parents to discuss any concerns about students; initiate interventions; and oversee student performance to help ensure good standing on a continuous basis.

#### Décor of Classes and School Facilities

All staff must use good judgment when displaying items on campus including classrooms and offices. Also, please remember that many classrooms are used by HU on its campus for evening courses. The administration may require ABLE employees to remove any item that, in his sole discretion, violates ABLE's written policy on personal expression which is available on the ABLE website. We believe students must be free to grow and formulate their own personal views on critical social or political issues, without undue influence or perceived pressure from teachers and others. Failure to remove any item upon request is grounds for disciplinary action including termination of employment.

#### **Teacher Lesson Plans**

Planning is essential to excellent instruction. Lesson planning protocols are established prior to the first day of school during orientation and professional development. Teachers are required to follow these protocols.

Your written lesson plan provides a snapshot of what you will be teaching that week and provides the essentials needed for execution in the classroom. Administrators are always free to ask to see your lessons plans.

Please see an instructional leader for help if you ever have a question about lesson design for a given situation or instructional exercise.

#### **Substitute Teacher Lesson Plans**

A lesson plan for substitute teachers may or may not be consistent with the intended lesson sequence or content. The plan should be based on the teacher's level of confidence with the assigned substitute. Also, the substitute plans should be explicit and thorough and provide engaging and stimulating work for students in the teacher's absence, when possible.

Teachers must try to think ahead for covering both anticipated and unanticipated absences. By the end of the second week of instruction, teachers should digitally provide their content leads with <u>at least two days of emergency lesson plans</u> which can be accessed for an unanticipated absence in which the teacher is unable to provide current plans.

#### Prohibited Use of Drug, Tobacco, or Alcohol

The manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance, tobacco products including vapor and e-cigarettes, or alcohol is prohibited on ABLE campuses and at all school activities. Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to termination of employment.

#### **Drug Screening**

During your employment, if you present reasonable suspicion of being under the influence of a controlled substance, ABLE may require you to undergo a drug test in a timely manner. Lack of willingness to take the drug screen test and/or the test results determine any personnel action taken by ABLE.

Employees are prohibited from using ABLE resources or monies for personal gain including their work hours for outside employment. You are required to follow the Incompatible Activities policy posted on ABLE's website.

#### **Employee Discipline**

All employees of ABLE are at-will employees and we reserve the right to terminate employment at any time for lawful reasons. Employees are expected to do all the following: conduct themselves professionally and courteously, demonstrate sound and effective judgment, perform duties to their best abilities, and comply with their employment agreements, handbooks, policies and procedures, and state and federal laws. Instances of employee misconduct or insufficient performance are addressed on the specific merits of the case. Nothing in the process of addressing employee discipline shall alter the at-will nature of an individual's employment or suggest any progressive disciplinary process whatsoever. Employee discipline must result in immediate and sustained improvement. Sanctions for employee misconduct or insufficient performance range from informal or formal reprimand to suspension or dismissal based on the nature and severity of the specific act.

# 4 Attendance and Leaves of Absence

#### General

COVID protocols related to daily employee attendance at work change often. The Chief Human Resources Officer will brief staff on protocols, informa staff of changes throughout the year as they occur, and post protocols on the ABLE website. Employees are expected to attend to current COVID protocols.

ABLE provides days of leave in accordance with the employment agreement. It is important for every employee to be clear regarding allowable leave time and procedures for taking leave. You should clarify any uncertainties with your supervisor before taking leave time.

Employee leave is stipulated in their employment agreements and procedures for receiving permission to use leave – if required, logging leave, and rolling over unused leave are announced annually by the Chief Human Resources Officer. Every employee should be clear regarding allowable leave and procedures for using it. Employees should clarify any uncertainties with their supervisorbefore taking any leave time.

Regular attendance and punctuality are matters of basic professionalism and requirements for employment at ABLE. Excessive absenteeism, tardiness, or not adhering to requirements of the attendance and leave policies, may result in employee discipline, up to and including termination, unless the reason for the absence or tardiness is legally protected or otherwise excused. You are expected to schedule your absence in the Frontline Absence Management system as far in advance as possible when you will be absent. The Chief Human Resources Officer serves as the primary contact for this employee attendance system. Generally, the cut-off time to enter an absence into Frontline is by 5:30 am of that day, but your supervisor or principal may establish more stringent requirements as needed. If you miss the cut-off requirement, please contact your supervisor immediately. You must enter each day of your absence into Frontline unless your supervisor gives you different instructions. Calls made by friends, relatives, or another employee to your supervisor will not be considered proper notification, unless you are incapable of communicating directly and that incapacity is documented. Messages left with someone other than your immediate supervisor, your principal, or your other designated person are unacceptable.

When exigent conditions exist that will cause you to be away from campus for any portion of the workday, you must apprise your direct supervisor. You must also make arrangements to cover the assignment and make up any lost time. Failure on the part of the employee to report these instances are considered a significant breach of professional conduct and addressed accordingly.

Please use leave time appropriately. For example, do not use sick leave and CPR leave for recreation or vacation. A doctor's release must be presented to the Chief Of Human Resources before an employee returns to work for any absence due to illness of more than three (3) consecutive work days. ABLE reserves the right to check with the doctor on an employee's status to determine if the employee can perform her/his assigned duties.

#### **Holidays**

The following holidays are reflected in the current and prevailing calendar for instruction and operations. Non-working holidays for teachers (and paid holidays for classified employees) include: Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, Presidents Day, Easter, and Memorial Day. The ABLE campuses and offices are closed on these days. Other days off may be referenced in your employment agreement and calendar of instruction and school operations.

#### **Jury Duty and Court Subpoena Leave**

ABLE provides paid leave when an employee is subpoenaed to appear in an official proceeding if that proceeding does not involve self-employment and does not concern the employee's own personal affairs.

Leave is also granted to an employee for appearing in court as a witness, to serve on a jury, or to respond to an official order from another governmental jurisdiction for reasons not related to the employee's own alleged misconduct.

Employees should apply for leave as soon as possible prior to the required date of court service. Any amount received for jury or witness fees shall be assigned to ABLE except for reimbursement of transportation expenses.

#### **Bereavement Leave**

ABLE grants leave of absence to employees in the event of the death of the employee's current spouse, registered domestic partner, child, parent, legal guardian, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild; or mother-, father-, sister-, brother-, son-, or daughter-in-law. Under these circumstances, employees may take up to 3 days consecutive scheduled workdays off with pay. The Superintendent may also approve additional unpaid time off.

### Maternity/Paternity, Parental, Family and Medical Leave

ABLE grants maternity/paternity leave, parental leave, and family and medical leave in compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations. Please contact the Chief of Human Resources as soon as you realize the need for leave time. Additional information is available on our website and from the Chief of Human Resources.

Employees are entitled to take leave time to care for themselves or others, under specified conditions, to care for themselves or others due to the Covid-19 virus. Additional information is available on our website and from the Chief Human Resources Officers.

#### **Sick Leave for Part-Time Employees**

Part-time employees are given twenty-four (24) hours or hours equal to three (3) days of leave as determined by ABLE under their employment agreements. The hours allotted are available for immediate use, with no carryover. Hours are refreshed on July 1 of each year.

#### Add-Pay (Overtime) Paperwork and Timelines

When an employee is pre-approved to work beyond her or his contracted hours s/he must submit add-pay paperwork to get paid for the extra time – overtime. The date on which the employee submits this paperwork determines when the overtime is paid. It is solely the employee's responsibility to complete and submit the necessary paperwork, as follows. Employees must submit add-pay paperwork by end of shift on the  $28^{th}$  of the month for the overtime to post on the mid-month paycheck (if they are paid twice per month) and/or by end of shift on the  $15^{th}$  of the month for the overtime to post on the end of month check. If this deadline is missed, the employee will still be paid for the overtime but on the following paycheck.

# 5 Wages and Benefits

#### **Working Hours**

ABLE office hours are 7:00 am to 4:00 pm daily, excluding holidays unless otherwise determined by the Superintendent. Certificated employees' work day starts at 7:30 am and ends at 4:00 pm with at least a 30-minute duty-free lunch break coinciding with the student lunch period. Classified employees' and administrators' work schedules are set by the employment agreement and prevailing law.

#### Compensation

Teachers' salaries are negotiated based on standardized criteria including years of experience, post-BA units earned, advanced degrees, and subject area authorization(s). A salary schedule provides a framework for starting salaries; however, other factors including the person's credential and work experience prior to teaching may affect initial placement which is at the complete discretion of the ABLE administration. Job performance and additional work performed at the school may enhance an employee's salary over time. Certain employees may also receive work stipends depending on budget availability and operational needs. Extra work approved by the Superintendent (or designee) will be paid at the employee's hourly or per diem rate.

Classified personnel are compensated at an hourly rate or by salary depending on the requirements of the position along with the employee's experience, expertise, and training, and subject to the approval of the ABLE Board of Directors.

ABLE compensates administrators by salary, subject to approval by the Board of Directors, at a rate based upon credentials and certifications held, the position held, and experience.

Employment agreements including the salary rates are subject to approval by the ABLE Board.

#### **Employee Benefits**

Employees are allowed to participate in designated employee benefits programs and/or plans established by ABLE, subject to program and eligibility requirements and budget availability. These benefit programs and plans may be amended by ABLE from time to time at its sole discretion. ABLE Employee Benefits Brochures and/or materials are available upon request from either the Chief of Human Resources or the Chief Business Officer.

ABLE notifies new full-time employees, and employees changing from part-time to full-time status, about their options for participating in benefits programs.

In addition, certificated employees are enrolled in the State Teacher's Retirement System.

#### **Employee External Education**

Certain employees may need to attend training programs, seminars, conferences, lectures, meetings, or other outside activities for the benefit of ABLE and its students. Attendance at these activities, whether required by ABLE or requested by individual employees, must receive approval from the Superintendent. Any employee wishing to attend an educational activity paid for with ABLE funds must submit a Requisition Form to the Business Office. The form must be signed by your supervisor before submitting it for administrative staff approval. The form must also describe and/or attach all relevant information including date, hours, location, cost, expenses, and the nature, purpose, and justification for attendance.

Attendance at any educational or training event is subject to the following policies on reimbursement and compensation. For attendance at events required or authorized by ABLE, customary and reasonable expenses will be reimbursed upon submission of proper receipts. Acceptable expenses generally include registration fees, materials, meals, transportation, and parking. Reimbursement policies regarding these expenses should be discussed with Chief Business Officer in advance.

Employee attendance at authorized outside activities will be considered hours worked for non-exempt employees and will be compensated in accordance with normal payroll practices.

This policy does not apply to an employee's voluntary attendance, outside of normal working hours, at formal or informal educational sessions, even if those sessions generally lead to improved job performance. While ABLE encourages all employees to improve their knowledge, job skills, and promotional qualifications, these outside activities do not qualify for reimbursement or compensation under this policy unless prior written approval is obtained as described previously.

#### **Reimbursement for Mileage**

When employees use their personal vehicle for business-related travel to locations other than to campuses, they may receive reimbursement per documented mile traveled at a rate established annually by the Internal Revenue Service. Business travel must also be pre-approved on a Requisition Form to qualify for reimbursement, and documentation must be presented with that form to the Chief Business Officer. The current allowable rate is 56 cents per mile.

#### **Workers' Compensation**

All employees are protected under state workers' compensation laws. This benefit covers accidental injuries or occupational illnesses that are caused by, arise from, or occur in the course and scope of employment at school. If an employee is injured, no matter how slightly, the injury must be reported immediately to the Chief of Human Resources or to another administrative member who can help provide appropriate follow-up with you. The proper steps to follow in the case of an injury or exposure to hazardous materials are listed below.

If you are injured on the job or exposed to hazardous materials, you are directed to seek medical attention as posted in the administrative area and/or staff lounge. As soon as practicable but within five days, you must report the injury or exposure to the Chief of Human Resources or another member of the administrative team. In an emergency that threatens life or limb, call 9-1-1 and notify an administrator thereafter within five days.

ABLE provides a claim form to you within 24 hours of your report. Doctor's orders may instruct modifications of job duties, if necessary. The employee may only return to full and unrestricted duty with the doctor's written consent at which time the file will be closed.

# 6 Health and Safety

#### **Workplace Safety**

ABLE strives to provide staff with a safe place to work. We want all employees to be safe both on and off the job. Please do not take any chances. When you think about safety, you make things safe for yourself and your colleagues. Unsafe conditions or conduct which jeopardize your safety or the safety of others must be reported immediately to a member of the administrative team. Such matters are investigated in a timely manner resulting in appropriate action to rectify the situation and including employee disciplinary action where appropriate.

At the start of each year, employees sign for keys to doors of work areas and specified common areas; certain lockable storage containers in the work area; and school gates. You must maintain school keys by keeping them in your possession at all times. Never provide them to any other individual including a student – not even for a moment.

Our campuses are alarmed and monitored after hours, on weekends, and on holidays. Employees requiring access to a campus outside their assigned work times must receive the approval of a designated supervisor and the Superintendent. No school campus is to be accessed beyond regularly assigned work times except with the permission and assistance of the administrative team.

ABLE is not responsible for any damage or any loss of staff members' personal items that may occur on the campuses. You are permitted (but not required) to bring or use personal items on campus in the course of your employment.

ABLE maintains a school safety plan as part of its charter and publishes updated guidelines for its employees to follow in response to existing Covid-19 conditions.

#### **Security**

Employees who are assigned radios for campus use are required to check in with the office daily via the radio to ensure its functionality by no later than 7:45 am. These radios must remain on at all times during work. Please remember to turn the radios to the channel prescribed by the administration as described earlier. At the end of each day, radios should be turned off to recharge.

We expect teachers to maintain current and printed copies of class rosters in a folder near their desk to be taken along with any given class during an emergency evacuation exercise on campus to help account for students. Teachers should familiarize themselves with evacuation routes at the beginning of the year. Also, they should test their gate keys by opening the locks along the evacuation routes to ensure proper functioning in the case of a drill or emergency evacuation.

At the beginning of each school year, ABLE briefs its employees about safety protocols including emergency evacuation and intruder on campus scenarios. Any questions or concerns with safety procedures and protocols should be immediately addressed with your immediate supervisor or any member of the administration.

# 7 Employee Acknowledgement

All employees receiving this handbook must read and acknowledge the following by submitting a signed copy of this page to the Chief Human Resources Officer within <u>10 calendar days</u> of receiving notification of the digital Employee Handbook online.

- ✓ I understand that I may request a hard copy of the Employee Handbook by submitting a request to the Superintendent: <a href="mailto:clem.lee@ablecharter.com">clem.lee@ablecharter.com</a>, and that the hard copy will be provided within 48 hours of the receipt of my request.
- ✓ I acknowledge that I received the ABLE Employee Handbook. I read this Handbook and understand its contents including stated and/or referenced policies, practices, and procedures of ABLE. I agree to follow all these policies, practices, and procedures.
- ✓ Moreover, I understand that my intentional or unintentional failure to follow ABLE's policies, practices, and procedures may be grounds for disciplinary action up to termination of my at-will employment.
- ✓ I understand and agree to my at-will employment status. I understand the Employee Handbook does not reflect any contract, in whole or in part, of employment with ABLE. Nor does this Handbook constitute any guarantee of ongoing employment with ABLE or guaranteed terms and conditions of employment.
- ✓ As an at-will employee, I am free to terminate the employment agreement with ABLE at any time; and ABLE, in its sole discretion, also reserves the right to modify or terminate my employment agreement at any time for any reason or for no reason.
- ✓ In its sole discretion, ABLE may modify any or all of the following at any time with respect to my employment: terms of employment, policies, practices, procedures, work hours, wages, benefits, work conditions, job duties, assignments, and position title.
- ✓ I understand that other than the ABLE Superintendent and/or the ABLE Board, no supervisor or any other employee or agent of ABLE is authorized or empowered to enter into any agreement with me,

- express or implied, for employment by ABLE and for any time period, or to make any agreement for employment other than at-will.
- ✓ I understand that only the ABLE Superintendent and/or the ABLE Board are authorized to approve any employment agreement with me, and any employment agreement must be in writing and signed by the ABLE Superintendent and approved by the Board.

Employee			Name		 (Print):
Employee Signature:					 
Date mm/dd/yyyy:	/	/		_	