Innovations Academy

Powerfully creating our lives through self-expression,
compassionate connection and
purposeful learning

Hourly Employee Handbook
2017~~6~~-18~~7~~ School Year

10380 Spring Canyon Rd.
San Diego, CA 92131
InnovationsAcademy.org

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Welcome to Innovations Academy

The following pages contain information regarding many of the policies and procedures of Innovations Academy. These policies are a condition of employment. Labor relation laws require that all employees maintain a written policy that is applied non-discriminately to all employees.

Have questions or **need assistance** reviewing this document? Please contact:

Chistine Kuglen (Director) at (858)-271-1414

Christine@InnovationsAcademy.org

Office hours:

Monday - Friday: 8:30am to 4:30pm

Saturday: Closed

Sunday: Closed

Important Phone Numbers:

Main Office Line - (858) 271-1414

Christine Kuglen (619) 379-9275 (cell)

Tony Spitzberg (858) 232-2307 (cell)

For life threatening emergencies, dial 911

Disclaimer

This handbook is intended only to outline the employment policies, procedures and benefits of Innovations Academy. This manual is not intended to be all-inclusive and should not be considered to be an employment contract. Innovations Academy reserves the right to change employment policies, procedures, benefits or this manual at any time without notice. It is the responsibility of the employee to stay abreast of policy. Innovations Academy will make every effort to notify employees of any policy changes, additions or deletions. Said changes will immediately become a part of this manual.

Innovations Academy Mission Statement

At Innovations Academy we powerfully create ourselves through self-expression, compassionate connection, and purposeful learning.

Career Opportunities:

It is our desire to see each and every employee achieve their highest potential through our mission. We will do our best to provide opportunities and offer training, education, and guidance whenever possible. Stay in communication with the Director regarding professional development.

Open Door Policy:

It is our objective to provide a work environment free from elements that would deter employees from performing their best work. All concerns may be expressed through our open door policy. The Director at Innovations Academy maintains this open door policy to discuss any issues you may have. Feel free to express yourself about work related or personal matters. Your input is welcome.

Code of Conduct:

Employees of Innovations Academy are to conduct themselves in a responsible, professional, and ethical manner. Report unethical or dishonest behavior to the Director.

Reported activities will be investigated by Innovations Academy administrative staff. The appropriate means for resolution will be determined. Employees found to be conducting themselves in an unethical manner may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employment Expectations

Teacher Assistants at Innovations Academy work with a specific teacher and class. Teacher assistants are expected to be punctual and practice kind and firm interactions with students. Teacher assistants are expected to ask questions and seek understanding about philosophies and tasks that are not clear. Job duties of a teacher assistant/instructional aide at Innovations Academy include but are not limited to:

- Assist the teacher in planning and maintaining a safe, clean, learning environment and in assuring the wellbeing and safety of the children.
- Exhibit a genuine nurturing, caring attitude to all children. Maintains a positive, calm attitude and encourages this attitude and voice in others working in the classroom.
- Maintain a cooperative attitude of working together with the teacher, volunteers and parents in planning and implementing activities.
- Plan with and assist the teacher in preparing materials and supplies in advance for activities.

- Assist the teacher in maintaining confidential child classroom folders, by collecting monthly samples of children's work.
- Assist teacher in implementing behavior plans designed by the ed specialists and/or counselor.
- Assist the teacher in maintaining discipline and supervision of children
- Become familiar with the teacher's lesson plans, the daily schedule, methods for recording attendance, and all other daily duties of the teacher.
- Perform lunch duty on a daily basis. A TA's lunch break is taken before or after the student lunch period.
- Assist teacher in supervising students on breaks
- Often accompanies students to 'special' classes while teacher is planning.
- Work with students in small groups and one-on-one
- Actively participate in activities and work side-by-side with teacher to create classroom community.
- Supports students using Positive Discipline techniques
- Is familiar with IEPs of students with special needs. Keeps track of progress on goals using notebook in class on a weekly basis. Collaborate with the special ed team on notes and tasks involving special needs students.

Policies and Procedures

Equal Opportunity Employment:

Employees are hired based solely on Innovations Academy personnel requirements and the qualifications of each individual position.

We will not tolerate nor condone discrimination due to age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability. We will comply with the spirit and letter of all local, state and federal laws pertaining to employment. Furthermore, we will not discriminate due to age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability when making decisions regarding termination of employees.

Any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of this policy should be directed to the Director.

Eligibility For Employment:

Federal law requires both new employees and re-hires to provide documentation of eligibility to work in the United States plus proper identity. A properly submitted form I-9 is required for employment.

Familial Employment:

Innovations Academy does allow family members and relatives of employees to be considered for employment, provided they are qualified for the position and no other conflict of interest exists. Hiring decisions will be the exclusive responsibility of the Director.

Part-Time Employment:

Innovations Academy does offer part-time employment positions. Direct all questions regarding part time positions to the Director.

Criminal Convictions:

Criminal convictions are taken seriously at Innovations Academy. We reserve the right to disqualify any applicant for employment that has been convicted of a criminal offense.

Furthermore, conviction of a crime may result in an automatic termination. Innovations Academy will make every effort to evaluate the nature and circumstances of the conviction. With the safety and well -being of co-workers at stake, convicted employees may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Violence:

Threats of violence and acts of violence are strictly prohibited. Employees threatening or committing acts of violence will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Report any such activity to your immediate supervisor or the Director.

Weapons:

Weapons are generally defined as guns, knives and other objects universally considered a weapon by the vast majority of society. A “weapon” can also be any object which would do harm to another when used as such. Innovations Academy shall deem any such object a “weapon” for the purpose of enforcing of this policy.

Possession of weapons is prohibited on company property and while on duty performing company business at any location. Any employee on duty or on company premises in possession of a weapon will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Report any weapon possession to your immediate supervisor or the Director.

Alcohol, Drugs & Illegal Substance Abuse:

Possession of alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances is not permitted on company property, or while on duty in the employment of Innovations Academy. Furthermore, employees are not permitted to report for duty while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances. Employees failing to adhere strictly to this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Report any suspicious activity to the Director.

Drug Testing:

Innovations Academy does not tolerate the use of alcohol or nonprescription drugs on company premises or during work hours at any other employment

location as required by Innovations Academy. If an employee is suspected of working while under the influence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol, the employee may be suspended and required to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test. Suspension shall be without pay until the results of the test are obtained by Innovations Academy. If the results are negative, the employee will be reinstated and compensated for normal hours of work missed as a result of the suspension. Positive test results may result in termination of employment.

All employees and prospective employees are hereby notified that test results may be used in arbitration, administrative hearings and court cases arising as a result of the employee's drug testing. Results will be sent to federal agencies as required by federal law. In all other instances every reasonable effort will be made by Innovations Academy to protect the confidentiality of the information.

Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment:

It is the objective of Innovations Academy to provide a working environment free from discrimination and conduct commonly referred to as sexual harassment.

The E.E.O.C. (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) has provided a broad definition of sexual harassment. It is general in nature and may not always be clear when evaluating everyday situations.

“Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.”

Sexual harassment refers to behavior inappropriate in the workplace because it is offensive, unwelcome behavior which would not occur but for the gender of the offended person. Both sexual harassment, and accusations of sexual harassment, are disrupting to the work environment.

If you or a co-worker experience what you believe to be sexual harassment or accusations of sexual harassment, report it promptly to the Director. Innovations Academy will investigate any employee, regardless of job position when such allegations are made. Based on available information, Innovations Academy will take appropriate action and communicate on a need-to-know basis.

Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination will be taken against any individual for sexual harassment charges determined to be valid.

Domestic Violence Statement:

Innovations Academy recognizes that domestic violence can have an adverse impact on employee job performances and may also impact co-worker’s performance.

Innovations Academy will assist employees affected by domestic violence, both the victim and the abuser within reasonable guidelines. Information will remain confidential as long as the safety of others is not at risk.

At-Will Employment:

Employment with Innovations Academy is on an “At-Will” basis which means that employment can be terminated by either the employer or employee at any time for any reason or for no reason at all.

This understanding is explicit and unaffected by any statements, comments, terms or agreements, express or implied, verbal or written unless approved by the Board of Directors of the Innovations Academy.

Employees choosing to terminate their employment with Innovations Academy are required to return all school property to the staff director before leaving the premises on their final day of employment. Upon receipt of all school owned property, the employee will receive their final paycheck.

Innovations Academy may terminate employment at any time for any reason. If an employee is terminated for a severe violation of policy they will be escorted from the premises immediately. Any personal property, plus their final paycheck will be given to the employee upon receipt of all school owned property.

The Director will provide opportunity to all employees leaving Innovations Academy to have an exit interview. Request for exit interviews must be made with reasonable time for the Director to schedule the interview.

Severance:

Innovations Academy does not offer severance benefits for employees terminating employment for any reason.

Personnel File:

Innovations Academy maintains a confidential personnel file for each employee. Files are controlled by the Director. Consult with the Director in order to view or obtain a copy of your file. These files are the property of Innovations Academy, no documents may be altered or removed by the employee. Every reasonable effort is made to keep the information confidential, access is limited to staff members who require access to perform their job functions. Copies will not be distributed to any third party unless mandated to do so by a court of law.

Attendance:

Punctual attendance is mandatory for efficient job performance. If you are not going to arrive on time, please call or text the Director to communicate this information.

Absence from work for a teacher assistant impacts the lives of many people. In case of absence for any reason, notify the Director as well as the front office immediately. Best notification takes place the night before by 9pm to the Director's cell phone (619-379-9275).

Poor attendance, absence without notification or habitual tardiness will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Work Schedule Requirements:

The work schedule for Teacher Assistants is 8:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Monday - Friday. Unless otherwise agreed upon by staff and administration, all staff are expected to be on campus during these work hours. Due to budget constraints, extra hours are not permitted

At Innovations Academy our students participate in overnight field trips. Teacher Assistants have the OPTION to attend overnight field trips. See below for compenstation information.

Lunch Break:

Teacher Assistants perform lunch/recess duty 3-4 times a week. If a TA has lunch duty, they will take their 30 or 45 minutes lunch break after their lunch duty. If they do not have lunch duty, they will take their lunch break at the same time as the teacher and students.

Parking:

Innovations Academy employees are required to park in the employee parking area (northeast small lot). All other parking is reserved for families and visitors.

Feedback/suggestions:

All staff are encouraged to submit suggestions, comments or new ideas which may benefit the school. If you wish to remain anonymous, every precaution will be made to preserve your privacy. Feedback/suggestions can be placed in the Directors mailbox or email.

Workplace Dress Code:

Innovations Academy encourages employees to dress comfortably in attire appropriate for working with children.

Medical Attention:

Innovations Academy requires employees to notify a supervisor when medical attention is required for any reason, accident or illness. Transportation and medical costs are the responsibility of the employee.

Compensation:

Innovations Academy employs both hourly and salaried employees. Hourly rates are stated in contracts signed upon hiring.

Overnight Field Trips:

Innovations Academy participates in overnight field trips. Teacher Assistant attendance is **optional** for overnight stays. If you elect to participate in overnight field trips, you will be paid 10 hours per day, 8 hours at regular pay and two hours of overtime pay. You are off duty after this ~~and you will receive a $75.00 stipend per night.~~

Wage and Salary Disclosure:

Compensation programs are confidential between the employee and Innovations Academy. Disclosure of wages or compensation to any third party or other employee is prohibited and could be grounds for termination.

Payroll Schedules:

Employees are paid semi-monthly. Paydays are the 10~~15~~th and the ~~last day~~25th - of the month. In the event payday falls on a weekend, paychecks will be distributed the Friday prior. Employees are encouraged to enroll in automatic deposit. Paychecks shall be distributed or deposited according to this section. Federal, state and any other required taxes will be withheld from wages as will any voluntary deductions.

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Payroll Deductions for Federal Tax, State Tax, FICA and Medicare:

As required by law, Innovations Academy withholds taxes from employee earnings, as well as social security (FICA) and Medicare. Innovations Academy also participates in matching programs as required.

IRA's - Individual Retirement Accounts:

Innovations Academy encourages employees to plan for retirement. IRA saving programs offer the employee advantages for retirement as well as tax savings at the time of purchase. Contact the Director for details and information regarding automatic payroll deductions.

Performance & Evaluation Reviews:

Performance Evaluations have been the source of considerable dissatisfaction for teachers and staff in traditional school settings because of the many shortcomings that have plagued the system. At Innovations Academy we recognize the need for full participation in goal setting and evaluation by our staff with the objective of continuously working to perfect our practice as professional educators.

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Please note: our At-Will contract supersedes any evaluation process. Successful participation in the performance evaluation process does not guarantee that a contract

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will be renewed. The intention is to provide support to staff for continual professional growth.

Reimbursement of Expenses:

Expenses to be reimbursed by Innovations Academy must be approved in writing prior to expenditure. To receive reimbursement you must furnish two items: receipts for all expenses (other than per diem or mileage) and a properly completed expense form (available from Donna).

We appreciate your approved expenditures on behalf of Innovations Academy and will make every effort to reimburse you in a most timely fashion.

If you require an advance for expenses, see Donna.

Reporting Personal Information Changes:

Employees must notify the Director whenever there is a change in their personal information on file with Innovations Academy This includes address, phone number, income tax withholding information, emergency contacts and if applicable, any information which may impact your insurance coverages.

Personal Property:

Innovations Academy is not responsible for personal property of employees in facilities, vehicles or parking areas.

Personal Safety:

At Innovations Academy the safety of our employees is a top priority. We will make every effort possible to ensure the safest working environment possible. If you have suggestions or concerns discuss them with the Director. If you feel you are in danger performing your job duties, stop working and report the hazard immediately.

Food & Beverage:

Without exception, food and beverage is strictly prohibited within immediate proximity of any computers, servers and related hardware. All rules regarding food and drinks for students will also apply for all adults.

Smoking:

Smoking is not allowed in Innovations Academy facilities or anywhere on campus.

School Property

Confidential Information Security:

As a matter of course employees of Innovations Academy will have access to confidential information. This information includes, but is not limited to, student information, personal family information and school matters. It is a condition of employment that you not disclose this information to third parties during or after employment. Disclosure of Innovations Academy confidential information without express written approval is prohibited.

Classroom Conditions:

It is the responsibility of each class to maintain the cleanliness and order in their room AND the surrounding area outside the classroom door and around the picnic table including all items left behind by students, the class microwave, old lunch materials etc. Teachers are encouraged to create a class structure in which students will actively participate in the upkeep of their classrooms. It is important that teacher assistants reinforce and hold themselves and the students accountable for the structure instituted by the teacher.

Facilities Security:

It is the responsibility of all employees to make sure the facilities and work areas are secure. Any employee entrusted with facility keys shall make certain the facility is secure when that employee is the last to leave. If the building is accessed on the weekend, the security of the facility is of utmost importance. This includes, but is not limited to, turning off appropriate lights and closing and locking all doors and windows, signing in and out with SDUSD police, and locking gates. Report any potential security risks.

Office Supplies, Postage & School Accounts:

Innovations Academy postage, postage systems, shipping accounts and accounts with various vendors and suppliers are to be used for school purposes only. Improper use of these items may result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

School Equipment:

School property, such as laser printers, copiers, computers, projectors, cameras, doc cams and all tools, are to be used for Innovations Academy purposes only. Inappropriate use of school property may result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Conservation and Recycling:

Conserving energy and resources is a priority at Innovations Academy. Employees are required to conserve power and water in all reasonable ways.

Recycling containers are provided throughout the facility for collection. Containers are marked for various materials. Please be certain to separate all recyclables and put them into the appropriate containers.

Computer Related

Computers and Related Equipment:

Innovations Academy provides employees access to computers, printers and other equipment on an as-needed basis, to perform their job requirements. Employees are required to maintain their computers and related equipment in good working order. If any of your equipment needs service, repair or maintenance, notify the staff director immediately. Employees shall not use school systems to knowingly violate any city, state or federal laws. School equipment shall not be used to store or display images depicting violence, sexually explicit material or racially offensive material. Software installed on school computers must be properly licensed and installed at the direction of the Administration.

Internet:

Innovations Academy will comply with any reasonable requests from law enforcement to review internet activities of any employee. While accessing the internet, employees should be fully aware of the global reach of the media. Employees are required to maintain a high level of dignity and be mindful that they represent Innovations Academy to the world at large while online.

Email & Electronic Communication:

Teacher Assistants are not to communicate electronically or via phone with parents or students. “School to home” messages should be sent from the teacher’s school email. If a teacher assistant wishes to communicate about an incident with a parent they will communicate with the teacher who will initiate and supervise the communication.

Policies for Leave of Absence

Sick Leave:

Innovations Academy uses an accrual method for sick leave. Hourly employees earn one hour sick leave per 30 hours worked. Employees are entitled to use accrued sick leave on the 90th calendar day following commencement of employment. At the end of employment with Innovations Academy, employees will not be paid for unused sick leave days, but employees who are rehired within six months of separation will have their unused, earned sick leave reinstated.

Notify the Director in advance when you plan to use sick leave for scheduled medical procedures or doctor appointments.

If you are sick and unable to attend work or if you must leave before the end of your shift because of illness, notify the Director immediately.

Personal Time Off:

Innovations Academy does not offer paid personal time as part of compensation packages.

Short-Term Disability Leave:

Innovations Academy offers short term disability benefits to eligible employees for extended illness or injury when the employee is deemed unable to perform their job duties for more than 5 consecutive scheduled workdays. Short term disability leave benefits are earned at a rate of one day of paid leave for every 2 completed calendar months worked. Eligible employees can earn up to six days of short term disability leave per year. Unused short term disability leave may not be carried to the next year. At the end of employment with Innovations Academy, employees will not be paid for unused short term disability leave days.

Notify the Director in advance when you plan to use short term disability leave for scheduled medical procedures or pregnancy related disability. Innovations Academy reserves the right to verify any employees inability to perform job duties through consultation with medical experts selected by Innovations Academy

Unpaid Family & Medical Leave:

Innovations Academy employees are eligible to take unpaid leave as per the terms of The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. Consult with the Director for details and notify your immediate supervisor if you choose to take this unpaid leave of absence.

Personal Leave of Absence:

Innovations Academy will make every reasonable effort to consider personal leaves of absence. Apply for unpaid personal leave of absence authorization from the Director. Many factors are considered when determining eligibility for personal leave of absence and is granted or denied solely at the discretion of Innovations Academy. When granted, the maximum allowable is 20 days per calendar year.

Funeral Leave:

Innovations Academy will provide reasonable time off for employees to attend funerals of friends and loved ones. In the event of a death of an immediate family member (parent, child, spouse/significant other, sibling) of the employee, up to three days paid time off may be granted to attend to family matters and funeral arrangements. Additional unpaid time off may also be granted. Contact the Director concerning your specific needs.

Jury Duty:

Notify your immediate supervisor if you are summoned for jury duty. Time off from work will be granted as necessary in compliance with applicable law. IA does not offer paid jury leave.

Benefits

Overview:

Benefits provided to employees are provided at the will of Innovations Academy and Innovations Academy reserves the right to modify or eliminate benefits without notice under conditions of law. The benefits listed herein are intended to be a general description only. Details of specific benefits are outlined in the documentation for the benefit program.

Eligibility:

To qualify for benefits an employee must be considered full time (30 hours or more) and have completed a minimum of ninety (90) days continuous employment with Innovations Academy. Full time employees are employees who have been assigned a regular 30 hour or more per week work shift. Employees scheduled for less than 30 hours weekly are not eligible. Innovations Academy reserves the right to, without notice, revise these eligibility requirements. If you have questions contact the Director.

Group Medical Insurance:

Innovations Academy provides medical, dental and vision benefits to full time employees and their dependents. Details of the plans are available through the Administration. Notice:

Plan details may change without notice.

Life Insurance Policies:

Innovations Academy does not offer life insurance policies to employees at this time.

401K Plan:

Innovations Academy does not offer a 401K plan at this time. We do offer participation in an employee-initiated 403b. See the Director for details.

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Retirement:

All classified staff will participate in the federal social security program.

Worker's Compensation:

State and federal law governs eligibility requirements. All premium costs are paid by Innovations Academy. Claims are paid directly to employees. All employees are expected to return to work immediately upon release by their physician. Employees are required to report job-related injuries immediately. Failure to comply could result in difficulty with the employee's claim. Report all accidents or injuries to your immediate supervisor.

Conflict Resolution Policy

Communication/Conflict/When Something Isn't Working for You Policy:

The solution to most problems is often found through communication. Effective communication begins by going straight to the source. We can also use NVC language and conflict resolution techniques to assist. The administration will make every reasonable effort to assist in solving problems or disputes amongst employees. We understand that it can be difficult for a teacher assistant to address an issue directly with the teacher. We also understand that it is the only way an issue will be solved. We will provide all of the assistance you need to effectively resolve difficult situations.

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We recommend the following steps:

- For disputes between employees, first discuss the problem between the two employees and make every attempt to resolve it.
- If no resolution is reached, either or both employees together approach the director or school counselor to participate in the resolution.
- If a resolution is not reached, additional administration will be asked to participate in the resolution.
- If there is an ongoing need, the director will consult with Roots and Wings, an NVC expert or other mediator to introduce professional mediation into the situation.
- If the discomfort is with the director, the staff member will alert the director via personal conversation, email or a note left in the director's mailbox. If desired the staff member can find another staff member or the school counselor to assist in the discussion.
- If the situation does not resolve, then mediation with Roots and Wings, an NVC professional or other mediator will support the development of open communication.

Acknowledgement

I have read these~~is~~ policies outlined in this handbook. I understand that while this is not an employment contract, I am bound to abide by the policies set herein.

I further understand that Innovations Academy may modify, revise, and update this manual at any time. I am also aware that this updating may include additions or deletions.

I also certify that I have had ample time to discuss this handbook and its contents with Innovations Academy administration and I fully understand the contents.

With this ~~knowledge~~knowledge, I accept the policies outlined herein as a condition of employment.

_____

Printed Name Employee Signature Date

Innovations Academy reserves the right to make changes to this handbook for the purpose of modifying, revising and updating school policy and this manual. Notice of changes will be sent to all employees and become a part of this manual. Violation of any school policy may result in immediate termination.