



*“To Live, To Love, To Learn, To Leave a Legacy”*

## **Staff Handbook 2022-2023**

### *Mission Statement:*

*STRIDE Academy nurtures individuals while fostering leadership and empowering students to attain their highest potential in a family-centered environment.*

**STRIDE Academy**  
3241 Oakham Lane  
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Phone Number: 320.230.5340  
Fax Number: 320.217.6318

Web Site: [www.strideacademy.org](http://www.strideacademy.org)

Email: first initial & last name @strideacademy.org (example: eskanson@strideacademy.org)

**Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

STRIDE Academy is a charter school authorized by the Minnesota Department of Education. As a charter school, we are a public, non-profit entity and receive funding through the Minnesota Department of Education. We must comply with all state and federal mandates that govern public schools in the State of Minnesota. We must also comply with requirements established by our authorizer, Pillsbury United Communities. Students are not assessed tuition fees to attend STRIDE Academy.

Eric Skanson, Executive Director  
[eskanson@strideacademy.org](mailto:eskanson@strideacademy.org)  
320.230.5340

**STRIDE Academy School Board of Education Members:**

Sara Fromm – Board Chair  
Aaron Lundblad – Community Representative  
Andy Lyman - Teacher Representative  
Ahmed Ahmed - Parent Representative  
Hassan Yussuf - Treasurer  
Eric Skanson - Ex-Officio

Board meetings are held on the dates listed below at 6:00 pm, in conference room 111 at STRIDE Academy. Meetings are open to the public. Board minutes are available on the STRIDE Academy website or upon request. See board meeting postings on the STRIDE Academy website or within the school building.

**School Board Meeting Dates for the 2022-2023 School Year:**

- July 21, 2022
- August 18, 2022
- September 15, 2022
- October 13, 2022
- November 17, 2022
- December 15, 2022
- January 19, 2023
- February 16, 2023
- March 30, 2023
- April 20, 2023
- May 18, 2023
- June 15, 2023

**Staff Members:**

Eric Skanson – Executive Director  
Angie Lichy – Principal K-4  
Nathan Schwieters – Principal 5-8  
Marlene Grindland – Special Ed. Director  
AnneMary Wielkiewicz – School Psychologist  
Steve Swenson – Technology Coordinator  
Bechtold, Tanner-Technology Specialist  
Cory Heinen – Building & Grounds Coordinator  
Judy Theisen – Human Resource Asst.  
Fardosa Hassan – Admin. Assistant  
Mara Kramer – Accounts Payable

Amy Lindell – RN - On/Off-Site  
Dahir Hassan – Cultural Liaison/Dean of Students 5-8  
Jessica Sowers – Social Worker  
Noel Kirchner – Kindergarten  
Jordyn Birch – Kindergarten  
Jennifer Feigum - Kindergarten  
Valerie Weyer – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade  
Val Dahl– 1<sup>st</sup> Grade  
Brittany Malave- 1st Grade  
Ashlee Gibson – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

Kayla Silverberg – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade  
Brianna Theisen-2nd Grade  
Grace Cote – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade  
Jennifer Geisler – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade  
Erica Louis – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade  
Amanda Jacques – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Laura Seeley – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Allie Peitermeier-4th Grade  
Ben Alvord – 5<sup>h</sup> Grade  
Laura Maiers – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Chris Kirchner – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Katie Strand – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Sara Voss – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Alex Alvord – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Andy Lyman – 7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math  
Petra Borchert– 7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies  
Noah Cote– 7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science  
BlairAnn Dressler – 7/8 Language Arts  
Jason Fleege – Physical Education  
Lisa Swan Anderson– Physical Education/Health  
Jamie Watrin – Music  
Ted Chopp – Band/Music  
Julia Clark– Art  
Justin Walters – Technology  
Mikaela Yager- Title 1 Teacher  
Hamida Ali - Dean of Students K-4  
Paige Knorek– ML Coordinator/Teacher  
Susan Janey – ML  
Amy Gartland – ML  
Jennifer Horner – ML  
Paige Knorek -ML  
Ashley Broughton – Special Education  
Michele Kockler – Special Education  
– Special Education

Mary Holden – Special Education  
Matthew Dockendorf – Special Education  
Shannan Daniels – Dyslexia Specialist  
Judi Larsen – Speech/Language Pathologist  
Kelly Haws - Dyslexia Specialist  
Judy Kelsch – Building Substitute Teacher  
Mulkiya Ahmed – Lunch//Recess Monitor  
Tanner Bechtold – Student Services Coordinator  
Rochelle Berger – Paraprofessional  
Fardosa Bile – Lunch/Recess Monitor  
Robyn Elliott – Paraprofessional  
Kathy Fritz – Kitchen Staff  
Ellie Hamilton – Paraprofessional  
Emma Hamilton – Paraprofessional  
Hani Hashi – Paraprofessional  
Cori Hilsgen – Paraprofessional  
Melissa Miller – Paraprofessional  
Mary Molitor – Paraprofessional  
Heather Peterson - Library Paraprofessional  
Sina Saad – Lunch/Recess Monitor  
Linda Theisen – Paraprofessional  
Nurto Yalahow – Lunch/Recess Monitor  
Nancy Kalla-Paraprofessional  
Khadro Abdi-Health Services  
Deqa Ahmed -Paraprofessional  
Safiyo Ainab -Paraprofessional  
Brenda Crusier - Paraprofessional  
Yasmin Ismail -Recess/Lunch/Hallway Monitor  
Amina Warfa-Classroom Assistant  
Fartun Mohamed-Paraprofessional  
Sahane Raabi -Interventionalist  
Bashir Duale -Interventionalist

### ***Absent Staff***

#### **ALL ABSENCES FOR PTO MUST BE ENTERED INTO AESOP.**

All staff **must** report an unexpected absence to AESOP prior to 6:00 a.m. AESOP can be accessed via the STRIDE website, via Staff Resources or by clicking [HERE](#).

Should an absence need to be reported after 6:00 am, staff must contact Michele Kockler via text or phone call. This will ensure we have proper coverage for absent staff. You must also report your unexpected absence in AESOP.

Michele Kockler – 320-248-3174

For all absences, it is expected that ALL staff provide detailed lesson plans for their substitute in print or digital form. Additionally, please send your detailed lesson plans to team members and sub coordinator as soon as possible so they can print them off if needed.

**When leaving the building anytime during the school work day, ALL staff must sign out & in at the front office after notifying administration.**

If more than 3 consecutive PTO days are used, please contact your building administrator before the next consecutive day is taken for PTO.

### ***Accidents***

All accidents must be reported to the office as soon as possible after the incident. The person witnessing the accident or receiving the first report of the accident must fill out an ***Incident Report***. Staff must use their best judgment in managing an emergency situation. It is critical to avoid decisions that could result in further injury to the individual(s). Always plan student activities with safety as a primary consideration, be alert to potential dangers and try to prevent accidents from happening.

### ***Appliances, Coffee Pots, and Furniture***

STRIDE Academy must comply with federal/state occupational safety and fire codes. These are in place to guarantee the safety of students and staff. All staff are expected to comply with these requirements. There will be no small appliances (including coffee pots) in classrooms or student areas. The only appliances permitted in staff areas must be commercially rated. Staff may not bring discarded furniture to use in school areas.

### ***Attendance Incentive - Staff***

Absences by any staff person shifts workload to other staff and can be disruptive to the Mission of STRIDE Academy Charter School. At the same time, it is recognized that at times such absences are unavoidable. In an effort to minimize the impact of absences, STRIDE Academy Charter School shall provide all regularly assigned employees, excluding administration, an incentive for minimizing the number of absences. For purposes of this policy, an absence shall be any hours the employee is not at work during his/her scheduled work time.

#### Licensed Staff

- First-Year Teachers: After the first five unused PTO days are carried over, the remaining unused PTO days will be converted to salary at the rate of \$150/day, up to a maximum of \$800/year.
- Second-Year and Beyond Teachers: After the first five unused PTO days are carried over, the remaining unused PTO days will be converted to salary and paid out at the rate of \$200/day, up to a maximum of \$2000/year.

#### Non-licensed Staff (days missed = payout)

0 days =	\$400
1 day =	\$340
2 days =	\$280
3 days =	\$220
4 days =	\$160
5 days =	\$100
6 days =	\$40

### ***Attendance - Student***

- Attendance must be taken in ***every*** classroom by approximately 9:00a.m. Calls will be made home between 9:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. for students unverified by a telephone call from parents informing

the school of the absence. Notify the office of any changes in attendance immediately as they occur throughout the day.

- Refer all notes, e-mails or telephone calls from parents regarding future absences, especially extended time away from school to the office. Parents/guardians should be directed to speak to the principal regarding extended absences. An “excused” absence can become an “unexcused” absence if it is not approved by the principal in advance.
- **Attendance - Student Policy:**
  - It is very important that staff members are aware of the student attendance policy, located in the Family/Student Handbook.
  - Parents will receive a letter home reminding them of the attendance policy. If the excessive absences continue, parents will be required to hand in a doctor’s excuse for each absence.
- **Early Dismissal / Late Arrival of a Student**
  - When a parent/guardian brings their student to school after the start of the school day, they must report to the office and sign the student in. Office staff will notify the teacher that the student has arrived and send him/her to class with a pass.
  - When a parent/guardian wishes to remove their student from school prior to the end of the school day, they must report to the office and sign the student out. Office staff will notify the teacher that the student’s school day has ended and students will then be sent to the office. Parents should not pick up their children from the classroom.

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

Employees of STRIDE Academy are employed “at will”. This means that you have the option of resigning from your employment at any time, for any reason or no reason, with or without prior notice. This also means STRIDE Academy has the same option to terminate your employment at any time, for any reason or no reason, with or without prior notice. Nothing in the Employee Handbook or any other STRIDE document should be understood as creating a guarantee of continued employment, a right to termination only for specific reasons or pursuant to specific procedures, or of any other guarantee of continued benefits.

### ***Bereavement Leave***

Regularly assigned employees are eligible for funeral leave per the Funeral Leave Policy outlined below. If additional time is needed, the employee may be authorized to use Paid Time Off or take an unpaid leave of absence.

1. Death of spouse, child or stepchild: 5 days
2. Death of mother/father, sister/brother, grandchild/grandmother/grandfather, mother/father in-law, sister/brother in-law, grandmother/grandfather in-law: 3 days
3. Death of aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, of employee or employee’s spouse: 1 day

Funeral Leave shall be paid to all regularly assigned employees at their daily rate according to their offer letter. (POLICY 412)

### ***Blood Exposure Procedure***

If you are exposed to blood, it is necessary to follow adequate procedures to avoid contamination. Consider the following guidelines:

*Did the contact with blood include any of the following?*

- Blood in the eyes, nose or mouth; or
- Blood contact with broken skin (less than 24 hours old), including cuts or open skin rashes, or breaking of skin in a bite; or
- Penetration of skin by a blood contaminated sharp object (needle, lancet, glass, teeth, etc.)

*If any of the above occurred:*

- Report the incident to the Office
- Follow instructions in **Blood Exposure Manual**
- Consider obtaining medical care.

### ***Bullying***

The Board of STRIDE Academy actively promotes a safe and welcoming school, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. The staff is expected to create a climate in which all types of bullying are unacceptable.

Bullying is defined as any written or verbal expression, physical act or gesture, or a pattern of those behaviors, that is intended to cause distress upon one or more students in the school environment, including the school building, grounds, vehicles, email, internet, bus stops and all school-sponsored activities and events.

A student or staff member who engages in any act of bullying is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern of the bullying behavior shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

Anti-bullying efforts shall be aimed toward accomplishing the following goals:

1. To send a clear message to students, staff, parents and community members that bullying will not be tolerated.
2. To train staff and students in taking proactive steps to prevent bullying from occurring.
3. To implement procedures for immediate intervention, investigation, and confrontation of students engaged in bullying behavior.
4. To initiate efforts to change the behavior of students engaged in bullying behaviors through re-education on acceptable behavior, discussions, counseling, and appropriate negative consequences.
5. To foster a productive partnership with parents and community members in order to help maintain a bully-free environment.
6. To support victims of bullying with individual, group and/or peer counseling.
7. To help develop peer support networks, social skills and confidence for all students.
8. To recognize and praise positive, supportive behaviors of students toward one another on a regular basis.

### ***Bus Duty***

All staff members are expected to accompany their classes to their mode of transportation at the end of the day. All teachers will escort their classes to the gym (parent pick-up) and to the bus line. Staff should ensure all of their 'bus' students are on their bus before leaving the bus area.

Reminders for busses:

- Students must ride on their assigned bus only. Students are **not allowed** to take any other bus than the one officially assigned to them. They may not switch buses nor ride to a friend's home on a different bus.
- If parents send notes for students to ride home with their friends, refer them to the office. Students may not get off the bus for any reason (except emergency) once they are on the bus. This is an issue of safety and insurance coverage.

### ***Children of Employees on Worksite***

The principal must approve children attending work with a staff member. Children of staff members are not allowed in areas that are for staff members only (staff lounges, copy room).

### ***Celebrations***

All school wide celebrations and dress-up days must be pre-approved by the principal.

### ***Cell Phones - Staff***

Personal use of cell phones should be done during personal time. Staff are not allowed to use cell phones during student monitoring and contact time, unless during the event of an emergency. Exceptions may be for educational use with student learning..

### ***Communication (External)***

Communication is essential for efficient functioning of the school and delivering quality education to all students. Teachers are expected to communicate with parents biweekly through newsletters, website, parent letters, Remind, or other ways. Parent communications should not be limited to reprimands or missing assignments.

For all students under-performing in the classroom, especially those with D's and F's, teachers are expected to communicate to parents about the academic concerns. It is important to provide the students the opportunity to address and improve their grades on their own.

Any newsletter is expected to be edited by a team teacher or other staff member before leaving the building. Email all newsletters to the building administrators and administrative assistant, as this helps keep the office informed of the happenings in the classroom. Newsworthy activities and events from your classroom should be shared with the administrative team.

### ***Communication (Internal)***

Staff should check their email at least twice daily when school is in session and twice per week during the summer. Emails are expected to be professional and school related.

### ***Confidentiality***

Since school staff have access to private and confidential information about students and families, it is imperative that the student's right to confidentiality guide actions related to disclosure of student information. The sharing of any information about students or families can first be governed by the requesting individual's "right to know" the information. This includes sharing information between staff members. **Student issues (SPED, discipline, grades, test scores, parent concerns, financial status, etc.) will not be discussed unless in a closed classroom or office.** If in doubt about an individual's right to obtain information, ask the building administrator.

### ***Copy Machine***

**It is very important that you know how to use the copier(s)** before attempting to make copies. If the copier jams, ask office staff to assist in clearing the jam. Please ask for assistance or support from office staff. **Do not leave the jam for the next staff member!**

Conserve paper whenever possible. Try to use the double sided function. Recycle unused copies. Do not copy originals that have dark backgrounds or edging because the copies use toner at an incredible rate.

Honor the guidelines preventing plagiarism.

You will use your employee ID or key card to login to the copier.

### ***Cumulative Student Record***

Each student has a Cumulative (CUM) Student Record folder in secure files in the office. This CUM record is a permanent record and is forwarded to the next school the student attends. In the CUM record you will find information about the student such as demographic information, standardized test scores, attendance records, progress reports, health records and other personal information. Students receiving special education services will have a Special Education Due Process file included in their CUM record. **Each teacher should review their students' CUM file prior to the start of the year** for any pertinent information.

### ***Custodial Support***

Please support the STRIDE Academy custodial staff by teaching your students an “end of the day” closing routine which may include putting the chairs up, picking up the classroom floor and surrounding floor areas, etc. - Leave your teaching area at the end of the day in the same condition (or better) than when you arrived in the morning. Instructing and expecting students to be leaders in keeping our building clean is a high priority.

### ***Daily Transportation Changes***

All teachers are directed to refer to the shared Google Doc titled ‘Daily Transportation Changes’. It is imperative that this is checked at least twice throughout the school day to ensure that students are sent to the right spot when they are leaving the building during the day OR at the end of the day. Teachers must make sure they follow the transportation requests listed in the ‘Daily Transportation Changes’. In order for a student to go anywhere other than their normal daily transportation, you must have written or verbal permission from the parent, **NOT THE STUDENT**. All changes made throughout the day will be communicated in the Daily Transportation document.

### ***Discharge***

STRIDE Academy’s Administration reserves the right to discharge any employee for inability to conduct his/her job duties, or for misconduct as outlined in the school’s disciplinary policy.

### ***Discrimination – Nondiscrimination***

The Board of Education of STRIDE Academy has adopted the following policy regarding discrimination.  
*“No person shall, on the grounds of race, creed, sex, marital status, national origin, age, color, religion, ancestry, status with regard to public assistance, sexual or affection orientation, familial status or disability be subjected to discrimination in any program operated by STRIDE Academy or in recruitment, consideration, selection, employment or rate of compensation by the Academy.”*

Staff should report concerns or policy violations to the Executive Director as soon as possible.

### ***Duty Day***

**The duty day for certified staff is eight (8) hours, 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m., as per the Offer Letter of Employment.** Frequently the 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and 3:05 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. time periods are dedicated to meetings involving staff throughout the school. There may be occasions when a staff member will need to arrive late or leave early. **You must get prior approval from the principal.** The official student day is from 8:15 to 3:05.

If staff must leave the school building during the duty day, she/he must obtain Administrator approval and use the **Sign In/Out binder** located in the front Office.



### ***Dress Code - Appearance and Clothing***

As an employee of STRIDE Academy, you are required to dress professionally. All employees of STRIDE are required to maintain dress, grooming and hygiene practices that are consistent with a professional workplace environment. It is unacceptable for employees to be unclean, disheveled or offensive.

If the Administration determines an employee's dress is inappropriate (too casual, provocative, unsafe or solicitous) the employee may be asked to change. Repeated violations may result in further disciplinary action.

### ***Educational Assistance Program***

STRIDE academy wishes to support staff members who also wish to continue their education to secure increased responsibility and growth within their professional careers. In keeping with this philosophy, the school has established a reimbursement program for expenses incurred through approved learning institutions. If you are full-time staff and have been asked to pursue a degree or have been reassigned to a different teaching subject, you may be eligible for participation in this program.

STRIDE Academy will reimburse the credit cost up to a maximum of \$10,000 for expenses incurred by an employee for continuing their education, ending in a successful degree and licensure. You must secure a passing grade of "C" or its equivalent or obtain certification or provide a reasonable explanation for a lower grade (as approved by the Executive Director) to receive any reimbursement. Expenses must be validated by receipts, and a copy of the final transcript grade card or certification must be presented to show the hours or certification received.

Enrollment in the Educational Assistance Program means the employee agrees to teach for STRIDE Academy for a minimum of five years. Over the course of those five years, STRIDE Academy will reimburse the employee an amount equal to 20% of the total degree/certification cost per year for each remaining year of the five-year period that they are employed at STRIDE Academy. The teacher will not be penalized if failure to teach the required class(es) during the 5-year period is caused by a reduction in force or layoff, conducted by STRIDE Academy. If the employee is terminated for gross misconduct, is not renewed, or the employee voluntarily leaves employment the organization, the employee forfeits any future reimbursement during the 5-year period.

To receive tuition reimbursement, STRIDE Academy should follow the procedures listed here:

1. A written request including the college/university or program information, classes required and costs, should be provided to the Executive Director prior to enrollment.
2. Upon written approval of the Executive Director, the teacher can then enroll in the certification / degree program.

3. After completion of the certification/ degree, the employee should resubmit the original requests along with receipts and evidence of a passing grade or certification attached.
4. The Executive Director will then coordinate the reimbursement with the payroll department at the rate of 20% per year for a 5 year period.

Any questions or comments should be directed to the Executive Director.

### ***Emergency Information***

An **emergency message** from Skylert will be used if emergency information must be disseminated quickly to all staff. Staff will receive a text message with any emergency information. Please let the office know if your phone number changes.

### ***Emergency Procedures - Please see Emergency Procedures Manual.***

- **Severe Weather Plan**
  - The procedures to follow in case of severe weather are posted in each room of the building.
  - Please familiarize yourself and your students with these procedures which are located in the **Emergency Procedures Manual**.
  - Severe weather shelter signs are posted in the building.
- **Lockdown Drills**
  - All lock down procedures are located in the Emergency Procedures Manual.
  - STRIDE Academy will conduct five lockdown drills per year.
  - The lockdown procedures should be kept confidential.
- **Fire Drills**
  - Minnesota schools are required to conduct five fire drills each year. At least one of these drills must be an obstructed exit fire drill.
  - Fire drills will be conducted on a regular basis as per the State Fire Marshall regulations.
  - In each room, an emergency escape plan is posted. Please familiarize yourself and your students with this plan. Refer to this map so you know how to evacuate your area of the building. You may want to practice evacuation with your students prior to an actual fire drill.
  - Please turn off lights and close all doors as you pass through them.

### ***Energy Management***

We request that all staff make an effort to conserve energy, especially during peak energy consumption times of the year. Please follow all administrative requests regarding thermostat settings, open windows and doors, and turning off lights.

### ***Field Trips***

Grade levels are encouraged to plan for field trips in advance. Each grade level is expected to complete the **Field Trip Request Form** at least three (3) weeks prior to the planned event. Scheduling for transportation (bussing) is to be completed by the grade level and not the office. The field trips should be carefully selected by the instructional staff to enhance and enrich students' learning.

If you must cancel a field trip for which arrangements have already been made, notify the office at least 24 hours in advance. Cancellation on the day of the trip may only be made in case of emergency (i.e. inclement weather) or conditions in which the safety and welfare of the students may be jeopardized.

If a teacher has concerns about a student attending a field trip, they are expected to communicate said concerns with the parents and administration. Denying a field trip to any student is not permitted.

### ***Grade Reporting***

Grades in Skyward will be updated weekly..

### ***Grant Proposal Writing***

Staff members are encouraged to write proposals to obtain grant funding to specific projects, activities, equipment or materials. The building administrator must be kept informed about your efforts at obtaining Grant funding and provide support to the application.

### ***Grounds and Adjacent Park Area***

If you need to do any planting or use the grounds for educational activities, consult with the Principal prior to planning the activity. When using the grounds, make sure to clean up and dispose of trash properly.

### ***Harassment***

STRIDE Academy has a commitment to confront behaviors that are considered to be harassment. Prompt reporting and investigation by administration is mandated by the STRIDE Academy Board of Education. All staff will sign the attached Harassment Policy Acknowledgement Form on a yearly basis. (Policy 413) and return to Judy Theisen, HR.

The following definitions of harassment apply:

**Harassment** is participating in, or conspiring for others to engage in badgering acts that injure, degrade, disgrace or threaten other individuals (examples include religious persecution or cruelty directed toward an individual with a disability).

**Sexual Harassment** is defined as, but not limited to:

1. Words or actions relating to sex that are derogatory, offensive, exploitative and/or degrading; or...
2. A display or circulation of materials and/or pictures, which are sexually explicit or demeaning (including web-based or electronically transmitted information).

**Racial Harassment** and racial bias consists of physical or verbal conduct related to an individual's race when conduct:

1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities

**Religious Harassment** consists of physical or verbal conduct which is related to an individual's religion when the conduct:

1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individuals work or academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.

### ***Health Services***

The Health Service Office is responsible for school health services.

If a student comes to school with medication, send that student to the Health Service Office to consult with personnel about administration of the medication. Our guidelines for administration of medication follow those established by the Minnesota Department of Education.

- Administering medication from unmarked bottles or envelopes violates the medical code of ethics.
- Students shall be administered medication in school only in exceptional circumstances, wherein the student's health may be jeopardized without it.
- Prescription medication may be given at school. Medications must be contained in the original container current labeled by the pharmacist or doctor. The pharmacist will provide parents with two prescription bottles, upon request. Medication authorization forms are available from the office.
- Over-the-counter medication, including Tylenol, aspirin and cough syrup, may be given when accompanied by a note from the parent/guardian **and** physician. Over-the-counter medication must be in the original container with printed instructions on the bottle or box.
- Students are NOT allowed in the Health Services area without approval from authorized staff personnel. All students reporting to the Health Service Office must be accompanied with a signed Health Service Pass.

### ***Jury Duty***

STRIDE Academy recognizes the responsibility of its employees to the community and urges all employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities. Jury duty is one such responsibility that all employees have. The STRIDE Academy shall assist the employee to fulfill this responsibility by granting them time off with pay for the period of 10 school days. Time off will be granted without pay beyond 10 school days. The employee shall inform the principal or supervisor of upcoming jury duty as soon as possible after receiving a summons. (Policy 411)

### ***Meetings***

Staff meetings for regularly assigned staff will be scheduled in advance and communicated via S'MORE/email to include agendas. Routine announcements for the week will be sent to staff each via S'MORE/email from the building administrators.

### ***Mandatory Reporting***

All school personnel are mandated to report any child abuse. All reports of suspected child abuse and neglect are to be made directly and immediately to the local police department, county sheriff or county Child Protection Office. This verbal report is followed by a **Mandatory Written Report** (see building administrator). Please work collaboratively with the Principal and Social Worker to address your concerns about student welfare and the appropriate course of action to take.

### ***New Employee Signing Bonus***

New employees at STRIDE Academy are eligible to receive a one-time signing bonus based on previous years of employment as a teacher. Teachers with 1-2 years of experience will get a \$2000 signing bonus, and those with three plus years experience will receive a \$4000 signing bonus. Based on your experience, your signing bonus will be . If the employee is terminated for gross misconduct, is not renewed, or the employee voluntarily leaves employment in the organization, the employee forfeits any future payment.

The signing bonus will be paid in 4 equal installments over the course of two years of employment and be paid out in the following schedule. The teacher must meet the minimum employment benchmark requirements to receive the bonus for each period of employment.

Payment/Benchmark 1 - December 1/ Year 1

Payment/Benchmark 2 - June 1/ Year 1  
Payment/Benchmark 3 - December 1/ Year 2  
Payment/Benchmark 4 - June 1/ Year 2

### ***P.A.C. (Panther Activities Club)***

STRIDE Academy Activities Club is an organization composed of parents, staff, and friends of STRIDE Academy. The Activities Club will provide additional support to all extra-curricular activity programs at STRIDE Academy through volunteerism and financial support. The Activities Club will help purchase supplies, equipment, provide scholarships, help with team events, as well as recognize students' participation beyond what the activity fees provide.

### ***Paid Time Off (PTO)/Personal Leave***

All regularly assigned employees are eligible for paid time off upon completion of 90 calendar days of continuous employment. Temporary employees are not eligible for paid time off. Paid time off is accrued one day per month, up to 12 days per year for regularly assigned employees working more than 36 hours per week, and up to 9 days for regularly assigned employees working between 30 and 35 hours per week. Up to 3 days may be rolled over to the next year for regularly assigned employees working between 30 - 35 hours per week, and up to 5 days for regularly assigned employees working more than 36 hours per week. (Policy 409)

During the school year, an employee may request two or more days of paid time off. This request must also be made at least one month in advance, and is subject to approval by the Administration.

In special/emergency circumstances, Administration will determine and adjust needed emergency paid time off accrued by the employee.

Unless approved by Administration, accrued paid time off must be used prior to taking unpaid time off.

Employees are responsible for monitoring their own PTO hours/time off. This information is available through your employee Skyward account.

1. Holidays: Labor Day, Thursday of MEA, Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Friday, Winter Break, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Mid-Winter Break, Spring Break Friday, Memorial Day
2. Maximum of 5 days a month of PTO per employee
3. Parent contact time is an important professional responsibility and every effort must be made to be present. Teachers are responsible for the content of parent-teacher conference days and/or staff development days when absent during these days. Missed parent contact time made up with administrative approval will result in no PTO deduction.

### ***Paraprofessionals***

Paraprofessionals are STRIDE Academy school staff members serving in a supportive role to the teaching staff and administration. Paras provide instructional or behavioral support to students. They may be assigned to work one-to-one with a student, or work with small groups of students to pre-teach concepts or vocabulary, reinforce instructional concepts, or enhance or extend instructional time. They may provide behavioral cues, reinforcement, or proximity control to individual students. Paras are **not** expected to provide primary instruction to an individual student, small group of students or class. All paraprofessionals' interventions must be planned, guided and supervised by the teacher in charge.

***P.A.T.H.S. (Parents and Teachers Helping Students)***

All parents, guardians, and teachers of STRIDE Academy are members of PATHS, and are invited to attend the meetings. PATHS is a volunteer organization of parents and guardians who want to assist our teachers and staff in making STRIDE Academy the best school it can be! The meeting agenda will be posted on the PATHS bulletin board. Members of the staff will serve as liaisons of PATHS, so see them with questions. All material/funding requests will need administrative approval before going to PATHS.

***Parent / Teacher / Student Conferences***

The STRIDE Academy Board of Directors supports a conference procedure that gives parents a variety of formats in which they receive information about their student's progress. The conference schedule provides times that are convenient and encourage parental participation. All staff must convey to the parent/guardian the importance of face-to-face conferencing, the availability of conferencing, and the understanding that parents/guardians can request conferences at any time which is mutually convenient to the teacher and parent. Parent/Teacher conference dates and times are as following:

- **October 27, 2022:** 3:30pm-7:30pm
- **November 3, 2022:** 3:30pm-7:30pm
- **March 16, 2023:** 3:30pm-7:30pm
- **March 23, 2023:** 3:30pm-7:30pm

***Personal Property on School Site***

Personal property brought to the school site should be clearly identified so items can be distinguished from school property. Valuables must be stored in secure locations, preferably in locked drawers or closets.

***Professionalism***

The image and reputation of STRIDE Academy is reflected in its staff, administration, and Board. The STRIDE Academy Board has high expectations for its employees in conveying a positive professional attitude, and maintaining honorable behavior. All staff are expected to present themselves as professional educators; which include wearing professional attire and appropriate jewelry. The communicative behavior of staff must be respectful at all times. Staff to staff communication must also be of professional nature.

STRIDE Academy staff is expected to be involved in their professional community to enhance their professional development and maintain an informed network of professional support.

***Photo Identification***

STRIDE Academy will provide each employee with a photo identification card. All staff are expected to visibly wear their identification in the building or at a school-related function. Remember that all visitors are expected to have a visible visitor badge, and if you do not see one, you are expected to ask for it.

***Purchasing Procedure for Ordering, Purchasing, and Reimbursement***

1. Obtain a Purchase Requisition form from the copy room.
2. Complete the form with as much detail as possible, including vendor name, address, and fax number, as well as individual items to be purchased and estimated costs (including shipping and handling, if known).
3. Administration will approve or disapprove based on items requested and cost.
4. You will be notified via email the result of your request.

**All receipts must be turned in for reimbursement within 7 calendar days or you will not be reimbursed!**

***Referral Bonus for Successful Hires***

Current STRIDE Academy Staff is eligible for a referral bonus for successful teacher hires for the 2022-2023 school year. Any staff member is eligible for a \$500 annual compensation for a successful referral that ends in yearlong employment. This bonus is applicable for each referral. In addition, payment will be for up to three years of successful completion of the referred teacher's employment for a total of \$1500. Applicants should share their referral source upon interview.

***Release of Private Information to Parents***

Parents have a right to request/receive information about their child. Non-custodial parents also have a right to request/receive information about their child unless there is a court order to the contrary. Documentation of restricted access to records is retained in the student's Skyward or CUM file.

***Repairs***

Please report to maintenance or the front office any safety concerns or items in need of repair. This may be done via e-mail or by writing your needs on a note.

***Resignation***

An employee wishing to resign shall provide at least two-week written notice to the Administration. Whenever possible, it is preferred that the employee give Administration as long a notice of resignation as possible. The date of the notice shall be the date when the Administration receives the written notice of resignation. In certain circumstances the employee may be required to leave at the time of notice. Under these circumstances he/she may be paid for the two-week notification period. Failure to comply with the resignation timetable may result in forfeiture of certain benefits that the employee may have accrued.

Employees are not eligible for paid time off during the resignation period.

***School Calendar***

There is a copy of the school calendar in the office and school website.

***School Closings***

The following process is followed in the event of a school closure:

1. District 742 will make the determination to close school for the day.
2. Staff will be notified via School Messenger/Skylert.
3. School closings will be announced on local news channels/stations, and posted to our Facebook page and school website.
4. Hourly staff will be paid for up to **two** inclement weather days that are **not** made up. After the two days that are not made up, the options are to use PTO, take unpaid time, or make up the work day with approval from the principal.
5. [E-Learning Days](#)

***Security***

Security and safety procedures have been established for the protection of students, staff, and all who enter our facility. Enter and exit the building using designated access doors only. To enter the building on non-school days (weekends and holidays) use the main entrance and sign in the staff handbook or email the building administrator. Any and all keys, security access cards, and Picture ID's will remain the property of STRIDE Academy. Upon separation from employment at STRIDE Academy, all of the previously mentioned items shall be turned in to the Office no later than the last day of work.

### ***Snacks in the Classroom***

Teachers/grade levels may provide time for snacks, embedded during instructional time. Snack time should not be a scheduled non-instructional time, but rather a working snack. Please model, practice, and review on how to eat snacks and work at the same time.

### ***Standardized Testing***

The State of Minnesota requires administration of the MCA tests (Minnesota Statewide Comprehensive Assessment) for 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades. We follow the MDE (Minnesota Department of Education) calendar of testing dates. NWEA (MAP) Tests will be given in the fall, winter, and spring for all Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> graders. We are piloting a program called FastBridge this school year. FastBridge is a research based model which incorporates a complete set of standards and skills-based assessment tools to understand each student's academic and social-emotional behavior (SEB) learning and needs.

### ***Student Discipline***

It is essential that students understand the expectations for appropriate school behavior. All students are responsible for their own behavior. Classroom behavioral expectations must reinforce building-wide expectations. Although some variation in expected behavior is expected from classroom to classroom, a quiet and organized environment conducive to learning is required for all students. Respect, responsibility, and positive reinforcement are valued. Students must understand that there will be consequences for making inappropriate choices. These consequences are designed to help the student make better choices in the future. Teachers are expected to be actively involved in designing and implementing behavioral consequences. Frequent parent contact regarding behavioral issues is also expected.

It is additionally important that appropriate behavior is maintained outside the classroom, in non-teaching areas (i.e. bathrooms, hallways, lunchroom, and playground, to and from the bus). If you witness a student displaying inappropriate behavior or being disruptive, please escort that student to his/her classroom for intervention by his/her classroom teacher.

If an infraction occurs which requires documentation into Skyward, notify parents or guardians as well.

### ***Substitute Teacher Folder***

Each teacher **must** prepare an emergency substitute folder. In this folder you must outline your daily schedule from beginning to end of the day. These additional items should be included:

- Class list
- Attendance procedure
- Bathroom procedures
- Prep time
- Lunch time
- Rules of the class
- Fire drill procedures/Lockdown procedures
- Who to contact for emergencies
- Special needs of students, to include paraprofessional duties, assigned to work in your room



- Activities that will keep the students constructively engaged throughout the day

Leave daily lesson plans in a visible spot within your teaching areas. All grade level members should be able to locate this information in your classroom.

Adequate planning for substitutes, clear expectations, and good communication will ensure the availability of substitute teachers when we need them. Follow-up with students, based on substitute reports, will delineate a link between teacher and substitute.

### ***Tours***

School tours are given upon appointment with the building administrator. The tours last about 30 minutes and are given to prospective parents, families, students, teachers, student teachers, interns, community sponsors, university staff, etc. Please greet visitors warmly.

### ***Technological Equipment***

The equipment available to all teachers includes:

- Smartboard
- LCD Projector
- Laptop Carts

Please use all technological equipment appropriately and report any malfunction to the Technology Coordinator immediately. If you are uncertain how to operate equipment, ask the Technology Coordinator for assistance.

### ***Thursday Folders***

STRIDE Academy utilizes Thursday Folders as an important method of communication with parents. We will send as many items as possible electronically, but will send items via paper as deemed appropriate. All Thursday Folder communication sent through the office must be given to Fardowsa Hassan no later than 8AM on Wednesday. This will allow for administrative approval, copying, and distribution. Anything after the deadline will be either sent the following week, or not sent at all. The front office must also be given a copy of all items sent by the classroom teacher in Thursday Folders. This will allow for the front office and administration to support in communicating in answering parental questions.

### ***Timesheets***

All hourly, non-exempt employees will fill out a paper timesheet. Timesheets are kept in a mailbox in the copy room labeled 'Timesheets'. Timesheets must be detailed with exact work times, and record work times in the proper department of work performed. All hours must be added, hours rounded to the nearest quarter hour, and timesheets must be signed in order to ensure timely payment. Pay periods run from the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month through the 15<sup>th</sup>, and the 16<sup>th</sup> through the last day of the month. Staff will be paid on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> of the month.

### ***Tobacco Use***

The Board of Education prohibits the use of tobacco products (ex. – cigarettes, e-cigs, and other forms of tobacco) on STRIDE Academy property, including school building and grounds.

## **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

*STRIDE academy wishes to support staff members who also wish to continue their education to secure increased responsibility and growth within their professional careers. In keeping with this philosophy, the school has established a reimbursement program for tuition expenses incurred for the purposes of completing classes in an approved area of study, taken from approved learning institutions. If you are a full-time staff member and have been asked to pursue a degree or have been reassigned to a different teaching subject, you may be eligible to participate in this program.*

*For purposes of this program: “approved area of study” means course work in the field of education or a related field that contributes to or enhances your work as an educator; “approved institution” means any accredited community college, state college, public university, or private university in Minnesota that offers a degree program in the field of education.*

*STRIDE Academy will reimburse up to a maximum of \$10,000 for tuition expenses incurred by an employee for continuing their education that results in a degree, certification, or licensure. You must secure a passing grade of “C” or its equivalent, or obtain certification or provide a reasonable explanation for a lower grade (as approved by the Executive Director), to receive any reimbursement. Receipts must validate expenses, and a copy of the final transcript grade card or certification must be presented to show the degree, certification, or licensure received.*

*Enrollment in the Educational Assistance Program means the employee agrees to teach for STRIDE Academy for a minimum of five years following completion of the degree, certification, or licensure. STRIDE will reimburse the employee an amount equal to 20% of the approved amount at the end of each year during such five-year period, provided that STRIDE will reimburse all remaining amounts if the teacher’s employment with STRIDE is ended before the completion of the five-year period due to (a) a reduction in force or layoff conducted by STRIDE Academy. If the employee’s contract is not renewed, or the employee voluntarily leaves employment with the organization, the employee forfeits any future reimbursement during the 5-year period. If the employee is terminated for gross misconduct, the employee forfeits undisbursed reimbursements, and the employee must return and previously received reimbursements.*

*To receive tuition reimbursement, a STRIDE Academy employee must follow the procedures listed here:*

- 1. A written request, including the college/university or program information, classes required, and costs, must be provided to the Executive Director before enrollment.*
- 2. Upon written approval of the Executive Director, the teacher may enroll in the approved certification/degree program.*
- 3. After completion of the certification/degree, the employee should resubmit the original requests, along with receipts and evidence of a passing grade or certification attached.*
- 4. The Executive Director will then coordinate the reimbursement with the payroll department at the rate of 20% per year for 5 years.*

*If you have any questions or comments, you should be directed to the Executive Director.*

## **Video Surveillance**

Maintaining the health, welfare, and safety of the students, staff, and visitors while on the school property and the protection of school property are important factors of the school. The school board recognizes the value of video/electronic surveillance systems in monitoring daily activity on school property. The school building and grounds may be equipped with video surveillance. Videotapes will be viewed by school personnel on a random basis and/or when problems have been brought to the attention of the school. A videotape will be released only in conformance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act Minn. Stat. Ch.13 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder. This is a summary of the video surveillance other than busses policy. For complete review, see Policy 712.

### ***Video Tapes, DVDs, and CDs***

The use of videos and movies as instructional tools is an alternative method of instruction. All videos must be pre approved by the principal. Parent permission slips must also be sent home if the video is not G-rated. Preview any video that you wish to show your class. Please consider the following when choosing to use a video:

1. It is appropriate for a school setting.
2. It is appropriate for your age group of students.
3. It is educationally relevant.
4. It is related to instructional goals / objectives. The use of videos/movies to fill down time is discouraged. If used as a reward, please use your professional judgment.

### ***Voice Mail***

Staff receives voice messaging using our telephone system. Staff members are directed to check for messages twice daily and update their voice message.

### ***Volunteers***

We anticipate having many volunteers working in the building. A background check must be completed on anyone directly interacting with our students in school and register them for insurance purposes. All volunteers must be authorized by the building administrator **prior** to beginning work in the classroom. Volunteers will be expected to comply with school policies and procedures and maintain expectations of the school and classroom. When a volunteer comes to school to work, you must sign in at the office and obtain a badge which will visibly identify them to staff and students.

***If you see someone in the building that is not wearing a visitor's badge, ask him/her to report to the office immediately to obtain one. Inform the office that someone is on the way to sign in.***

### ***Weapons – See Policy***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK  
2022/2023

I acknowledge, with my signature below, I have been assigned a copy of the STRIDE Academy Staff Handbook and I understand it is my obligation to read the handbook and to understand what it says.

I acknowledge after having read the handbook, I am encouraged to contact the Principal or the Executive Director at any time I have uncertainty about any personnel policy, practice or benefit.

I understand this handbook does not constitute or create a contract of employment between STRIDE Academy and any employee, nor does the handbook establish any terms or conditions of employment.

I understand additions to or alterations or modifications of the rules, policies and procedures contained in this handbook may be made by STRIDE Academy at any time and for any reason and that I am obligated to insert those additions into the handbook to assure it is remaining current. I understand I am to comply with and follow these additional, altered or modified rules.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Employee Name (printed)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Employee Signature**

HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE POLICY  
2022/2023

I acknowledge, with my signature below, I have been assigned a copy of the STRIDE Academy Harassment and Violence Policy 413. I understand it is my obligation to read the policy and to understand what it says.

I acknowledge after having read the policy, I am encouraged to contact Administration or the Human Resource Coordinator at any time I have uncertainty about the Harassment and Violence Policy.

I understand additions to or alterations or modifications of the rules, policies and procedures contained in the staff handbook may be made by STRIDE Academy at any time and for any reason and I am obligated to insert those additions into the staff handbook to assure it is remaining current. I understand I am to comply with and follow these additional, altered or modified rules.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Employee Name (printed)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Employee Signature**