



2026-2027 Staff and Faculty Handbook

Keeping the Promise, Educating the Whole Child

Promise Academy Staff Handbook

2026-2027 School Year

Table of Contents

Welcome

- Welcome Letter from the Executive Principal
- About This Handbook

Revision History

Version	Effective Date	Description
1.0	July 1, 2026	Initial release of the Promise Academy Staff Handbook for the 2026-2027 school year.

Section 1: About Promise Academy

- 1.1 Mission
- 1.2 Vision
- 1.3 Core Values
- 1.4 Our Beliefs About Students
- 1.5 The Promise Academy Way
- 1.6 Organizational Structure
- 1.7 Equal Opportunity Statement

Section 2: Employment at Promise Academy

- 2.1 Employment Philosophy
- 2.2 Equal Employment Opportunity
- 2.3 At-Will Employment
- 2.4 Employment Classifications
- 2.5 Background Checks
- 2.6 Licensure and Certification
- 2.7 Personnel Records
- 2.8 Employee Responsibilities
- 2.9 Professional Ethics

Section 3: School Culture and Professional Expectations

- 3.1 Culture at Promise Academy
- 3.2 Professionalism
- 3.3 Staff Conduct
- 3.4 Relationships with Students
- 3.5 Family Partnerships
- 3.6 Communication Expectations
- 3.7 Confidentiality
- 3.8 Professional Appearance
- 3.9 Social Media
- 3.10 Conflict Resolution

Section 4: Student Culture and Behavior

- 4.1 School-Wide Behavior Philosophy
- 4.2 Student Expectations
- 4.3 Classroom Management
- 4.4 Active Supervision
- 4.5 Restorative Practices
- 4.6 Behavior Documentation
- 4.7 Student Discipline Procedures
- 4.8 Mandatory Reporting

Section 5: Communication and Family Engagement

- 5.1 Communication Standards
- 5.2 Parent Communication Expectations
- 5.3 Conferences
- 5.4 Email Expectations
- 5.5 Phone Calls
- 5.6 Communication Platforms
- 5.7 Professional Communication

Section 6: Professional Responsibilities

- 6.1 Professional Growth
- 6.2 Staff Collaboration
- 6.3 Professional Development
- 6.4 Meetings
- 6.5 Committees
- 6.6 Leadership Opportunities
- 6.7 Staff Accountability

Section 7: Professional Responsibilities, Employment Practices, and Human Resources

- 7.1 Our Commitment to Professional Excellence
- 7.2 Equal Employment Opportunity
- 7.3 Employment Relationship
- 7.4 Professional Responsibilities
- 7.5 Attendance and Dependability
- 7.6 Professional Conduct
- 7.7 Confidentiality
- 7.8 Performance Expectations
- 7.9 Progressive Discipline
- 7.10 Workplace Investigations
- 7.11 Major Misconduct
- 7.12 Documentation
- 7.13 Human Resources
- 7.14 Employee Responsibility
- 7.15 Employee Dress Code
- 7.16 Technology and Electronic Communications
- 7.17 Social Media and Public Communications
- 7.18 Conflicts of Interest and Outside Employment
- 7.19 Required Reporting Responsibilities
- 7.20 Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation
- 7.21 Workplace Safety
- 7.22 Employee Cooperation
- 7.23 Ethical Standards
- 7.24 A Culture of Accountability

Section 8: Compensation, Benefits, Leave, and Time Off

- 8.1 Compensation
- 8.2 Payroll
- 8.3 Direct Deposit
- 8.4 Timekeeping
- 8.5 Employee Benefits
- 8.6 Retirement Benefits
- 8.7 Paid Holidays
- 8.8 Paid Time Off and Leave
- 8.9 Sick Leave
- 8.10 Personal Leave
- 8.11 Bereavement Leave
- 8.12 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)
- 8.13 Military Leave
- 8.14 Jury Duty and Civic Responsibilities

- 8.15 Workers' Compensation
- 8.16 Leave Without Pay
- 8.17 Return to Work
- 8.18 Attendance Incentives and Professional Responsibility
- 8.19 Benefits and Leave Administration
- 8.20 Attendance During Critical School Events

Section 9: Safety, Security, and Emergency Procedures

- 9.1 Shared Responsibility for Safety
- 9.2 Student Supervision
- 9.3 Campus Security
- 9.4 Employee Identification and Building Access
- 9.5 Emergency Preparedness
- 9.6 Emergency Drills
- 9.7 Medical Emergencies
- 9.8 Student Health and Medication
- 9.9 Accident and Incident Reporting
- 9.10 Mandatory Reporting
- 9.11 Threat Assessment
- 9.12 Workplace Violence
- 9.13 Weapons
- 9.14 Alcohol, Drugs, and Controlled Substances
- 9.15 Communicable Illnesses
- 9.16 Bloodborne Pathogens
- 9.17 Field Trip Safety
- 9.18 Safe Learning Environment
- 9.19 Crisis Communication
- 9.20 Employee Responsibility

Emergency Codes Quick Reference

Section 10: Technology, Equipment, and Facilities

- 10.1 Acceptable Use of Technology
- 10.2 School-Issued Devices
- 10.3 Email and Electronic Communication
- 10.4 Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- 10.5 Student Data Privacy
- 10.6 Internet and Network Usage
- 10.7 Password Security
- 10.8 Personal Technology
- 10.9 Instructional Technology
- 10.10 School Property

- 10.11 Keys, Badges, and Building Access
- 10.12 Facilities and Workspaces
- 10.13 Maintenance Requests
- 10.14 School Supplies and Purchasing
- 10.15 End-of-Year Responsibilities
- 10.16 Responsible Stewardship

Section 11: Instructional Excellence, Professional Growth, and Coaching

- 11.1 Instructional Vision
- 11.2 The Promise Academy Teacher
- 11.3 Curriculum Fidelity
- 11.4 Lesson Planning
- 11.5 High-Quality Instruction
- 11.6 Learning Environment
- 11.7 Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- 11.8 Data-Driven Instruction
- 11.9 Professional Coaching
- 11.10 Classroom Observations
- 11.11 Feedback and Reflection
- 11.12 Professional Growth Plans
- 11.13 Professional Development
- 11.14 Collaboration
- 11.15 Professional Communication
- 11.16 Deadlines and Professional Responsibilities
- 11.17 Professional Growth Mindset
- 11.18 Instructional Non-Negotiables
- 11.19 Our Commitment to Excellence

Section 12: School Operations and Daily Procedures

- 12.1 School Hours
- 12.2 Arrival Responsibilities
- 12.3 Dismissal Responsibilities
- 12.4 Planning Periods
- 12.5 Duty-Free Lunch
- 12.6 Staff Meetings and Professional Learning
- 12.7 Supervision Responsibilities
- 12.8 Classroom Coverage
- 12.9 Visitors
- 12.10 Parking
- 12.11 Personal Belongings

- 12.12 Deliveries and Personal Packages
- 12.13 Staff Workspaces
- 12.14 School Property and Supplies
- 12.15 Building Access
- 12.16 School Events
- 12.17 Professional Presence During the School Day
- 12.18 Daily Operational Excellence

Daily Operations Snapshot

Section 13: Staff Handbook Acknowledgment

- 13.1 Staff Handbook Acknowledgment
- 13.2 Employee Certification
- 13.3 Employee Information
- 13.4 Human Resources Verification
- 13.5 Annual Acknowledgment
- 13.6 Welcome to the Promise Academy Team

Dear Promise Academy Team,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year.

I am honored and incredibly excited to serve as Executive Principal of Promise Academy. As we begin this new chapter together, I want to thank you for choosing to be part of this work and this mission.

At Promise Academy, we believe that every child deserves an exceptional education, unwavering support, and adults who believe deeply in their potential. Our scholars deserve classrooms where they feel safe, challenged, known, and inspired every single day.

This year, our work is centered around one word: **SOAR**.

SOAR represents who we are and who we strive to become as a school community. It reflects our commitment to high expectations, strong relationships, academic excellence, and personal responsibility. It is not simply a student behavior system. It is a way of thinking, teaching, leading, and serving.

As educators, we will:

- Set ambitious goals.
- Hold ourselves accountable for student outcomes.
- Support one another through coaching and collaboration.
- Approach challenges with optimism and determination.
- Commit to continuous growth.

Our vision is to make Promise Academy the model of excellence and innovation in education. We will accomplish this by creating joyful classrooms, delivering rigorous instruction, building strong relationships, and ensuring that every scholar experiences success.

The work ahead will require commitment, courage, and collaboration. It will also be deeply meaningful. Together, we will build a school where children thrive, teachers grow, and families feel proud to call Promise home.

Thank you for believing in our scholars, our mission, and one another.

I am excited to SOAR alongside you.

With gratitude,

Samantha Buford
Executive Principal
Promise Academy

OUR MISSION

Promise Academy educates, develops, and nurtures the mind, body, and spirit of every child so that they emerge as lifelong learners, responsible citizens, and world-ready leaders.

OUR VISION

Promise Academy will be a model of excellence and innovation where every scholar is known, challenged, supported, and inspired to achieve at the highest levels academically, socially, emotionally, and ethically.

OUR CORE BELIEFS

At Promise Academy, we believe:

- Every child can achieve at high levels.
- Strong relationships are the foundation of learning.
- All students deserve access to excellent instruction every day.
- Literacy is the foundation for lifelong success.
- High expectations and high support must exist together.
- Character development is equally important as academic achievement.
- Diversity strengthens our school community.
- Families are essential partners in student success.
- Adults are responsible for student outcomes.
- Continuous improvement is everyone's responsibility.

OUR COMMITMENT TO SCHOLARS

At Promise Academy, we commit to:

- Knowing every scholar personally and academically.
- Creating safe, joyful, and inclusive learning environments.
- Delivering rigorous, grade-level instruction.
- Supporting the whole child through academic, social, emotional, and behavioral systems.
- Building strong relationships with families.
- Ensuring every scholar experiences belonging, challenge, and success.
- Preparing students to become responsible citizens and lifelong learners.

OUR COMMITMENT TO FAMILIES

We believe that families are our most important partners.

Promise Academy commits to:

- Maintaining consistent and respectful communication.
- Providing timely academic and behavioral updates.
- Inviting families into the educational process.
- Partnering to support student growth.
- Listening to family feedback and concerns.
- Working together to ensure student success.

When schools and families work together, students thrive.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2026–2027

During the 2026–2027 school year, Promise Academy will focus on five strategic priorities:

1. Academic Excellence

Every scholar will receive rigorous, standards-aligned instruction that prepares them for future success.

2. Strong School Culture

Students and adults will experience a safe, joyful, and structured environment built on mutual respect and high expectations.

3. Exceptional Instruction

Teachers will engage in coaching, professional learning, and collaboration to continuously improve their practice.

4. Family Partnership

Families will serve as active partners in supporting student growth and achievement.

5. Whole Child Development

Students will develop academically, socially, emotionally, and ethically through meaningful relationships and experiences.

OUR THEORY OF ACTION

If we:

- Provide exceptional instruction every day,
- Build strong relationships with scholars and families,
- Maintain high expectations and high support,
- Invest in teacher development and coaching,
- Create safe, joyful, and structured learning environments,

Then every Promise scholar will achieve academic success and develop the skills necessary to thrive in school, college, career, and life.

THE PROMISE OF SOAR

SOAR is more than a behavior framework. It is the foundation of our school community.

SOAR guides how we teach, learn, lead, and serve one another. It establishes a shared commitment to excellence and provides a common language for our expectations.

Every scholar and every adult at Promise Academy is expected to SOAR each day.

Our scholars will:

- Show Respect
- Own Their Actions
- Aim for Excellence
- Rise Together

Our adults will:

- Model professionalism.
- Build relationships.
- Hold high expectations.
- Support student growth.
- Work collaboratively.
- Pursue continuous improvement.

Together, we create a school where every member of our community can SOAR.

SECTION 2: THE PROMISE ACADEMY WAY

OUR WHY

At Promise Academy, we believe that every child deserves an exceptional education, strong relationships, and opportunities to discover their unique strengths and talents.

Our work extends beyond academic achievement. We are committed to developing scholars who think critically, act responsibly, demonstrate empathy, persevere through challenges, and contribute positively to their communities.

Every decision we make must answer one question:

"Is this in the best interest of our scholars?"

When we place children at the center of every decision, excellence follows.

OUR BELIEFS ABOUT CHILDREN

At Promise Academy, we believe:

- Every child can learn and achieve at high levels.
- Children thrive when expectations are clear and consistent.
- Strong relationships are essential to learning.
- Mistakes are opportunities for growth.
- Students deserve both high expectations and high support.
- Every child deserves to feel safe, valued, and respected.
- Students rise when adults believe in them.
- Academic excellence and character development go hand in hand.

THE PROMISE ACADEMY WAY

The Promise Academy Way is the collective commitment we make to our scholars, families, and one another.

We believe:

- Excellence is expected.
- Relationships matter.
- Every minute matters.
- Every scholar matters.
- Adults own outcomes.
- Growth is continuous.
- Teamwork is essential.
- Joy belongs in schools.

SOAR

SOAR serves as the foundation for our school culture. It establishes clear expectations for scholars and adults and creates a shared language across our school community.

S – SHOW RESPECT

We demonstrate kindness, empathy, and consideration toward ourselves, others, and our environment.

We:

- Treat others with dignity.
- Listen when others speak.
- Care for school property.
- Use respectful words and actions.
- Celebrate differences.

O – OWN YOUR ACTIONS

We take responsibility for our choices, behavior, and learning.

We:

- Accept responsibility.
- Learn from mistakes.
- Solve problems appropriately.
- Follow directions.
- Demonstrate integrity.

A – AIM FOR EXCELLENCE

We consistently give our best effort and strive for continuous improvement.

We:

- Set goals.
- Persevere through challenges.
- Complete quality work.
- Take pride in our efforts.
- Believe in our potential.

R – RISE TOGETHER

We support one another and work collaboratively to achieve success.

We:

- Encourage others.
- Work as a team.
- Include everyone.
- Build positive relationships.
- Celebrate collective success.

THE PROMISE SCHOLAR

A Promise Scholar demonstrates the following characteristics:

Respectful

Treats others with kindness and dignity.

Responsible

Makes good choices and accepts accountability.

Resilient

Perseveres through challenges and setbacks.

Curious

Asks questions and seeks understanding.

Collaborative

Works effectively with others.

Confident

Believes in their ability to succeed.

Compassionate

Shows empathy and care for others.

Lifelong Learner

Continues to grow academically and personally.

WHAT SOAR LOOKS LIKE FOR SCHOLARS

In the Classroom

Students:

- Arrive prepared and ready to learn.
- Follow directions promptly.
- Participate actively.
- Complete assignments.
- Ask questions.
- Support classmates.
- Demonstrate perseverance.

In the Hallway

Students:

- Walk safely and quietly.
- Stay with their class.
- Follow adult directions.
- Respect learning environments.
- Demonstrate self-control.

In the Cafeteria

Students:

- Enter quietly.
- Use appropriate voices.
- Remain seated.
- Clean their space.
- Demonstrate respectful behavior.

During Specials

Students:

- Follow expectations.
- Participate fully.
- Respect teachers and classmates.
- Take responsibility for materials.
- Demonstrate sportsmanship.

During Arrival and Dismissal

Students:

- Follow adult directions.
- Remain safe.
- Demonstrate patience.
- Show responsibility.
- Respect procedures.

WHAT SOAR LOOKS LIKE FOR ADULTS

Every adult at Promise Academy is expected to model SOAR.

Show Respect

- Build positive relationships.
- Maintain professionalism.
- Assume positive intent.
- Communicate respectfully.

Own Your Actions

- Accept responsibility.
- Seek solutions.
- Follow through on commitments.
- Reflect and improve.

Aim for Excellence

- Prepare thoroughly.
- Deliver high-quality instruction.
- Pursue continuous growth.
- Hold high expectations.

Rise Together

- Collaborate with colleagues.
- Support teammates.
- Celebrate success.
- Contribute positively to school culture.

EVERY MINUTE MATTERS

Instructional time is sacred.

Adults and students share responsibility for maximizing learning time by:

- Starting class promptly.
- Being prepared.
- Minimizing disruptions.
- Maintaining routines.
- Protecting instructional time.

Every minute saved is an opportunity for learning.

RELATIONSHIPS FIRST

Strong relationships are the foundation of strong schools.

Every adult commits to:

- Knowing students personally.
- Building trust.
- Listening actively.
- Creating belonging.
- Supporting student growth.
- Partnering with families.

Students learn best from adults who know them, believe in them, and care deeply about their success.

JOYFUL AND STRUCTURED ENVIRONMENTS

Promise Academy classrooms are both joyful and structured.

Students thrive when:

- Expectations are clear.
- Routines are consistent.
- Relationships are strong.
- Learning is engaging.
- Success is celebrated.

We believe that structure creates safety, and joy creates belonging.

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Excellence is not perfection.

Excellence means:

- Doing your best.
- Learning from mistakes.
- Seeking feedback.
- Growing continuously.
- Never settling for less than our potential.

At Promise Academy, we believe every scholar and every adult can SOAR.

SECTION 3: ADULT CULTURE AND PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

OUR ADULT COMMITMENTS

At Promise Academy, we believe that school culture begins with adults. The way we speak, collaborate, solve problems, and support one another directly impacts the experiences of our scholars.

Every employee contributes to the culture of our school. We are committed to creating a professional community built on trust, accountability, growth, and shared responsibility.

As members of the Promise Academy team, we commit to:

- Putting students first in every decision.
- Maintaining high expectations for ourselves and others.
- Building positive relationships.
- Approaching challenges with solutions.
- Supporting our colleagues.
- Seeking feedback and continuous growth.
- Acting with professionalism and integrity.
- Representing Promise Academy positively.

ADULT SOAR EXPECTATIONS

At Promise Academy, adults are expected to model SOAR every day.

SHOW RESPECT

We:

- Speak respectfully to students, families, and colleagues.
- Maintain professional relationships.
- Honor diverse perspectives.
- Assume positive intent.
- Protect student dignity.

OWN OUR ACTIONS

We:

- Accept responsibility.
- Learn from mistakes.
- Follow through on commitments.
- Seek solutions.
- Demonstrate integrity.

AIM FOR EXCELLENCE

We:

- Prepare thoroughly.
- Deliver high-quality work.
- Pursue professional growth.
- Welcome feedback.
- Maintain high expectations.

RISE TOGETHER

We:

- Support colleagues.
- Collaborate effectively.
- Celebrate success.
- Share responsibility.
- Contribute positively to school culture.

PROFESSIONALISM

Employees are expected to conduct themselves professionally at all times.

Professionalism includes:

- Arriving prepared and on time.
- Meeting deadlines.
- Following through on responsibilities.
- Communicating respectfully.
- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Using appropriate language.
- Demonstrating emotional professionalism.
- Dressing appropriately.

Staff members serve as role models for our scholars.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Consistent attendance is essential to student success.

Employees are expected to:

- Arrive on time each day.
- Attend required meetings.
- Fulfill assigned duties.
- Follow absence procedures.
- Notify supervisors promptly regarding absences.

Excessive absenteeism or chronic tardiness may result in corrective action.

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Employees are expected to communicate professionally with:

- Students
- Families
- Colleagues
- Supervisors

Communication should be:

- Respectful
- Timely
- Solution-oriented
- Professional

Concerns should be addressed directly and through appropriate channels.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Employees are responsible for protecting confidential information.

Confidential information includes:

- Student records
- Academic information
- Discipline records
- Medical information
- Personnel matters
- Family information

Confidential information should only be shared with individuals who have a legitimate educational interest.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Promise Academy recognizes that employees may use social media and other digital platforms in their personal lives. However, all staff members are expected to maintain professional judgment and conduct that reflects positively on the school and serves as an appropriate example for students.

Employees are expected to adhere to the following expectations:

- Personal social media use must not interfere with assigned job responsibilities or the supervision of students.

- Employees may not create, record, livestream, post, or share social media content while supervising students or while students are present, except as authorized for official school purposes.
- The use of personal phones or social media in classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, playgrounds, or other student learning or supervision areas should be limited to legitimate school business or emergencies.
- Employees may not photograph, video record, or post images, videos, or information involving students on personal social media accounts or personal devices unless specifically authorized by school administration and in accordance with applicable student privacy laws and school policies.
- Employees are expected to use sound judgment when posting content on personal social media accounts. Publicly shared content depicting illegal activity, conduct involving moral turpitude, harassment, discrimination, violence, unlawful drug use, or other behavior that is inconsistent with the school's mission, professional expectations, or the employee's ability to effectively serve students may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, to the extent permitted by law.
- Employees should avoid posting content that could reasonably be interpreted as representing the views of Promise Academy unless authorized to do so.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

STAFF DRESS EXPECTATIONS

Employees are expected to maintain a professional appearance that reflects the values and expectations of Promise Academy.

Staff members should:

- Dress professionally.
- Maintain appropriate grooming.
- Wear school identification when required.
- Serve as positive role models for scholars.

Specific dress expectations may be communicated by administration.

UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The following behaviors are inconsistent with the expectations of Promise Academy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

Student Safety Violations

- Leaving students unsupervised.
- Inappropriate physical contact.
- Failure to supervise students.
- Violating safety procedures.
- Endangering student safety.
- Violating student confidentiality.

Professional Misconduct

- Dishonesty.
- Falsification of records.
- Insubordination.
- Failure to follow directives.
- Repeated policy violations.
- Breach of confidentiality.
- Misrepresentation of information.

Workplace Misconduct

- Harassment.
- Bullying.
- Intimidation.
- Threatening behavior.
- Profanity directed toward others.
- Creating a hostile work environment.
- Disruptive conduct.

Attendance and Duty Violations

- Excessive absenteeism.
- Chronic tardiness.
- Leaving campus without authorization.
- Failure to perform assigned duties.
- Failure to supervise students.

Technology Misconduct

- Inappropriate communication with students.
- Misuse of school technology.
- Sharing confidential information electronically.
- Unauthorized recordings.
- Inappropriate social media activity.

Substance Use

Employees may not:

- Report to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

- Possess illegal substances on school property.
- Use tobacco or vaping products in prohibited areas.
- Distribute prohibited substances.

MANDATORY REPORTING

All employees are mandatory reporters under Tennessee law.

Employees are legally required to immediately report suspected:

- Child abuse
- Child neglect
- Child endangerment

Failure to report suspected abuse may result in:

- Disciplinary action
- Licensure consequences
- Legal penalties

CONDUCT THAT MAY RESULT IN IMMEDIATE TERMINATION

Examples may include:

- Physical abuse of a student.
- Sexual misconduct.
- Failure to report abuse.
- Child endangerment.
- Theft.
- Fraud.
- Possession of weapons.
- Possession of illegal drugs.
- Gross insubordination.
- Falsification of records.
- Serious breaches of confidentiality.
- Criminal conduct affecting employment.

This list is not exhaustive.

Administration reserves the right to determine the appropriate response based on the circumstances of each situation.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

Promise Academy may utilize progressive discipline when appropriate.

Corrective action may include:

- Verbal coaching.
- Written warnings.
- Improvement plans.
- Suspension.
- Nonrenewal.
- Termination.

The school reserves the right to bypass progressive discipline when circumstances warrant immediate action.

OUR COMMITMENT

At Promise Academy, we believe that professionalism, accountability, and relationships create the conditions for student success.

Every adult contributes to our culture. Every interaction matters. Every scholar deserves our very best.

SECTION 4: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE

OUR INSTRUCTIONAL VISION

At Promise Academy, we believe that excellent teaching changes lives.

Every scholar deserves access to rigorous, engaging, grade-level instruction every day. Our classrooms are places where students think deeply, participate actively, persevere through challenges, and experience success.

We believe:

- Every child can achieve at high levels.
- Strong Tier I instruction is the foundation of academic success.
- High expectations and high support must exist together.
- Literacy is the gateway to opportunity.

- Students learn best when they are actively engaged.
- Data should inform instruction.
- Relationships strengthen learning.

THE PROMISE CLASSROOM

Every Promise classroom should be:

Safe

Students feel physically and emotionally secure.

Structured

Clear procedures and routines maximize learning.

Joyful

Students experience belonging, encouragement, and celebration.

Rigorous

Students engage in grade-level work and productive struggle.

Inclusive

Every scholar has access to learning.

Student-Centered

Students do the thinking, talking, reading, writing, and problem-solving.

OUR CURRICULUM

Promise Academy utilizes high-quality instructional materials aligned to Tennessee Academic Standards.

English Language Arts

Benchmark Advance

Mathematics

Eureka Math

TouchMath (Special Education)

Science

STEMscopes

Teachers are expected to implement curriculum with fidelity while responding to student needs through effective instructional practices.

INSTRUCTIONAL NON-NEGOTIABLES

Every classroom at Promise Academy will demonstrate the following:

1. Learning Targets Are Visible

Students should know:

- What they are learning.
- Why they are learning it.
- How success will be measured.

2. Students Are Doing the Thinking

Students should regularly:

- Read.
- Write.
- Discuss.
- Explain.
- Solve problems.
- Defend answers.
- Collaborate.

The person doing the thinking is the person doing the learning.

3. Every Student Participates

Teachers use strategies that engage every learner.

Examples include:

- Turn and Talk
- Cold Call
- Think-Pair-Share
- Written Responses
- Partner Work
- Response Cards

Participation is expected from every scholar.

4. Checks for Understanding Drive Instruction

Teachers regularly assess understanding through:

- Questioning
- Observation
- Exit tickets
- Student discussion
- Written responses
- Quick assessments

Instruction should adjust based on student understanding.

5. High Expectations for All Students

Teachers:

- Maintain grade-level expectations.
- Scaffold without lowering rigor.
- Provide access and support.
- Believe every student can succeed.

LESSON INTERNALIZATION

Strong instruction begins before students enter the classroom.

Teachers are expected to:

- Study the standards.
- Internalize the curriculum.
- Anticipate misconceptions.
- Plan questions.
- Identify key vocabulary.
- Determine success criteria.
- Prepare instructional materials.

Teachers should know:

- What students need to learn.
- Why it matters.
- Where students may struggle.
- How they will respond.

PLANNING EXPECTATIONS

Teachers are expected to:

- Maintain lesson plans.
- Prepare materials in advance.
- Use student data.
- Collaborate with teammates.
- Differentiate instruction.
- Attend planning meetings prepared.

Planning is essential to instructional excellence.

LITERACY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Every adult at Promise Academy contributes to literacy development.

Teachers support literacy by:

- Building vocabulary.
- Promoting discussion.
- Encouraging writing.
- Supporting comprehension.
- Developing language skills.

Strong readers become strong learners.

STUDENT DISCOURSE

Students should regularly:

- Explain their thinking.
- Ask questions.
- Justify answers.
- Engage in discussion.
- Build upon others' ideas.
- Learn from peers.

Classrooms should amplify student voice.

RIGOR AND PRODUCTIVE STRUGGLE

Students learn by thinking deeply and persevering through challenges.

Teachers should:

- Ask rigorous questions.
- Encourage problem-solving.
- Allow productive struggle.
- Support perseverance.
- Maintain high expectations.

Struggle is a necessary part of learning.

DIFFERENTIATION

Teachers provide access to learning for all students.

Differentiation may include:

- Small groups
- Flexible grouping
- Scaffolds
- Accommodations
- Enrichment
- Intervention

Support should increase access to rigorous learning, not reduce expectations.

DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTION

Teachers regularly analyze:

- Student work.
- Benchmark assessments.
- Classroom assessments.
- Universal screeners.
- Progress monitoring.

Data should answer:

- What did students learn?
- Where are students struggling?
- What interventions are needed?
- What instructional adjustments should be made?

INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT

When students need additional support, we respond quickly.

Interventions may include:

- Small-group instruction
- Academic intervention
- Progress monitoring
- Targeted support plans
- Additional practice opportunities

Our goal is for every scholar to experience success.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Teachers are lifelong learners.

Staff members are expected to:

- Attend professional development.
- Participate in PLCs.
- Implement feedback.
- Reflect on practice.
- Pursue continuous growth.

Growth is expected for every adult.

EXCELLENCE IN EVERY CLASSROOM

At Promise Academy, we believe that every scholar deserves:

- Excellent instruction.
- Strong relationships.
- High expectations.
- Meaningful support.
- Joyful learning experiences.

Instructional excellence is not an initiative, it is our responsibility.

SECTION 5: COACHING, FEEDBACK, AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

OUR BELIEF ABOUT COACHING

At Promise Academy, we believe that great teachers are developed through continuous learning, meaningful feedback, collaboration, and reflection.

Coaching is not punitive. Coaching is an investment in people.

Every educator deserves support, encouragement, feedback, and opportunities for professional growth. Our coaching model is designed to strengthen instructional practice, improve student outcomes, and develop leadership capacity throughout the organization.

At Promise Academy:

- Everyone is coached.
- Everyone can improve.
- Everyone deserves support.
- Growth is expected.

A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We believe:

- Feedback is a gift.
- Reflection leads to growth.
- Excellence requires practice.
- Vulnerability strengthens teams.
- Coaching improves outcomes.

Employees are expected to approach coaching with professionalism, openness, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING MODEL

Instructional coaching at Promise Academy is designed to provide job-embedded support that directly impacts teaching and learning.

Coaching may include:

- Classroom observations

- Modeling lessons
- Co-planning
- Co-teaching
- Data analysis
- Lesson internalization
- Student work analysis
- Feedback conversations
- Professional development

The purpose of coaching is growth, not evaluation.

COACHING CYCLE

Teachers will participate in ongoing coaching cycles that may include:

Step 1: Goal Setting

Teachers and coaches identify an area of focus based on:

- Student data
- Classroom observations
- Instructional priorities
- Teacher self-reflection

Step 2: Observation

Coaches or administrators observe instruction to gather evidence.

Observations may include:

- Classroom walkthroughs
- Formal observations
- Informal observations
- Learning walks

Step 3: Feedback

Feedback should be:

- Timely
- Specific
- Actionable
- Evidence-based
- Focused on student outcomes

Step 4: Action Planning

Teachers and coaches develop clear next steps for implementation.

Step 5: Follow-Up

Progress is monitored and celebrated through additional support and observation.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Administrators and instructional coaches regularly visit classrooms to:

- Support teachers.
- Observe instruction.
- Gather evidence.
- Identify strengths.
- Determine coaching needs.

Observations may be:

- Informal walkthroughs
- Scheduled observations
- Formal evaluations
- Learning walks

Frequent classroom visits support professional growth and student achievement.

FEEDBACK EXPECTATIONS

Feedback should:

- Focus on student learning.
- Be specific.
- Include strengths.
- Identify next steps.
- Encourage reflection.

Teachers are expected to:

- Receive feedback professionally.
- Reflect on practice.
- Implement action steps.
- Seek clarification when needed.

INTELLECTUAL PREPARATION

Teachers are expected to thoroughly prepare for instruction.

Preparation includes:

- Studying standards.
- Internalizing lessons.
- Anticipating misconceptions.

- Planning questions.
- Preparing materials.
- Identifying success criteria.

Strong preparation leads to strong instruction.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (PLCS)

PLCs provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and improve practice.

PLCs may focus on:

- Student data
- Instructional planning
- Assessment analysis
- Curriculum internalization
- Intervention planning
- Student work

Teachers are expected to actively participate and contribute.

DATA MEETINGS

Data meetings help teams understand student progress and identify instructional next steps.

Teams may analyze:

- Benchmark assessments
- Common assessments
- Progress monitoring
- TCAP results
- Student work

Data conversations should answer:

- What did students learn?
- What misconceptions exist?
- Which students need support?
- What instructional changes are needed?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Promise Academy is committed to developing exceptional educators.

Professional learning opportunities may include:

- Summer professional development
- Weekly professional development sessions
- Instructional workshops

- Conferences
- Coaching sessions
- Book studies
- Collaborative planning

Attendance at required professional development is expected.

GROWTH PLANS

Employees may participate in individual growth plans designed to:

- Strengthen instructional practice
- Improve professional skills
- Address areas of concern
- Support leadership development

Growth plans are intended to support employee success.

TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Teachers are leaders within our school community.

Teacher leadership opportunities may include:

- Mentoring
- Leading PLCs
- Facilitating professional development
- Supporting colleagues
- Serving on committees
- Participating in school improvement initiatives

Leadership is not determined by title. Leadership is demonstrated through influence and service.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Employee performance evaluations will be conducted in accordance with state requirements and school procedures.

Evaluations may include:

- Classroom observations
- Professional responsibilities
- Student growth measures

- Goal attainment
- Professional contributions

Employees will receive feedback and opportunities for growth throughout the year.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees are expected to:

- Attend meetings.
- Meet deadlines.
- Maintain records.
- Communicate with families.
- Collaborate with colleagues.
- Implement school initiatives.
- Participate in professional learning.

Professional responsibilities are essential components of effective practice.

CELEBRATING GROWTH

At Promise Academy, we celebrate:

- Professional growth
- Instructional excellence
- Leadership
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Student success

Recognizing growth strengthens our culture and supports continuous improvement.

OUR COMMITMENT

We believe that the growth of adults directly impacts the growth of scholars.

When teachers improve, students benefit.

When teams collaborate, schools improve.

When adults embrace coaching, everyone SOARS.

At Promise Academy, coaching is not something that happens to teachers.

Coaching is something we do together in pursuit of excellence.

SECTION 6: SCHOLAR CULTURE, SOAR EXPECTATIONS, AND THE HEART FRAMEWORK

OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Promise Academy, we believe that every scholar deserves a safe, structured, joyful, and supportive learning environment.

We believe:

- Behavior is a skill that can be taught.
- Relationships drive positive outcomes.
- Mistakes are opportunities for learning.
- Accountability and support go hand in hand.
- Students thrive when expectations are clear.
- Every child deserves dignity and belonging.

Our goal is not simply to manage behavior. Our goal is to develop responsible, respectful, resilient young people who are prepared to succeed in school and in life.

SOAR EXPECTATIONS

SOAR serves as the foundation of our school culture and provides a shared language for behavior, relationships, and expectations.

Every scholar is expected to:

SHOW RESPECT

Students:

- Use kind words.
- Follow directions.
- Respect others.
- Care for property.
- Demonstrate good manners.

OWN OUR ACTIONS

Students:

- Take responsibility.
- Learn from mistakes.

- Tell the truth.
- Make things right.
- Demonstrate integrity.

AIM FOR EXCELLENCE

Students:

- Give their best effort.
- Persevere through challenges.
- Participate actively.
- Complete assignments.
- Set goals.

RISE TOGETHER

Students:

- Encourage others.
- Work as a team.
- Include everyone.
- Build positive relationships.
- Support the school community.

WHAT SOAR LOOKS LIKE

In the Classroom

Students:

- Arrive prepared.
- Participate actively.
- Follow directions.
- Stay engaged.
- Respect learning.

In the Hallway

Students:

- Walk safely.
- Maintain appropriate voice levels.
- Follow adult directions.
- Respect instructional spaces.

In the Cafeteria

Students:

- Use good manners.
- Remain seated.
- Clean their area.
- Demonstrate kindness.

At Recess

Students:

- Practice good sportsmanship.
- Include others.
- Follow safety expectations.
- Resolve conflicts appropriately.

During Arrival and Dismissal

Students:

- Follow procedures.
- Stay with assigned groups.
- Demonstrate patience.
- Maintain safe behavior.

THE HEART FRAMEWORK

At Promise Academy, we believe that discipline should teach, restore, and support.

HEART stands for:

H – Healing

Students learn strategies to regulate emotions and cope with challenges.

E – Empathy

Students learn to understand the feelings and perspectives of others.

A – Accountability

Students take responsibility for their choices and actions.

R – Restoration

Students work to repair harm and rebuild relationships.

T – Transformation

Students develop new skills and behaviors for future success.

THE HEART ROOM

The HEART Room is a supportive environment designed to help scholars:

- Regulate emotions.
- Reflect on behavior.
- Repair relationships.
- Develop coping skills.
- Learn problem-solving strategies.
- Return successfully to learning.

The HEART Room is not intended as punishment.

Students may participate in:

- Reflection activities
- Restorative conversations
- Conflict resolution
- Goal setting
- Social-emotional learning activities
- Self-regulation strategies

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

Promise Academy believes positive behavior should be recognized and celebrated.

Recognition may include:

- SOAR celebrations
- Positive phone calls home
- Classroom celebrations
- Attendance recognition
- Academic recognition
- Leadership opportunities
- Student celebrations

Success deserves celebration.

CLASSROOM-MANAGED BEHAVIORS

Teachers are responsible for addressing minor behaviors within the classroom whenever possible.

Examples include:

- Off-task behavior
- Calling out
- Minor disruptions
- Incomplete work
- Inappropriate voice levels
- Failure to follow directions

Teacher responses may include:

- Redirection
- Reteaching
- Reflection
- Parent communication
- Classroom consequences

ADMINISTRATIVE REFERRALS

Administrative support may be necessary when:

- Behaviors become repeated.
- Safety concerns arise.
- Learning is significantly disrupted.
- Teacher interventions have not been successful.

Examples may include:

- Repeated defiance
- Repeated disruption
- Bullying
- Inappropriate language
- Aggressive behavior
- Harassment

MAJOR SAFETY CONCERNS

Serious behaviors requiring immediate administrative intervention may include:

- Fighting
- Physical aggression

- Threats
- Weapons
- Drugs
- Serious bullying
- Sexual harassment
- Vandalism
- Theft
- Behavior that threatens safety

These behaviors may result in suspension or other disciplinary consequences.

BULLYING

Promise Academy prohibits bullying in all forms.

Bullying may include:

- Physical aggression
- Verbal harassment
- Social exclusion
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Cyberbullying

Reports of bullying will be investigated promptly. Retaliation against individuals who report concerns is prohibited.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying includes:

- Harassing messages
- Social media threats
- Sharing embarrassing content
- Online intimidation
- Fake accounts

Cyberbullying that impacts the school environment may result in school disciplinary action.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Promise Academy utilizes restorative practices to:

- Build relationships.

- Repair harm.
- Promote accountability.
- Strengthen community.

Restorative practices may include:

- Reflection conversations
- Problem-solving conferences
- Peer mediation
- Restorative circles
- Reentry meetings

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Families are essential partners in supporting scholar behavior.

School staff will communicate with families regarding:

- Behavioral concerns
- Progress
- Interventions
- Support plans
- Celebrations and successes

When schools and families work together, students thrive.

OUR COMMITMENT

At Promise Academy, we believe every child deserves:

- High expectations.
- Strong relationships.
- Meaningful support.
- Opportunities to grow.
- A sense of belonging.

Through SOAR and the HEART Framework, we help scholars become responsible, compassionate, and successful individuals.

SECTION 7: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES, EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES, AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Our Commitment to Professional Excellence

At Promise Academy, every employee contributes to creating a safe, joyful, and high-performing learning environment where students can thrive. Professionalism extends beyond completing assigned responsibilities. It is reflected in how we communicate, collaborate, solve problems, and represent our school each day.

Employees are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, professionalism, accountability, and respect while consistently modeling the character and behaviors we seek to develop in our students.

Every employee shares responsibility for protecting our school culture, maintaining high standards of conduct, and supporting the success of every student and colleague.

7.1 Equal Employment Opportunity

Promise Academy is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all qualified applicants and employees. Employment decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, creed, sex, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

The school is committed to maintaining a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

7.2 Employment Relationship

Employment with Promise Academy is at-will unless otherwise provided by written contract or applicable law. This means either the employee or the school may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause, subject to applicable law.

Nothing contained within this handbook creates an employment contract or guarantees continued employment.

Employees are responsible for maintaining all required licenses, certifications, and qualifications necessary for their position throughout their employment.

7.3 Professional Responsibilities

Every Promise Academy employee is expected to:

- Put students first in every decision.
- Maintain high ethical standards.
- Demonstrate professionalism in appearance, communication, and conduct.
- Treat students, families, colleagues, and visitors with dignity and respect.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding student and personnel information.
- Follow all Board policies, school procedures, state law, and federal law.
- Complete assigned duties accurately and on time.
- Attend required meetings, trainings, and professional development.
- Respond to feedback professionally and implement coaching recommendations.
- Exercise sound judgment in all interactions involving students.

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that positively reflects the mission, vision, and values of Promise Academy both during and outside of work when representing the school.

7.4 Attendance and Dependability

Reliable attendance is essential to maintaining a high-quality educational program for students.

Employees are expected to:

- Report to work on time each day.
- Be prepared to begin work at their scheduled start time.
- Follow all procedures for requesting leave.
- Notify their supervisor as early as possible when an unexpected absence occurs.
- Obtain approval before leaving campus during scheduled work hours.

Repeated tardiness, excessive absenteeism, leaving work without authorization, or failing to follow attendance procedures may result in corrective action.

Employees who fail to report to work for three consecutive scheduled workdays without notifying their supervisor may be considered to have voluntarily abandoned their position.

7.5 Professional Conduct

All employees are expected to contribute to a positive, respectful, and collaborative workplace. Employees shall:

- Communicate respectfully with students, families, colleagues, and community members.
- Resolve disagreements professionally.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Use professional language at all times.
- Refrain from gossip, bullying, intimidation, retaliation, or behavior that negatively impacts the workplace.
- Demonstrate professionalism on campus, during school-sponsored events, and in all school-related communications.

Unprofessional conduct that disrupts the learning environment or negatively impacts the workplace may result in disciplinary action.

7.6 Confidentiality

Employees are entrusted with sensitive information regarding students, families, and colleagues.

Confidential information shall only be shared with individuals who have a legitimate educational or business need to know.

Employees shall comply with FERPA, applicable privacy laws, and all school confidentiality expectations. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information may result in disciplinary action.

7.7 Performance Expectations

Employees are expected to consistently demonstrate effective job performance by:

- Meeting established performance standards.
- Completing assigned responsibilities.
- Following administrative direction.
- Participating fully in coaching and evaluation processes.
- Demonstrating continuous professional growth.
- Completing required compliance trainings.
- Supporting school-wide initiatives.

Performance concerns will generally be addressed through coaching and progressive discipline whenever appropriate.

7.8 Progressive Discipline

Promise Academy believes that most performance concerns can be addressed through coaching, clear expectations, and ongoing support. When improvement does not occur, the school utilizes a progressive discipline process designed to promote accountability while maintaining fairness and consistency.

Depending on the severity of the concern, the progressive discipline process may include:

Step 1: Coaching Conversation

Informal discussion focused on clarifying expectations and providing support.

Step 2: Documented Counseling

Formal documentation identifying the concern, expected improvement, and timeline for correction.

Step 3: Documented Oral Reprimand

A formal verbal discussion documented in writing that notifies the employee that continued concerns may result in additional disciplinary action.

Step 4: Written Reprimand

Formal written notice documenting continued or significant performance concerns, required corrective action, and potential consequences.

Step 5: Suspension

Employees may be placed on unpaid suspension for repeated violations or serious misconduct.

Step 6: Termination of Employment

Failure to improve performance or serious misconduct may result in termination of employment.

The school reserves the right to begin the disciplinary process at any step, including immediate suspension or termination, depending upon the seriousness of the conduct or violation. Progressive discipline is intended as a guideline and does not limit the school's discretion in responding appropriately to employee misconduct. This approach reflects the school's progressive discipline philosophy while recognizing that more serious violations may require bypassing earlier steps.

7.9 Workplace Investigations

Promise Academy is committed to conducting fair, timely, and thorough investigations of alleged misconduct, policy violations, or workplace concerns.

During an investigation, employees are expected to:

- Cooperate fully.
- Provide truthful and complete information.
- Preserve relevant documents or evidence.
- Maintain confidentiality to the extent appropriate.

Employees may be placed on administrative leave during an investigation when necessary to protect students, employees, or the integrity of the investigation. Placement on administrative leave does not indicate a predetermined outcome.

Following the investigation, the school will determine appropriate next steps based on the facts gathered and applicable policies. These procedures align with the investigation principles outlined in the school's progressive discipline process.

7.10 Major Misconduct

Certain behaviors are considered so serious that they may result in immediate disciplinary action, including suspension or termination, regardless of prior disciplinary history.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Child abuse, neglect, or failure to report suspected abuse.
- Inappropriate relationships or communication with students.
- Physical violence or threats of violence.
- Harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or bullying.
- Possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol while working or at school-sponsored events.
- Possession of unauthorized weapons on school property.
- Theft, fraud, or misappropriation of school funds or property.
- Falsification of records, employment documents, or official reports.
- Intentional destruction or misuse of school property.
- Job abandonment.
- Serious safety violations.
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.
- Criminal conduct that materially affects an employee's ability to perform assigned duties or maintain the trust required of their position.

This list is intended to provide examples and is not all-inclusive. The school reserves the right to determine whether other conduct constitutes major misconduct warranting immediate disciplinary action. These examples are adapted from the school's progressive discipline guidelines and major infraction categories.

7.11 Documentation

When employee performance or conduct concerns arise, supervisors are expected to maintain accurate, objective, and timely documentation.

Documentation may include:

- Date and time of the incident.
- Description of the observed behavior.
- Individuals involved.
- Witness statements, when applicable.
- Relevant supporting evidence.
- Previous coaching or disciplinary actions.
- Expected corrective action.
- Timeline for improvement.

Employees may be asked to acknowledge receipt of disciplinary documentation. An employee's signature acknowledges receipt only and does not necessarily indicate agreement with its contents.

7.12 Human Resources

The Human Resources Department supports employees throughout their employment by providing guidance regarding employment practices, benefits, leave administration, licensure requirements, employee relations, personnel records, investigations, and workplace concerns.

Employees are encouraged to contact Human Resources whenever they have questions regarding employment policies, workplace concerns, or available resources.

7.13 Employee Responsibility

Every employee is responsible for understanding and complying with the policies and expectations outlined in this handbook.

Failure to follow school policies, administrative directives, or applicable laws may result in corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees who have questions regarding any policy contained in this handbook should seek clarification from their supervisor or the Human Resources Department before taking action.

7.14 Employee Dress Code

As representatives of Promise Academy, employees are expected to present a professional appearance that reflects the school's commitment to excellence and inspires confidence among students, families, and the community.

Employees are expected to:

- Maintain a neat, clean, and professional appearance at all times.
- Wear attire that is appropriate for an educational setting and the responsibilities of their position.
- Follow any campus-specific or event-specific dress expectations communicated by school leadership.
- Wear required identification badges while on campus, if applicable.

The following are not considered appropriate workplace attire unless specifically approved for designated spirit days or special events:

- Clothing with offensive, inappropriate, or political messages.
- Clothing that is excessively revealing or damaged.
- Athletic wear not related to assigned duties.
- Footwear that presents a safety concern.

School leadership reserves the right to determine whether attire is appropriate for the workplace and may require an employee to change clothing if necessary.

7.15 Technology and Electronic Communications

Technology is provided to support teaching, learning, communication, and school operations.

Employees are expected to use school technology responsibly, ethically, and in accordance with all applicable laws and school policies.

Employees shall:

- Use school technology primarily for work-related purposes.
- Protect passwords and account information.
- Maintain the confidentiality of student and employee information.
- Follow all cybersecurity procedures established by the school.
- Report suspected security breaches immediately.

Employees may not:

- Access inappropriate or unlawful content using school technology.
- Install unauthorized software.
- Share confidential information through unsecured platforms.
- Use school technology for personal business or activities that interfere with work responsibilities.

Employees should understand that school-issued technology, email, internet usage, and electronic communications may be monitored in accordance with applicable law.

7.16 Social Media and Public Communications

Employees are encouraged to exercise sound judgment when using social media and other public communication platforms.

Employees should remember that online conduct may impact public confidence in the school and the professional relationships necessary to effectively serve students.

Employees are expected to:

- Maintain professional boundaries with students.
- Protect confidential student and employee information.
- Refrain from posting content that violates school policies or applicable law.
- Clearly distinguish personal opinions from official school communications.

Employees shall not:

- Communicate with students through personal social media accounts or other unauthorized electronic platforms.
- Post confidential information regarding students, employees, or school operations.
- Use social media to harass, bully, threaten, or demean students, families, or colleagues.

School leadership reserves the right to investigate online conduct that substantially disrupts school operations or violates school policies.

7.17 Conflicts of Interest and Outside Employment

Employees are expected to avoid situations that create actual or perceived conflicts between personal interests and their professional responsibilities.

Outside employment is permitted provided it:

- Does not interfere with the employee's assigned responsibilities.
- Does not create a conflict of interest.
- Does not negatively affect the employee's work performance or attendance.

Employees may not use school resources, confidential information, equipment, or work time for outside employment or personal financial gain.

Employees should promptly disclose any potential conflict of interest to their supervisor or Human Resources.

7.18 Required Reporting Responsibilities

As educators and school employees, all staff members have important legal and ethical reporting obligations.

Employees are required to immediately report:

- Suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Student safety concerns.
- Workplace violence or threats.
- Harassment or discrimination.
- Fraud, theft, or misuse of school resources.
- Serious violations of school policy or law.

Failure to report required information may result in disciplinary action and, where applicable, legal consequences.

Nothing in this handbook limits an employee's legal obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

7.19 Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation

Promise Academy is committed to maintaining a workplace where all employees are treated with dignity, professionalism, and respect.

Harassment, discrimination, bullying, intimidation, or retaliation based upon any protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive comments or jokes.
- Unwelcome physical conduct.
- Verbal abuse.
- Intimidation.
- Threats.
- Sexual harassment.
- Retaliation against an employee for making a good-faith complaint or participating in an investigation.

Employees who experience or witness inappropriate conduct should report concerns immediately to their supervisor or Human Resources.

All reports will be reviewed promptly and investigated as appropriate.

Employees who knowingly make false accusations may also be subject to disciplinary action.

7.20 Workplace Safety

Providing a safe learning and working environment is a shared responsibility.

Employees are expected to:

- Follow all safety procedures and emergency protocols.
- Participate in required safety drills and trainings.
- Report unsafe conditions immediately.
- Use equipment appropriately.
- Follow visitor management and campus security procedures.

Employees shall not engage in conduct that jeopardizes the safety of students, staff, or visitors.

7.21 Employee Cooperation

Promise Academy operates best when employees communicate openly and work collaboratively.

Employees are expected to:

- Demonstrate professionalism during difficult conversations.
- Accept constructive feedback.
- Participate in problem-solving.
- Cooperate with investigations and administrative requests.
- Maintain positive working relationships.

Disagreements should be addressed respectfully and through appropriate supervisory channels.

7.22 Ethical Standards

Every Promise Academy employee serves as a role model for students and is expected to demonstrate the highest standards of integrity.

Employees shall:

- Act honestly and ethically.
- Avoid dishonesty, fraud, or misrepresentation.
- Protect school resources.
- Exercise sound professional judgment.
- Comply with all federal, state, and local laws.

Employees are expected to make decisions that uphold the mission, vision, and reputation of Promise Academy.

7.23 A Culture of Accountability

At Promise Academy, accountability is viewed as an essential component of professional excellence. Employees are encouraged to seek support, ask questions, and engage in continuous improvement. Coaching, feedback, and professional learning are intended to help employees grow and succeed.

While the school is committed to supporting employee development, every employee is responsible for meeting professional expectations, demonstrating integrity, and fulfilling the responsibilities of their role. Maintaining a culture of accountability ensures that every member of our team contributes to a safe, respectful, and high-performing environment where students can thrive.

Professionalism at Promise Academy

At Promise Academy, professionalism is not simply about following policies. It is about honoring our commitment to students, families, and one another. Every interaction, every decision, and every action contributes to the culture we are building. We believe exceptional schools are built by exceptional people who lead with integrity, accountability, compassion, and excellence. Every employee is expected to uphold these standards each day because our students deserve nothing less.

SECTION 8: COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, LEAVE, AND TIME OFF

Supporting Our Team

Promise Academy recognizes that our employees are our greatest asset. We are committed to providing competitive compensation, comprehensive benefits, and leave programs that support the health, well-being, and work-life balance of our team members. Employees are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Department with questions regarding payroll, benefits, or leave eligibility.

8.1 Compensation

Promise Academy strives to provide competitive compensation that reflects each employee's responsibilities, qualifications, experience, and performance.

Compensation decisions are made based upon several factors, including:

- Position responsibilities
- Relevant experience
- Education and credentials
- Internal equity
- Organizational budget
- Market competitiveness

Salary increases are not automatic and may depend upon available funding, organizational priorities, performance, and Board approval.

8.2 Payroll

Employees are paid on a semi-monthly schedule in accordance with the official payroll calendar.

Employees are responsible for:

- Accurately submitting all required payroll documentation.
- Maintaining current personal information with Human Resources.
- Promptly reporting payroll discrepancies.

Payroll schedules are published annually and distributed by Human Resources.

8.3 Direct Deposit

Direct deposit is the preferred method of payroll distribution. Employees are encouraged to enroll in direct deposit upon hire and are responsible for notifying Human Resources of any changes to banking information.

Employees should allow sufficient processing time when making banking changes to avoid delays in receiving compensation.

8.4 Timekeeping

Employees who are required to record hours worked must accurately report their time using the school's designated timekeeping system.

Employees are responsible for:

- Recording time honestly and accurately.
- Following established procedures for clocking in and out, if applicable.
- Reporting missed punches or errors promptly.
- Obtaining approval before working overtime, when applicable.

Falsification of time records may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

8.5 Employee Benefits

Eligible employees may participate in benefit programs offered by Promise Academy, subject to plan eligibility requirements and annual enrollment periods.

Benefit offerings may include:

- Medical insurance
- Dental insurance
- Vision insurance
- Life insurance
- Disability insurance
- Flexible Spending Accounts (if applicable)
- Employee Assistance Program (if applicable)
- Retirement savings plans

Benefit offerings are subject to change based on carrier agreements and Board approval. Complete benefit information is available through Human Resources during onboarding and annual open enrollment.

8.6 Retirement Benefits

Eligible employees may participate in retirement programs available through Promise Academy.

Information regarding eligibility, enrollment procedures, employer contributions, and investment options is available through Human Resources.

Employees are encouraged to review retirement options carefully and consult a financial advisor if needed.

8.7 Paid Holidays

Promise Academy observes designated holidays throughout the school year as identified on the annual school calendar.

Holiday schedules are approved annually and communicated prior to the beginning of each school year.

Employees are expected to work all scheduled workdays before and after holidays unless approved leave has been granted.

8.8 Paid Time Off and Leave

Promise Academy recognizes that employees occasionally need time away from work for personal, medical, or family reasons.

Employees are expected to request leave as early as possible and follow all established procedures.

Whenever possible, leave requests should be submitted sufficiently in advance to minimize disruption to student learning.

The approval of leave is subject to operational needs and applicable policies.

8.9 Sick Leave

Sick leave is intended for:

- Personal illness or injury.
- Medical appointments.
- Caring for an eligible family member when permitted by policy.
- Other qualifying reasons permitted by applicable law.

Employees who are unable to report to work due to illness must notify their supervisor as soon as reasonably possible and follow all absence reporting procedures.

The school reserves the right to request medical documentation when appropriate or as permitted by law.

8.10 Personal Leave

Eligible employees may request personal leave for important personal matters that cannot reasonably be scheduled outside the workday.

Personal leave should be requested in advance whenever possible.

Approval is based upon staffing needs, instructional impact, and operational requirements.

The school may limit personal leave during critical instructional periods, state testing windows, professional development days, or other essential school events.

8.11 Bereavement Leave

Promise Academy understands the impact of losing a loved one and seeks to provide reasonable leave for eligible employees experiencing the death of an immediate family member.

Employees requesting bereavement leave should notify their supervisor and Human Resources as soon as possible.

Additional leave may be requested through available leave balances or other approved leave options.

8.12 Family and Medical Leave

Eligible employees may qualify for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or other applicable federal and state laws.

Eligible reasons may include:

- Serious personal health conditions.
- Birth or adoption of a child.
- Care for a qualifying family member.
- Military family leave.
- Other qualifying circumstances provided by law.

Employees should contact Human Resources for eligibility requirements, required documentation, and application procedures.

8.13 Military Leave

Promise Academy complies with all federal and state laws regarding military service and military leave.

Employees serving in the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserve components will receive applicable employment protections and reemployment rights as provided by law.

8.14 Jury Duty and Civic Responsibilities

Employees called for jury duty or other legally required civic responsibilities should notify their supervisor immediately upon receiving official notice.

The school will comply with all applicable laws regarding jury service.

Employees should provide documentation when requested.

8.15 Workers' Compensation

Employees who experience a work-related injury or illness must report the incident to their supervisor immediately, regardless of the severity of the injury.

Prompt reporting ensures:

- Appropriate medical care.
- Timely reporting to the workers' compensation carrier.
- Compliance with applicable reporting requirements.

Employees should never delay reporting a workplace injury.

8.16 Leave Without Pay

When available paid leave has been exhausted, employees may request unpaid leave under certain circumstances.

Approval of unpaid leave is not guaranteed and depends upon:

- Operational needs
- Applicable laws
- Position responsibilities
- Length of requested leave

Requests should be submitted to Human Resources for review.

8.17 Return to Work

Employees returning from an approved leave of absence may be required to provide documentation verifying their ability to return to work, when permitted by law.

Employees are expected to communicate anticipated return dates with Human Resources and their supervisor.

Failure to return from approved leave as scheduled may be considered a voluntary resignation unless otherwise protected by law.

8.18 Attendance Incentives and Professional Responsibility

Consistent attendance is critical to ensuring continuity of instruction and maintaining a positive learning environment for students.

Employees are expected to carefully manage their leave and schedule appointments outside of work hours whenever possible.

Frequent absences, excessive tardiness, or patterns of leave usage that negatively impact school operations may result in coaching, corrective action, or progressive discipline as outlined in this handbook.

8.19 Benefits and Leave Administration

Questions regarding compensation, payroll, benefits, retirement, or leave should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

Benefit plans, payroll procedures, and leave policies may change periodically due to changes in law, insurance providers, organizational needs, or Board action. Employees will be notified of any significant changes.

8.20 Attendance During Critical School Events

Certain workdays are essential to the successful operation of the school and may be designated as critical attendance days. These may include, but are not limited to:

- New staff orientation
- Summer professional development
- Opening and closing of school
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- State testing windows
- Staff retreats
- Graduation and promotion ceremonies
- Required professional learning days

Employees are expected to be present on designated critical attendance days. Personal leave requests during these times may be limited or denied except in cases of emergency, illness, or other circumstances approved by school leadership.

Maintaining adequate staffing during these key events is essential to fulfilling our commitment to students and families.

SECTION 9: SAFETY, SECURITY, AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Our Commitment to Safety

The safety and well-being of our students, staff, and visitors is our highest priority. Every employee shares responsibility for maintaining a secure learning environment and following established safety procedures.

Employees are expected to remain vigilant, exercise sound judgment, and respond promptly to situations that may affect the safety or security of our school community.

All staff members are expected to participate in required safety trainings and emergency drills and to comply with all school, local, state, and federal safety regulations.

9.1 Shared Responsibility for Safety

Creating a safe school requires every employee to be actively engaged in maintaining a secure environment.

Employees are expected to:

- Know and follow all emergency procedures.
- Maintain awareness of students and surroundings.
- Immediately report unsafe conditions.
- Supervise students at all assigned times.
- Follow all visitor management procedures.
- Report suspicious individuals or activity immediately.
- Support a culture where students and staff feel physically and emotionally safe.

9.2 Student Supervision

Student supervision is one of the most important responsibilities of every employee.

Employees are expected to actively supervise students during:

- Arrival
- Breakfast
- Hallway transitions
- Restroom breaks
- Lunch
- Recess
- Specials
- Dismissal
- Field trips
- School events

Students should never be left unsupervised.

Employees should actively circulate, monitor behavior, anticipate potential concerns, and intervene promptly when necessary.

Failure to adequately supervise students may result in disciplinary action.

9.3 Campus Security

To maintain a safe campus:

- Exterior doors should remain secured.
- Employees should never prop open secured doors.
- Visitors must enter through the designated entrance.
- Visitors must check in through the school office.
- Visitors must wear a visitor badge while on campus.
- Employees should politely direct unidentified visitors to the main office.

Employees should never allow unauthorized individuals access to secure areas of the building.

9.4 Employee Identification and Building Access

Employees may be issued identification badges, keys, key cards, or access credentials.

Employees are responsible for:

- Safeguarding assigned credentials.
- Reporting lost or stolen credentials immediately.
- Never lending badges, keys, or access cards to another individual.

Access privileges may be modified or revoked as necessary.

9.3 Campus Security

Promise Academy maintains comprehensive emergency response procedures for a variety of situations, including:

- Fire
- Severe weather
- Tornado
- Medical emergencies
- Lockdown
- Lockout
- Shelter-in-place
- Evacuation
- Utility failures
- Hazardous materials

Employees are expected to become familiar with emergency procedures for their assigned work area.

9.6 Emergency Drills

Emergency drills are conducted throughout the school year in accordance with state law and school policy.

Employees are expected to:

- Take every drill seriously.
- Follow established procedures.
- Supervise students throughout the drill.
- Assist students with disabilities or other special needs.
- Report concerns identified during drills.

Drills are opportunities to improve preparedness and should be conducted professionally.

9.7 Medical Emergencies

Employees should immediately notify the school nurse or designated medical personnel whenever a student or staff member experiences a medical emergency.

Employees should:

- Remain calm.
- Contact emergency assistance immediately.
- Never administer medication unless authorized.
- Stay with the individual until assistance arrives when appropriate.
- Complete required incident documentation.

9.8 Student Health and Medication

Only authorized personnel may administer medication to students in accordance with school policy.

Employees should never:

- Dispense medication without authorization.
- Allow students to share medication.
- Store medication in classrooms unless specifically authorized.

Any concerns regarding student health should be referred to the school nurse.

9.9 Accident and Incident Reporting

All accidents, injuries, safety concerns, and unusual incidents must be reported immediately to school administration.

Employees should complete required documentation as soon as possible following the incident.

Prompt reporting allows the school to:

- Provide appropriate support.
- Investigate concerns.
- Improve safety practices.
- Comply with legal reporting requirements.

9.10 Mandatory Reporting

As educators and school employees, all staff members are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Employees must immediately report any reasonable suspicion of:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Human trafficking

Employees must follow all state reporting laws and school procedures.

Failure to report suspected abuse may result in disciplinary action and legal consequences.

9.11 Threat Assessment

Employees should immediately report:

- Threats of violence
- Weapons
- Suspicious behavior
- Threatening communications
- Self-harm concerns
- Suicide concerns

The school will respond in accordance with established threat assessment procedures.

9.12 Workplace Violence

Promise Academy maintains zero tolerance for workplace violence.

Violence includes:

- Physical assault
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Fighting
- Harassment involving threats of violence

Employees should immediately notify administration or law enforcement when necessary.

9.13 Weapons

Except as permitted by law and authorized by the school, weapons are prohibited on school property and at school-sponsored events.

Employees who become aware of a weapon on campus should immediately notify administration.

Employees should never attempt to independently disarm an individual unless necessary to protect life.

9.14 Alcohol, Drugs, and Controlled Substances

Employees are prohibited from:

- Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Possessing illegal drugs on school property.
- Using controlled substances in violation of applicable law.
- Impairing their ability to safely perform assigned duties.

Violations may result in immediate disciplinary action.

9.15 Communicable Illnesses

Employees experiencing symptoms of contagious illness should notify their supervisor and remain home when appropriate.

The school will follow guidance from public health authorities regarding communicable diseases.

Employees should practice appropriate hygiene to help reduce the spread of illness.

9.16 Bloodborne Pathogens

Employees whose responsibilities may involve exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials will receive required training.

Employees should never clean bodily fluids without following approved procedures and using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

9.17 Field Trip Safety

Employees participating in field trips are responsible for:

- Actively supervising assigned students.
- Following all school procedures.
- Maintaining emergency contact information.
- Reporting incidents promptly.
- Ensuring students remain under supervision at all times.

Student safety remains the highest priority during off-campus activities.

9.18 Safe Learning Environment

Every employee contributes to creating an environment where students feel physically and emotionally safe.

Employees are expected to:

- Model respectful behavior.
- Address bullying promptly.
- Intervene when safety concerns arise.
- Foster inclusive classrooms.
- Build positive relationships with students.

A safe school culture is essential to academic success and student well-being.

9.19 Crisis Communication

During emergencies, employees should communicate only through approved school channels.

Employees should not:

- Share confidential information.
- Communicate with media representatives unless authorized.
- Post emergency information on social media.

All media inquiries should be directed to the Executive Principal or the school's designated spokesperson.

9.20 Employee Responsibility

Every employee plays an essential role in maintaining a safe, secure, and prepared school community.

Employees who fail to comply with safety procedures or knowingly disregard safety expectations may be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

Questions regarding safety procedures should be directed to school administration.

Promise Academy Emergency Response Quick Reference

Promise Academy 2026-2027 Staff and Faculty Handbook

The safety of our students and staff depends on every employee understanding and responding appropriately during emergencies. Employees are expected to remain calm, follow administrative direction, and implement the procedures outlined in the school's Emergency Operations Plan.

This quick reference is intended as a reminder only. All employees will receive annual safety training and participate in required emergency drills.

Emergency	Employee Response
Fire Evacuation	Evacuate students immediately using the designated evacuation route. Bring your class roster (if applicable), close doors, account for all students, and report missing individuals immediately. Do not re-enter the building until authorized.
Severe Weather / Tornado	Move students to the designated shelter area. Keep students quiet, seated, and away from windows. Remain in shelter until an all-clear is given.
Lockdown	Immediately lock classroom doors, turn off lights, move students out of sight, remain silent, and do not open the door until authorized by law enforcement or school administration.
Lockout (Secure Perimeter)	Bring everyone indoors, lock exterior doors, continue normal operations inside the building while remaining alert. No one enters or exits until directed.
Shelter-in-Place	Continue instruction indoors while following specific directions related to the emergency (weather, hazardous materials, etc.). Limit movement throughout the building.
Medical Emergency	Contact the school nurse and administration immediately. Call 911 if directed. Stay with the individual until assistance arrives. Complete an incident report following the emergency.
Missing Student	Notify administration immediately. Do not delay reporting while searching independently. Follow administrative direction.
Threat or Weapon	Notify administration immediately. If there is an immediate danger, call 911. Do not attempt to intervene unless necessary to protect life.
Building Evacuation	Follow administrative instructions. Escort students to the designated reunification or evacuation site. Account for all students immediately.

Emergency Communication Expectations

During any emergency:

- Remain calm and reassure students.
- Follow the directions of school administrators, first responders, and emergency personnel.
- Keep students under active supervision at all times.
- Do not leave your assigned students unless directed to do so.
- Do not share emergency information on social media.
- Refer all media inquiries to the Executive Principal or the school's designated spokesperson.

Every employee is responsible for knowing emergency procedures before an emergency occurs.

SECTION 10: TECHNOLOGY, EQUIPMENT, AND FACILITIES

Supporting Learning Through Responsible Stewardship

Promise Academy provides employees with technology, equipment, instructional resources, and facilities to support excellent teaching, efficient operations, and student success. Employees are expected to use all school property responsibly, ethically, and in a manner that reflects good stewardship of school resources.

All school-issued equipment, technology, accounts, and facilities remain the property of Promise Academy.

10.1 Acceptable Use of Technology

Technology resources are provided to support instruction, communication, collaboration, and school operations.

Employees are expected to use school technology responsibly, professionally, and in accordance with applicable laws and school policies.

Appropriate uses include:

- Instructional planning
- Student learning
- Communication with families
- Professional collaboration
- School business
- Professional learning

Technology should be used in ways that support the mission of Promise Academy and protect the privacy and security of our students and staff.

10.2 School-Issued Devices

Employees may be issued laptops, tablets, mobile devices, or other technology necessary to perform their duties.

Employees are responsible for:

- Protecting assigned equipment from damage or theft.
- Maintaining devices in good working condition.
- Promptly reporting lost, stolen, or damaged equipment.
- Returning all equipment upon separation from employment or when requested.

Normal wear is expected; however, employees may be held responsible for damage resulting from negligence or misuse.

10.3 Email and Electronic Communication

School-issued email accounts are the official means of communication for school business.

Employees are expected to:

- Check email regularly throughout the workday.
- Respond to communications within a reasonable timeframe.
- Maintain professional language and tone.
- Protect confidential information.

Employees should avoid conducting school business using personal email accounts.

10.4 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Promise Academy recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) tools are becoming increasingly valuable in education and workplace productivity. When used responsibly, AI can enhance planning, communication, and efficiency.

Employees may use approved AI tools to support professional responsibilities such as:

- Lesson planning
- Creating instructional materials
- Drafting communications
- Brainstorming ideas
- Analyzing data
- Developing assessments
- Professional productivity

Employees remain fully responsible for all content created or submitted using AI.

Employees may not:

- Enter confidential student, employee, or personnel information into public AI platforms.
- Use AI to replace professional judgment.
- Generate or submit inaccurate information.
- Violate copyright laws or intellectual property rights.
- Misrepresent AI-generated work as original professional work when such disclosure is required.

School leadership may establish additional guidance regarding approved AI tools as technology evolves.

10.5 Student Data Privacy

Employees are responsible for protecting confidential student information.

Employees shall:

- Comply with FERPA and all applicable privacy laws.
- Use only approved educational platforms.
- Secure confidential documents.
- Log out of devices when unattended.
- Avoid discussing confidential information in public settings.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information may result in disciplinary action.

10.6 Internet and Network Usage

Employees are expected to use the school's network responsibly.

Prohibited activities include:

- Accessing inappropriate websites.
- Downloading unauthorized software.
- Circumventing security systems.
- Using technology for illegal purposes.
- Introducing malicious software or viruses.

Technology resources may be monitored to ensure compliance with school policies.

10.7 Password Security

Employees are responsible for safeguarding usernames and passwords.

Employees should:

- Create strong passwords.
- Never share passwords.
- Change passwords when instructed.
- Report suspected security breaches immediately.

Failure to protect account credentials may compromise school security.

10.8 Personal Technology

Personal electronic devices should not interfere with assigned job responsibilities.

During instructional time, employees are expected to limit personal cell phone use except for emergencies or approved school business.

Employees should model responsible technology use for students.

10.9 Instructional Technology

Employees are expected to effectively utilize available instructional technology to enhance student learning.

Teachers should:

- Integrate technology appropriately.
- Teach responsible digital citizenship.
- Monitor student technology use.
- Follow approved technology guidelines.

Technology should enhance learning rather than replace high-quality instruction.

10.10 School Property

Employees are responsible for protecting all school-owned property.

This includes:

- Furniture
- Classroom materials
- Curriculum resources
- Athletic equipment
- Musical instruments
- Office equipment
- Instructional supplies

Damage, theft, or loss should be reported immediately.

10.11 Keys, Badges, and Building Access

Employees issued keys, identification badges, or access cards are responsible for maintaining their security.

Employees may not:

- Duplicate keys.
- Share access credentials.
- Allow unauthorized entry.
- Leave secure areas unsecured.

Lost keys or badges should be reported immediately.

10.12 Facilities and Workspaces

Employees share responsibility for maintaining a clean, organized, and professional learning environment.

Employees should:

- Maintain orderly classrooms and workspaces.
- Follow storage procedures.
- Report maintenance concerns promptly.
- Respect shared work areas.
- Conserve school resources.

Classrooms and offices should reflect the high standards of Promise Academy.

10.13 Maintenance Requests

Facility concerns should be reported promptly using the school's established maintenance request procedures.

Examples include:

- Plumbing issues
- HVAC concerns
- Electrical problems
- Broken furniture
- Safety hazards
- Custodial needs

Employees should not attempt repairs beyond routine classroom responsibilities.

10.14 School Supplies and Purchasing

School resources should be used responsibly.

Employees should:

- Follow purchasing procedures.
- Obtain required approvals.
- Use instructional funds appropriately.
- Protect school assets.

Unauthorized purchases may not be reimbursed.

10.15 End-of-Year Responsibilities

Prior to the conclusion of each school year or upon separation from employment, employees are responsible for:

- Returning school-issued equipment.
- Returning keys and badges.
- Organizing classrooms or workspaces.
- Completing required checkout procedures.
- Returning instructional materials and curriculum resources.

Final pay may be affected by unreturned school property where permitted by law.

10.16 Responsible Stewardship

Every employee shares responsibility for protecting the resources entrusted to Promise Academy.

Thoughtful stewardship of technology, equipment, instructional materials, and facilities ensures that students and staff have access to the resources needed for teaching and learning.

Employees are expected to use school resources wisely, report concerns promptly, and contribute to maintaining a safe, efficient, and welcoming environment for our entire school community.

SECTION 11: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE, PROFESSIONAL GROWTH, AND COACHING

Excellence Is Our Standard

At Promise Academy, we believe that every child deserves exceptional instruction every day. Instructional excellence does not happen by chance. It is the result of intentional planning, strong relationships, continuous reflection, and a commitment to professional growth.

Our instructional model is built on the belief that every educator can improve through coaching, collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and consistent implementation of high-quality instructional practices.

Professional learning is not viewed as remediation. It is an essential part of our culture and our commitment to becoming the best educators possible for our students.

11.1 Instructional Vision

Every classroom at Promise Academy should reflect our commitment to high expectations, joyful learning, and academic excellence.

Every lesson should:

- Be standards-aligned.
- Be intentionally planned.
- Maximize instructional time.
- Engage all learners.
- Include rigorous, grade-level content.
- Promote student thinking and discussion.
- Provide opportunities for practice and feedback.
- End with clear evidence of student learning.

Instruction should consistently reflect the school's instructional framework and curriculum expectations.

11.2 The Promise Academy Teacher

Every Promise Academy teacher is expected to:

- Believe every student can achieve at high levels.
- Build strong relationships with students and families.

- Create structured, engaging classrooms.
- Deliver high-quality instruction every day.
- Maintain high expectations for behavior and academics.
- Use student data to drive instructional decisions.
- Collaborate with colleagues.
- Reflect on practice and pursue continuous improvement.
- Model professionalism and lifelong learning.

11.3 Curriculum Fidelity

Promise Academy has adopted research-based curricula designed to ensure rigorous and equitable instruction.

Teachers are expected to:

- Implement the adopted curriculum with fidelity.
- Follow pacing guides.
- Utilize required instructional materials.
- Administer required assessments.
- Participate in curriculum planning.

Adaptations should be made only as approved by school leadership to meet student needs while preserving the integrity of the curriculum.

11.4 Lesson Planning

Effective instruction begins with intentional planning.

Teachers are expected to prepare lesson plans that:

- Align to grade-level standards.
- Reflect the adopted curriculum.
- Include measurable learning objectives.
- Identify instructional strategies.
- Differentiate for student needs.
- Include formative assessment opportunities.
- Incorporate opportunities for student discourse.

Lesson plans should be completed according to school expectations and made available to administrators and instructional coaches upon request.

11.5 High-Quality Instruction

Effective instruction at Promise Academy includes:

- Clear learning targets.
- Explicit instruction.
- Frequent checks for understanding.
- Student engagement.
- Academic discourse.
- Guided practice.
- Independent practice.
- Timely feedback.
- Appropriate differentiation.

Teachers should maximize instructional minutes and minimize downtime throughout every lesson.

11.6 Learning Environment

Every classroom should be physically and emotionally safe while maintaining high expectations.

Teachers are expected to:

- Establish consistent routines and procedures.
- Build positive classroom culture.
- Reinforce school-wide expectations.
- Maintain organized classrooms.
- Display student learning.
- Celebrate student growth.

Students should know what to expect every day and feel challenged, supported, and valued.

11.7 Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Professional Learning Communities are essential to improving instruction and student outcomes.

Teachers are expected to actively participate in PLCs by:

- Preparing in advance.

- Bringing student work and assessment data.
- Collaborating with colleagues.
- Sharing instructional strategies.
- Reflecting on student outcomes.
- Developing action plans.

PLCs should remain focused on improving student achievement through collaborative problem-solving.

11.8 Data-Driven Instruction

Student data informs instructional decision-making.

Teachers are expected to regularly analyze:

- Universal screening data.
- Benchmark assessments.
- Unit assessments.
- Classroom assessments.
- Student work.
- Intervention progress.

Data should be used to:

- Identify learning gaps.
- Plan interventions.
- Differentiate instruction.
- Monitor student growth.
- Adjust instructional practices.

11.9 Professional Coaching

Promise Academy believes coaching is one of the most effective ways to improve instruction.

Every instructional coach, administrator, and teacher shares responsibility for professional growth.

Coaching may include:

- Classroom observations.
- Modeling lessons.
- Co-planning.
- Data analysis.
- Feedback conversations.
- Goal setting.
- Reflection.

Coaching is intended to support continuous improvement rather than serve solely as an evaluative process.

11.10 Classroom Observations

Administrators and instructional coaches regularly visit classrooms to support instructional excellence.

Observations may be:

- Formal
- Informal
- Announced
- Unannounced

Observation feedback is intended to:

- Celebrate strengths.
- Identify opportunities for growth.
- Support instructional improvement.
- Increase student achievement.

11.11 Feedback and Reflection

Professional growth requires meaningful feedback.

Employees are expected to:

- Receive feedback professionally.

- Reflect on instructional practice.
- Implement agreed-upon action steps.
- Seek support when needed.
- Demonstrate continuous improvement.

Feedback conversations should be viewed as opportunities to strengthen practice.

11.12 Professional Growth Plans

Employees may develop professional growth goals throughout the school year.

Growth plans may include:

- Specific performance goals.
- Action steps.
- Professional learning opportunities.
- Coaching support.
- Evidence of progress.

Growth plans are intended to promote continuous improvement and celebrate professional success.

11.13 Professional Development

Professional learning is an expectation for every employee.

Employees are expected to:

- Attend all required professional development.
- Actively participate.
- Apply new learning to practice.
- Complete assigned follow-up activities.

Professional learning opportunities may occur during the school year, before the school year begins, or after the school year concludes.

Attendance at required professional development is considered a work responsibility.

11.14 Collaboration

Strong schools are built through collaboration.

Employees are expected to:

- Share resources.

- Support colleagues.
- Participate in team planning.
- Contribute to school improvement efforts.
- Maintain positive professional relationships.

Collaborative professionalism strengthens both teacher effectiveness and student success.

11.15 Professional Communication

Employees are expected to communicate professionally with:

- Students
- Families
- Colleagues
- Administrators
- Community partners

Professional communication should be:

- Respectful
- Timely
- Solution-oriented
- Accurate
- Confidential when appropriate

11.16 Deadlines and Professional Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for completing assigned tasks within established timelines.

Examples include:

- Lesson plans
- Grades
- Progress reports
- Parent communication logs
- Assessment administration
- Data submissions
- Compliance documentation

11.17 Professional Growth Mindset

Promise Academy values educators who continuously seek to improve their practice.

Employees are encouraged to:

- Seek feedback.
- Learn from challenges.
- Reflect regularly.
- Share successful practices.
- Pursue professional learning.

Continuous improvement is an essential characteristic of instructional excellence.

11.18 Instructional Non-Negotiables

While instructional strategies may vary, the following expectations are consistent across all classrooms:

Every Promise Academy classroom will:

- Demonstrate rigorous, standards-aligned instruction.
- Maintain high expectations for all students.
- Maximize instructional time.
- Utilize the adopted curriculum with fidelity.
- Foster respectful and joyful learning environments.
- Use frequent checks for understanding.
- Analyze student data to inform instruction.
- Maintain consistent classroom procedures.
- Build strong relationships with students and families.
- Commit to continuous professional growth.

11.19 Our Commitment to Excellence

Instructional excellence is a shared responsibility. Every employee contributes to the academic success of our students through professionalism, preparation, collaboration, and an unwavering belief that every child can succeed.

At Promise Academy, we do not pursue excellence because it is easy. We pursue excellence because our students deserve nothing less.

SECTION 12: SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND DAILY PROCEDURES

Operational Excellence

Strong schools operate through consistent systems and shared expectations. Every employee contributes to the smooth operation of Promise Academy by arriving

prepared, following established procedures, and fulfilling assigned responsibilities with professionalism and urgency.

The procedures outlined in this section help ensure a safe, organized, and productive learning environment for students, families, and staff.

12.1 School Hours

The regular instructional day is as follows:

- **Teacher Workday:** 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.*
- **Student Arrival Begins:** 7:45 a.m.
- **Instruction Begins:** 8:00 a.m.
- **Student Dismissal:** 3:00 p.m.

Employees are expected to report to work on time and be fully prepared to fulfill their assigned responsibilities prior to the arrival of students.

*Work hours may be adjusted for professional development, special events, conferences, or other school activities.

12.2 Arrival Responsibilities

Every staff member plays an important role in ensuring a safe, welcoming, and orderly start to the school day.

Teachers and designated staff members are assigned morning arrival supervision posts and are expected to:

- Report to assigned supervision locations on time.
- Welcome students positively and professionally.
- Actively supervise students.
- Reinforce school expectations.
- Monitor student safety.
- Assist with a smooth transition into the building.

Employees should remain at their assigned posts until relieved or until students have safely transitioned to their classrooms.

12.3 Dismissal Responsibilities

Dismissal is one of the most critical supervision times of the day.

Teachers and staff assigned dismissal duties are expected to:

- Report promptly to assigned dismissal posts.
- Actively supervise students until dismissal is complete.
- Follow established dismissal procedures.
- Ensure students are released safely.
- Immediately communicate any concerns or discrepancies to school leadership.

Employees should not leave their assigned dismissal responsibilities until dismissed by administration.

12.4 Planning Periods

Teachers are provided with a daily planning period to support instructional planning, grading, collaboration, and professional responsibilities.

Planning time should be used for work-related purposes, including:

- Lesson planning
- Reviewing student data
- Grading
- Parent communication
- Collaboration
- Professional preparation

Planning periods are considered professional work time and may occasionally be used for meetings, coaching, or professional development as determined by school leadership.

12.5 Duty-Free Lunch

Teachers receive a duty-free lunch period each instructional day.

Employees are encouraged to use this time to rest and recharge.

Duty-free lunch periods may only be interrupted during emergencies or extraordinary operational circumstances.

12.6 Staff Meetings and Professional Learning

Attendance at all required meetings is considered a professional responsibility.

Required meetings may include:

- Weekly staff meetings
- Grade-level meetings

- Department meetings
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Data meetings
- Professional development sessions
- Individual coaching meetings
- Parent conferences
- School-wide events

Employees are expected to arrive on time, participate actively, and come prepared.

12.7 Supervision Responsibilities

Every employee is responsible for actively supervising students whenever they are under their care.

Active supervision includes:

- Remaining attentive.
- Continuously scanning the environment.
- Moving throughout assigned areas.
- Interacting positively with students.
- Addressing concerns immediately.
- Preventing unsafe behavior before it escalates.

Employees should never leave students unsupervised.

12.8 Classroom Coverage

When an employee is unexpectedly absent or temporarily away from the classroom, administration will arrange appropriate coverage.

Employees should never independently ask another teacher or staff member to supervise students without administrative approval.

Whenever possible, lesson plans and emergency substitute information should be readily available.

12.9 Visitors

To maintain a safe campus, all visitors must enter through the school's designated entrance and check in at the main office.

Employees are expected to:

- Politely direct all visitors to the front office.
- Ensure visitors wear the appropriate visitor badge.
- Never permit unauthorized individuals into secured areas.
- Notify the office immediately if an unidentified visitor is observed on campus.

Employees should not allow visitors to enter the building through side or secured entrances.

12.10 Parking

Employees are expected to park only in designated employee parking areas.

Parking regulations help maintain student safety, emergency access, and efficient traffic flow.

Employees should:

- Follow all parking guidelines.
- Avoid parking in fire lanes or designated visitor spaces unless authorized.
- Secure their personal vehicles.
- Observe posted traffic patterns.

Promise Academy is not responsible for loss or damage to personal vehicles or personal property.

12.11 Personal Belongings

Employees are responsible for safeguarding personal belongings brought to campus.

The school assumes no responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items.

Employees are encouraged to keep valuables secured at all times.

12.12 Deliveries and Personal Packages

Personal deliveries should be limited and should not interfere with school operations. Employees should coordinate personal deliveries through the front office when necessary.

Students should not receive unauthorized food deliveries or other deliveries during the instructional day unless approved by administration.

12.13 Staff Workspaces

Employees share responsibility for maintaining clean, organized, and professional classrooms, offices, and shared workspaces.

Employees should:

- Keep instructional spaces organized.
- Maintain clean work areas.
- Return shared equipment promptly.
- Respect common areas.
- Clean up after using staff spaces.

Professional work environments contribute to a positive school culture.

12.14 School Property and Supplies

Employees are expected to use school resources responsibly. Instructional materials, furniture, technology, and supplies should be cared for appropriately and used primarily for school purposes.

Requests for additional supplies should follow established purchasing procedures.

12.15 Building Access

Employees are expected to help maintain campus security.

Employees should:

- Keep exterior doors closed and secured.
- Never prop open locked doors.
- Never share keys or access cards.
- Report lost keys or badges immediately.

Maintaining secure access protects students and staff.

12.16 School Events

Employees are expected to support school functions that strengthen relationships with students and families.

These may include:

- Open House
- Family Nights
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Performances
- Award ceremonies
- Curriculum nights
- Graduation and promotion ceremonies
- Other events designated by school leadership

Attendance expectations for specific events will be communicated in advance.

12.17 Professional Presence During the School Day

Employees are expected to remain engaged and visible throughout the workday.

Professional expectations include:

- Being present and attentive during assigned duties.
- Limiting personal cell phone use during instructional and supervisory responsibilities.
- Responding promptly to administrative requests.
- Maintaining professional interactions with students, families, and colleagues.

Every interaction contributes to the culture and reputation of Promise Academy.

12.18 Daily Operational Excellence

Operational excellence is achieved when every employee consistently fulfills their responsibilities with professionalism, urgency, and care.

By following established procedures and working collaboratively, employees help create an organized, safe, and welcoming environment where students can thrive and learning remains the primary focus.

Promise Academy Daily Operations Snapshot

The schedule below provides a general overview of the school day. Specific duty assignments, meeting schedules, and event calendars will be communicated by school leadership throughout the year.

Time	Daily Expectation
7:30 a.m.	Staff arrive on campus, prepare classrooms and workspaces, check email, gather instructional materials, and report to assigned morning supervision posts.
7:45 a.m.	Student arrival begins. Staff actively supervise assigned arrival locations, greet students, reinforce expectations, and ensure a safe and orderly start to the day.
Instructional Day	Deliver high-quality, standards-aligned instruction. Maintain active supervision, maximize instructional time, communicate with families as needed, and fulfill all professional responsibilities.
Planning Period	Utilize planning time for lesson preparation, grading, data analysis, parent communication, collaboration, coaching, and other professional responsibilities.
Duty-Free Lunch	Teachers receive a daily duty-free lunch period to rest and recharge.
Throughout the Day	Monitor hallways, reinforce school-wide expectations, support a positive school culture, respond promptly to student needs, and maintain professionalism in all interactions.
3:00 p.m.	Student dismissal begins. Report promptly to assigned dismissal posts and actively supervise until all students have safely departed.
After Dismissal	Attend scheduled meetings, coaching sessions, PLCs, professional development, parent conferences, or complete planning, grading, and preparation for the next instructional day.
End of Workday	Ensure classrooms and workspaces are organized, technology is secured, confidential materials are protected, and all assigned responsibilities have been completed before leaving campus.

Daily Professional Expectations

Every Promise Academy employee is expected to:

- ✓ Arrive on time and prepared for the day.
- ✓ Be present and actively engaged during all assigned duties.
- ✓ Protect instructional time by minimizing interruptions.
- ✓ Maintain active supervision of students at all times.
- ✓ Model professionalism in appearance, communication, and conduct.
- ✓ Respond promptly to emails and administrative communication.
- ✓ Keep classrooms and shared spaces clean, organized, and welcoming.
- ✓ Collaborate positively with colleagues.
- ✓ Complete assigned tasks and meet established deadlines.
- ✓ Leave each day prepared for a successful tomorrow.

Promise Academy Daily Success Checklist

Before leaving each day, ask yourself:

- ☐ My classroom/workspace is clean, organized, and ready for tomorrow.
- ☐ Student safety concerns or behavior incidents have been communicated and documented.
- ☐ Parent communication has been completed, if needed.
- ☐ Lesson plans and materials are prepared for the next day.
- ☐ Student work and assessments have been organized.
- ☐ School-issued technology and confidential materials are secure.
- ☐ I have completed any required documentation or administrative tasks.
- ☐ I know my responsibilities and schedule for tomorrow.

SECTION 13: STAFF HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Staff Handbook Acknowledgment

The Promise Academy Staff Handbook has been developed to provide employees with important information regarding the school's mission, values, policies, procedures, professional expectations, and operational practices. Every employee is responsible for becoming familiar with the contents of this handbook and conducting themselves in accordance with the expectations outlined herein.

By signing below, I acknowledge and understand the following:

1. I have received access to the Promise Academy Staff Handbook.
2. I understand that it is my responsibility to read, understand, and comply with the policies, procedures, and expectations contained within this handbook.
3. I understand that this handbook is intended to serve as a guide to employment at Promise Academy and does not create a contract of employment or guarantee employment for any specific period of time.
4. I understand that my employment with Promise Academy is at-will, unless otherwise specified by a written employment agreement or applicable law. This means that either I or Promise Academy may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause, subject to applicable law.
5. I understand that Promise Academy reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, revoke, or change any policy, procedure, benefit, or practice described in this handbook at any time, with or without prior notice, as permitted by law.
6. I understand that no supervisor, administrator, or employee of Promise Academy has the authority to enter into any agreement that alters the at-will employment relationship unless such agreement is made in writing and signed by the Executive Director or the Board of Directors, as applicable.
7. I understand that I am expected to seek clarification from my supervisor or the Human Resources Department whenever I have questions regarding the policies or expectations contained in this handbook.
8. I understand that failure to comply with the policies, procedures, and professional expectations outlined in this handbook may result in corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.
9. I acknowledge that I am responsible for remaining informed of future revisions, updates, or additions to the handbook that may be communicated during my employment.

Employee Certification

I acknowledge that I have received the Promise Academy Staff Handbook and understand that it is my responsibility to read, understand, and comply with the policies and expectations contained within it.

Promise Academy 2026-2027 Staff and Faculty Handbook

I understand that this handbook supersedes any previous employee handbook or written personnel guidelines unless otherwise stated.

I understand that my signature below acknowledges receipt and understanding of the handbook and does not constitute a contract of employment.

Employee Information

Employee Name (Print): _____

Position: _____

Acknowledgment

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Human Resources Verification

Received By: _____

Date Received: _____

Annual Acknowledgment

Employees may be required to acknowledge receipt of revised editions of the Staff Handbook each school year or whenever significant policy revisions occur.

Final Message from School Leadership

Thank You for Choosing Promise Academy

Promise Academy 2026-2027 Staff and Faculty Handbook

Thank you for joining the Promise Academy team. By choosing to serve our students, you have accepted an extraordinary responsibility and an incredible opportunity to make a lasting impact.

Our students deserve educators and professionals who believe in their limitless potential, who lead with integrity, who embrace continuous growth, and who are committed to excellence in every interaction. Together, we are building more than a school. We are building a community where every child is known, challenged, supported, and inspired to become a lifelong learner and world-ready leader.

We are grateful to have you as part of our team and look forward to the difference we will make together.

Welcome to Promise Academy. We are excited to do this important work with you.