



# SPIRIT'S HEART

## EXECUTIVE HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY

### MANUAL

Version 2026

**Director's Discretion:** Depending on staffing levels, enrollment, licensing requirements, safety concerns, employee performance history, business necessity, and operational needs, Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to make exceptions, modify procedures, approve or deny requests, or implement alternative solutions consistent with Company policy and applicable law.

**Management Discretion Clause:** Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Chapter 1 – Welcome to Spirit's Heart

- 1.1 Welcome Message
  - 1.2 About Spirit's Heart Childcare
  - 1.3 Mission Statement
  - 1.4 Vision Statement
  - 1.5 Core Values
  - 1.6 Employment Philosophy
  - 1.7 Equal Employment Opportunity
  - 1.8 At-Will Employment
  - 1.9 Handbook Disclaimer
  - 1.10 Management Rights
  - 1.11 Policy Interpretation
  - 1.12 Policy Revisions
  - 1.13 Open Door Communication
- 

## Chapter 2 – Employment & Onboarding

- 2.1 Purpose
  - 2.2 Employment Classifications
  - 2.3 Employment Eligibility
  - 2.4 Introductory Employment Period
  - 2.5 Orientation Program
  - 2.6 Continuing Education
  - 2.7 Training Investment
  - 2.8 Personnel Files
  - 2.9 Changes in Personal Information
  - 2.10 Professional Licenses & Certifications
  - 2.11 Internal Promotion Philosophy
  - 2.12 Employee Childcare Enrollment
  - 2.13 Employment Standards Acknowledgment
- 

## Chapter 3 – Professional Standards & Workplace Conduct

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

- 3.1 Purpose
  - 3.2 Professional Expectations
  - 3.3 Active Engagement Expectation
  - 3.4 Professional Communication
  - 3.5 Confidentiality
  - 3.6 Professional Appearance
  - 3.7 Identification Badges
  - 3.8 Cell Phone & Personal Device Policy
  - 3.9 Social Media Policy
  - 3.10 Solicitation & Distribution
  - 3.11 Gifts, Gratuities & Conflicts of Interest
  - 3.12 Professional Boundaries with Families
  - 3.13 Teamwork Expectations
  - 3.14 Ethics & Business Conduct
  - 3.15 Company Reputation
  - 3.16 Cultural Respect & Inclusion
- 

## **Chapter 4 – Attendance, Scheduling & Payroll**

- 4.1 Purpose
- 4.2 Attendance Expectations
- 4.3 Work Readiness
- 4.4 Work Schedules
- 4.5 Punctuality
- 4.6 Call-Off Procedures
- 4.7 No Call / No Show
- 4.8 Unscheduled Absences
- 4.9 Breaks & Meal Periods
- 4.10 Overtime
- 4.11 Timekeeping & Payroll Verification
- 4.12 Shift Coverage
- 4.13 Reliability Standards
- 4.14 Abandonment of Position
- 4.15 Professional Responsibility

**Attachment:** Payroll & Timekeeping Acknowledgment Form

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## **Chapter 5 – Child Safety & Licensing Compliance**

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- 5.1 Purpose
  - 5.2 Child First Standard
  - 5.3 Active Supervision
  - 5.4 Ratio Compliance
  - 5.5 Child Transitions
  - 5.6 Release of Children
  - 5.7 Safe Environment Responsibility
  - 5.8 Health & Sanitation
  - 5.9 Mandatory Reporting
  - 5.10 Child Guidance & Discipline
  - 5.11 Incident Reporting
  - 5.12 Emergency Response
  - 5.13 Licensing Compliance
  - 5.14 Cameras & Monitoring
  - 5.15 Child Safety Responsibility
  - 5.16 Challenging Behavior Intervention
  - 5.17 Developmentally Appropriate Practice
  - 5.18 Family Communication
  - 5.19 Community Resources
  - 5.20 Inclusion & Individual Accommodations
- 

## **Chapter 6 – Performance Management & Standards of Excellence**

- 6.1 Purpose
  - 6.2 Performance Philosophy
  - 6.3 Performance Expectations
  - 6.4 Coaching
  - 6.5 Performance Improvement Plans
  - 6.6 Corrective Action
  - 6.7 Immediate Separation of Employment
  - 6.8 Investigations
  - 6.9 Performance Evaluations
  - 6.10 Promotions
  - 6.11 Recognition Programs
  - 6.12 Open Communication
  - 6.13 Professional Development
  - 6.14 Standards of Excellence
  - 6.15 Management Rights
- 

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## **Chapter 7 – Compensation, Benefits & Financial Responsibility**

- 7.1 Purpose
  - 7.2 Compensation Philosophy
  - 7.3 Payroll
  - 7.4 Payroll Verification
  - 7.5 Payroll Overpayments
  - 7.6 Company Property Responsibility
  - 7.7 Training Investment
  - 7.8 Employee Childcare Benefits
  - 7.9 Payroll Deductions
  - 7.10 Uniforms
  - 7.11 Pay Advances
  - 7.12 Bonuses & Incentives
  - 7.13 Expense Reimbursement
  - 7.14 Financial Accountability
  - 7.15 Company Property Upon Separation
  - 7.16 Management Rights
- 

## **Chapter 8 – Technology, Confidentiality & Information Security**

- 8.1 Purpose
- 8.2 Company Technology
- 8.3 No Expectation of Privacy
- 8.4 Brightwheel Policy
- 8.5 Passwords & Account Security
- 8.6 Confidential Information
- 8.7 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy
- 8.8 Photography & Video Recording
- 8.9 Social Media & Online Communication
- 8.10 Email & Business Communication
- 8.11 Record Retention
- 8.12 Security Cameras
- 8.13 Remote Access & Mobile Devices
- 8.14 Reporting Security Incidents
- 8.15 Intellectual Property
- 8.16 Management Rights

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## Chapter 9 – Leave, Benefits & Employee Wellness

- 9.1 Purpose
  - 9.2 Paid & Unpaid Leave
  - 9.3 Requesting Time Off
  - 9.4 Blackout Dates
  - 9.5 Personal Leave
  - 9.6 Medical Absences
  - 9.7 Family & Medical Leave
  - 9.8 Bereavement
  - 9.9 Jury Duty & Legal Obligations
  - 9.10 Professional Development Leave
  - 9.11 Employee Wellness
  - 9.12 Employee Assistance
  - 9.13 Religious Accommodations
  - 9.14 Lactation Accommodations
  - 9.15 Employee Benefits
  - 9.16 Employee Conduct During Leave
  - 9.17 Return to Work
  - 9.18 Attendance Impact
  - 9.19 Management Rights
- 

## Chapter 10 – Separation of Employment

- 10.1 Purpose
- 10.2 Voluntary Resignation
- 10.3 Job Abandonment
- 10.4 Exit Responsibilities
- 10.5 Final Payroll
- 10.6 Company Property
- 10.7 Continuing Confidentiality
- 10.8 Non-Solicitation & Professional Ethics
- 10.9 Exit Interview
- 10.10 Rehire Eligibility
- 10.11 References & Employment Verification
- 10.12 Survival of Obligations
- 10.13 Management Rights
- 10.14 Handbook Acknowledgment

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# Appendices

- Appendix A** – Progressive Discipline Matrix
  - Appendix B** – Payroll & Timekeeping Acknowledgment
  - Appendix C** – Confidentiality Agreement
  - Appendix D** – Technology & Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment
  - Appendix E** – Social Media Agreement
  - Appendix F** – Training Investment Acknowledgment
  - Appendix G** – Company Property Receipt
  - Appendix H** – Employee Childcare Tuition Agreement
  - Appendix I** – Classroom Professional Standards Checklist
  - Appendix J** – Orientation Completion Checklist
  - Appendix K** – Texas Rising Star Standards & Staff Responsibilities
- 

## Employee Acknowledgment

- Employee Handbook Acknowledgment
- Employee Information
- Management Acknowledgment
- The Spirit's Heart Pledge

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

## Executive Edition

Effective Date: July 1, 2026

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## "Where Every Child Belongs"

### Kirby Campus

210-451-9553

### Schertz Campus

210-957-2110

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Copyright © 2026 Spirit's Heart Childcare Center, LLC

All Rights Reserved.

This handbook contains confidential and proprietary information belonging to Spirit's Heart Childcare Center, LLC ("SHCC"). No portion of this handbook may be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, or disclosed outside of the organization without written authorization from the Owner or Human Resources Department.

This handbook supersedes all previous employee handbooks, policy manuals, memorandums, and employment practices unless otherwise required by law or specifically authorized in writing by the Owner.

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# 1.1 WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to Spirit's Heart Childcare Center.

We are honored that you have chosen to become part of our organization.

Spirit's Heart was founded on the belief that every child deserves a safe environment, quality education, meaningful relationships, and opportunities to develop into confident leaders. Every Team Member contributes directly to that mission.

Our success is built upon professionalism, accountability, teamwork, integrity, and excellence.

We expect every Team Member to perform their responsibilities with compassion while maintaining the highest standards of safety, ethics, and operational excellence.

This handbook has been developed to establish clear expectations, promote consistency, and provide guidance regarding employment policies, procedures, and professional standards.

Every Team Member is expected to read, understand, and comply with the policies contained within this handbook.

Thank you for choosing to serve our children, families, and community.

Angela Ikpitah

Owner & Chief Executive Officer

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center, LLC

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# 1.2 ABOUT SPIRIT'S HEART CHILDCARE

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center is a faith-based early childhood education organization committed to providing exceptional care and educational experiences for children while supporting families and strengthening communities.

Founded in 2012 and expanded into a licensed childcare center in 2019, Spirit's Heart has continued to pursue excellence through high-quality programming, inclusion, family engagement, and professional development.

Our classrooms are designed to support the physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and spiritual development of every child while maintaining compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

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We believe that childcare is more than supervision—it is leadership, education, mentorship, and service.

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## 1.3 MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide exceptional childcare services by nurturing the whole child through education, compassion, faith, and excellence while partnering with families and serving our community with HEART.

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## 1.4 VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to become the premier childcare organization in Texas by creating safe learning environments where children thrive, families belong, professionals grow, and communities are strengthened.

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## 1.5 CORE VALUES

Every decision made within Spirit's Heart Childcare is guided by the following values:

### **H — Honor**

We honor God, children, families, coworkers, and our commitments.

### **E — Excellence**

We pursue excellence in teaching, service, communication, and leadership.

### **A — Accountability**

We accept responsibility for our actions and continuously seek improvement.

### **R — Respect**

We treat every child, family, visitor, and Team Member with dignity and professionalism.

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## T — Teamwork

We support one another because collaboration creates extraordinary outcomes for children.

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# 1.6 EMPLOYMENT PHILOSOPHY

Spirit's Heart Childcare believes that exceptional organizations are built by exceptional people.

We hire individuals who demonstrate integrity, professionalism, initiative, compassion, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

Employment with Spirit's Heart carries significant responsibility. Families entrust us with the care and development of their children, and every Team Member is expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively upon the organization at all times.

Performance is evaluated based upon professionalism, attendance, teamwork, initiative, child safety, communication, compliance with licensing requirements, and overall contribution to organizational success.

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# 1.7 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center provides equal employment opportunities to all applicants and Team Members in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

Employment decisions are based upon qualifications, experience, organizational needs, and the ability to perform the essential functions of the position.

Spirit's Heart prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation and is committed to maintaining a professional workplace where every Team Member is treated with dignity and respect.

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# 1.8 AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT

Employment with Spirit's Heart Childcare Center is voluntary and at-will.

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This means either the Team Member or Spirit's Heart Childcare Center may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause, except where otherwise prohibited by law or modified through a written agreement signed by the Owner.

Nothing contained within this handbook, any policy, orientation, training program, performance evaluation, or verbal communication creates an employment contract or guarantees employment for any specific duration.

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## 1.9 HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER

This handbook is intended to communicate general employment policies and professional expectations.

It is not intended to create contractual rights, guarantee employment, modify the at-will employment relationship, or establish mandatory procedures in every circumstance.

Spirit's Heart reserves the right to deviate from, interpret, suspend, revise, or eliminate any policy contained within this handbook at its sole discretion, consistent with applicable law.

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## 1.10 MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center retains the exclusive right to manage and operate its business.

Management reserves the authority to:

- Hire, transfer, promote, assign, or separate Team Members.
- Establish work schedules and staffing levels.
- Modify operational procedures.
- Implement new policies.
- Conduct investigations.
- Evaluate performance.
- Determine appropriate corrective action.

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- Interpret all handbook provisions.

No Director, Supervisor, or Team Member has authority to modify these rights unless specifically authorized in writing by the Owner.

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## 1.11 POLICY INTERPRETATION

Questions concerning any handbook provision should be directed to the Team Member's immediate supervisor or Human Resources.

The Owner or designated Human Resources representative shall have final authority regarding the interpretation and application of all policies contained within this handbook.

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## 1.12 POLICY REVISIONS

Because childcare regulations, employment laws, operational requirements, and organizational needs change periodically, Spirit's Heart reserves the right to revise, update, modify, suspend, or discontinue any policy at any time.

Revisions become effective immediately unless otherwise stated.

Continued employment following publication of revised policies constitutes acknowledgment and acceptance of those revisions.

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## 1.13 OPEN DOOR COMMUNICATION

Spirit's Heart encourages respectful, professional, and solution-focused communication.

Team Members are encouraged to address workplace concerns promptly through their immediate supervisor.

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If concerns cannot be resolved at that level, Team Members may elevate concerns through the chain of leadership or Human Resources without fear of unlawful retaliation.

Professional communication strengthens teamwork, improves operations, and supports the organization's commitment to excellence.

Every Team Member shares responsibility for maintaining a workplace built upon trust, accountability, respect, and collaboration.

## CHAPTER 2

# EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS, RECRUITMENT, ORIENTATION & INTRODUCTORY EMPLOYMENT

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## 2.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to establish consistent employment practices that promote professionalism, accountability, operational excellence, and compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws while supporting the mission of Spirit's Heart Childcare Center ("SHCC").

Every Team Member is expected to understand these policies as a condition of employment.

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## 2.2 EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Spirit's Heart Childcare classifies Team Members based upon operational needs, scheduled hours, and employment status.

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Employment classifications are established for administrative purposes only and do not alter the at-will employment relationship.

### **Full-Time Team Members**

Full-Time Team Members are regularly scheduled to work the hours established by management and may be eligible for company-sponsored benefits based upon company policy and business needs.

### **Part-Time Team Members**

Part-Time Team Members are scheduled according to operational needs and are not guaranteed a minimum number of hours.

### **Substitute or Floater Team Members**

Floaters and Substitute Team Members may be assigned to multiple classrooms, campuses, or operational areas based upon staffing requirements.

Assignments may change daily without advance notice.

### **Temporary Team Members**

Temporary Team Members are hired for specific projects, seasonal needs, enrollment increases, or temporary staffing shortages.

Temporary employment does not guarantee permanent employment.

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## **2.3 EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY**

All Team Members must successfully complete all hiring requirements before independently working with children.

Requirements may include but are not limited to:

- Employment Application
- Interview Process
- Employment Verification
- Criminal Background Check

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- FBI Fingerprinting (when applicable)
- Child Care Licensing Background Clearance
- Reference Verification
- Identity Verification
- Work Authorization Documentation
- Required Health Documentation
- CPR/First Aid Certification
- Required Orientation Training

Employment offers are contingent upon satisfactory completion of all required documentation and screenings.

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## 2.4 INTRODUCTORY EMPLOYMENT PERIOD

All newly hired Team Members are subject to a ninety (90) calendar day Introductory Employment Period.

The Introductory Employment Period allows both the Team Member and Spirit's Heart Childcare to evaluate overall job performance, attendance, professionalism, communication, initiative, classroom management, cultural alignment, and compliance with organizational standards.

During this period, Team Members are expected to actively participate in training, seek feedback, demonstrate flexibility, and consistently perform assigned responsibilities.

Completion of the Introductory Employment Period does not guarantee continued employment or alter the at-will employment relationship.

Spirit's Heart reserves the right to extend the Introductory Employment Period or separate employment at any time based upon operational needs or performance.

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## 2.5 ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Every newly hired Team Member must successfully complete the Spirit's Heart Orientation Program.

Orientation is designed to introduce Team Members to the organization's mission, culture, policies, operational procedures, licensing requirements, child safety standards, and professional expectations.

Orientation may include:

- Employee Handbook Review
- Licensing Standards
- Texas Rising Star Standards
- Emergency Procedures
- Active Supervision
- Child Abuse Prevention
- Confidentiality
- Brightwheel Training
- Classroom Procedures
- Parent Communication
- Health and Safety Procedures
- Company Culture
- Professional Standards

Management reserves the right to require additional orientation or retraining at any time.

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### 2.5.1 Texas Rising Star & Staff Orientation

All Team Members, including full-time, part-time, substitute teachers, volunteers, and temporary staff, shall complete a documented orientation before independently supervising children.

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Orientation includes, at a minimum:

- Texas Rising Star standards and expectations
- Spirit's Heart Childcare policies and procedures
- Developmental expectations for assigned age groups
- Daily classroom schedules and curriculum implementation
- Emergency procedures
- Child safety and active supervision

Documentation of orientation shall be maintained in the Team Member's personnel file.

## 2.6 CONTINUING EDUCATION

Professional growth is an expectation of employment.

Team Members are expected to complete all annual training required by:

- Texas Child Care Regulation
- Texas Rising Star
- CACFP
- Company Policy
- Licensing Agencies
- Management

Additional professional development may be assigned based upon classroom needs, leadership opportunities, or performance improvement initiatives.

Failure to complete required training may result in removal from the classroom, suspension of duties, or disciplinary action.

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## 2.7 TRAINING INVESTMENT

Spirit's Heart Childcare invests substantial financial and administrative resources into every newly hired Team Member.

These investments may include:

- Orientation
- Classroom Training
- Curriculum Instruction
- Administrative Processing
- Technology Setup
- Licensing Compliance
- CPR/First Aid Administration
- Staff Development
- Leadership Coaching
- Printed Materials and Resources

The estimated onboarding investment provided by Spirit's Heart Childcare is valued at Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) per newly hired Team Member.

Additional terms regarding training investment recovery, payroll authorizations, and repayment obligations are outlined within the Employment & Financial Responsibility Agreement executed separately from this handbook.

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## 2.8 PERSONNEL FILES

Spirit's Heart maintains confidential personnel records for each Team Member.

Personnel files may include:

- Employment Application
- Performance Reviews

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- Training Records
- Certifications
- Disciplinary Documentation
- Payroll Information
- Emergency Contacts
- Licensing Documentation

Personnel records remain the property of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

Team Members may request to review their personnel file by submitting a written request to Human Resources.

Confidential information relating to other Team Members will not be disclosed.

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## 2.9 CHANGES IN PERSONAL INFORMATION

Team Members are responsible for immediately notifying management of changes including but not limited to:

- Address
- Telephone Number
- Email Address
- Emergency Contact
- Legal Name
- Banking Information
- Driver's License
- Insurance Information
- Child Care Licensing Status

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Failure to maintain accurate records may delay payroll, benefits administration, licensing compliance, or emergency notifications.

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## 2.10 PROFESSIONAL LICENSES & CERTIFICATIONS

Team Members are responsible for maintaining all certifications, licenses, and qualifications required for their assigned position.

This includes timely renewal of CPR certifications, First Aid certifications, food handler permits, driver's licenses, and any other credential required by licensing authorities or Spirit's Heart Childcare.

Failure to maintain required qualifications may result in temporary reassignment, removal from duty, suspension, or separation of employment.

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## 2.11 INTERNAL PROMOTION PHILOSOPHY

Spirit's Heart Childcare believes leadership should be developed from within whenever possible.

Promotional opportunities are based upon:

- Attendance
- Professionalism
- Leadership
- Initiative
- Communication
- Child Safety Practices
- Teamwork

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- Performance Evaluations
- Organizational Needs

Length of employment alone does not guarantee advancement.

Promotion is earned through consistent demonstration of excellence and the ability to positively influence children, families, coworkers, and the organization.

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## 2.12 EMPLOYEE CHILDCARE ENROLLMENT

Team Members requesting childcare services for their own children must comply with all enrollment requirements, tuition policies, attendance procedures, and company expectations applicable to enrolled families.

Employee childcare benefits, discounts, payroll deductions, and scholarship opportunities are administered separately and may be modified or discontinued at the discretion of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

Enrollment of an employee's child does not create a contractual employment benefit and remains subject to classroom availability, licensing requirements, and operational needs.

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## 2.13 EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Employment with Spirit's Heart Childcare is based upon trust, professionalism, accountability, and a shared commitment to excellence.

Every Team Member is expected to actively contribute to a positive workplace culture by embracing continuous learning, supporting coworkers, protecting children, communicating professionally, and representing Spirit's Heart Childcare with integrity both on and off duty.

Failure to meet these expectations may result in coaching, performance improvement measures, disciplinary action, or separation of employment consistent with company policy and applicable law.

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# CHAPTER 3

## STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

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### 3.1 PURPOSE

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center ("SHCC") is committed to maintaining a professional, respectful, safe, and child-focused environment that reflects the organization's mission, values, and reputation.

Every Team Member is expected to demonstrate integrity, professionalism, accountability, and sound judgment while representing Spirit's Heart Childcare both during working hours and whenever representing the organization in the community.

Professional conduct is an essential function of every position.

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### 3.2 PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Every Team Member is expected to:

- Perform assigned duties safely and efficiently.
- Maintain a positive and cooperative attitude.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity.
- Communicate respectfully with children, families, visitors, and coworkers.
- Support organizational goals and leadership decisions.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Follow all licensing requirements and company policies.
- Protect company property and resources.

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- Report safety concerns immediately.
  - Conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively upon Spirit's Heart Childcare.
- 

## 3.3 ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATION

Children require constant interaction, supervision, encouragement, and support.

Team Members are expected to remain actively engaged with children throughout the workday by:

- Teaching
- Reading
- Playing
- Supervising
- Redirecting behaviors
- Encouraging learning
- Assisting with activities
- Supporting emotional development

Passive supervision is not consistent with Spirit's Heart standards.

Team Members should not remain seated for extended periods, gather for unnecessary conversations, or become distracted from child supervision responsibilities.

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## 3.4 PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Professional communication is expected at all times.

Team Members shall communicate honestly, respectfully, and professionally regardless of disagreement or circumstance.

The following behaviors are prohibited:

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- Gossip
- Yelling
- Profanity
- Threatening language
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Public criticism of coworkers
- Negative conversations in front of children or families

Concerns should be addressed privately through the appropriate chain of leadership.

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## 3.5 CONFIDENTIALITY

During employment, Team Members may have access to confidential information relating to:

- Children
- Families
- Medical information
- Assessments
- Employee records
- Business operations
- Financial information
- Licensing investigations
- Security procedures
- Curriculum

Confidential information shall not be discussed, copied, photographed, shared, removed from the premises, or disclosed to unauthorized individuals.

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This obligation continues after employment ends.

Unauthorized disclosure may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate separation of employment and any other remedies available by law.

---

## 3.6 PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

Every Team Member represents the Spirit's Heart brand.

Professional appearance promotes safety, confidence, and trust.

Team Members are expected to report to work:

- Wearing approved uniforms or approved professional attire.
- Maintaining appropriate personal hygiene.
- Wearing closed-toe shoes suitable for childcare environments.
- Wearing clothing that allows safe movement and interaction with children.
- Maintaining grooming standards consistent with a professional educational environment.

Management reserves the right to determine whether attire or appearance meets company standards.

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## 3.7 IDENTIFICATION BADGES

Identification badges may be required while on duty.

Badges remain company property and shall be worn as directed by management.

Lost badges must be reported immediately.

Replacement costs may be assessed in accordance with separate employment agreements and applicable law.

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## 3.8 CELL PHONE AND PERSONAL DEVICE POLICY

The primary responsibility of every Team Member is the supervision and care of children.

Personal cell phones, smart watches, earbuds, headphones, tablets, and other personal electronic devices shall not interfere with assigned duties or child supervision.

Personal devices should remain stored unless:

- Authorized by management
- Used for business purposes
- Used during approved breaks

Photography or video recording of children using personal devices is strictly prohibited unless specifically authorized by management.

---

## 3.9 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Spirit's Heart respects Team Members' personal use of social media while also protecting children, families, employees, and the organization.

Without written authorization, Team Members shall not:

- Post photographs of enrolled children.
- Discuss confidential workplace matters.
- Identify children or families.
- Post internal investigations.
- Share classroom information.
- Misrepresent Spirit's Heart Childcare.
- Use company logos or branding for personal business purposes.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Online conduct that negatively impacts the organization, violates confidentiality, or creates workplace disruption may result in disciplinary action.

---

## 3.10 SOLICITATION AND DISTRIBUTION

To maintain a professional work environment and minimize disruption, solicitation or distribution of literature during working time is prohibited unless approved by management.

This includes:

- Personal businesses
- Fundraisers
- Political campaigns
- Religious materials unrelated to company activities
- Sales of personal products or services

Nothing within this policy is intended to interfere with rights protected by applicable law.

---

## 3.11 GIFTS, GRATUITIES, AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Team Members shall avoid situations that create actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

Team Members shall not:

- Accept excessive gifts from families.
- Accept payments for preferential treatment.
- Conduct personal business during working hours.
- Use company resources for personal financial gain.

Any potential conflict of interest should be disclosed to management immediately.

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## 3.12 PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH FAMILIES

Healthy professional boundaries protect children, families, and Team Members.

Unless approved in writing by the Owner or Director, Team Members shall not:

- Babysit currently enrolled children.
- Transport enrolled children in personal vehicles.
- Borrow or loan money with families.
- Enter into financial agreements with families.
- Request personal favors from families.
- Share confidential employee information.
- Provide childcare services that create a conflict with company operations.

---

## 3.13 TEAMWORK EXPECTATION

Every Team Member shares responsibility for maintaining a positive workplace culture.

Professional teamwork includes:

- Offering assistance when needed.
- Maintaining respectful communication.
- Supporting classroom transitions.
- Accepting constructive feedback.
- Contributing to problem-solving.

The phrase "That's not my job" does not reflect Spirit's Heart values.

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All Team Members are expected to contribute to the overall success of the organization.

---

## 3.14 ETHICS AND BUSINESS CONDUCT

Spirit's Heart expects every Team Member to demonstrate honesty, fairness, integrity, and ethical decision-making.

Falsification of records, dishonesty, theft, misrepresentation, licensing violations, inappropriate discipline of children, abuse, neglect, retaliation, or intentional misconduct may result in immediate disciplinary action, including separation of employment.

---

## 3.15 COMPANY REPUTATION

Every Team Member serves as an ambassador of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

Professional conduct is expected both on and off duty whenever a Team Member's actions could reasonably be associated with the organization.

Team Members are expected to protect the reputation, mission, and values of Spirit's Heart through professionalism, integrity, respectful communication, and ethical behavior.

The continued success of Spirit's Heart depends upon the trust placed in us by children, families, employees, regulators, and the communities we serve.

## 3.16 Cultural Respect & Inclusion

Team Members shall respect and support the diverse cultures, languages, family structures, beliefs, and backgrounds represented within Spirit's Heart Childcare. Staff are expected to create welcoming classrooms that celebrate diversity while treating every child and family with dignity, equity, and respect.

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# CHAPTER 4

## ATTENDANCE, SCHEDULING, WORK HOURS & RELIABILITY

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### 4.1 PURPOSE

The quality of care provided by Spirit's Heart Childcare Center ("SHCC") depends upon dependable, consistent, and professional Team Members.

Every Team Member plays a critical role in maintaining classroom ratios, protecting children's safety, supporting coworkers, and delivering exceptional service to families.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential functions of every position.

---

### 4.2 ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

Team Members are expected to report to work as scheduled and remain at work for their entire assigned shift unless authorized by management.

Reliable attendance is a condition of employment and will be considered during:

- Performance evaluations
- Wage reviews
- Leadership opportunities
- Promotions
- Continued employment

Attendance patterns that negatively impact operations may result in corrective action.

---

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

## 4.3 WORK READINESS

Reporting to work means arriving fully prepared to begin assigned duties immediately at the scheduled start time.

Work readiness includes:

- Wearing the approved uniform
- Maintaining professional appearance
- Storing personal belongings
- Reviewing classroom assignments
- Preparing materials
- Being physically and mentally prepared to supervise children

Personal activities should be completed before the scheduled start of the workday.

---

## 4.4 WORK SCHEDULES

Work schedules are established according to enrollment, staffing needs, licensing ratios, business operations, and organizational requirements.

Schedules may be modified at any time based upon operational needs.

No Team Member is guaranteed a specific schedule, classroom assignment, number of hours, or campus assignment unless otherwise required by written agreement.

Management reserves the right to:

- Adjust schedules
- Change classroom assignments
- Transfer Team Members
- Require additional hours
- Reduce hours

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- Assign float responsibilities

based upon business necessity.

---

## 4.5 PUNCTUALITY

Every minute matters in childcare.

Late arrivals impact:

- Child safety
- Classroom ratios
- Licensing compliance
- Parent satisfaction
- Coworker responsibilities

Team Members are expected to arrive early enough to begin working at their scheduled start time.

Repeated tardiness or patterns of lateness may result in coaching, written documentation, performance improvement plans, disciplinary action, or separation of employment.

---

## 4.6 CALL-OFF PROCEDURES

Team Members who are unable to report to work are responsible for personally notifying their immediate supervisor or Director as soon as reasonably possible.

Whenever possible, notice should be provided no less than two (2) hours before the scheduled shift.

Text messages to coworkers, social media messages, or communication through another Team Member do not satisfy this requirement unless approved by management.

Management may request documentation supporting an absence when permitted by applicable law.

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## 4.7 NO CALL / NO SHOW

Failure to report to work without notifying management creates significant operational challenges and may place classroom ratios and child safety at risk.

A Team Member who fails to report to work and fails to notify management may be considered absent without authorization.

Multiple No Call / No Show occurrences or job abandonment may result in immediate separation of employment.

Spirit's Heart reserves the right to determine whether circumstances justify continuation of employment.

---

## 4.8 UNSCHEDULED ABSENCES

While Spirit's Heart recognizes that emergencies occur, frequent unscheduled absences disrupt operations and negatively impact children, families, and coworkers.

Attendance patterns including repeated absences before or after weekends, holidays, vacations, paydays, or scheduled events may be reviewed as part of overall performance.

Management may require attendance improvement plans when reliability concerns exist.

---

## 4.9 BREAKS AND MEAL PERIODS

Meal periods and rest breaks are scheduled according to operational needs and applicable law.

Team Members are expected to:

- Return promptly from breaks
- Remain available during paid breaks when required
- Follow Director instructions regarding break schedules

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Unauthorized extension of breaks or leaving the premises without approval may result in disciplinary action.

---

## 4.10 OVERTIME

Non-exempt Team Members must accurately record all hours worked.

Overtime must receive advance approval from management.

Working unauthorized overtime, failing to accurately record time worked, or altering time records is prohibited.

All hours worked will be compensated in accordance with applicable law; however, unauthorized overtime may result in corrective action.

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## 4.11 TIMEKEEPING

### 4.11 TIMEKEEPING, PAYROLL VERIFICATION & EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center is committed to maintaining accurate payroll records and compensating Team Members for all authorized hours worked.

Timekeeping is a shared responsibility between the Team Member and Management. Every Team Member is solely responsible for accurately recording, reviewing, and verifying their own time entries each pay period.

#### **Team Member Responsibilities**

Every Team Member is responsible for:

- Clocking in and out for every scheduled shift.
- Recording meal periods and breaks when applicable.

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- Reviewing time records regularly throughout the pay period.
- Immediately notifying Management of any missed punches, incorrect entries, or payroll discrepancies.
- Completing all required Time Adjustment Forms before payroll processing deadlines.

No Team Member may record time for another Team Member or permit another individual to record time on their behalf.

---

## **Payroll Verification**

Prior to payroll processing, Team Members are expected to review and verify the accuracy of their recorded hours.

Failure to review or report missing or incorrect time entries before the established payroll deadline may result in payroll being processed based upon the hours available in the company's official timekeeping system.

Payroll corrections submitted after payroll has been processed will be reviewed by Management and, if approved, may be processed on the next regularly scheduled payroll or through another payroll adjustment process determined by the Company.

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## **Missed Punches**

Missed punches are the responsibility of the Team Member.

Repeated missed punches, failure to maintain accurate time records, or failure to timely report discrepancies may result in coaching, written documentation, performance improvement measures, or disciplinary action.

---

## **Payroll Questions**

Questions regarding payroll should be submitted to Management no later than twenty-four (24) hours after receiving a paycheck.

Spirit's Heart Childcare will investigate reported discrepancies and make any necessary corrections in accordance with applicable law and company payroll procedures.

---

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

## **Falsification of Time Records**

Knowingly falsifying time records, altering another Team Member's time, requesting another individual to clock in or out on one's behalf, or intentionally misrepresenting hours worked is considered serious misconduct and may result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including separation of employment.

---

## **Management Rights**

Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to audit, review, verify, and correct all time records, payroll records, schedules, and attendance documentation.

Nothing in this policy relieves a Team Member of the responsibility to accurately maintain and verify their own time records.

Maintaining accurate time records is considered an essential job responsibility and is a factor in performance evaluations, promotions, and continued employment.

---

# **4.12 SHIFT COVERAGE**

Team Members are expected to fulfill their assigned schedules.

Shift trades or schedule changes require prior approval from management.

Obtaining another Team Member to work a shift without Director approval does not relieve the originally scheduled Team Member of responsibility.

Management reserves the right to deny schedule changes based upon operational needs.

---

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## 4.13 RELIABILITY AS A PERFORMANCE STANDARD

Spirit's Heart values Team Members who consistently demonstrate:

- Dependability
- Initiative
- Flexibility
- Professional communication
- Accountability

Reliable Team Members strengthen classrooms, improve family confidence, support coworkers, and contribute to organizational success.

Attendance and reliability are significant factors considered for promotions, leadership opportunities, compensation reviews, bonuses, and continued employment.

---

## 4.14 ABANDONMENT OF POSITION

A Team Member who leaves the workplace during a scheduled shift without authorization, refuses an assigned classroom or work assignment, walks off the job, or otherwise abandons assigned responsibilities may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate separation of employment.

Nothing in this policy limits management's discretion to consider individual circumstances.

---

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

## 4.15 PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Every Team Member accepts responsibility for contributing to a stable, dependable, and child-focused work environment.

Choosing reliability demonstrates respect for:

- The children entrusted to our care
- The families we serve
- Our coworkers
- Our mission
- Our professional reputation

Spirit's Heart Childcare believes that consistency builds trust, and trust is the foundation of exceptional childcare.

---

## MANAGEMENT RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, administer, modify, or deviate from any attendance, scheduling, or work-hour policy based upon business needs, staffing requirements, licensing obligations, emergencies, or other operational considerations, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.

No provision contained within this chapter creates a guarantee of hours, continued employment, or any contractual right.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

# PAYROLL & TIMEKEEPING ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus: ☐ Kirby ☐ Schertz ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Hire Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Spirit's Heart Childcare Center ("SHCC") is committed to paying every Team Member accurately and timely for all authorized hours worked. To ensure payroll accuracy and operational efficiency, every Team Member shares responsibility for maintaining complete and accurate time records.

By signing this acknowledgment, I understand and agree to the following:

## 1. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

I am solely responsible for accurately recording my own work hours each workday.

I understand that I may not ask another Team Member to clock me in or out, nor may I clock another Team Member in or out under any circumstance.

---

## 2. DAILY TIME REVIEW

I understand that it is my responsibility to review my time entries on a regular basis and ensure that:

- My clock-in times are accurate.
- My clock-out times are accurate.
- My breaks and meal periods are properly recorded.
- My total hours accurately reflect the time I actually worked.

---

**Management Discretion Clause:** Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.

### 3. MISSED PUNCHES

If I forget to clock in or clock out, I agree to notify Management immediately and complete any required Time Adjustment Form before payroll is processed.

I understand that repeated missed punches may result in coaching, written documentation, disciplinary action, or additional training.

---

### 4. PAYROLL DEADLINES

I understand that payroll is processed according to established company deadlines.

If I fail to review my time records or fail to report missing or incorrect entries before payroll is processed, my paycheck may be issued based upon the hours contained in the official company timekeeping system at the time payroll is finalized.

Approved payroll corrections will be processed on the next regular payroll cycle or through another payroll adjustment process determined by Spirit's Heart Childcare.

---

### 5. PAYROLL DISCREPANCIES

I agree to review my paycheck immediately upon receipt.

Any payroll concern or discrepancy must be reported to Management within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving payment.

Failure to promptly report discrepancies may delay payroll corrections while the matter is investigated.

---

### 6. FALSIFICATION OF TIME RECORDS

I understand that the following actions are considered serious misconduct:

- Recording time not actually worked.
- Altering time records.
- Clocking in or out for another Team Member.

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- Requesting another Team Member to clock me in or out.
- Intentionally failing to record work hours.
- Submitting false Time Adjustment Forms.

Such conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment and may subject me to repayment obligations or other legal remedies where applicable.

---

## 7. SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY

Spirit's Heart Childcare agrees to:

- Provide an approved timekeeping system.
- Process payroll based upon available verified records.
- Investigate reported payroll concerns.
- Correct verified payroll errors in accordance with applicable law.

I agree to:

- Record my time accurately.
  - Review my records regularly.
  - Report discrepancies promptly.
  - Cooperate with payroll investigations.
- 

## 8. PAYROLL AUTHORIZATION

I authorize Spirit's Heart Childcare Center to rely upon the official company timekeeping records and any approved Time Adjustment Forms submitted by me when calculating payroll.

I understand that payroll cannot be reconstructed from memory when I fail to properly record my hours or timely report missing entries.

---

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

## 9. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

I understand that maintaining accurate time records is an essential job function and a condition of employment.

My reliability, professionalism, and attention to detail in maintaining payroll records may be considered during performance evaluations, promotions, wage reviews, and continued employment.

---

## EMPLOYEE CERTIFICATION

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Spirit's Heart Childcare Payroll & Timekeeping Policy.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding this policy.

I agree to comply with these requirements as a condition of my employment.

I understand that failure to comply with these requirements may result in coaching, corrective action, disciplinary action, payroll processing delays for unverified corrections, or termination of employment, consistent with company policy and applicable law.

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**Employee Name (Print):**

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**Employee Signature:**

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**Date:**

**Director/Management Representative:**

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**Signature:**

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**Date:**

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

## HR USE ONLY

☐ Reviewed During Orientation

☐ Copy Provided to Employee

☐ Filed in Personnel File

☐ Questions Answered

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 5

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

# CHILD SAFETY, ACTIVE SUPERVISION & LICENSING COMPLIANCE

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## 5.1 PURPOSE

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center ("SHCC") is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, educational, and developmentally appropriate environment where every child is protected physically, emotionally, socially, and mentally.

Child safety is the highest priority of Spirit's Heart Childcare and supersedes convenience, personal preference, scheduling, productivity, and all other operational considerations.

Every Team Member shares responsibility for protecting children and maintaining full compliance with all applicable childcare licensing requirements.

Failure to follow child safety policies may result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including separation of employment.

---

## 5.2 CHILD FIRST STANDARD

Every decision made by a Team Member should begin with one question:

**"Is this in the best interest of the child?"**

If the answer is uncertain, the Team Member is expected to immediately seek guidance from Management before proceeding.

The safety, dignity, supervision, development, and well-being of every child shall remain the primary responsibility of every Team Member.

---

## 5.3 ACTIVE SUPERVISION POLICY

Active supervision is required at all times.

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Children shall remain under continuous sight and sound supervision appropriate for their age, developmental level, and individual needs.

Active supervision requires Team Members to:

- Position themselves to observe all children.
- Continuously scan the environment.
- Listen for signs of distress or unsafe behavior.
- Move throughout the classroom and playground.
- Anticipate potential hazards.
- Interact and engage with children.
- Count children during every transition.

Passive supervision is prohibited.

Watching children while distracted by personal conversations, cell phones, computers, paperwork, or other activities does not satisfy Spirit's Heart supervision standards.

---

## 5.4 RATIO COMPLIANCE

Spirit's Heart shall maintain all required child-to-caregiver ratios established by licensing authorities.

No Team Member may:

- Leave a classroom unattended.
- Leave another Team Member out of ratio.
- Accept additional children beyond licensing limits.
- Change classrooms without authorization when doing so would affect ratios.

Every Team Member has the authority and responsibility to immediately notify Management if ratios are in danger of being exceeded.

Protecting ratios is everyone's responsibility.

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---

## 5.5 CHILD TRANSITIONS

Transitions create increased safety risks.

Every Team Member shall account for every child before, during, and after every transition.

Transitions include:

- Playground
- Restroom
- Hallways
- Meals
- Naptime
- Field trips
- Classroom changes
- Outdoor activities

Children shall never be assumed to be present.

Visual verification and physical counts shall occur during every transition.

---

## 5.6 RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children shall only be released to individuals authorized by the parent or legal guardian and verified through company procedures.

Identification may be required before releasing any child.

If there is uncertainty regarding authorization, the child shall remain in Spirit's Heart's care until proper verification is obtained.

The inconvenience of delaying release is preferable to releasing a child to an unauthorized individual.

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## 5.7 SAFE ENVIRONMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Every Team Member is responsible for maintaining a safe environment.

Unsafe conditions shall be corrected immediately or reported to Management without delay.

Examples include:

- Spills
- Broken equipment
- Damaged toys
- Exposed electrical outlets
- Open gates
- Unlocked exterior doors
- Hazardous materials
- Choking hazards

If you see a safety concern, you own the responsibility to act.

---

## 5.8 HEALTH & SANITATION

Every Team Member shall maintain a clean and sanitary environment consistent with licensing standards and company procedures.

Responsibilities include:

- Hand washing
- Surface sanitizing
- Toy disinfecting

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- Diaper changing procedures
- Food handling procedures
- Daily classroom cleaning
- Illness prevention practices

Universal precautions shall be followed whenever exposure to bodily fluids may occur.

---

## 5.9 MANDATORY REPORTING

Every Team Member is legally and ethically responsible for protecting children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, or endangerment.

Any Team Member who suspects abuse, neglect, inappropriate conduct, or unsafe practices shall immediately report concerns according to applicable law and company policy.

No Team Member shall suffer retaliation for making a good faith report.

Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect may result in disciplinary action and may expose the Team Member to personal legal responsibility.

---

## 5.10 CHILD GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE

Spirit's Heart Childcare utilizes positive guidance techniques designed to teach, redirect, encourage, and develop appropriate behavior.

Corporal punishment, humiliation, intimidation, threats, ridicule, physical force, withholding food, or any inappropriate discipline technique is strictly prohibited.

Team Members are expected to model patience, respect, consistency, and professionalism while supporting children's social and emotional development.

---

## 5.11 INCIDENT REPORTING

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Any injury, accident, unusual event, licensing concern, missing child incident, behavioral concern, or safety issue shall be documented immediately and reported to Management.

Incident reports shall be completed accurately, honestly, and before the end of the Team Member's scheduled shift unless otherwise directed.

Failure to report an incident or falsification of incident documentation may result in immediate disciplinary action.

---

## 5.12 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Every Team Member shall participate in emergency preparedness training and follow established emergency procedures.

Emergencies may include:

- Fire
- Medical emergencies
- Severe weather
- Lockdown
- Evacuation
- Missing child
- Utility failure
- Security threats

During emergencies, Team Members shall remain calm, follow Management instructions, protect children, and prioritize safety above all other responsibilities.

---

## 5.13 LICENSING COMPLIANCE

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Every Team Member shares responsibility for maintaining compliance with childcare licensing standards, Texas Rising Star requirements, CACFP requirements, and Spirit's Heart operational procedures.

Team Members shall cooperate fully with licensing representatives, investigators, auditors, and authorized regulatory agencies.

Knowingly providing false information, concealing violations, or failing to cooperate with investigations is considered serious misconduct.

---

## 5.14 CAMERAS & MONITORING

Spirit's Heart Childcare utilizes security cameras and monitoring systems to enhance child safety, protect Team Members, support investigations, improve quality, and strengthen operational excellence.

Team Members should have no expectation of privacy in classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, common areas, or other monitored locations except where prohibited by law.

Camera systems remain the exclusive property of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

Unauthorized access, recording, copying, distribution, or tampering with surveillance equipment or recordings is strictly prohibited.

---

## 5.15 CHILD SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Every Team Member has both the authority and obligation to stop unsafe behavior immediately.

If a Team Member observes conduct that may place a child at risk, they are expected to intervene when appropriate, notify Management immediately, and document concerns according to company procedures.

No Team Member will be disciplined for acting in good faith to protect the health, safety, or welfare of a child.

Spirit's Heart Childcare believes that trust is earned through consistent protection of children.

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Every Team Member is entrusted with that responsibility every moment of every workday.

## 5.16 CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION POLICY

### Purpose

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center ("SHCC") is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate learning environment for every child. We recognize that children communicate through behavior and that challenging behaviors are opportunities to teach, guide, and support rather than punish.

The goal of this policy is to protect the safety of all children and Team Members while partnering with families to develop appropriate interventions that promote self-regulation, social-emotional growth, and long-term success.

Spirit's Heart Childcare will maintain ongoing documented communication with parents regarding behavioral interventions, strategies implemented, progress made, and recommendations for additional support when appropriate.

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### Guiding Principles

Spirit's Heart Childcare is committed to:

- Maintaining the dignity and respect of every child.
- Using positive guidance and redirection techniques.
- Teaching self-regulation and emotional awareness.
- Partnering with families to support behavioral success.
- Providing consistent interventions based on the individual needs of the child.
- Protecting the safety of all children, Team Members, and visitors.

Corporal punishment, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, verbal abuse, or any practice prohibited by licensing regulations is strictly prohibited.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

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## Immediate Safety Intervention

When a child's behavior presents an immediate risk of harm to themselves, other children, Team Members, or Company property, staff shall intervene immediately using the least restrictive intervention necessary to restore safety.

Staff may:

- Redirect the child.
- Remove unsafe objects.
- Relocate the child to a designated calming area.
- Reduce environmental stimulation.
- Provide emotional coaching and support.

At no time shall a child be placed in seclusion or involuntarily confined alone in a room or area from which the child is physically prevented from leaving.

A Team Member shall remain with the child at all times while the child is utilizing a calming space.

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## Calming Area

Each classroom shall maintain a designated calming area designed to assist children in self-regulation.

The calming area shall:

- Remain visible to staff.
- Be free from hazards.
- Contain developmentally appropriate calming materials.
- Never be used as punishment.

The purpose of the calming area is to provide emotional support and assist children in safely returning to classroom activities.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

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## Incident Notification

Whenever a child demonstrates behavior that results in injury, property damage, repeated classroom disruption, or presents a safety concern, the Team Member shall immediately notify the Director or designated Administrator.

Management may:

- Observe the child.
- Provide classroom support.
- Contact the child's parent or guardian.
- Modify staffing assignments.
- Recommend additional interventions.

---

## Documentation

Behavior incidents shall be documented whenever appropriate using the Company's Incident Report or Behavior Documentation Form.

Documentation should include:

- Date and time
- Objective description of the behavior
- Antecedent or triggering event
- Intervention used
- Child's response
- Injuries or property damage, if any
- Individuals notified

Documentation shall remain factual, objective, and free from personal opinions or diagnoses.

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**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

# Family Partnership

Spirit's Heart believes that positive behavior support is most effective when families and educators work together.

Behavior concerns shall be communicated respectfully and in a timely manner.

Conversations with families should focus on:

- Observed behaviors
- Strengths of the child
- Successful strategies
- Opportunities for collaboration

Staff shall remain sensitive to cultural differences, family values, developmental expectations, and individual circumstances.

---

## Individualized Behavior Support Plan

When challenging behaviors become persistent or significantly interfere with the child's ability to safely participate in the program, Management may recommend the development of an Individualized Behavior Support Plan.

The plan may be developed collaboratively with:

- Parents or guardians
  - Classroom teachers
  - Director
  - Regional leadership
  - Early intervention specialists
  - Therapists or other partnering agencies, when appropriate and authorized by the family
- 

## Behavior Support Plan Components

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Each Behavior Support Plan may include:

- Description of the behavior of concern
- Frequency and duration
- Known triggers or antecedents
- Prevention strategies
- Environmental modifications
- Positive reinforcement strategies
- De-escalation techniques
- Crisis response procedures
- Communication expectations
- Progress monitoring schedule

Behavior Support Plans are living documents and may be modified as the child's needs change.

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## Ongoing Review

Teaching staff and Management shall regularly review documented behaviors and intervention strategies to evaluate effectiveness.

Adjustments may be made based on:

- Child progress
  - Family input
  - Classroom observations
  - Specialist recommendations
  - Safety considerations
- 

## Referrals for Additional Support

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

When appropriate, Spirit's Heart may recommend that families seek additional evaluations or community resources to support the child's development.

Recommendations are intended to provide support and shall not be interpreted as a diagnosis or guarantee of services.

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## Management Rights

Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to implement immediate safety measures, modify classroom assignments, require additional meetings, request outside consultation, temporarily adjust participation in certain activities, or take other reasonable actions necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of children, Team Members, and the learning environment, consistent with applicable law and licensing regulations.

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## 5.17 Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Team Members shall provide care, supervision, and instruction that reflects each child's age, developmental level, individual strengths, and unique learning needs.

Children shall never be expected to perform tasks beyond their developmental abilities, and classroom expectations shall promote positive growth through encouragement, exploration, and individualized support.

## 5.18 Family Communication

Spirit's Heart Childcare believes families are essential partners in every child's education. Team Members are expected to maintain ongoing communication regarding children's development, behavior, achievements, health, and classroom experiences through approved communication methods including Brightwheel, written reports, conferences, email, telephone calls, and parent meetings. Communication shall remain professional, respectful, and documented when appropriate.

## 5.19 Community Resources

Spirit's Heart Childcare maintains current community resources and referral information to assist families with educational, developmental, health, intervention, and family support services.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Team Members should direct families requesting assistance to Management for appropriate resources and referrals.

## **5.20 Inclusion & Individual Accommodations**

Spirit's Heart Childcare is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment that respects each child's abilities, culture, language, and individual needs. Reasonable accommodations, individualized strategies, and collaboration with families and specialists will be implemented whenever appropriate to promote successful participation in the program.

### **Spirit's Heart Philosophy**

Every child deserves to be seen before they are corrected, understood before they are judged, and supported before they are labeled.

We believe behavior is communication, relationships create change, and every child is capable of growth when surrounded by consistency, compassion, accountability, and love.

## **CHAPTER 6**

# **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, CORRECTIVE ACTION & STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE**

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

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## 6.1 PURPOSE

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center ("SHCC") is committed to creating a culture of excellence through coaching, accountability, continuous learning, and professional development.

Performance management is designed to help Team Members succeed, strengthen organizational effectiveness, improve child outcomes, and maintain the highest standards of professionalism.

Corrective action is intended to improve performance rather than punish Team Members; however, SHCC reserves the right to separate employment whenever it determines continued employment is not in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization.

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## 6.2 PERFORMANCE PHILOSOPHY

Spirit's Heart believes that exceptional childcare begins with exceptional Team Members.

Performance is evaluated based upon the Team Member's ability to consistently demonstrate:

- Professionalism
- Reliability
- Initiative
- Teamwork
- Child Safety
- Classroom Management
- Licensing Compliance
- Parent Communication
- Integrity
- Leadership

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Performance evaluations consider the overall contribution of the Team Member rather than isolated events.

---

## 6.3 PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

Every Team Member is expected to:

Perform assigned duties efficiently.

Maintain organized classrooms.

Arrive prepared for work.

Complete assigned documentation accurately and timely.

Communicate professionally.

Support coworkers.

Accept coaching.

Take initiative.

Represent Spirit's Heart positively.

Protect children at all times.

Consistent demonstration of these expectations contributes to organizational success and leadership opportunities.

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## 6.4 COACHING

Coaching is an ongoing process designed to strengthen performance through communication, guidance, education, and support.

Coaching may occur at any time and may be verbal, written, demonstrated, or documented.

Coaching conversations become part of the Team Member's overall performance history and may be considered during future evaluations.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

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## 6.5 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

When performance concerns exist, Management may implement a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).

A Performance Improvement Plan may include:

Specific performance expectations.

Required training.

Measurable objectives.

Observation periods.

Follow-up meetings.

Additional coaching.

Failure to demonstrate satisfactory improvement may result in additional corrective action, reassignment, or separation of employment.

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## 6.6 CORRECTIVE ACTION

Spirit's Heart reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of corrective action based upon the seriousness of the conduct, prior performance history, operational needs, and surrounding circumstances.

Corrective action may include:

Professional Coaching

Documented Counseling

Written Warning

Final Written Warning

Performance Improvement Plan

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Administrative Leave

Suspension

Separation of Employment

Nothing in this policy requires Management to follow any specific sequence of corrective action.

Management may bypass any step whenever it determines immediate action is appropriate.

---

## 6.7 IMMEDIATE SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT

The following conduct may result in immediate separation of employment without prior coaching or progressive discipline:

Child abuse or neglect.

Leaving children unsupervised.

Falsification of company records.

Falsification of time records.

Theft.

Violence or threats of violence.

Possession of illegal drugs or alcohol while working.

Working under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.

Intentional licensing violations.

Dishonesty during investigations.

Unauthorized removal of company property.

Sleeping while responsible for children.

Unauthorized photography or recording of children.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Refusal to perform essential job responsibilities.

Serious misconduct that jeopardizes the safety, reputation, or operations of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

This list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

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## 6.8 INVESTIGATIONS

Spirit's Heart reserves the right to investigate any allegation involving misconduct, policy violations, licensing concerns, safety issues, payroll concerns, harassment, discrimination, theft, or other operational matters.

Team Members are expected to cooperate fully and honestly during investigations.

Providing false information, withholding information, destroying evidence, retaliating against witnesses, or interfering with an investigation may result in disciplinary action up to and including separation of employment.

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## 6.9 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Performance evaluations may be conducted periodically at the discretion of Management.

Evaluations may consider:

Attendance

Professionalism

Initiative

Child interactions

Parent feedback

Teamwork

Leadership

Documentation

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Classroom organization

Compliance

Performance evaluations do not guarantee wage increases, promotions, bonuses, or continued employment.

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## 6.10 PROMOTIONS

Spirit's Heart promotes individuals who consistently demonstrate leadership, accountability, professionalism, and organizational commitment.

Promotions are based upon:

Qualifications

Performance

Attendance

Initiative

Leadership

Business needs

Organizational structure

Length of employment alone does not create an entitlement to promotion.

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## 6.11 RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Spirit's Heart believes excellence should be recognized.

Management may recognize outstanding Team Members through:

Employee of the Month

Performance bonuses

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Gift cards

Professional development opportunities

Leadership assignments

Merit increases

Public recognition

Additional paid responsibilities

Recognition programs remain discretionary and may be modified or discontinued at any time.

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## 6.12 OPEN COMMUNICATION

Team Members are encouraged to seek clarification, ask questions, request additional training, and discuss performance concerns with Management.

Spirit's Heart believes problems are best solved through respectful communication, accountability, and collaboration.

Retaliation against a Team Member who raises a good-faith concern is prohibited.

---

## 6.13 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Learning is an ongoing expectation of employment.

Management may require Team Members to participate in:

Additional training

Leadership development

Licensing updates

Classroom observations

Mentoring

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Continuing education

Professional reading assignments

Training time may be mandatory and compensated in accordance with applicable law and company policy.

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## 6.14 STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Spirit's Heart Childcare does not measure success solely by minimum licensing compliance.

Excellence is demonstrated through consistent actions that exceed expectations.

Every Team Member is expected to:

Leave classrooms better than they found them.

Protect children without exception.

Communicate professionally.

Support coworkers willingly.

Take ownership of problems.

Represent the organization positively.

Continuously improve their knowledge and skills.

Every action contributes to the trust families place in Spirit's Heart Childcare.

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## 6.15 MANAGEMENT DISCRETION

Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the exclusive right to determine performance expectations, evaluate performance, implement coaching strategies, issue corrective action, modify job responsibilities, establish performance standards, and make employment decisions consistent with applicable law.

Nothing contained within this chapter creates a contractual right to coaching, progressive discipline, promotion, continued employment, or any particular corrective process.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Management retains sole discretion to determine the action necessary to protect children, families, Team Members, and the organization.

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# THE SPIRIT'S HEART STANDARD

A Spirit's Heart Professional does not ask,

"What is the minimum I have to do?"

A Spirit's Heart Professional asks,

"How can I leave this classroom, this child, this family, and this organization better than I found it?"

That standard defines our culture, our leadership, and our commitment to excellence.

## CHAPTER 7

# COMPENSATION, PAYROLL, BENEFITS & FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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## 7.1 PURPOSE

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center ("SHCC") is committed to providing accurate and timely compensation while maintaining responsible financial stewardship and operational excellence.

This chapter establishes the policies governing wages, payroll administration, benefits, employee financial responsibilities, payroll deductions, training investments, childcare benefits, and company property.

Every Team Member is expected to understand and comply with these policies as a condition of employment.

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**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

## 7.2 COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY

Spirit's Heart Childcare believes compensation should reflect:

- Professionalism
- Reliability
- Performance
- Leadership
- Experience
- Education
- Certifications
- Organizational contribution

Compensation is reviewed based upon business needs, financial performance, market conditions, licensing requirements, and individual performance.

Nothing contained in this handbook guarantees wage increases, bonuses, incentives, or future compensation adjustments.

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## 7.3 PAYROLL

Payroll is processed according to the Company's established payroll schedule.

Team Members are responsible for ensuring:

- Accurate time entries
- Updated banking information
- Correct personal information
- Timely submission of payroll corrections

Payroll dates may be modified due to banking holidays, emergencies, system failures, or operational circumstances.

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## 7.4 PAYROLL VERIFICATION

Every Team Member is responsible for reviewing and verifying his or her own payroll information.

Payroll will be processed using the official company timekeeping system and approved payroll documentation.

Failure to review time records before payroll processing may delay payroll corrections until the next scheduled payroll cycle or another correction process determined by Management.

Payroll cannot be reconstructed solely from memory when required documentation has not been submitted.

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## 7.5 PAYROLL OVERPAYMENTS

Payroll errors occasionally occur.

If Spirit's Heart determines that a Team Member has received an overpayment of wages, benefits, reimbursements, bonuses, or other compensation, the Team Member agrees to cooperate in correcting the overpayment.

Recovery may occur through:

- Payroll adjustment
- Direct repayment
- Future wage deductions where separately authorized and legally permitted
- Other lawful repayment arrangements

Management will communicate repayment expectations promptly upon discovery of the overpayment.

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**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

## 7.6 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPANY PROPERTY

Every Team Member is entrusted with company property necessary to perform assigned duties.

Company property may include:

- Keys
- Identification badges
- Tablets
- Laptops
- Classroom supplies
- Curriculum
- Training materials
- Uniforms
- Office equipment
- Books
- Company credit cards
- Security access devices

Team Members are expected to protect company property and immediately report loss, theft, or damage.

Company property remains the exclusive property of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

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## 7.7 TRAINING INVESTMENT

Spirit's Heart invests significant resources into every newly hired Team Member before independent classroom assignment.

These investments may include:

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

- Orientation
- CPR/First Aid
- Classroom coaching
- Administrative processing
- Technology setup
- Licensing compliance
- Curriculum training
- Leadership development

The estimated onboarding investment is Two Hundred Dollars (\$200).

Terms governing reimbursement obligations, payroll authorizations, and repayment procedures are contained within the separately executed Employment & Financial Responsibility Agreement.

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## 7.8 EMPLOYEE CHILDCARE BENEFITS

Spirit's Heart may offer childcare benefits, tuition discounts, scholarship opportunities, payroll deduction plans, or other employee childcare programs.

Participation in these programs is subject to:

Classroom availability

Licensing capacity

Enrollment priorities

Financial standing

Company policy

Operational needs

Spirit's Heart reserves the right to modify, suspend, or discontinue employee childcare benefits at any time.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

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## 7.9 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Spirit's Heart will make deductions required by law and deductions voluntarily authorized by the Team Member.

Authorized deductions may include:

Taxes

Insurance premiums

Retirement contributions

Childcare tuition

Approved repayment agreements

Uniform purchases

Company property replacement

Training investment recovery

Payroll advances

Other deductions separately authorized in writing.

Nothing contained within this handbook authorizes deductions prohibited by applicable law.

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## 7.10 UNIFORMS

Spirit's Heart uniforms promote professionalism and organizational identity.

Team Members are responsible for maintaining uniforms in clean, professional condition.

Replacement uniforms, lost uniforms, or additional uniforms may be subject to charges outlined in the Employment & Financial Responsibility Agreement.

Uniforms issued by Spirit's Heart remain subject to company policies governing return or replacement.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

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## 7.11 PAY ADVANCES

Spirit's Heart is under no obligation to provide payroll advances, loans, or early wage access.

Any approved advance shall be documented in writing and may require repayment through payroll deduction or other agreed repayment methods.

Approval of one request does not establish a precedent for future requests.

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## 7.12 BONUSES & INCENTIVES

From time to time Spirit's Heart may offer:

Performance bonuses

Referral bonuses

Retention incentives

Recognition awards

Leadership incentives

Holiday appreciation gifts

Attendance awards

Bonus programs are discretionary and may be modified, suspended, or discontinued at any time.

Unless otherwise stated in writing, a Team Member must be actively employed and in good standing on the payment date to receive discretionary bonuses or incentives.

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## 7.13 EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Team Members seeking reimbursement for approved business expenses must submit supporting documentation within the timeframe established by Management.

Unauthorized purchases or expenses may not be reimbursed.

Management reserves the right to approve or deny reimbursement requests.

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## 7.14 FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Every Team Member shares responsibility for protecting the financial integrity of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

Examples include:

Proper use of company resources.

Accurate payroll reporting.

Protection of company assets.

Honest documentation.

Responsible purchasing.

Reporting suspected fraud or theft.

Misuse of company funds or assets may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate separation of employment and legal action when appropriate.

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## 7.15 COMPANY PROPERTY UPON SEPARATION

Upon separation of employment, Team Members shall immediately return all company property including:

Keys, Uniforms, Identification badges, Technology, Training materials, Curriculum, Documents

Passwords, Access devices.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Spirit's Heart reserves all rights available under applicable law and separate written agreements regarding recovery of company property and financial obligations.

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## 7.16 MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to establish, interpret, modify, suspend, or discontinue compensation practices, bonus programs, benefit offerings, reimbursement procedures, payroll schedules, and financial policies consistent with applicable law.

Nothing contained within this chapter creates a contractual entitlement to wages beyond hours worked, bonuses, benefits, continued employment, or any future compensation program.

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## SPIRIT'S HEART FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP STANDARD

Every dollar entrusted to Spirit's Heart represents an investment made by families in the care and education of their children.

Every Team Member shares the responsibility of protecting company resources, eliminating waste, using supplies wisely, maintaining equipment, preventing loss, and exercising sound financial judgment.

Stewardship is not only an operational expectation—it is a reflection of our integrity, our professionalism, and our commitment to serving children and families with excellence.

## CHAPTER 8

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

# TECHNOLOGY, COMMUNICATION, CONFIDENTIALITY & INFORMATION SECURITY

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## 8.1 PURPOSE

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center ("SHCC") utilizes technology to improve communication, strengthen operations, enhance child safety, maintain regulatory compliance, and support educational excellence.

Every Team Member is entrusted with access to company technology, electronic communications, confidential information, and digital resources.

The improper use, disclosure, or misuse of these resources may compromise child safety, violate privacy obligations, damage the Company's reputation, and create legal liability.

Every Team Member shares responsibility for protecting the information entrusted to Spirit's Heart Childcare.

---

## 8.2 COMPANY TECHNOLOGY

Technology provided by Spirit's Heart Childcare is intended for business purposes.

Company technology includes but is not limited to:

- Brightwheel
- Company email accounts
- Tablets
- Laptops
- Desktop computers
- Internet access

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

- Cameras
- Security systems
- Telephones
- Company software
- Electronic files

All technology remains the exclusive property of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

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## 8.3 NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY

All information created, stored, transmitted, or received using Company technology or Company systems is the property of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, Spirit's Heart reserves the right to monitor, review, audit, retrieve, access, preserve, or disclose information stored on Company equipment or systems without prior notice.

Team Members should have no expectation of privacy while using Company technology or Company communication systems.

---

## 8.4 BRIGHTWHEEL POLICY

Brightwheel is the official communication and documentation platform for Spirit's Heart Childcare.

Every Team Member is responsible for maintaining complete, accurate, and timely documentation.

Required documentation may include:

Attendance

Meals

Diaper changes

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Bottles

Activities

Photos

Incident reports

Messages

Learning observations

Behavior documentation

Documentation shall be completed in real time whenever possible.

Knowingly entering false information, backdating records, or intentionally failing to document required information may result in disciplinary action up to and including separation of employment.

---

## 8.5 PASSWORDS & ACCOUNT SECURITY

Each Team Member is responsible for protecting login credentials assigned by Spirit's Heart Childcare.

Team Members shall not:

Share passwords.

Use another Team Member's login.

Access information unrelated to assigned duties.

Leave devices unlocked.

Attempt to bypass security measures.

Passwords shall remain confidential and shall be changed whenever requested by Management.

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**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

## 8.6 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Confidential information includes any non-public information relating to:

Children

Families

Medical information

Assessments

Employee records

Payroll

Financial information

Enrollment

Business operations

Marketing strategies

Security procedures

Training materials

Policies

Curriculum

Confidential information shall only be accessed or disclosed when required to perform assigned job responsibilities.

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## 8.7 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

Spirit's Heart recognizes that Artificial Intelligence ("AI") technology may improve productivity; however, the use of AI must never compromise confidentiality or child privacy.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Without written authorization from Management, Team Members shall not upload, enter, copy, paste, or submit the following into any Artificial Intelligence platform:

Children's names

Photographs of children

Medical information

Behavior reports

Assessments

Incident reports

Family information

Employee records

Internal policies

Payroll information

Licensing investigations

Confidential business information

AI may not be used to create official child documentation without prior approval from Management.

Improper AI usage may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate separation of employment.

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## 8.8 PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO RECORDING

Only Company-approved devices and applications shall be used to photograph or record enrolled children.

Personal cell phones, personal cameras, smart watches, tablets, or other personal devices shall never be used to photograph, record, livestream, or otherwise capture images or videos of children while on Company property or during Company-sponsored activities.

All photographs remain the exclusive property of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

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## 8.9 SOCIAL MEDIA & ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Team Members are ambassadors of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

Online conduct that negatively impacts the organization, children, families, coworkers, or the Company's reputation may result in corrective action.

Without written authorization, Team Members shall not:

Post classroom photos.

Post children.

Discuss confidential matters.

Identify enrolled families.

Share licensing matters.

Share internal investigations.

Represent themselves as speaking on behalf of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit lawful communications protected by applicable law.

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## 8.10 EMAIL & BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Company email addresses, messaging platforms, and communication systems are intended primarily for business purposes.

Professional communication is expected at all times.

Messages should be:

Respectful

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Accurate

Professional

Timely

Business appropriate

Harassing, discriminatory, threatening, offensive, or inappropriate communications are prohibited.

---

## 8.11 RECORD RETENTION

Company records shall be maintained according to operational needs, licensing requirements, and applicable law.

Team Members shall not:

Delete company records.

Destroy documentation.

Alter files.

Remove records from Company property without authorization.

Dispose of confidential information improperly.

All records remain the property of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

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## 8.12 SECURITY CAMERAS

Spirit's Heart utilizes surveillance systems to:

Protect children.

Support Team Members.

Investigate incidents.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Maintain security.

Strengthen operational quality.

Monitor compliance.

Tampering with camera systems, deleting recordings, obstructing camera views, disconnecting equipment, or attempting to interfere with surveillance systems is strictly prohibited and may result in immediate separation of employment.

---

## 8.13 REMOTE ACCESS & MOBILE DEVICES

Management may authorize remote access to certain Company systems.

Team Members using mobile devices or remote access systems shall:

Protect passwords.

Maintain secure internet connections.

Prevent unauthorized viewing.

Immediately report lost or stolen devices.

Secure confidential information at all times.

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## 8.14 REPORTING SECURITY INCIDENTS

Every Team Member is responsible for immediately reporting:

Lost devices

Unauthorized access

Password compromises

Suspicious emails

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Technology failures

Data breaches

Confidentiality concerns

Prompt reporting allows Spirit's Heart Childcare to minimize risk and protect children, families, Team Members, and Company operations.

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## 8.15 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

All lesson plans, policies, manuals, forms, curriculum materials, marketing materials, photographs, videos, logos, training materials, and operational systems created or developed for Spirit's Heart Childcare remain the exclusive intellectual property of the Company.

No Team Member may reproduce, distribute, sell, publish, or use Company intellectual property for personal or commercial purposes without written authorization from the Owner.

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## 8.16 MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to establish, monitor, modify, suspend, audit, restrict, or discontinue technology systems, software platforms, communication tools, and security procedures at any time consistent with operational needs and applicable law.

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# SPIRIT'S HEART CONFIDENTIALITY STANDARD

Families trust Spirit's Heart Childcare with their children, their personal information, their daily routines, and often their most private concerns.

Every Team Member is expected to protect that trust with the highest level of professionalism.

Confidentiality is not simply a policy.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

It is a responsibility that continues during employment and after employment ends.

Protecting information protects children.

Protecting children protects families.

Protecting families protects the mission of Spirit's Heart Childcare.

## CHAPTER 9

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE, BENEFITS, EMPLOYEE WELLNESS & WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

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## 9.1 PURPOSE

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center ("SHCC") recognizes that Team Members occasionally require time away from work for personal, family, medical, educational, religious, or other important life events.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish fair and consistent guidelines governing employee leave, benefits, attendance expectations, employee wellness, and workplace flexibility while ensuring continuity of care for children and uninterrupted business operations.

Nothing contained within this chapter guarantees approval of leave, continued employment, or any specific employee benefit unless otherwise required by law or provided through a separate written agreement.

---

## 9.2 PAID & UNPAID LEAVE

Spirit's Heart may provide paid or unpaid leave opportunities based upon:

Employment classification

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Length of service

Business needs

Operational requirements

Available staffing

Applicable law

Company policy

All leave requests are subject to management approval unless otherwise required by law.

---

## 9.3 REQUESTING TIME OFF

Team Members are expected to submit requests for scheduled time off as early as possible.

Whenever practical:

Routine requests should be submitted at least thirty (30) days in advance.

Vacation requests should be submitted at least forty-five (45) days in advance.

Holiday requests should be submitted at least sixty (60) days in advance.

Submitting a request does not guarantee approval.

Approval is based upon:

Licensing ratios

Enrollment

Staffing needs

Business operations

Previously approved requests

Company events

Training schedules

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Spirit's Heart reserves the right to approve, deny, modify, or revoke approved leave based upon operational necessity.

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## 9.4 BLACKOUT DATES

Certain periods of the year require full staffing due to enrollment demands, licensing requirements, company events, audits, accreditation visits, or operational needs.

During designated blackout periods, vacation requests may be limited or denied.

Management will communicate blackout dates annually or as operational needs require.

---

## 9.5 PERSONAL LEAVE

Personal leave may be approved at Management's discretion.

Approval depends upon:

Operational impact

Staffing availability

Performance history

Attendance history

Business needs

Personal leave does not guarantee job protection unless otherwise required by applicable law.

---

## 9.6 MEDICAL ABSENCES

Team Members unable to perform assigned duties due to illness or injury are expected to notify Management as soon as reasonably possible.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Management may request documentation supporting an absence when permitted by applicable law.

Spirit's Heart reserves the right to require a healthcare provider's release before a Team Member returns to work when necessary to protect children, coworkers, or workplace safety.

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## 9.7 FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE

Spirit's Heart will administer qualifying family and medical leave in accordance with applicable federal and state law.

Nothing contained within this handbook expands or limits rights provided by applicable law.

Questions regarding protected leave should be directed to Human Resources or Management.

---

## 9.8 BEREAVEMENT

Spirit's Heart recognizes the emotional impact of losing a loved one.

Reasonable bereavement leave may be approved based upon:

Relationship to the deceased

Operational needs

Length of service

Available staffing

Documentation may be requested when appropriate.

---

## 9.9 JURY DUTY & LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Team Members required to serve on jury duty or respond to lawful court orders should notify Management immediately upon receiving notice.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Spirit's Heart will comply with applicable legal requirements regarding jury service and protected legal obligations.

---

## 9.10 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE

Spirit's Heart encourages continuing education and professional growth.

Management may approve time away from work for:

Training

Conferences

Licensing requirements

Educational programs

Leadership development

Approval is based upon organizational needs and available resources.

Completion certificates or proof of attendance may be required.

---

## 9.11 EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

Spirit's Heart believes healthy Team Members create healthy environments for children.

Team Members are encouraged to:

Maintain professional boundaries.

Practice self-care.

Seek assistance when needed.

Communicate concerns early.

Take approved breaks.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Support coworkers.

Management reserves the right to remove a Team Member from duty when illness, fatigue, impairment, or other conditions create safety concerns.

---

## 9.12 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

Spirit's Heart encourages Team Members experiencing personal, financial, family, emotional, or workplace challenges to communicate with Management whenever assistance or workplace accommodations may be appropriate.

While Spirit's Heart cannot guarantee solutions to every circumstance, the organization believes open communication strengthens relationships and creates opportunities for support.

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## 9.13 RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

Spirit's Heart respects sincerely held religious beliefs and practices.

Reasonable accommodations may be considered when they do not create an undue hardship or compromise child safety, licensing compliance, classroom operations, or business needs.

Requests should be submitted to Management for review.

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## 9.14 LACTATION ACCOMMODATIONS

Spirit's Heart will provide reasonable accommodations for nursing Team Members consistent with applicable law and operational capabilities.

Reasonable break periods and appropriate private space will be provided as required.

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## 9.15 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Eligible Team Members may participate in Company-sponsored benefit programs offered from time to time.

Benefits may include:

Employee childcare discounts

Professional development

Leadership training

Recognition programs

Referral incentives

Holiday appreciation

Performance bonuses

Other programs established by Management

Benefit offerings may be modified, expanded, suspended, or discontinued at any time.

Nothing contained within this handbook guarantees any specific benefit.

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## 9.16 EMPLOYEE CONDUCT DURING LEAVE

While on approved leave, Team Members remain subject to:

Confidentiality obligations

Non-disclosure requirements

Company policies

Professional conduct expectations

Management may communicate with Team Members during leave regarding operational matters, benefits administration, return-to-work planning, licensing concerns, or employment status.

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**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

## 9.17 RETURN TO WORK

Before returning from certain leaves of absence, Spirit's Heart may require:

Fitness-for-duty documentation

Medical release

Updated certifications

Licensing documentation

Training updates

Management approval

Team Members unable to perform the essential functions of their position may be evaluated for reasonable accommodations or other employment options consistent with applicable law.

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## 9.18 ATTENDANCE IMPACT

Approved leave does not eliminate the Team Member's responsibility to maintain reliable attendance, communicate professionally, and comply with Company reporting procedures.

Patterns of excessive absenteeism, misuse of leave, failure to communicate, or abuse of Company policies may result in corrective action consistent with applicable law.

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## 9.19 MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to establish, interpret, modify, suspend, or discontinue employee benefits, leave programs, wellness initiatives, recognition programs, scheduling practices, and operational procedures based upon business needs and applicable law.

Nothing contained within this chapter creates a contractual entitlement to any leave, benefit, accommodation, schedule, or continued employment except where specifically required by law or provided through a written agreement signed by the Owner.

---

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

# THE SPIRIT'S HEART FAMILY COMMITMENT

Spirit's Heart Childcare recognizes that every Team Member is also a parent, spouse, caregiver, student, volunteer, or community member.

We believe the strongest organizations balance compassion with accountability.

We strive to support Team Members through life's challenges while maintaining our unwavering commitment to the children and families who depend upon us every day.

Professionalism, communication, preparation, and mutual respect allow us to serve one another with excellence and ensure that every child entrusted to Spirit's Heart receives consistent, high-quality care.

## CHAPTER 10

# SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT, EXIT PROCEDURES & CONTINUING OBLIGATIONS

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## 10.1 PURPOSE

Spirit's Heart Childcare Center ("SHCC") recognizes that employment relationships may end for a variety of reasons, including voluntary resignation, retirement, reduction in force, or involuntary separation.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

The purpose of this chapter is to establish consistent procedures for separation of employment while protecting the interests of children, families, Team Members, confidential information, and Company property.

Nothing contained within this chapter alters the at-will employment relationship.

---

## 10.2 VOLUNTARY RESIGNATION

Team Members who choose to resign are expected to provide written notice to their Director or Human Resources.

Spirit's Heart requests a minimum of:

**Fourteen (14) calendar days written notice**

for all Team Members.

Management positions may be requested to provide additional notice based upon operational needs.

Providing notice allows Spirit's Heart to:

Protect classroom continuity.

Maintain licensing ratios.

Communicate with families.

Train replacement staff.

Transfer responsibilities.

Complete payroll and administrative processing.

Failure to provide notice does not prevent separation but may affect eligibility for rehire, future references, discretionary bonuses, retention incentives, and other Company programs.

---

## 10.3 JOB ABANDONMENT

A Team Member who:

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Fails to report to work,

Fails to communicate with Management,

Leaves during a scheduled shift without authorization,

Or otherwise abandons assigned responsibilities,

may be considered to have voluntarily resigned employment.

Spirit's Heart reserves the exclusive right to determine whether circumstances constitute job abandonment.

---

## 10.4 EXIT RESPONSIBILITIES

Before separation is finalized, Team Members are expected to:

Return all Company property.

Complete required documentation.

Submit passwords and access credentials.

Return keys and identification badges.

Return uniforms and equipment.

Complete final classroom responsibilities.

Transfer assigned duties as directed.

Failure to complete exit responsibilities may affect final administrative processing and eligibility for rehire.

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## 10.5 FINAL PAYROLL

Spirit's Heart will issue final compensation in accordance with applicable law and Company payroll procedures.

Final compensation may include:

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Regular wages earned.

Approved reimbursements.

Accrued compensation required by law or Company policy.

Final payroll will be calculated using:

Verified time records,

Approved payroll adjustments,

Official Company documentation.

Team Members remain responsible for reviewing and reporting payroll concerns promptly.

---

## 10.6 COMPANY PROPERTY

All Company property remains the exclusive property of Spirit's Heart Childcare regardless of employment status.

Company property includes but is not limited to:

Keys

Uniforms

Tablets

Laptops

Identification badges

Classroom materials

Training manuals

Curriculum

Company records

Security devices

Technology

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Marketing materials

Confidential documents

Failure to return Company property may result in additional administrative action or other remedies available under applicable law and separate written agreements.

---

## 10.7 CONTINUING CONFIDENTIALITY

The obligation to maintain confidentiality continues after employment ends.

Former Team Members shall not disclose or use confidential information relating to:

Children

Families

Medical information

Enrollment

Business operations

Payroll

Financial records

Policies

Training materials

Curriculum

Licensing matters

Security procedures

This obligation survives separation of employment.

---

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

## 10.8 NON-SOLICITATION & PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Spirit's Heart invests significant resources in developing relationships with families and Team Members.

Any post-employment restrictions contained within separately executed Employment Agreements shall remain in effect according to their written terms and applicable law.

Nothing contained within this handbook creates additional contractual restrictions beyond those separately agreed upon.

---

## 10.9 EXIT INTERVIEW

Management may request an exit interview to:

Gather feedback.

Improve operations.

Identify training opportunities.

Review Company obligations.

Confirm return of property.

Discuss continuing responsibilities.

Participation is encouraged but may not be required.

---

## 10.10 REHIRE ELIGIBILITY

Former Team Members may be considered for future employment based upon:

Performance history.

Attendance.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Professionalism.

Reason for separation.

Business needs.

Compliance with exit procedures.

Return of Company property.

Providing proper notice.

Rehire eligibility is determined solely by Spirit's Heart Childcare.

No former Team Member is guaranteed future employment.

---

## 10.11 REFERENCES & EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION

Spirit's Heart Childcare will respond to employment verification requests consistent with Company policy and applicable law.

Unless otherwise authorized, employment verification may be limited to:

Position held.

Dates of employment.

Other information approved by Management.

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## 10.12 SURVIVAL OF OBLIGATIONS

The following obligations continue after employment ends:

Confidentiality.

Protection of intellectual property.

Return of Company property.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Financial obligations established by separate written agreement.

Payroll overpayment repayment obligations.

Training investment agreements.

Technology agreements.

These obligations remain enforceable according to applicable law and separately executed agreements.

---

## 10.13 MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the exclusive right to determine:

Separation procedures.

Final work assignments.

Exit processing requirements.

Rehire eligibility.

Administrative responsibilities.

Return of Company property procedures.

Nothing contained within this chapter guarantees notice, severance pay, continued employment, future employment opportunities, or any contractual right.

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## 10.14 HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Every Team Member is responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the policies contained within this Employee Handbook.

Questions regarding any policy should be directed to Management or Human Resources before signing the acknowledgment.

Failure to read the handbook does not excuse noncompliance with Company policies.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

Appendix A – Progressive Discipline Matrix  
Appendix B – Payroll & Timekeeping Acknowledgment  
Appendix C – Confidentiality Agreement  
Appendix D – Technology & AI Acknowledgment  
Appendix E – Social Media Agreement  
Appendix F – Training Investment Acknowledgment  
Appendix G – Company Property Receipt  
Appendix H – Employee Childcare Tuition Agreement  
Appendix I – Classroom Professional Standards Checklist  
Appendix J – Orientation Completion Checklist  
Appendix K – Texas Rising Star Standards & Staff Responsibilities

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# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Spirit's Heart Childcare Employee Handbook.

I understand that it is my responsibility to read, understand, and comply with the policies, procedures, and expectations contained within this handbook.

I understand that this handbook is designed to provide general guidance regarding employment and does not create a contract of employment or guarantee employment for any specific period of time.

I understand that my employment with Spirit's Heart Childcare is at-will and may be terminated by either myself or the Company at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause, subject to applicable law.

I understand that Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, revise, modify, suspend, or discontinue any policy contained within this handbook at its sole discretion.

I understand that additional agreements executed separately, including but not limited to Employment Agreements, Financial Responsibility Agreements, Confidentiality Agreements, Payroll Acknowledgments, Technology Agreements, Training Investment Agreements, and Company Property Agreements, remain binding according to their terms.

I agree to uphold the mission, values, and professional standards of Spirit's Heart Childcare and understand that my actions directly impact the safety of children, the trust of families, and the reputation of the organization.

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**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

## EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Employee Name:

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Employee Signature:

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Date:

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Position:

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Campus:

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## MANAGEMENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Management Representative:

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Title:

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Signature:

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Date:

## THE SPIRIT'S HEART PLEDGE

I understand that every child deserves my best.

I will lead with professionalism.

**Management Discretion Clause:** *Spirit's Heart Childcare reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, waive, or deviate from any policy contained within this handbook when Management determines such action is in the best interest of the children, families, Team Members, or the organization, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.*

I will protect every child entrusted to my care.

I will communicate with honesty and respect.

I will support my teammates.

I will represent Spirit's Heart Childcare with integrity.

I will pursue excellence rather than minimum standards.

I will leave every classroom better than I found it.

I understand that children are always watching, families are always trusting, and excellence is my daily responsibility.

**An Extension of God's Hands, Where Every Child Belongs.**