



2026-2027

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Revised May 27, 2026

OVEC MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC) is to provide professional learning, advocacy, and services that support, lead and inspire.

HISTORY OF OVEC

In 1974, the Kentucky Department of Education created 16 regional organizations. The Region VI unit included Bullitt, Eminence Independent, Henry, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, and Trimble school districts.

In 1976, KDE disbanded the regional units, and the superintendents amended the Interlocal Agreement for Unit VI and renamed the organization the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative. Included in that amendment was the addition of Anchorage Independent, Carroll, Gallatin, and Owen school districts. In 1981, West Point Independent and Elizabethtown Independent joined OVEC. In 1994, Elizabethtown withdrew, and Grant County Schools joined OVEC. In 2001, Franklin County Schools joined OVEC. In 2011, West Point Independent withdrew. In 2018, Frankfort Independent and Jefferson County joined OVEC. In 2023, Franklin County withdrew.

OVEC serves approximately 155,000 students in north central Kentucky and offers programs that serve member school districts, their student populations, and families. Some of the programs that OVEC provides include professional development for teachers, administrators, and support staff; coordinated regional bidding; instructional support services; multi-district grant coordination; consultation and technical assistance and special reports and publications. OVEC serves students from preschool through grade twelve as well as adults through adult learning programs. OVEC works in partnership with, and for, the benefit of its member districts, their schools, and the children, families, and communities they serve.

LEGAL STATUS OF OVEC

OVEC was established on November 17, 1976, under the Kentucky Revised Statutes as 65.200.65.300. This statute is known as the Interlocal Cooperation Act. This law provides that governmental units, such as school districts, can form jointly operated organizations for the common good of the member units.

OHIO VALLEY EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIVE f
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with OVEC and to provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and some of the policies affecting your employment. You should read, understand, and comply with all provisions of the handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the programs developed by OVEC and its Board of Directors to benefit employees. One of our objectives is to provide a work environment that is conducive to both personal and professional growth.

Although every effort will be made to update the manual on a timely basis, the Board of Directors reserves the right, and has the sole discretion, to change any policies, procedures, benefits, and terms of employment without notice, consultation, or publication, except as may be required by contractual agreements and law. Consequently, the Board of Directors reserves the right, and has sole discretion, to modify or change any portion of this manual at any time. Employees are advised to check the OVEC website on a regular basis for new and updated policies.

Employment with OVEC is “at will.” This means that either the employee or OVEC may terminate the employment relationship at any time for any reason not expressly prohibited by law, or for no reason at all. Nothing contained in this Handbook constitutes a guarantee of employment, and nothing in this Handbook may be construed as a contract, express or implied, between OVEC and any employee. Any oral or written representation to the contrary, regardless of when made or by whom made, is invalid and may not be relied upon to alter the at-will employment relationship between OVEC and the employee.

Field-based staff must keep in mind that although their employer is listed as OVEC, they are, in essence, also employed by the individual school district(s) in which they provide services. With that in mind, it should also be remembered that policies in those districts must be observed. If a conflict exists between a policy within a district and an OVEC policy, that should be discussed with the program supervisor as soon as possible so that differences can be resolved.

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

The employee handbook describes important information about OVEC, and I understand that I should consult the Chief Executive Officer, the Human Resources Office, or my immediate supervisor regarding any questions not answered in the handbook. I have entered into my employment relationship with OVEC voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment. Accordingly, either OVEC or I can terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time, so long as there is no violation of applicable federal or state law.

Since the information, policies, and benefits described here are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur, except for OVEC's policy of employment-at-will. All such changes will be communicated through official notices of the Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies. Only the Board of Directors of OVEC can adopt any revisions to the policies in this handbook.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document. I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

SAMPLE

EMPLOYEE'S NAME (printed):

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE:

DATE:

POLICY DISSEMINATION AND INTERPRETATION

The Chief Executive Officer is directed by the OVEC Board of Directors to establish and maintain an orderly plan for preserving and making accessible the policies adopted by the Board and the administrative rules and regulations needed to put them into effect.

All employees are responsible for complying with all rules, regulations, and policies of the Board and those of the Kentucky Revised Statutes and with administrative rules, regulations, and oral directives of their supervisors. All employees are responsible for acquainting themselves with OVEC's rules, regulations, policies, and state laws.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for settling any questions arising out of the interpretation and application of established board policies.

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

The school districts, schools, and the communities in which we work are among our organization's most valuable assets. Every employee represents OVEC to these entities and school personnel. The way we do our jobs presents an image of our entire organization. We are all judged by the way we treat those with whom we have contact. Therefore, one of our first priorities is to be of assistance to parents, students, teachers or administrators with whom we have contact in any fashion. Nothing is more important than being courteous, friendly, helpful, and prompt in the attention you give to these individuals.

Our personal contact with the public, our manners on the telephone and the communications we send are a reflection not only of ourselves, but also of the professionalism of OVEC. Positive relations not only enhance the image of OVEC but also pay off in greater loyalty to and respect for OVEC.

101 Nature of Employment

It is the goal of the Board of Directors to employ qualified personnel for all positions with OVEC; to establish fair and equitable procedures for transfers, promotions within OVEC; and to provide, to the extent possible, working conditions and resources to enable each employee to perform to the greatest potential within the employee's assigned position.

The goal of this handbook is to provide employees with a general understanding of our personnel policies. The Board of Directors encourages employees to familiarize themselves with the contents of this handbook, as it will answer many common questions concerning employment with OVEC.

Employment with OVEC is voluntarily entered into, and the employee is free to resign at will at any time, with or without cause. Similarly, OVEC may terminate the employment relationship at will at any time, with or without notice or cause, so long as there is no violation of applicable federal or state law.

Employment is with OVEC and not a particular program. However, the employee's position may be tied to funding by a particular program. If funding for the position is eliminated or substantially decreased, the position may be eliminated, and the employee may be terminated.

Employment with OVEC does not guarantee an employee a set workstation. OVEC reserves the right to transfer an employee whenever necessary and in the best interest of OVEC.

This handbook cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question about employment. The Board of Directors does not imply by developing and accepting the policies set forth in this handbook to create a contract, nor are they to be construed to constitute contractual obligations of any kind or a contract of employment between OVEC and any of its employees. The provisions of the handbook have been developed at the discretion of management and, except for its policy of employment-at-will, may be amended or cancelled at any time, at OVEC's sole discretion.

These provisions supersede all previous employee handbooks and may not be amended or added to without the express written approval of the Board of Directors or Chief Executive Officer of OVEC. To retain necessary flexibility in the administration of policies and procedures, the OVEC Board of Directors reserves the right to change, revise, or eliminate any of the policies and/or benefits described in this handbook. The only recognized deviations from the stated policies are those authorized by the OVEC Board of Directors and signed by the Chief Executive Officer.

102 Employee Relations

OVEC and its Board of Directors believe that the work conditions, wages, and benefits it offers to its employees are competitive with those offered by other employers in this area and in the public sector. If employees have concerns about work conditions or compensation, they are strongly encouraged to voice these concerns openly and directly to their supervisors.

Our experience has shown that when employees deal openly and directly with supervisors, the work environment can be excellent, communications can be clear, and attitudes can be positive. We believe that OVEC amply demonstrates its commitment to employees by responding effectively to employee concerns.

103 Equal Employment Opportunity

The OVEC Board and the Chief Executive Officer shall exercise every equitable means to provide the opportunity for equal employment to all employees and applicants for employment, without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation or gender identity), genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, age, handicap or disabling condition, or limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions in accordance with applicable state and federal law. This policy applies to all aspects of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, job assignment, compensation, promotion, benefits, training, discipline, and termination.

OVEC shall adhere to a policy of equal employment opportunity in all personnel matters, including employment, promotion, demotion, transfer, recruitment practices, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other terms of compensation, and selection for training in all positions.

OVEC expects all employees to act in accordance with our equal employment opportunity policy, and to take all steps necessary to maintain a workplace free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the overall adherence to this policy.

OVEC shall engage in a timely, good faith and interactive process to determine reasonable accommodation for an employee's limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Reasonable accommodations shall be provided as required by law.

104 Business Ethics and Conduct

The business operation and reputation of OVEC is built upon the principles of fair and ethical conduct of our employees. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The continued success of OVEC is dependent upon the trust of our school districts, and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Employees have an obligation to OVEC and the school districts to act in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

OVEC will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its directors, officers, and employees to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct.

In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide you with respect to lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with your immediate supervisor and, if necessary, with the Chief Executive Officer for advice and consultation.

Compliance with this policy of business ethics and conduct is the responsibility of every OVEC employee.

105 Hiring

Authority to Employ

Appointments, promotions, and terminations of employees will be made by the Chief Executive Officer. The CEO will prescribe the duties and administer compensation as established by the appropriate salary schedule as adopted annually by the Board and any relevant addendums as adopted by the Board as needed. The CEO shall inform the Board of all personnel actions at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

The Chief Executive Officer, in determining the eligibility of a particular candidate for election to a position, will select that person whose qualifications best meet the requirements of the job as described by the job description.

No person will enter upon the duties of a position requiring certification qualifications until his/her certificate has been filed or credentials registered with the Cooperative.

For certified staff, contracts will be awarded for a maximum period of one (1) year (partial year for mid-year start).

Contracts for re-employment shall be presented to the employee on or before July 1 of each year. The contract should be returned to the HR department within ten (10) working days of receipt.

Employment of staff is employment with OVEC, but not in a particular position.

For employees who are hired pursuant to, and directly as a result of, an agreement with an outside agency, the terms of said employment shall be dictated by the agreement. If the policies stated above and the agreement differ or are in conflict, the terms of the agreement shall prevail.

Creation of New Positions

The creation of a new position should require prior approval of the Board of Directors. The CEO shall employ all employees, but is encouraged to use the committee process regarding the employment of any employee. Terms and conditions of employment for all employees shall be determined by the CEO, in accordance with OVEC Board personnel policies.

No director, manager, supervisor, or representative of OVEC has the authority to enter into any employment agreement, promise, or commitment for any specific period of time except the CEO. Any employment agreement shall be in writing and be signed by the CEO.

Job Posting

New and vacant positions in the Cooperative will be advertised through links on the OVEC website. However, this process may be waived in filling those positions that are the direct result of a Memorandum of Agreement entered into by the Cooperative and an Agency.

The CEO shall give first consideration for openings to applicants who are current OVEC employees and who have qualifications equal to or better than those required for the position. This provision shall not be interpreted to limit the discretion of OVEC to seek and obtain the best-qualified individual for employment with OVEC. The posting shall include required education, experience, basic duties and responsibilities, date of opening and closing for acceptance of applications, and the salary of each position. Employees have five (5) working days to apply for the internal opening before external candidates are evaluated. Internal application should be utilized and sent to the immediate supervisor and the HR department.

Criminal Records Check

All applicants offered employment must undergo background screening, which may include criminal history and other checks as permitted by law. Screening is conducted to promote workplace safety and ensure suitability for positions involving student services, financial responsibilities, or sensitive duties.

Applicants will complete authorization forms permitting background checks. Information obtained will be kept confidential and used solely for employment decision-making.

OVEC assumes the cost associated with any background check (including pre-hire and periodic post-employment checks). New employees must submit to criminal record checks through the Kentucky State Police and fingerprint-based screening as part of the hiring process. Positions involving childcare or direct student services may require

additional checks. No employee will begin work in such roles until background results are reviewed and employment qualifications are verified.

Criminal history does not automatically disqualify applicants. Employment decisions will consider the nature of the offense, relevance to job duties, time elapsed, evidence of rehabilitation, and organizational safety concerns. The organization may decline or terminate employment if background information reveals conduct inconsistent with job responsibilities or risks to students, employees, or the community.

Financial and fraud-sensitive positions require applicants to acknowledge compliance with fraud prevention measures. Background screening may evaluate financial misconduct where relevant to job duties.

Periodic criminal background checks may be required every two years or as otherwise mandated. Contractors and vendors granted access to organizational property may also be subject to background screening requirements.

If background results may affect employment, applicants will receive notice and an opportunity to review or dispute information before a final decision. Background information will remain confidential and stored in accordance with record retention policies.

Employment decisions will be based on an individual assessment of background information and its relationship to job requirements and organizational safety.

106 Medical Examinations

The Board may require an employee upon initial employment to submit to medical examinations, including a TB test, provided they are based on job-related criteria and comply with ADA and privacy requirements. OVEC will pay the cost of any medical examination required by it of a job applicant or current employee.

As a condition of continuing employment, OVEC reserves the right to require a medical examination and a certificate from a qualified physician selected by OVEC demonstrating the employee's physical ability to perform his or her job if OVEC has reason to believe that the employee is not able to perform his or her job successfully or safely because of a medical condition.

If a medical examination reveals or confirms that a job applicant or employee has a disability, this information will not be used by OVEC to unlawfully discriminate against the job applicant or employee on the basis of disability. OVEC will not use the results of a medical examination that reveals or confirms a disability to withdraw an offer of employment or discharge an employee unless the disability limits the individual in the performance of the essential functions of his or her job, and no reasonable accommodation can be made.

The results of any medical examination performed by or on behalf of OVEC will be collected and maintained on separate forms and in separate medical files and will be treated as confidential. Medical information may be disclosed only under the following circumstances:

- (1) Supervisors and managers may be informed about necessary restrictions on the work or duties of the employee and any necessary accommodation.
- (2) First aid and safety personnel may be informed, where appropriate, if the disability might require emergency treatment; and
- (3) Government officials investigating compliance with federal laws shall be provided with relevant information upon request.

107 Immigration Law Compliance

OVEC is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin.

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form.

Employees with questions or seeking more information on immigration law issues are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Office. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

108 Conflicts of Interest

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative as a result of OVEC business dealings. Personal gain may result not only in cases where an employee or relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which OVEC does business, but also when an employee or relative receives any kickback, bribe, substantial gift, or special consideration as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving OVEC.

No OVEC employee with decision-making authority over the financial position of OVEC shall have any pecuniary interest, either directly or indirectly, in an amount exceeding twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) per year, at the time of or after appointment, in supplying any goods, services, property or merchandise for which Cooperative funds are expended. Nor shall any such person receive directly or indirectly any gift, reward, or promise of reward for goods, services, property, or merchandise of any kind for which OVEC funds are expended.

Unless prior arrangements are made with the CEO, any device, publication or any other item to be copyrighted developed during the employee's paid time shall be OVEC property.

Employees shall not profit monetarily through the use of confidential information gained in the course of or by reason of their position of employment with OVEC.

Exception

This policy shall not prohibit the CEO from approving non-contracted personal services for the benefit of OVEC.

110 Outside Activities

Employees may not perform any duties related to an outside job or personal business during their regular working hours.

Consulting Activities

Except as may be limited or prohibited by an individual contract, OVEC employees may serve as consultants to outside agencies, public and/or private, provided that consultant work does not interfere with the performance responsibilities of the employee. Consulting during working hours requires prior authorization by the Chief Executive Officer. Paid consultant work shall be performed on the employee's own time.

Professional Research and Publishing

Professional research and publication by employees that involve local school information about students and staff and other reserved data require prior permission of the local district superintendent and shall be implemented in keeping with state and federal requirements concerning confidentiality of records, school research, and/or other such pertinent information.

An employee must receive authorization from the local district superintendent to have access to student or staff information or to utilize any school-related information, school system records, or data from a local school system.

Services to Other Agencies and Organizations

Employees shall not participate as a speaker or facilitator in their capacity as an OVEC employee or representative at a convention, workshop, or other program sponsored by another agency or organization without notification to their immediate supervisor. Except in the event of a last-minute request, permission to participate in an event shall be obtained from the program director at least five (5) days prior to the activity.

Employees shall not accept honoraria or other compensation above and beyond the salary paid by OVEC from other agencies or organizations with which OVEC works in the educational arena without prior permission of the CEO obtained at least five (5) days prior to the activity. Such groups include, but are not limited to, the Kentucky Department of Education, KEA, KASA, KHSAA, regional cooperatives and Kentucky school districts that are members of OVEC. In the event an employee receives permission to accept compensation from such groups, s/he shall:

- Perform services for such other agency or organization on his/her personal time at no monetary cost to OVEC, and at no detriment to his/her own performance for OVEC, taking leave as appropriate;
- Not be considered to be an employee of OVEC (for any purpose) during the time that the employee is preparing for, traveling to and from the performance of and performing services for such other agency or organization; and
- Disclaim that s/he represents OVEC during the time that s/he is performing services for the other agency or organization.

Media Presentations

Employees shall not plan, accept or schedule an appearance, comment or interview on radio or television or other media in their role as an OVEC employee without the approval from the program director. In such instances, the director shall obtain approval and notify the CEO or designee of the planned appearance as soon as possible.

In response to media requests, directors are authorized and encouraged to provide information on an as-needed, impromptu basis in keeping with their OVEC responsibilities. Examples would include responding to telephone and written requests or spur-of-the-moment verbal requests for information. In such cases, notification to the CEO shall not be required.

For further information, refer to Policy 03.1721.

112 Confidentiality of Records

Data and information concerning students may be collected to provide a sound basis for educational decisions and to enable OVEC program staff to prepare necessary reports. The Chief Executive Officer shall establish procedures for confidentiality and information access in compliance with the Family and Education Rights and Privacy Act.

Student information should be made available to the parent of a dependent student or eligible student on request. Eligible students include those eighteen (18) years of age or over or those duly enrolled in a post-secondary school program. Parents or eligible students shall be provided with a copy of records on written request. Such copies shall be provided in a manner that protects the confidentiality of other students.

The parent or eligible student shall be granted a hearing regarding the contents of the record on written request to the CEO. If the hearing results in a finding that the record is inaccurate or misleading in whole or that information in the record violates the privacy or other rights of the student, it shall be duly amended. If the hearing finds no impropriety in the record, the parent or eligible student will be informed of the right to enter in the record a comment or exception to the written record.

No individual or agency may have access to the record without the written consent of the parent or eligible student except the following as provided by law:

- Other staff of the Cooperative or member school districts who have been determined by the Chief Executive Officer to have a legitimate educational interest;
- Officials of another school or school district in which the student enrolls or plans to enroll;
- Authorized representatives of specific federal and state officials authorized by law;
- State and local officials to whom reports are mandated by statute;
- Organizations conducting educational studies for a legitimate educational purpose, provided the confidentiality will be assured;
- Accrediting organizations in carrying out their functions;
- Compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena; and
- Appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.

Personally identifiable student information may be released to those other than employees who are designated by the CEO in connection with audit, evaluation, enforcement, or compliance activities regarding Federal or State programs. Such designation must be executed in writing with the authorized representative and specify information as required by 34 CFR Part 99.35.

Duty to Report

If it is determined that OVEC cannot comply with any part of FERPA or its implementing regulations due to a conflict with state or local law, the CEO/designee must notify the Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) within forty-five (45) days of the determination and provide the text and citation of the conflicting law.

A list of all individuals or agencies who request access to the record, whether or not it is granted, shall be maintained in the record and accessible to the parent or eligible student. The list shall include name, address, and purpose of inspection.

When student records are transferred pursuant to a student transferring out of a program operated by the Cooperative to a similar program operated by another agency, a reasonable attempt shall be made by the CEO/designee to notify the parent or eligible student.

Annual notice shall be provided to parents or eligible students of the types and locations of student records maintained by the Cooperative, the titles of officials responsible for the records, and the parents' and eligible students' rights to access such records.

Employee Records

Human Resources personnel shall maintain a master personnel file for each employee that documents employment history. This file shall be under the custody of the CEO/designee.

All employee records are to be considered confidential and, except for access by the individual employee, are available only to other personnel as designated by the CEO. Those portions of personnel records containing material of a personal nature, the disclosure of which would constitute an invasion of privacy, are not open for public inspection.

Medical information should be maintained separately from other information in an employee's personnel file.

113 Social Media

Employees use social media for a variety of reasons related to both work and personal lives. It is important to recognize that using social media presents risks and requires the use of responsible behavior. OVEC expects employees to use these guidelines to exercise responsible, mature judgment when using social media.

Social media, in this policy, includes all methods of communicating and posting information on the Internet. It includes any web log or blog, journal, diary, personal web site, social network or affinity web site, web bulletin board, chat room or any other form of electronic communication that exists as of the publication of this policy or will be created in the future.

Employees are solely responsible for whatever employees post online. If conduct adversely affects job performance, the performance of co-workers or otherwise adversely affects any stakeholder working on behalf of our legitimate business interests, it may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

When posting anything related to employment at OVEC, the following guidelines apply:

- If anything, an employee posts is viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, intimidating, disparaging to program participants, employees, or vendors, or could be viewed as harassment or bullying, OVEC will view it as a violation of this policy.
- If it is viewed as intentionally harmful to another person's reputation or may be called a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, retaliation, or any other status protected by law or company policy, OVEC will view it as a violation of this policy. OVEC will not provide legal defense for employees violating this expectation.
- It is the employee's duty as an OVEC employee to understand that certain information is protected by law.
- Maintain confidentiality of protected and private information (as described in Section 112, Confidentiality of Records). Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal business-related confidential communications. This includes all "privileged" communication.
- Never create a link to OVEC's websites from a personal blog or web site, or any other social networking site, without prior identification as an OVEC employee.
- If an employee identifies as an OVEC employee on social media, when expressing an opinion relevant to OVEC's mission, vision, or services, the employee will be expected to clearly state that it is a personal opinion and the employee is not speaking on behalf of the company, other employees, or any other stakeholder.
- If publishing a blog or post online, employees should clearly state that they are not speaking on behalf of the company. OVEC recommends that employees post a disclaimer that says, "The postings on this site are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer."

- Employees' personal blogs or social media posts will not be considered official statements of the views of OVEC.

Employees have rights under the National Labor Relations Act to express their opinions about work, and nothing in this policy was written to interfere with those rights or to infer that they are not applicable.

OVEC has a designated person(s) to speak on behalf of the company when contacted by any media representative. Unless specifically designated by the CEO or designee, employees must not speak on behalf of the company and/or represent themselves as an official spokesperson.

114 Anti-Nepotism

The CEO shall not employ an individual when employment would result in direct line supervision of, or by, a relative of a current employee. For purposes of this policy, "relative" shall refer to husband, wife, domestic partner, father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, grandfather, grandmother, grandson or granddaughter, or any of those relationships arising as a result of marriage or domestic partnership (for example, brother-in-law or stepdaughter).

An employee of OVEC cannot use their authority or relationship with OVEC to benefit or to disadvantage a job applicant with whom a familial relationship exists. The employee shall not participate in any aspect of the hiring process.

Employees are required to notify the CEO and the Chief Human Resources Officer of a familial relationship in the following circumstances:

- Employee becomes aware of an existing familial relationship between themselves and another employee;
- A familial relationship is created among employees (for example, by the marriage of two employees); and
- A familial relationship exists between the employee and a job applicant or potential contractor.

The obligation to report a familial relationship or potential conflict lies with the employee or board member and employees are expected to notify the Chief Human Resources Officer, CEO, or Board Chair within two (2) business days of learning about the relationship.

- Non-managerial employees are to report on familial relationships to the Chief Human Resources Officer.
- Managerial employees are to report relationships to the CEO.
- The CEO and any employee supervised by the CEO are to report relationships to the Board Chair.

Decisions regarding what measures are to be taken surrounding conflicts shall be made by the Chief Human Resources Officer, CEO, or Board Chair, in accordance with the above reporting structure and this policy. The same rules for familial relationships will also apply to existing romantic relationships between two employees, or an employee and any contractor of OVEC.

115 ADA/ADAA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA) are federal laws that require employers with fifteen (15) or more employees to not discriminate against applicants and individuals with disabilities and, when needed, provide reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees

who are qualified for a job—with or without reasonable accommodations—so that they may perform the position’s essential job duties.

It is the policy of OVEC to comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of individuals with disabilities and to act in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Furthermore, it is the company policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities regarding application procedures, hiring, advancement, compensation, training, discharge, or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

Procedures

When an applicant with a disability requests accommodation and can be reasonably accommodated without creating an undue hardship or causing a direct threat to workplace safety, the individual will be given the same consideration for employment as any other applicant. Applicants who pose a direct threat to the health, safety and well-being of themselves or others in the workplace when the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation will not be hired.

OVEC will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability so that they can perform the essential job functions unless doing so causes a direct threat to these individuals or others in the workplace and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation or if the accommodation creates an undue hardship to OVEC. Contact the HR Department with any accommodation questions or requests. All requests for accommodation will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

All employees are required to comply with the company's safety standards. Current employees who pose a direct threat to the health or safety of themselves or other individuals in the workplace will be placed on leave until an organizational decision has been made regarding the employee's immediate employment situation.

Individuals currently using illegal drugs at or outside of work are excluded from coverage under the company's ADA policy. OVEC’s ADA policy does not extend protections to individuals who are currently using illegal drugs. However, if an individual is in or has completed a drug rehabilitation program and is not currently using illegal drugs, a reasonable accommodation may be available. The HR department is responsible for implementing this policy, including resolving reasonable accommodation, safety/direct threat, and undue hardship issues.

For definitions of terms used in this policy, please refer to the Appendix of the Employee Handbook.

201 Employment Status

Employee Classifications

At the time of employment, personnel status shall be determined based on the following designations:

- *Certified* – An employee holding a position that requires a four-year degree who is considered as “exempt” under Wage and Hour standards.
- *Non-certified* – An employee holding a position that does not require a four-year degree who, depending on the position, may be considered as either “exempt” or “non-exempt” under Wage and Hour standards.
- All other classifications, as listed below, shall not be eligible for any employment benefits beyond pay and coverage required by law:

- *Consultant* - An individual who provides services for OVEC on an “as-needed” basis.
- *Temporary* - An employee who is hired to work either part-time or full-time no more than six (6) consecutive months. The prior written authorization of the CEO shall be required before a temporary employee begins his/her sixth month of employment.

202 Employment Applications

OVEC relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in the exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, immediate suspension from work. The Chief Executive Officer may then move to terminate the employee.

203 Employment Reference Checks

To ensure that individuals who join OVEC are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, it is the policy of OVEC to check the employment references of all applicants. The Human Resources office or designee performs background and reference checks on applicants. All applicants for positions with OVEC undergo this pre-employment process. Applicants should have two (2) professional reference checks upon hire.

OVEC will respond in writing to those reference check inquiries that are submitted in writing by potential employers. Responses to telephone inquiries will confirm only dates of employment, wage rates, and position(s) held unless prior approval has been agreed upon by the employee or former employee. No employment data will be released without a written authorization and release signed by the individual who is the subject of the inquiry.

206 Supervision

Each employee will be assigned a supervisor.

Job Descriptions

There shall be written job descriptions for all employees of OVEC. Job descriptions shall include qualifications, reporting relationships, performance responsibilities (including physical demands), work year, and salary schedule.

Standards of Conduct

To fulfill the mission and goals of OVEC, the work environment must reflect an atmosphere of cooperation and professional courtesy. To promote such an atmosphere, employees should conduct themselves during their working hours and, in the context of their assigned duties, in a manner consistent with the following standards:

- Employees shall demonstrate civility and professional courtesy to all individuals with whom they have contact.
- Employees shall address and publicly refer to their co-workers only in terms reflecting respect and common courtesy. Examples of behaviors that should be avoided include profane or insulting name-calling, stories, or pictures of or about a co-worker intended to stigmatize him or her.
- Employees shall be actively engaged in their work at all times they are expected to be working, regardless of their location.
- Employees are expected to be present for work at the time they are scheduled to begin work.

- Employees shall follow all policies in this Handbook.
- Employees in the Head Start & Early Head Start program should follow an additional standard of conduct as described in the Head Start Program Performance Standards (1302.90(c)).
- Employees are expected to follow policy in intervening and reporting to their supervisor those situations that endanger the safety of students, other staff members, or visitors to the school. Such instances shall include, but are not limited to, bullying or hazing of students and harassment/discrimination (as defined in section 703 of the handbook) of staff, students, or visitors by any party.
- Employees shall cooperate fully with all investigations conducted by OVEC as authorized by policy or law. Failure to comply may be considered insubordination.
- Employees who fail to observe these standards shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures, up to and including dismissal.

209 Promotions and Transfers

Only the Chief Executive Officer is authorized to transfer employees. The Chief Executive Officer shall report all transfers made under this policy to the Board of Directors.

Voluntary Transfers

Employees desiring a transfer or reassignment and with proper qualifications shall be given due consideration. Employees are required to complete an internal application and submit the application to their supervisor and the HR department. An employee shall not be permitted to transfer into a position where they would directly supervise or be supervised by a relative as defined in Policy 03.11. Should an employee not be in good standing at the time of transfer, the employee will be considered ineligible for transfer, and the application will be denied by HR.

Involuntary Transfers

When extenuating circumstances dictate the transfer or reassignment of personnel, the CEO shall have sole authority to make such transfers or reassignments. In such instances, the employee's preferences for assignment shall be given due consideration by the Chief Executive Officer.

Promotions

Only the Chief Executive Officer is authorized to promote employees. The Chief Executive Officer shall report all promotions made under this policy to the Board of Directors.

When a new position or vacancy occurs that is at a level above an employee's current position, in terms of pay and/or responsibility, all qualified employees, except for those on probationary status, may apply for the position. The appointment process may require employees to compete for the promotional position with all other interested parties, both within and outside the Cooperative.

The CEO may promote an employee into a vacant or new position without advertising the position or vacancy if such an action is in the best interest of the Cooperative.

210 Personnel Data Changes

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify OVEC of any changes in personnel data through OVEC's HRIS system of record. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, numbers and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishments and certification changes, and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times. If any personnel data has changed, notify the

Human Resources Office. The failure to report personnel data changes may adversely impact the employee's pay and benefit programs.

212 Access to Personnel Files

OVEC maintains a personnel file on each employee. The personnel file includes information such as the employee's job application, resume, records of training, documentation of performance appraisals and salary increases, and other employment records.

Personnel files are the property of OVEC, and access to the information they contain is restricted. Generally, only those employees authorized by the Chief Executive Officer who, due to their job responsibilities, have a legitimate reason to review personnel information may have access to the files.

Current employees who wish to review their own file should contact the Human Resources Office. With reasonable advance notice, employees may review their own personnel files in OVEC's offices and in the presence of an individual designated by the Chief Executive Officer to maintain the files. Employees may not copy, photograph, or remove any documentation from their personnel file.

281 Evaluation of Staff

The CEO/designee shall be responsible for evaluating OVEC personnel.

Although supervisors and employees should discuss job performance and goals on an informal, day-to-day basis, formal evaluations will be completed annually, no later than April 15th of each year. The evaluations shall document employee performance in relation to the responsibilities set out in the employee's job description and specific areas in need of improvement.

Immediate supervisors should complete a summary evaluation for new employees and for employees experiencing performance problems each month, but no less frequently than every ninety (90) working days.

For those employees who are hired pursuant to, and as a direct result of, an agreement with an outside agency, evaluations may be made by said agency, in lieu of the requirements set forth herein. The evaluation should contain input from the local education agencies (LEAs) to which the staff person may be assigned.

The procedures for evaluations shall be established and implemented by the CEO. Evaluations, along with any response materials an individual employee wishes to submit, are confidential and will become a part of the employee's permanent record.

The evaluation shall be discussed with each employee, and, if needed, the employee and evaluator will develop a professional growth plan. If the employee is hired as a result of an agreement with an LEA, such LEA superintendent or designee may participate. The employee will be asked to sign the evaluation, indicating the evaluation has been discussed with the employee, but not necessarily to imply agreement or disagreement with the evaluation. If an employee believes that the evaluation procedures established and implemented by the CEO have not been followed, the employee may submit an appeal within ten (10) days of the evaluation, of the procedural issue only, to a three (3)-member appeal panel elected from the full-time staff of OVEC.

The evaluation may form the basis for the decision of the CEO regarding the individual's continued employment with OVEC.

282 Compensation

Salaries

The Board of Directors shall establish the salary of the CEO annually. The CEO shall recommend salaries for all employees within the budget parameters established by the Board of Directors. The normal practice would be to grant co-op employees the average increase as provided by the system members.

An experience increment on the salary schedule shall be based on completion of a minimum 75% of the annual contract year of employment with a qualified educational or governmental agency in a fiscal calendar year. The addition of days to be worked beyond the original contract for a position requires prior Board approval.

Experience Verification

The following experience verification policy applies to new OVEC employees hired after July 1, 2024. All completed Verification of Experience Forms, along with the required attachments such as the job description, must be submitted to the Human Resources office within two (2) months from the team members' start date. Submissions should be faxed or sent directly via email from the former employer. Any information received after this two-month period will not be considered for compensation calculation purposes.

Previous work experience will be acknowledged if the responsibilities closely align with those outlined in the OVEC job description. Submissions will undergo review by the Human Resources department to assess the similarity of duties. Recommendations regarding the recognition of experience for compensation will be forwarded to the Chief Human Resources Officer for final review and will be approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

Certain positions may necessitate additional evaluation to support the recognition of experience based on the similarity of duties.

OVEC reserves the right to consider additional documentation when a statement from a former employer is not available. Acceptable documentation may include W-2 Wage and Tax Statements, pay stubs from the period of employment, or other written documentation approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

Experience will be awarded in full years, corresponding to steps/years on the salary schedule for the position. A years' experience will be granted if the employee has worked 75% or more of the number of days in their last fulltime position. Experience in part-time positions may be counted in half-year increments at the discretion of the Chief Human Resources Officer and will be approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

Compensation will initially be calculated based on zero (0) years of experience until all experience verifications have been reviewed by the Human Resources staff before the employee's start date but no later than within the first two (2) months of employment. After the start of employment, any compensation adjustments resulting from verified experience will be retroactive to the start date.

Pay Dates

Employees shall be paid via direct deposit on the 15th and last day of each month or on the last preceding working day when the payday falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday.

Overtime

FLSA non-exempt employees shall not work overtime hours beyond a forty (40)-hour workweek without prior written authorization of their immediate supervisor. If overtime is approved, and employees do not take compensatory time during the same work week, then they shall be paid overtime pay at the rate of one and one-half (1^{1/2}) times the regular hourly rate.

Overtime pay is based on actual hours worked. Time off on sick leave, vacation leave, or any leave of absence will not be considered hours worked for purposes of performing overtime calculations.

Employees who work overtime without receiving prior authorization from the supervisor may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment.

283 Sign-On, Retention, and Referral Incentives

The Sign-On and Retention policy pertains exclusively to full-time initial hiring or classified employees and does not extend to part-time, transfers, or certified employees. Effective July 1, 2024, OVEC offers the following incentives:

- **Sign-On Incentive:** The sign-on incentive is disbursed to eligible employees upon the successful conclusion of the hiring process and commencement of their employment. Employees must adhere to all eligibility criteria delineated in the company's hiring policies to receive the sign-on incentive. Sign-On incentives are disbursed at the payroll date when HR receives the completed paperwork; this is generally the first or second paycheck upon hire.
- **Retention Incentive:** Qualified employees become eligible to receive the retention upon the completion of their initial six-month contract. The incentive may be forfeited if the employee violates the attendance procedure, demonstrates unsatisfactory job performance, or ceases to be employed with the company. The retention incentive is paid six months from the date the sign-on incentive is received.
- **Referral Incentive:** Referral Incentives are for full-time employees hired to work for OVEC; part-time positions are not eligible. Employees recommending candidates for vacant positions must ensure that the referred individuals specify their name during the application process (including the referee's name on the application or during the interview process). Referral incentives are granted to eligible referring employees provided that the referred candidate is hired, completes the hiring process, and satisfies the requirements for the sign-on incentive. Referral incentives are disbursed at the payroll date when the referred employee receives the retention incentive. Hiring managers are not eligible for incentives if the referral is for a position that directly reports to them. The standard incentive amount for both sign-on and retention incentives is \$500, unless stated otherwise in an approved grant budget. The standard amount for referral incentives is \$250. All incentives are separate from an employee's base pay, processed through payroll, and are subject to taxation as income.

It is the duty of the onboarding representative and the direct supervisor overseeing the new team member to handle the processing of sign-on and retention incentive paperwork during orientation. This procedure involves filling out and signing the Sign-On, Retention, and Referral Incentive form and forwarding the request to the Human Resources department for approval by the CEO. HR is taking the name included on the application as the referring employee to initiate processing for the referral incentive.

284 Tuition Assistance

Effective July 1, 2024, OVEC will offer tuition assistance to full-time employees who do not qualify for Head Start tuition assistance, when grant budgets or the general fund budget of the cooperative includes funds for these purposes.

To be eligible for tuition assistance, an employee must be enrolled in an accredited post-secondary institution or professional certification program. Courses covered by tuition assistance may include Associate, Bachelor's, Master's, Doctoral, or Certificate programs, and must be in a field related to the employee's job description.

Employees participating in the tuition assistance program must commit in writing to remain OVEC employees for three years after completion of coursework. If an employee resigns or is terminated before completion of the three-year service commitment, the employee will repay OVEC for tuition support, which will be prorated based upon percentage of service completed. Employees non-renewed based upon funding will be exempt from the repayment policy.

All coursework and studying time must be completed on the employee's own personal time. No employee may use regular working hours for attending classes, traveling to classes, or completing class assignments. Employees are responsible for all duties as outlined in their job description while utilizing tuition assistance.

Some activity fees are required for some Colleges that are not directly a part of a required degree program. Other equipment, supplies, or mileage needed by the individual taking the courses will be at the employee's expense and will not be reimbursed by the agency.

Any person who dropped a course, received a grade below a C, had an incomplete on a course funded by OVEC, or fail to provide documentation of grades will have to reimburse OVEC for the tuition assistance. After completing each course of study for which the agency has provided tuition assistance, the employee must provide a copy of their grades, letter of verification of grades (although actual grade will need to be submitted when staff receive final grade) or transcript indicating completion to the central office for placement in their personnel file. Failure to provide this information could jeopardize future requests for tuition assistance. Invoicing from the institution must be sent to the Human Resources Department for processing.

Each fiscal year, the CEO will designate a three-person committee for determining distribution of tuition assistance approved in OVEC's general fund budget. The committee will establish an application process and criteria for distribution, which shall be approved by the CEO.

Student loan repayment programs in approved grant budgets will not be subject to the terms of this policy.

301 Employee Benefits

Eligible employees at OVEC are provided with a wide range of benefits. Several of the programs (such as Social Security, workers' compensation, state disability, and unemployment insurance) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law.

Benefits eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification. Details of the benefit programs can be found elsewhere in the employee handbook, company website, or you may ask the Human Resources Office or the Chief Executive Officer for more information.

Some benefit programs require contributions from the employee. OVEC or the Commonwealth of Kentucky matches some of the contributions. Other benefits are totally optional and paid for entirely by the employee.

Changes in Retirement Status or Benefits

It is the responsibility of the employee to contact the appropriate retirement program regarding the employee's retirement status or additional benefits available from the retirement system.

OVEC Role and Responsibility in Handling Fringe Benefit Programs

OVEC's role in all fringe benefit plans is simply to provide the employee with optional plans available from a variety of insurance companies and other vendors, and to handle payroll deductions and payments to the insurance companies.

The OVEC office staff are not insurance or retirement specialists. Employees should address any questions about policies or specific coverage and benefits to the insurance company or companies or retirement system in question.

Any information an employee obtains from the OVEC office staff regarding specific insurance, retirement, tax-deferred, or annuity program benefits or restrictions within policies is solely the opinion of staff and not necessarily reflecting the true benefits or restrictions on any benefits offered by a particular benefit program.

303 Annual Leave

Each full-time (12-month) employee who is employed on a 240 to 260 day contract shall be allowed annual leave with pay at the following rate:

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Annual Leave Days</u>
0-3 years of service	0.83 leave day/month (10 per year maximum, divided equally over 12 months)
3+ years of service	1¼ leave days/month (15 per year maximum)

During the first six (6) months of employment for a non-certified employee, annual leave is accrued but will not be available for use until the first day of the month following the completion of six months of employment. Should employment terminate or if the employee resigns during or at the end of a probationary period, any accrued leave is forfeited.

For employees who have worked for three (3) years or longer, in a position qualifying for annual leave, or transferring into a position qualifying for annual leave, annual leave is accrued at the rate of 1¼ days per month, beginning the month after completion of their third anniversary. Annual leave shall accrue only when an employee is working or on authorized leave with pay.

An employee must have worked or been on paid leave for more than one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the workdays in a month to qualify for annual leave. Annual leave shall become available for use on the first day of the month following completion of a qualifying month. Leave shall be taken in half- or full-day increments.

If employment terminates or if the employee resigns on the last day of a month, the final day of earned annual leave will be included in any unused annual leave payout on the final check. However, failure to give the required notice of resignation by the deadlines set out in policy 03.17 shall result in forfeiture of payment for accrued annual leave. If an employee is dismissed for cause, including, but not limited to, abandonment of the job, accrued annual leave will be forfeited.

Annual leave may be accumulated and carried forward from one (1) fiscal year to the next, not to exceed twenty (20) days. Unused annual leave in excess of 20 days on June 30 will be credited to the employee's sick leave account on July 1 of the next fiscal year. The maximum annual leave to be credited to an employee's sick leave account each year shall not exceed fifteen (15) days. The maximum annual leave payout for an employee retiring on or prior to June 30 is 35 days. All annual leave must be approved and scheduled by the Chief Executive Officer or designee.

Absence due to sickness, injury, or disability in excess of that hereinafter authorized for such purpose or in excess of available non-workdays will be charged against annual leave.

Employees are charged with annual leave for absences only on days for which they would otherwise work and receive pay. If an employee takes an annual leave day without prior approval, it may result in disciplinary action.

When grants are to be terminated, accumulated annual leave must be taken during the grant work period. Any annual leave time not taken during the grant work period will be lost, unless the employee transfers to another position qualifying for annual leave within the company.

For any person who moves from a position that qualifies for annual leave to a position that does not qualify, annual leave will be paid out at the time of transfer.

Any employee who leaves a position that qualifies for annual leave for a period of 90 days or longer, through transfer or termination, and subsequently returns to a qualifying position shall not receive credit for years of service as it pertains to annual leave.

304 Pregnant Workers Policy

As required by the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA), OVEC will provide reasonable accommodations to employees and applicants with limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, unless the accommodation will cause undue hardships to OVEC's operation.

An employee or applicant may request an accommodation due to pregnancy, childbirth or a related medical condition by submitting the request in writing to human resources (HR). The accommodation request should include an explanation of the pregnancy-related limitations, the accommodation needed and any alternative accommodation(s) that might be reasonable. Depending on the nature of the accommodation, the individual may be requested to submit a statement from a health care provider substantiating the need for the accommodation.

Upon receipt of a request for accommodation, HR will contact the employee or applicant to discuss the request and determine if an accommodation is reasonable and can be provided without significant difficulty or expense, i.e., undue hardship.

While the reasonableness of each accommodation request will be individually assessed, possible accommodations include allowing the individual to:

- Sit while working.
- Drink water during the workday.
- Receive closer-in parking.
- Have flexible hours.
- Receive appropriately sized uniforms and safety apparel.
- Receive additional break time to use the bathroom, eat and rest.
- Take time off to recover from childbirth.
- Be excused from strenuous activities and/or activities that involve exposure to compounds deemed unsafe during pregnancy.

An employee may request paid or unpaid leave as reasonable accommodation under this policy; however, OVEC will not require an employee to take time off if another reasonable accommodation can be provided that will allow the employee to continue to work.

OVEC prohibits any retaliation, harassment or adverse action due to an individual's request for accommodation under this policy or for reporting or participating in an investigation of unlawful discrimination under this policy.

305 Holidays

All full-time employees shall be paid for holidays as follows:

DAYS EMPLOYED	PAID HOLIDAYS	PAID HOLIDAYS
185-219	4	Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day
220-250	6	Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Memorial Day
251-261	9	Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, Day after Christmas, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day

If any of these holidays occur on a non-workday, then the CEO shall select an alternate day for the observance.

Employees on Leave

Employees on paid leave of absence at the time of an official OVEC holiday shall receive pay for that holiday. Employees on unpaid leave of absence shall not be paid for the holiday.

306 Workers' Compensation Insurance

OVEC provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, the workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or, if the employee is hospitalized, immediately.

OVEC expects employees to work in a safe manner that does not endanger themselves, their co-workers, or others at the workplace. Employees who are unable to complete their job duties safely should not report to work. Employees must comply with all applicable workplace safety and health laws and OVEC policies and procedures.

When an employee sustains serious or life-threatening injuries, he/she should seek medical attention immediately. The HR department should be notified as soon as possible after treatment has been received, or in the case of minor injuries, HR should be notified immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it must be reported immediately. This will enable an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible. The employee or the employee's supervisor is responsible for contacting the approved workers' compensation service provider (e.g., Medcor) to complete an injury report. This report should be submitted as soon as possible, but not later than 24 hours after the time of injury. Failure to complete the report in a timely manner could jeopardize the worker's compensation benefits for the employee. For additional information, employees are encouraged to review the labor law poster displayed at their worksite.

Injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by OVEC are generally considered non-compensable for purposes of workers' compensation.

307 Sick Leave

OVEC provides paid sick leave benefits to all eligible employees for periods of temporary absence due to illness or injury. Eligible employee classification(s) for sick leave include:

- Regular full-time employees
- Regular part-time employees

Based on contractual status and effective July 1, 2010, eligible employees will be granted sick leave each year on the following basis:

<u>Contract Days</u>	<u>Annual Sick Days</u>
220-260	12 days
185-219	10 days
125-184	5 days

For employees hired after July 1 or on a limited contract extension, the number of sick days granted will be based on the prorated days of the contract.

An employee may use up to thirty (30) days of sick leave immediately following the birth or adoption of a child or children. Additional days may be used when the need is verified by a physician's statement.

Paid sick leave shall be taken in half- or full-day increments. For purposes of this policy, the working day is considered the number of hours per day specified in the employees' contract. An eligible employee may use sick leave benefits for an absence due to his or her own illness, injury, or medical or dental appointments. Sick leave may also be used for the illness, injury, or medical or dental appointments of a parent, child, brother, sister, or the spouse of any of them, or any person related by blood or affinity with a similarly close relationship.

Employees who are unable to report to work due to personal illness or injury should notify their direct supervisor before the scheduled start of their workday if possible. The direct supervisor must also be contacted on each additional day of absence. If an employee is absent for three (3) or more consecutive days due to personal illness or injury, a statement from the employee's health care provider will be required to verify the disability and its beginning and expected ending dates. OVEC may request such verification for other sick leave absences as well, and such verification may be required as a condition to receive sick leave benefits. An employee must provide administratively acceptable evidence or medical certification within fifteen (15) days of the agency's request. If the employee is unable to provide evidence, despite the employee's diligent, good faith efforts, he or she must provide it within a reasonable period of time, but no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the agency makes the request. If the employee fails to provide the required evidence within the specified time period, he or she is not entitled to sick leave.

Sick leave can also be taken for illness in the immediate family or for the purpose of mourning a member of the employee's immediate family. Immediate family shall mean the employee's spouse, children (including stepchildren and foster children), grandchildren, daughters-in-law and sons-in-law, brothers and sisters, parents, spouse's parents, grandparents, and spouse's grandparents, without reference to the location or residence of said relative and any other blood relative who resides in the employee's home. OVEC limits leaves under these circumstances to three (3) working days; however, the Chief Executive Officer may grant a reasonable extension of time.

OVEC also grants sick leave when the employee suffers a catastrophic loss to his or her personal property due to either a natural disaster or fire that has caused or will cause the employee to be absent.

Sick leave benefits will be calculated based on the employee's base pay rate at the time of absence. Unused sick leave benefits will be allowed to accumulate indefinitely. OVEC will accept sick leave days transferred from a district, provided there has been no break in service of 90 days or longer. Sick leave must be transferred within

the first 60 days of employment with OVEC. Any employee who leaves a position that qualifies for sick leave for a period of 90 days or longer, through transfer or termination, and subsequently returns to a qualifying position shall forfeit any previously accrued sick days. Only employees meeting eligibility requirements at the time of retirement (see section 326 Retirement) are eligible for payout of unused sick leave. Employees who have resigned, are terminated, or transferred to an OVEC position that is not eligible for sick leave are not eligible for payout of unused sick leave.

OVEC may grant leave without pay to employees on a case-by-case basis for employees unable to return to work because of medical issues, provided the unpaid leave does not exceed the balance of the employee's contract. At the termination of sick leave without pay, the Board may reinstate the employee. For information concerning FMLA, see Policy 03.12322.

308 Sick Leave Bank

OVEC shall administer the sick leave bank. A Sick Leave Bank Committee composed of OVEC leaders shall be formed. The Committee's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, the determination of eligibility requirements and the minimum/maximum number of days to be maintained in the bank. Sick Leave Bank Committee members shall not rule on an application of their own or of a relative.

Membership

All regular full-time and regular part-time OVEC employees who have a sick leave balance of six or more days at the time of the initial contribution shall be eligible to participate in the Sick Leave Bank.

Newly hired employees shall be eligible to participate in the Bank the month following the accumulation of six sick leave days.

Upon joining, an eligible employee must immediately contribute 1-3 days of accumulated sick leave.

Once employees elect to participate in the Sick Leave Bank, membership is established for the duration of their employment by OVEC, unless they submit a statement to discontinue membership or decline to make the required annual contribution to the Sick Leave Bank.

A participant granted leave of absence shall retain his/her status upon returning to regular duties.

Enrolled employees will be automatically re-enrolled each year and may be required to contribute 1-3 days from their sick leave accumulation to the Bank, depending upon the annual cumulative usage from the Bank. Employees continue as members until they submit a statement to discontinue membership or decline to make a required annual contribution, or employment ends.

The Sick Leave Bank may be opened for re-enrollment of participating members in any month following a decline to a balance of less than one day per member.

Non-participating employees shall be provided with an opportunity to enroll in each succeeding annual benefits open enrollment period and may be required to contribute 1-3 days from their sick leave accumulation to the Bank, depending upon the annual cumulative usage from the Bank.

Participation is restricted to eligible employees who have contributed to the Bank.

Sick Leave Bank usage is not available to an employee's family member

Eligibility

After employees have exhausted all accumulated paid leave days (including vacation days, if applicable), they may apply to the Sick Leave Bank Committee for use of sick leave bank days.

If employees' applications for the use of Sick Leave Bank days are approved, they shall be awarded bank days in five (5) working day blocks, not to exceed a maximum of thirty (30) days per year unless extenuating circumstances require further committee consideration for an extension. Days granted but not used from a five-day block shall be returned to the bank and the member's usage record shall be adjusted accordingly.

New employees have a ninety (90) day waiting period from the date of employment before becoming eligible to withdraw from the Sick Leave Bank.

Contribution

Each employee who is a member shall contribute 1-3 days of their annual sick days to the Bank each year. This annual contribution may be waived, as determined by the Chief Human Resources Officer. The requirement for contributions is based on annual cumulative days used from the Bank. A sick day contributed to the Bank will be deducted from the sick leave days available to the contributing employee.

The day, once contributed to the Bank, becomes the property of the Bank and may not be reclaimed by the employee except as specified in this policy. Only employees who are active members of the Sick Leave Bank in any given year shall be eligible to draw on the Bank.

The criteria for Sick Leave Bank usage shall be as follows:

- Catastrophic accident by the employee requiring absences from work (this does not include absences attributable to workers' compensation).
- Catastrophic illness of the employee.
- Extended hospitalization of the employee.

Application and Withdrawal

Each grant of sick leave days shall be limited to a maximum of 30 consecutively scheduled working days (equivalent to 225 hours for employees regularly scheduled to work 7.5 hours per day, or equivalent to 240 hours for employees regularly scheduled to work 8.0 hours or more each day) for each illness or injury. The total sick leave granted from the Sick Leave Bank to any one member shall not exceed 30 days for any one illness, recurring illness, or injury.

Employees who have already exhausted all of their accumulated sick leave in accordance with criteria for Sick Leave Bank usage will be exempt for the remainder of the current calendar year from the eligibility requirement of contributing sick days to the Bank.

To be considered for Bank leave usage, a written request signed by the employee must be submitted to the HR Department. Requests for Sick Leave Bank assistance must be in writing and be accompanied by a written statement from a licensed medical practitioner stating the beginning date of the condition, a description of the catastrophic illness or injury, and the date the employee may be able to return to work. Progress reports may be required to continue sick leave payments to the employee.

Sick Leave Bank usage shall be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

311 Jury/Court Leave

OVEC employees are entitled to jury/court leaves of absence from duties without loss of time of pay, for the amount of time necessary to fulfill court subpoenas at any level, serve as jurors or witnesses. Exceptions apply if the employee or their family is involved in the legal proceedings as plaintiffs or defendants. This leave encompasses necessary travel time. Employees must return to work if relieved of jury or witness duties during regular working hours. Employees selected for jury/court leave must inform their immediate supervisors and the OVEC time administrator and submit documentation beforehand. Documentation confirming the leave, including the initial service notification letter, must be submitted upon the employee's return to work.

312 Relocation Assistance

OVEC employees are eligible for relocation assistance when their program's funding source allows for this expense and their program's budget has a line-item for this expense.

Relocation assistance will be provided on a reimbursement basis, based on documentation of actual costs, up to the maximum amount determined by the program budget, but not to exceed \$5,000 per employee. OVEC advises all employees requesting relocation assistance to consult with professionals on the tax implications of relocation assistance, specifically under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

To be eligible for relocation assistance:

- The employee's relocation must be for the benefit of the employer.
- The employee's address on their application for employment must be fifty (50) miles or more from their assigned primary work location.

The following expenses may be reimbursed, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.464:

- The costs of transportation of the employee, members of their immediate family and household, and personal effects to the new location;
- The costs of finding a new home, such as advance trips by employees and spouses to locate living quarters and temporary lodging during the transition period, up to a maximum period of thirty (30) calendar days; and
- Other necessary and reasonable expenses normally incident to relocation, such as the costs of canceling an unexpired lease (limited to three [3] times monthly rental amount), transportation of personal property, and purchasing insurance against loss of or damages to personal property.

To receive reimbursement for relocation expenses, the employee must submit detailed receipts or invoices for allowable expenses. Requests submitted by the first Friday of the month will be submitted for approval by the OVEC Board of Directors and paid after the board approves the request.

313 Benefits Continuation (COBRA)

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under OVEC's health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, or death of an employee covered under a couple or family plan; a

reduction in an employee's hours or a leave of absence; an employee's divorce or legal separation; and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements.

Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at OVEC's group rates plus an administration fee. A written notice is provided to each eligible employee describing rights granted under COBRA. The notice contains important information about the employee's rights and obligations.

If you and/or your dependent(s) lose your group health insurance coverage due to termination of employment, reduction in hours worked, your death, divorce or legal separation, your entitlement to Medicare, or your dependent child(ren) becoming ineligible under your plan, you (or they) have the right to continue coverage at your (or their own expense) under COBRA.

Qualifying Events that entitle you to COBRA coverage	Length of coverage
Termination of employee's employment (except for gross misconduct) (Former employee & covered dependents)	18 Months
Reduction of hours worked by the employee (Employee and covered dependents)	18 Months
Death of a covered employee (Surviving spouse and covered dependents)	36 Months
Divorce or legal separation from the covered employee* (Spouse and covered dependents)	36 Months
Employee becomes entitled to Medicare* (Spouse and covered dependents)	36 Months
Dependent child covered under plan ceases to be an eligible dependent under the terms of the Plan *(e.g., reaches age limit, marries or otherwise loses dependent status)	36 Months
Persons considered to have total disability, according to Social Security	29 Months

Employee's Responsibility – You must notify your agency within 30 days when one of these qualifying events occurs, or risk jeopardizing your COBRA rights.

Electing COBRA – Employees and/or their covered dependents who are entitled to COBRA coverage will be sent notification by the employee's agency. If COBRA is elected, the COBRA letter, election form, and a newly completed health insurance application must be submitted per the instructions in the COBRA packet. The initial premium, which must cover all periods back to the date of the qualifying event, must also be submitted. Subsequent payments should be sent directly to the carrier.

Employees with Disabilities – COBRA allows persons considered to have a total disability (while waiting approval for Medicare) to maintain insurance for up to 29 months from the date of the initial qualifying event. The 11-month disability extension must be requested through the Personnel Cabinet, Department of Employee Insurance, before the original 18 months of COBRA expires.

Open Enrollment – COBRA participants will be allowed to change carriers, benefit levels, and/or level of coverage during Open Enrollment. Information and an application will be sent to all COBRA participants by the carrier.

316 Health Insurance

OVEC's health insurance plan provides employees and their dependents access to medical insurance benefits. Employees in the following employment classifications are eligible to participate in the health insurance plan:

- Regular full-time employees
- Regular part-time employees (80+ hours per month)

Eligible employees may participate in the health insurance plan, subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between OVEC and the insurance carrier.

A change in employment classification that would result in loss of eligibility to participate in the health insurance plan may qualify an employee for benefits continuation under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). Refer to the Benefits Continuation (COBRA) policy for more information.

Details of the health insurance plan are described in the Summary Plan Description (SPD). An SPD and information on the cost of coverage will be provided in advance of enrollment to eligible employees. Contact the HR department for more information about health insurance benefits.

317 Life Insurance

Life insurance offers you and your family important financial protection. OVEC and the state of Kentucky provide a basic life insurance plan for eligible employees. Additional supplemental and/or dependent life insurance coverage may also be purchased.

Employees in the following employment classifications are eligible to participate in the life insurance plan:

- Regular full-time employees
- Regular part-time employees

Eligible employees may participate in the life insurance plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between OVEC and the insurance carrier.

Details of the basic life insurance plan including benefit amounts are described in the Summary Plan Description provided to eligible employees. Contact the Human Resources Office for more information about life insurance benefits.

319 Employee Assistance Program

It is the sincere intent of OVEC to provide a work environment conducive to high employee productivity and job satisfaction. In order to minimize influences that can negatively impact employee morale and productivity, the Board provides eligible employees and dependents with the opportunity to participate in an Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

The EAP service provides a specified level of assistance to eligible employees and their eligible dependents as outlined in the agreement with the vendor. If employees or their eligible dependents exceed the maximum level of

services provided in the contract between the EAP vendor and OVEC, they may arrange to continue to receive services by paying for any additional services or use any applicable insurance program or both.

Voluntary Participation

Employees who are experiencing stress or difficulty coping to the extent they may feel their work performance is affected are encouraged to voluntarily seek counseling and information by contacting the EAP provider directly. Complete confidentiality is assured to the employee by the EAP provider.

Administrative Referral

If an employee's work is so adversely affected by personal or other factors beyond the control of management, a program director may refer the employee to the Employee Assistance Program. However, the employee may refuse to take advantage of the program. In this case, supervisory personnel shall follow normal disciplinary procedures to address employee work performance.

In cases where the employee does take advantage of the Employee Assistance Program, it remains the responsibility of the employee to bring job performance up to acceptable standards.

326 Retirement

Definition

Retirement means retirement from the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) or Kentucky Public Pension Authority (KPPA).

Qualifications

All certified employees and all other employees required to hold a degree from a four (4)- year college or university accredited by the U.S Department of Education are required to participate in the TRS. Qualified non-certified employees are required to participate in the KPPA upon completion of six months of employment.

Notice

Employees retiring should give the CEO notice as far in advance as possible, but not less than twenty (20) working days prior to retirement for certified and non-certified staff.

Responsibility

Retirement benefits shall be solely a matter of contract between the employee and the Teachers' Retirement System or the Kentucky Retirement System and shall not be the responsibility of OVEC, except that OVEC shall deduct and send to the Teachers' Retirement System or Kentucky Retirement System those amounts required under Kentucky law.

Unused Sick Days

Provided an individual has been employed by OVEC for at least four (4) consecutive years prior to retirement., OVEC shall compensate eligible certified employees at the time of retirement for 30% of unused sick leave days at the rate of their current daily salary.

Provided an individual has been employed by OVEC for at least four (4) consecutive years prior to retirement. Based on unused accumulated sick leave, OVEC shall purchase for each eligible retiring non-certified employee up to six (6) months of service credit.

Payout of Unused Annual Leave

Employees retiring under TRS and KPPA shall be paid for unused accrued annual leave, with payment included in their final check. However, failure to give written notice of retirement at least twenty (20) working days prior to retirement shall result in forfeiture of payment for accrued annual leave.

Review

This policy is subject to review and possible amendment annually.

327 Domestic/Dating Violence Reporting and Education

Applicable to OVEC Personnel as Defined in KRS 209A.

Upon request of a victim, OVEC personnel, as defined in KRS 209A, shall report an act of domestic violence and abuse or dating violence and abuse to a law enforcement officer. OVEC personnel shall discuss the report with the victim prior to contacting a law enforcement officer.

OVEC personnel shall report to a law enforcement officer when s/he has a belief that the death of a victim with whom s/he has had a professional interaction is related to domestic violence and abuse or dating violence and abuse.

These reporting requirements covering domestic violence and abuse or dating violence and abuse do not relieve any other OVEC personnel of the duty to report any known or suspected abuse, neglect, or dependency of a child pursuant to KRS 620.030. This separate reporting requirement covers abuse, neglect or dependency of a child committed or caused by a parent, guardian, other person exercising control or supervision, of a person in a position of authority or special trust.

If individual OVEC personnel has reasonable cause to believe that a victim with whom s/he has had a professional interaction has experienced domestic violence and abuse or dating violence and abuse, s/he shall provide educational materials to the victim relating to such form(s) of abuse and including information on access to regional domestic violence programs or rape crisis centers and how to access protective orders. These materials shall be made available to OVEC personnel in print form or on the web by the primary domestic violence, shelter, and advocacy service provider designated by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to serve OVEC's area.

403 Administrative Pay Corrections

OVEC takes all reasonable steps to ensure that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday. However, all employees should always review their paychecks to make certain there are no errors or unauthorized deductions.

In the unlikely event that there is an error in the amount of pay, the employee should promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of the HR Department so that OVEC can promptly address and investigate the issue. If OVEC determines that it made an improper deduction or error, OVEC will reimburse the employee for the deduction or error.

Corrections (underpayments or overpayments) to payroll errors should take place as soon as possible or by the next regular paycheck. If there is an overpayment to an employee, OVEC will implement a reasonable schedule of employee payments to reimburse OVEC.

404 FLSA Safe Harbor

OVEC designates each employee as either exempt or nonexempt in compliance with applicable federal and state law. Employees who are designated as exempt are paid a fixed salary regardless of the number of hours worked each week or the quality or quantity of work and are not entitled to overtime pay.

It is OVEC's intent to (1) pay all employees qualifying as exempt under the current provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act on a salary basis; (2) prohibit improper deductions from the salary of exempt employees; and (3) promptly correct any improper deductions. OVEC prohibits deductions from exempt employees' salaries except those allowed by applicable federal, state, and local law.

Subject to the exceptions listed below, exempt employees must receive the full salary for any workweek in which the employee performs any work. Exempt employees do not need to be paid for any work week in which they perform no work. This policy shall not prevent OVEC for compensating exempt employees during periods of mandatory non-work. Deductions from exempt employees' pay are permissible for:

- Full-day absences from work for personal reasons, other than sickness or disability;
- Full-day absences from work due to sickness or disability, if the deduction is made in accordance with a bona fide plan, policy, or practice of providing compensation for loss of salary caused by sickness or disability;
- Unpaid, full-day disciplinary suspensions imposed in good faith for violations of workplace conduct rules;
- Full days not worked during an employee's first or last week of employment; and
- Full-day or partial-day absences for unpaid leave taken under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

OVEC prohibits and will not tolerate retaliation against any employee because that employee filed a good-faith complaint under this policy.

405 Pay Deductions and Garnishments

The law requires that OVEC make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state, and local income taxes. OVEC also must deduct Social Security taxes on each eligible employee's earnings up to a specified limit that is called the Social Security "wage base." OVEC matches the amount of Social Security taxes paid by each employee. The same is true for employees covered by the Kentucky Teacher Retirement System or by the County Retirement System.

OVEC offers programs and benefits beyond those required by law. Eligible employees may voluntarily authorize deductions from their paychecks to cover the costs of participation in these programs.

Deductions for membership dues of an employee organization, association, or union shall only be made upon the express written consent of the employee. This consent may be revoked by the employee at any time by written notice to the employer.

Garnishments are pay deductions taken by OVEC, ordered by a court or legal authority to satisfy a debt or legal obligation to OVEC or others.

If you have questions concerning why deductions were made from your paycheck or how they were calculated, the HR department can assist in answering your questions.

409 Hours of Duty

Standard Office Hours

Hours of duty shall be determined at the time of employment through the individual contract. Flexible time in scheduling individual work hours shall be requested in writing from the immediate supervisor.

Employees are entitled to a rest period of at least fifteen (15) minutes during each four-(4) -hour work period.

Work Week

The official work week for OVEC shall be Monday through Friday. For purposes of calculating overtime, the work week shall be Sunday through Saturday.

Work Year

The employment year for all employees shall commence on July 1. Salaries and related benefits will be prorated for the first and last year of employment.

As directed by the immediate supervisor, exempt employees shall prepare a work plan showing days to be worked in fulfillment of their contract. Changes to the work plan shall be communicated to the immediate supervisor.

Timekeeping

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every employee. Federal and state laws require OVEC to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties.

Exempt employees will submit a work calendar showing the actual days worked to their supervisor for signature and approval. The completed, signed calendar must be submitted to the Executive Assistant no later than the fifth working day of the month following the calendar month.

Nonexempt employees should accurately record the time they begin and end their work, as well as the beginning and ending time of each meal period. They should also record late arrival or early departure from work. Program directors or the Chief Executive Officer must approve overtime before it occurs. Unless granted prior approval, nonexempt employees must adjust their work schedule during the week to avoid working more than 40 hours in any workweek. In adjusting their schedule, the employees will consult with their immediate supervisor to take time off to keep from exceeding the 40-hour maximum, and yet not cause undue disruption by being absent from work.

Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Nonexempt employees should report no more than 15 minutes before the scheduled starting time, nor should they stay more than 15 minutes after the scheduled stop time without prior express authorization from their supervisor.

Non-exempt employees must maintain their time sheet on an automated timekeeping system daily. It is the employee's responsibility to approve his or her time records daily to certify the accuracy of all time recorded. Any adjustments that need to be made must be reported to their supervisor immediately. At the end of each pay period, the supervisor will review and approve the employee's time and process the reports for payroll. Timesheet reports

shall be forwarded to the Executive Assistant no later than five (5) working days from the end of the pay period for review and approval and will be forwarded to the Payroll Department for processing.

501 Health and Safety

The Chief Executive Officer shall take all necessary and reasonable steps to create a safe and healthy working environment. Relevant federal and state occupational health and safety laws shall be followed. Employees shall cooperate with the CEO to help maintain a safe and healthy working environment. To that end, employees shall:

- Exercise maximum care and good judgment at all times to prevent accidents and injuries.
- Seek first aid for all injuries and report the injury to the supervisor as soon as possible.
- Report on unsafe conditions, equipment, or practices to supervisory personnel; and
- Observe all safety rules and regulations conscientiously.

When an employee reports an unsafe condition, equipment, or practice to a supervisor, the supervisor shall provide written documentation confirming receipt of the report. On receipt of a report from an employee, the supervisor shall have the unsafe condition corrected or report the condition, in writing, to the CEO.

502 Life-Threatening Illnesses in the Workplace

Employees with life-threatening illnesses, such as cancer, heart disease, and AIDS, often wish to continue their normal pursuits, including work, to the extent allowed by their condition. OVEC supports these endeavors as long as employees are able to meet acceptable performance standards. As in the case of other disabilities, OVEC will make reasonable accommodation in accordance with all legal requirements to allow qualified employees with life-threatening illnesses to perform the essential functions of their jobs.

Medical information on individual employees is treated confidentially. OVEC will take reasonable precautions to protect such information from inappropriate disclosure. Managers and other employees have a responsibility to respect and maintain the confidentiality of employee medical information. Anyone inappropriately disclosing such information is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees with questions or concerns about life-threatening illnesses are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Office or OVEC's Employee Assistance Program for information and referral to appropriate services and resources.

504 Use of Telephones

Personal use of the telephone for long-distance and toll calls is not permitted. Employees should practice discretion when making local personal calls and may be required to reimburse OVEC for any charges resulting from their personal use of the telephone.

To ensure effective telephone communications, employees should always use an appropriate greeting and speak in a courteous and professional manner. Please confirm the information received from the caller and hang up only after the caller has done so.

Employees may not utilize personal cell phones in the classroom. Personal cell phone usage should be kept to a minimum throughout the workday. While occasional usage is permitted, employees should endeavor not to make personal phone calls, send text messages, or utilize the internet on their personal cell phones when they are supposed to be working. Excessive usage of a personal cell phone for non-business purposes may be grounds for discipline.

505 Tobacco, Alternative Nicotine Product or Vapor Product Free Campus

The use of tobacco products, alternative nicotine products, or vapor products as defined in KRS 438.305 is prohibited twenty-four (24) hours a day, (7) days a week on or inside property owned or leased by OVEC, including OVEC offices, stairwells, elevators, hallways, classrooms, restrooms, reception areas, conference rooms, break/lounge areas, and in OVEC- owned or rented vehicles.

This policy applies equally to all employees, volunteers, and visitors.

506 Rest and Meal Periods

Employees are required to take rest period of fifteen (15) minutes during each four-(4) -hour work period. To the extent possible, rest periods will be provided in the middle of each four-hour work period. Since this time is counted and paid as time worked, employees must not be absent from their workstations beyond the allotted rest period time. Employees may not combine rest breaks.

All full-time exempt (salaried) employees are provided with 1 meal period of 60 minutes in length each workday. All full-time nonexempt (hourly) employees are provided with one meal period of 30 minutes in length each workday. All meal breaks for nonexempt employees must be taken before the 5th hour that an employee works. Any employee who works more than 5 hours without taking a meal break will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, for failure to take a timely meal break. Nonexempt employees will be relieved of all active responsibilities and restrictions during meal periods and will not be compensated for that time. Supervisors will schedule meal periods to accommodate operating requirements.

508 Use of OVEC Property

No OVEC employee shall use any building, vehicle, equipment, or other property owned by OVEC for personal use, unless otherwise approved by the CEO or Board.

Use of Personal Property in the Workplace

When the assigned location of employment is changed, the employee must remove personal property in a timely manner. Otherwise, all claims to the property shall be relinquished.

Employee Responsibility

All personnel shall be responsible for OVEC property, equipment, supplies, publications, furniture, and apparatus under their care and use. Any damaged, lost, stolen, or vandalized property shall be reported immediately to the employee's immediate supervisor. Unless otherwise approved by the CEO or designee, an employee shall not use OVEC property for personal gain or benefit or to perform outside work.

Use of OVEC Vehicles

OVEC-owned vehicles are for the purpose of providing services and assistance directly to local districts.

Associated-owned vehicles shall be replaced based on mileage, repair needs, and costs. OVEC shall pay all required maintenance costs of OVEC-owned vehicles, including costs of insurance and applicable taxes.

Driving Record Check

The CEO or designee shall obtain a driving record from the Kentucky Department of Transportation on all employees who drive an OVEC-owned vehicle to transport students and/or their parents annually. Any traffic citation received during the year shall be reported to the employee's immediate supervisor prior to resuming their driving responsibilities. The CEO should ensure that OVEC vehicles are equipped with digital tracking devices for the purposes of inventory. OVEC staff are prohibited from using vehicles for personal use, such as trips to their personal residence.

Additional driving records requirements may apply for employees in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

510 Emergency Closings

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, power failures, or earthquakes can disrupt operations, as well as endanger employees' well-being and safety. In extreme cases, these circumstances may require the closing of the OVEC office or local school districts where there is assigned field staff. If such an emergency occurs during non-working hours, local radio and/or television stations will be asked to broadcast notification of the closing. Field-based staff located in schools will follow the emergency closing announcements of local school districts. Office staff residing outside of Shelby County should call the office if local conditions prevent or delay travel to the office.

When operations, either at the OVEC office or in the local school districts, are officially closed due to emergency conditions, or if the employee is unable to reach work due to severe weather or emergency conditions, the time off from scheduled work will be unpaid for nonexempt employees. Nonexempt employees may use available paid leave time, such as unused annual or personal leave, or if their contract permits, they may use nonwork. Exempt employees are to adjust their work calendar to make up for any day(s) lost due to emergency closings.

512 Workplace Threats and Violence

Threats, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against employees, visitors, guests, or other individuals by anyone on OVEC property will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy will lead to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal, arrest, and prosecution.

Any person who makes a substantial threat, exhibits threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts on OVEC property shall be removed from the premises. OVEC will initiate an appropriate response, which may include, but is not limited to, suspension and/or termination of any business relationship, reassignment of job duties, suspension or termination of employment, and/or criminal prosecution of person or persons involved.

No existing OVEC policy, practice, or procedure should be interpreted to prohibit decisions designed to prevent a threat from being carried out, a violent act from occurring, or a life-threatening situation from developing.

All OVEC personnel are responsible for notifying the Human Resource Department of any threat that they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. This shall include oral, written, or electronic threats. Even without an actual threat, personnel should also report any behavior they have witnessed that they regard as threatening or violent, when that behavior is job-related, could be carried out on a company-controlled site, or is connected to company employment.

Employees are responsible for making this report regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person or persons who were threatened or were the focus of the threatening behavior. If a Human Resources representative is not available, personnel should report the threat to their immediate supervisor or another member of the management team.

All individuals who apply for or obtain a protective or restraining order that lists OVEC locations as being protected areas must provide Human Resources with a copy of the petition and declarations used to seek the order. They must also provide a copy of any temporary protective or restraining order that is granted and a copy of any protective or restraining order that is made permanent.

OVEC understands the sensitivity of the information requested and has developed confidentiality procedures that recognize and respect the privacy of the reporting employee(s).

514 Visitors in the Workplace

To provide for the safety and security of employees and the facilities at OVEC, only authorized visitors are allowed in the workplace. Restricting unauthorized visitors helps maintain safety standards, protects against theft, ensures security of equipment, protects confidential information, safeguards employee welfare, and avoids potential distractions and disturbances.

All visitors should enter the OVEC reception area. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees are responsible for the conduct and safety of their visitors. Visitors will be asked to sign the guest book at the reception desk before proceeding to the office areas.

If an unauthorized individual is observed on OVEC's premises, employees should immediately notify their supervisor or, if necessary, direct the individual to the reception area.

Field-based staff should check with program directors regarding visitors in their specific site or location.

515 Volunteers

OVEC supports and promotes parent and volunteer involvement in its instructional programs. Under the direction and supervision of program staff, volunteers may assist in both instructional and non-instructional activities of children in the Head Start program. Volunteers may be used in other schools and community-based programs operated by OVEC, to the extent that program staff supervise the individuals.

To comply with Kentucky law, all volunteers who have contact with children in public schools, including Head Start children, on a regularly scheduled or continuing basis shall complete and have on file a criminal records check conducted by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

“Volunteer” may refer to a parent, guardian, or other family member and may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Translator
- Interpreter
- Foster grandparent
- Childcare workers for parent education training

OVEC shall not allow any individual to volunteer in its programs when a criminal records check uncovers any drug-related or sex-related criminal offense, other felony offenses, or other such offenses that OVEC deems as posing a serious or unnecessary risk to the well-being of children or program staff. All other individuals will be welcomed as volunteers in our programs. However, a criminal records check must be completed and a report received from the Administrative Office. Volunteers are required to go through OVEC’s volunteer training and onboarding requirements.

516 Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Employees are expected to use OVEC and KETS (CIITS), electronic media, networks, and other information technology resources appropriately and in compliance with this policy and applicable state and federal legal requirements. The purposes of this policy are to: 1. Educate; 2. Protect against privacy violations and misuse of OVEC resources, inappropriate or destructive behaviors that occur as a result of employee access to electronic information resources; and 3. Ensure that the technology resources of OVEC are dedicated to improving service and raising productivity. Appropriate and inappropriate use of technology resources shall be consistent with the criteria that guide decisions about other OVEC assets.

The policy applies to computer hardware (including, but not limited to, workstations, laptop computers, tablets, servers, etc.) and peripherals (printers, scanners, external hard drives, etc.); the telephone/mobile phone/voice mail system and fax machine(s); alarm system; software (applications, services, operating systems, etc.); network appliances such as routers and switches, mobile hot spots; network services such as email and internet access; local area network access; storage devices; and databases, files, and other repositories of information in electronic form that are the property of OVEC. In addition, this policy applies to both onsite and remote access.

The knowledge to make use of technology resources necessary for the execution of job duties is the responsibility of the employee. This includes knowledge of basic computer operation as well as remembering passwords and preventing others from knowing those passwords except when deemed necessary to the execution of job responsibilities. OVEC has made and continues to make investments in technology with the following expectations concerning its use by employees:

- Appropriate technological use increases productivity; generally, work products can be produced, and services can be delivered with greater accuracy, in less time, and at less cost.
- Decision-makers will have rapid access to more complete and accurate information.
- Communication among staff, between the staff and their customers, and with the public will improve.
- OVEC services and information will be more widely and equitably accessible.

OVEC technology resources may not be used for private business or personal gain. The following misuse of OVEC technology resources is strictly prohibited for private business purposes, non-work-related clubs or organizations, to obtain money, property or services for personal or private sector use, for political or religious purposes, for the playing of entertainment videos, music, or of games, or participation in contests and for training purposes, video and music streaming can be utilized.

By law, the Technology Officer, CEO, or their designee may examine files, transaction logs, email correspondence, or other information about an individual's use of technology resources. Electronic information stored on OVEC technology equipment is considered OVEC property. Further, employees should be aware that email logs, the content of email, logs or internet access, and the content of internet sessions may be subject to inspection under the Open Records Laws (KRS 61.870- 61.884 and KRS 171.410-171.720).

If an employee is unavailable, his or her supervisor may be provided with access to the employee's workstation, files, and email account without the employee's permission or prior notice.

Members of the OVEC leadership team are responsible for orienting employees within their organizational authority to the provisions of this policy, monitoring compliance, and taking appropriate disciplinary action when inappropriate use occurs.

Employees are responsible for their own actions and the actions of those they knowingly permit to use assigned resources and passwords. Passwords are to be chosen and protected carefully. Employees are encouraged to secure a workstation temporarily by locking their workstation. By law, OVEC itself will not be held responsible for a user's abuse of any OVEC technology system, including email; ultimate legal responsibility rests upon the user. The tier of consequences for violations of the OVEC Technology Acceptable Use Policy is as follows: 1. Loss of network/technology access 2. Disciplinary action per OVEC Policy, up to and including termination 3. Legal action

Employees may not use a password or key code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication unless they have been given authorization to do so. (Authorization is not required each time the electronic media is accessed in performance of one's duties.) Employees cannot expect confidentiality or privacy of information exchanged via email. The Technology Officer, CEO, or personnel authorized by either may monitor the use of OVEC technology resources at their discretion. Employees may be required to surrender their password on demand to the CEO, his/her designee, their supervisor, or the Technology Officer.

Security is every user's responsibility. If a user identifies a security problem within the OVEC network, that user is obligated to report the suspected problem to the Technology Officer or his/her designee. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users.

Pornography, Sexual Harassment, and Other Objectionable Material: Employees shall not use OVEC technology resources to copy, create, send, store, display, or distribute pornography and other objectionable materials. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Placing such materials on or retrieving them from a file server, hard drive, or other storage media;
- Sending or receiving pornography and objectionable materials through the network; and
- Using OVEC resources and/or network access to download from or post such materials to personally owned devices. Objectionable materials include information from hate groups and materials posted to harass or threaten. In addition, pornography viewed by others inadvertently may constitute grounds for sexual harassment.

Email communications taking place either through the OVEC email server or through another email server to which a user connects remotely shall adhere to the following criteria:

- No sexually explicit or obscene material as described above
- No religious material
- No biased political material
- Do not access another's email without permission except when necessary for the administration of the network email system
- No chain letters and other non-work-related correspondence
- Employees are expected to set up automatic out-of-office replies when they are on leave and to designate an alternate contact in their out-of-office message.

Only the Technology Officer or his/her designee may create, edit, or delete LAN login, OVEC internet server, or email accounts. The Technology Officer or his/her designee must be notified immediately upon any changes in the personnel status of any employee with an existing network account; such accounts may be retained for a reasonable period after a resignation or termination if necessary (with the consent of his/her supervisor, the Technology Officer, or the CEO). Users are responsible for the security of their user accounts. If passwords are distributed to others besides supervisors or the Technology Officer, the user is responsible for the actions of those to whom access is given. If the user leaves the workstation unattended with applications open, the user is responsible for resulting in inappropriate use or security violations. Only the CEO, his or her designee, or the Technology Officer, may be granted Administrator rights to the OVEC domain.

Employee Use of Social Networks In keeping with their job responsibilities, OVEC employees may request to use OVEC resources to set up blogs and other social networking accounts to promote communications among staff and with members and clients. In order for OVEC employees to utilize a social networking site for a work-related and/or communication purpose, they shall comply with the following:

1. They shall request prior permission from the CEO or Technology Officer.
2. If permission is granted, staff members will set up the site following OVEC guidelines developed by the Technology Officer.

3. Once the site has been created, the designated staff member is responsible for the following:

- Monitoring and managing the site to promote safe and acceptable use; and
- Observing confidentiality restrictions concerning the release of employee/student information under state and federal law.

Staff members are not permitted to create personal social networking sites to which they invite students to be friends without prior approval of their immediate supervisor and the Technology Officer. Employees taking such action do so at their own risk. All employees shall be subject to disciplinary action if their conduct relating to the use of technology or online resources violates this policy or other applicable policy, statutory or regulatory provisions governing employee conduct. The Education Professional Standards Board's Professional Code of Ethics for Kentucky School Certified Personnel requires certified staff to protect the health, safety, and emotional well-being of students and the confidentiality of student information. Conduct in violation of this Code, including, but not limited to, such conduct relating to the use of technology or online resources, must be reported to the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) as required by law and may form the basis for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

It is a Class C Felony (KRS 434.840-434.860) to access electronically stored data when you have no right or permission to do so. The felony also applies to those who allow or "cause to be accessed" the same. It is a Class D Felony (KRS 512.020) to intentionally or unintentionally deface, destroy, or damage any public agency data or technology property.

The responsibility for protecting against loss of OVEC data lies with the individual user. Users must maintain electronic copies of documents on their primary workstation and regularly back those documents up to the network storage server. Knowledge of this procedure should be considered necessary for the execution of any job duties that employ OVEC technology resources. It is crucial to understand that there is no foolproof, fail-safe method of protecting electronic documents; the best possible defense is the vigilance and effort it takes to make multiple copies of important data. Do not maintain only a single copy of a critical file. Do not maintain your only copies on the same storage device or in the same location.

The OVEC network includes an open \Share directory, which shall be mapped to all domain workstations. Its purpose is to serve as a central location for the distribution of files to all OVEC staff, or as a place where users may temporarily place specific files or folders to share them with others for short periods. It should not be considered as an appropriate file backup resource. Confidential information shall not be stored within \Share directory.

Individuals shall reimburse OVEC for the repair or replacement of property lost, stolen, damaged, or vandalized while under their care. OVEC employees who deface an OVEC website or social media account or otherwise make unauthorized changes to a website or social media account shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as appropriate.

Users shall not incorporate "power on" passwords orated into the BIOS, CMOS, or other startup feature of any OVEC computer. No machine running a server operating system may be connected in any way to the OVEC local area network without the approval of the Technology Officer or his/her designee. Workstation operating systems must be approved by the Technology Officer or his/her designee. No workstation may be added to the OVEC LAN with a static IP address without the approval of the Technology Officer or his/her designee. Instead, use DHCP to assign IP addresses. Enabling File/Print Sharing on individual workstations should be done only when necessary to the execution of job duties; when it is used, do not restrict access through user-assigned passwords without the knowledge and consent of the Technology Officer or his/her designee. In effect, workstation shares must be considered "open" on the local area network (LAN) unless designated otherwise by the Technology Officer or his/her designee.

With network printers, static IP addresses are the OVEC standard; only the Technology Officer or his/her designee may assign static IP addresses. The installation and configuration of networked appliances such as network storage devices, network printers, routers, gateways, wireless access points, switches, or additional hubs must be approved by the Technology Officer or his/her designee. Any security above and beyond OVEC Active Directory security on network devices (network printers, storage appliances, etc.), including administrative passwords for configuration tasks, must be configured by or with the knowledge and approval of the Technology Officer or his/her designee.

Passwords and security settings on network printers may not be changed without the knowledge and consent of the Technology Officer or his/her designee.

Software must not be installed, used, or shared between users in violation of an existing software license – software piracy will not be tolerated at OVEC. For questions about a software application license, read and comply with said application’s EULA (End User License Agreement), which will specify whether the rights purchased are for a single user on a single workstation, for multiple users, or for multiple workstations. Software may not be copied or shared outside the provisions of the agreement with the software publisher. Violations of software licensing agreements may constitute serious infractions of federal law and the violator may be subject to civil and/or criminal penalties. Employees shall not: • Copy software without authorization from the publisher or copyright holder; • Use software for which he or she does not have proof of legal right; • Copy information or programs from the internet and re-use or distribute it without acknowledging authorship and source; • Assume that he or she can load the older version of software on another workstation after the installation of a software upgrade to the original workstation; and • Take over a workstation without ensuring that the software already loaded is legal. When you assume responsibility for the workstation, you assume responsibility for the software. Distributors of software and the Software Publishers Association have the legal right to audit OVEC at any time to ensure compliance with licensing agreements. The user, program under which that user works, or the Technology Office must be prepared to show a software license certificate or copy of the purchase order for each piece of software loaded on that system. Users must not load software on OVEC computers without notifying the Technology Officer or his/her designee. If the responsible party cannot show proof of license of proper authorization for a software program, OVEC has the right to remove the software from the computer or fileserver.

The following types of software are prohibited on OVEC network client machines without the knowledge and consent of the Technology Officer or his/her designee, unless used for work related purposes. OVEC employees are not to install or use any of the following or similar programs on OVEC workstations: a. Streaming music or video clients b. Instant messaging clients Page | 9 c. Software that requires consent to also install marketing or monitoring software in order to be installed. d. “Amusement” applications with no applicability to the employee’s job duties. e. Applications that require processing power and/or bandwidth as a condition of discounted or free software. The industry term for this type of program is Grid Programming or Distributed Computing f. “Freeware” or “shareware” applications known to contain spyware, adware, or other bundled applications from partner software corporations. g. Games other than those bundled with the operating system. (Instructional games and game-like software being evaluated or reviewed by staff in the course of their jobs are excluded from this prohibition.) h. Any software deemed by the Technology Officer or his/her designee as having an adverse impact on the performance of the workstation, server, network, or internet connection. Applications that monitor, intercept, or decode network information, such as “packet sniffers,” password retrievers, or port scanners, are explicitly prohibited on the OVEC LAN except under the approval and supervision of the Technology Officer or his/her designee.

OVEC workstations must run an antivirus application approved by the Technology Officer or his/her designee and should be configured to schedule automatic, regular updates. Such software may be supplied by OVEC at the discretion of the Technology Officer or his/her designee, but if not so supplied, must be funded by the funding source of the workstation. Additional security software may be installed or mandated by the Technology Officer or his/her designee. Desktop firewall software should not be installed or enabled unless approved by the Technology Officer or his/her designee.

In the event user's employment with OVEC ends, any technology resources that are the property of OVEC must be returned to the OVEC Central Office on the final day of employment. This includes, but is not limited to, laptops, desktops, mobile phones, tablets, mobile hotspots, and peripherals such as printers, wireless keyboards and mouse devices, and any connecting cords or chargers. Failure to do so may result in the withholding of the final pay period check until the device is returned. If the device is not returned within two weeks of contract end, the user may be charged for the replacement cost of the technology resources

**OVEC
ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT
FOR USE OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY**

SAMPLE

I have read the OVEC Acceptable Use Policy for Electronic Resources and Technology.

By my signature, I agree to comply with this policy.

SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

520 Adherence to Copyright Laws

It is the intent of the Board of Directors of the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC) that its employees shall adhere to the provisions of the Copyright Act of 1976 (P. L. 94-553), the provisions of Title 17 of the United States Code, entitled “Copyrights” and all other relative federal legislation related to the duplication, retention, and use of copyright materials.

Employees may duplicate copyrighted materials with the prior written consent of the copyright holder, or where the duplication meets the definition of “fair use” of the materials as defined by law and by the courts.

Employees who make or use copies of copyrighted materials in their jobs are expected to be familiar with published provisions regarding “fair use” and public display, and are expected to provide, upon request of the CEO or program director, the justification under sections 107 or 110 of USC 17 for materials that have been used or copied. OVEC shall develop and disseminate to all current and new employees a compliance manual dealing with the use of copyrighted materials. Training shall be provided for all current and new staff regarding adherence to copyrights and on the compliance manual.

Employees who use copyrighted materials that do not fall within “fair use” or public display guidelines must demonstrate that the materials meet one of the following tests:

- The materials have been purchased from an authorized vendor by the individual or by OVEC, and a record of the purchase exists.
- The materials are copies covered by a licensing agreement between the copyright owner and OVEC or the individual employee.
- The materials are being previewed or demonstrated by the user to decide on a future purchase or licensing, and a valid agreement exists that permits such use.

Unlawful copies of copyrighted materials may not be produced on OVEC-owned equipment. OVEC requires the placement of appropriate notices on or near all equipment capable of making copies.

Unlawful copies of copyrighted material may not be used with OVEC-owned equipment, within OVEC-owned facilities, or at any OVEC-sponsored functions.

The legal and insurance protection of OVEC will not extend to employees who unlawfully copy and use copyrighted materials, and OVEC assumes no liability for infringement of copyright by individual employees.

550 Travel

Travel Preapproval - Training/Conference Travel Request Form

OVEC employees are required to get preapproval for all travel requests at least 30 days in advance of the conference/event date. A Training Conference Travel Request Form must be completed for any event taking place outside OVEC property. The Training/Conference Travel Request form can be found on the OVEC website. This form must include all dates of travel, an agenda of the conference/event, lodging information (number of nights and attached documentation stating the nightly rate and name of hotel), and airfare itinerary (Expedia or Southwest) if traveling via airplane. The Training/Conference Travel Request form and supporting documentation must be submitted and approved by the direct supervisor, the CFO, and the CEO. This must be approved prior to booking hotel/flights or conference registration.

Travel Reimbursement

Employees and other individuals representing the Cooperative are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses incurred during the course of an overnight trip made on official business for the Cooperative. Expenses eligible for travel reimbursement include (but are not limited to): lodging, meals, airfare, parking fees, luggage fees, and transportation costs.

- A) Lodging expenses are reimbursable when attendance at an approved training, conference, or meeting requires travel that meets both of the following conditions:
- 1) The event location is at least 50 miles one way from the employee's primary work location or residence; and
 - 2) The travel time and event schedule would result in a total workday longer than the employee's normal workday, making same-day travel unreasonable. Reimbursement for lodging requires submission of an itemized receipt from a hotel, motel, or other place of public accommodation covering the overnight stay (See Section C below.) This provision may be waived by the CEO when circumstances warrant.
- B) Travel by Air or Car: If an employee opts for road travel as opposed to air travel, the mileage reimbursement requested on the Travel Voucher (Appendix D) must not exceed a quote for air travel for the same time and distance.
- C) Reimbursement of Flights and Hotels:
- 1) The Training/Conference Travel Request Form must be submitted and approved prior to booking hotel and/or flight reservations.
 - 2) Once approved, staff will create a PO for flight and hotel expenses to be reimbursed to the employee who is traveling.
 - 3) When flight and hotel receipts are received, staff will submit them to Finance staff at OVECRequisition@ovec.org to receive reimbursement. Please include the PO # in the subject line of the email and on the attached receipts.
- D) Reimbursement of Additional Travel Expenses - Overnight Travel Reimbursement Form (Appendix E):
- 1) The Overnight Travel Reimbursement Form is required for requesting reimbursement of travel expenses outside of the flight and/or hotel. They may include: airport transportation, meals, parking, tolls, and baggage fees. The form is available on the OVEC website.
 - 2) The Overnight Travel Reimbursement Form (Appendix E) must be submitted within 30 days of completion of a trip.
 - 3) Receipts for all expenses (except meals) must be provided.
 - 4) All fields shall be completed on the form in order to receive reimbursement.
 - 5) Each employee must submit a separate form. A single travel form will not be approved for a group of travelers.
 - 6) These travel procedures apply to all reimbursement requests regardless of the source of the funds (general, federal grants, state grants, local grants, etc.).
 - 7) Failure to use the Overnight Travel Reimbursement Form in a timely manner could result in a delay in payment.
 - 8) Staff will create a check request for all expenses on the Overnight Travel Reimbursement Form and submit documentation.
 - 9) Meal Reimbursement (for overnight travel):
 - a) An employee whose authorized travel requires an overnight stay shall be paid a per-meal allowance in accordance with the **State of Kentucky's current meal allowance rates**. Current rates can be found on OVEC's Overnight Travel Reimbursement Form. Employees must be traveling the entire time period listed on form to receive reimbursement for that meal.
 - b) These requirements apply to all meals. In all instances and in accordance with IRS

rulings, reimbursement for meals shall be paid to the employee **only if an overnight stay was required.**

- c) Receipts are not required for per diem meal allowances. Per diem allowances are reimbursed after the trip is completed.
- d) If an employee attends a conference or meeting sponsored by a non-OVEC organization where the cost of the meal is fixed and that cost exceeds the meal allowance rate, they shall be entitled to reimbursement for actual charges where receipt is given.

NON-REIMBURSEABLE EXPENSES

Caution: This list of non-reimbursable expenses is intended to be representative, not comprehensive.

- 1) Alcohol
- 2) Baggage (lost baggage, optional baggage insurance, overweight baggage fees, more than one checked bag fee, oversized baggage fees, personal items, etc.)
- 3) Bank charges for ATM withdrawals and foreign currency conversion fees
- 4) Barbers and hairdressers
- 5) Cell phone charges, such as roaming
- 6) Change or cancellation fees of a flight/hotel reservation that do **not** fit into the following reasons: a. OVEC business required change verified by supervisor b. Canceled conference/meeting c. Airline canceled flight d. Death of a family member (spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling) e. Employee's unexpected illness, which is not due to misconduct.
- 7) Childcare
- 8) Clothing
- 9) Club and membership dues
- 10) Credit card charges/fees
- 11) Dependent care
- 12) Entertainment, including event cost and associated transportation (theatre, concerts, sightseeing, tours, sporting events, social/amusement activities, golf fees, etc.)
- 13) Expenses due to personal negligence of the traveler, including: a. Fines/Fees—parking tickets, traffic violations, court costs, towing fees b. Services to gain entry to a locked vehicle c. Failure to cancel hotel reservations d. Delivery of fuel to car; Jump-starting vehicle e. Missed flights f. Flight change due to failing to confirm details prior to departure g. Airfare purchased less than 14 days in advance, unless the travel is for essential business travel as defined in these Travel Guidelines
- 14) Frequent flyer purchases/upgrades
- 15) Gifts
- 16) GPS
- 17) Gratuities/Tips, other than ground transportation tips up to 20% of the charge
- 18) Home or lawn maintenance expenses
- 19) Internet connectivity in public places other than hotel, conference venue, or airplane unless absolutely needed for OVEC job functions

- 20) Laundry/Dry cleaning services for travel of fewer than seven consecutive business days
- 21) Legal fees
- 22) Limousine service
- 23) Loss or theft of personal funds, property, or airline tickets
- 25) Meals for individuals who are not OVEC employees
- 26) Medical expenses (doctor fees, hospital charges, prescription meds, other medical services)
- 27) Mileage to attend either visitations or funeral services
- 28) Passport, vaccination, visa expenses, Global Entry Program, and TSA Pre-Check
- 29) Personal convenience/Comfort and upgrade expenses (early bird check-in fees, economy comfort seating, amenities, etc.)
- 30) Personal/Incidental expenses a. Movies, personal calls, manicures, pedicures, mini-bar, shoeshine, in-room video, fitness center fees, massages, spa treatments, reading material, snacks, sundry items, safety deposit boxes in hotel, etc.
- 31) Personal automobile insurance
- 32) Personal automobile maintenance/tune-ups, repairs
- 33) Pet care (veterinarian expenses, boarding/kenneling expenses)
- 34) Souvenirs
- 35) Spouse/Family/Guest/Companion expenses
- 37) Transportation to entertainment events or venues
- 38) Travel insurance
- 39) Traveler's check fees
- 40) Vacation or personal day expenses taken before, during, or after a business trip
- 41) Valet parking (unless required by hotel)

TRAVEL VOUCHERS

OVEC employees using their personal vehicle for work purposes are eligible for mileage reimbursement. Travel Vouchers can be found on OVEC's website, and should be submitted on a timely basis, preferably monthly. Travel Vouchers should be submitted no later than the published accounts payable deadline following the month traveled. In the event of grant termination, please ensure travel vouchers are submitted prior to the time grant funds are unavailable. The Chief Executive Officer can waive non-recommendations at their discretion.

The rate of reimbursement for the use of personal automobiles for official travel shall be equivalent to the state travel policies and shall be determined by the circumstances below for employees of the Cooperative.

1. Employees will be reimbursed for mileage above and beyond their regular daily commute (driving a car between their home and your main or regular place of work). The sum of the mileage for which you are being reimbursed in a day cannot be greater than the actual miles minus your commute.
2. Employees who do not have a central work site and who work at more than one workplace in a day will be reimbursed for mileage from one workplace to the other. However, mileage from their home and their first workplace, as well as mileage from their last workplace and their home, is not reimbursable.

3. Cooperative-owned vehicles should be used if available, and car-pooling should be used in all circumstances.
4. OVEC employees who work a 185-day contract or less and substitute during the summer months will be reimbursed for mileage above and beyond their regular daily commute. Non-OVEC employees who substitute on an intermittent basis will be assigned a central work site. If a substitute is needed at a site other than their central work site, the substitute will be reimbursed for mileage above and beyond their regular daily commute.

Exceptions to the above travel and expense policies may be made when agreed to by the Cooperative and an employee and/or as provided for in contractual arrangements made with other Agencies.

580 Bloodborne Pathogens

Exposure Control Plan. The CEO/designee shall develop a Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan designed to meet the requirements of OSHA.

Identified Employees. The CEO shall identify those employees whose likely occupational exposure is to blood or other potentially infectious materials as a result of performing their job duties.

Employee Vaccination Program. OVEC provides hepatitis B (HBV) vaccinations to all employees who have occupational exposure and provides post-exposure follow-up for all employees with an occupational exposure incident.

OVEC requires that only a licensed physician or licensed health-care professional perform or supervise all medical bloodborne pathogens (BBP) evaluations and procedures, and that all BBP laboratory tests are at no cost to the employee.

OVEC provides all identified employees, at a reasonable time and place and at no cost, all BBP evaluations, procedures, vaccinations, and post-exposure management.

OVEC offers HBV vaccination to identified employees within ten (10) working days of initial assignment to all employees exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials, unless the employee has a previous HBV vaccination or unless antibody testing has revealed that the employee is immune or the vaccination is unnecessary for medical reasons. OVEC agrees to provide the vaccine to employees who initially decline an HBV vaccination but later, while still covered under the standard, decide to accept the HBV vaccination. If a doctor or other licensed health-care provider recommends a booster dose(s) at a future date, the implementation of such a recommendation is at no cost to the employee. Any employee who declines HBV vaccination must sign a waiver.

OVEC makes HBV antibody testing available to an employee who desires such testing before declining whether to receive HBV vaccination. If the employee is immune to HBV because of an adequate antibody titer, then OVEC does not need to provide the HBV vaccine.

Medical Records. OVEC complies with OSHA requirements for record keeping BBP medical records on all employees for the duration of employment, plus ten (10) years on all employees.

BBP Training. OVEC shall offer all employees an annual program of training on BBP and exposure to other potentially infectious materials. OVEC shall comply with OSHA requirements for maintaining training records.

Work Practice Controls. OVEC adopts policies and procedures to reduce the likelihood of employees being exposed to BBP. OVEC can accomplish this objective by altering the manner in which an employee performs a specific task. Included in OVEC control measures shall be an effective approach for infection control. OVEC shall

consider all human blood and certain human body fluids as infectious for HIV, HBV, and other Bloodborne pathogens.

581 Video Surveillance

OVEC reserves the right to install security cameras in work areas for specific business reasons, such as security, theft protection, and safety of program participants and staff.

OVEC may find it necessary to monitor work areas with security cameras when there is a specific job- or business-related reason to do so. OVEC will do so only after first ensuring that such action is in compliance with state and federal laws. Employees should not have any expectation of privacy in work-related areas.

OVEC employees are not authorized to release video footage to third parties.

Employees should contact their supervisor or the Human Resources (HR) department if they have questions about this policy.

Nothing in this policy is intended to, nor should be construed to limit or interfere with employee rights as set forth under all applicable provisions of the National Labor Relations Act, including Section 7 and 8(a)(1) rights to organize and engage in protected, concerted activities regarding the terms and conditions of employment.

603 Absences/Unpaid Leave

Authorization of leave and time taken off from one's job shall be in accordance with a specific leave policy. Absence from work that is not based on appropriate leave for which the employee is qualified may lead to disciplinary consequences, up to and including termination of employment.

Absences

Employees are expected to notify their immediate supervisor when they must be tardy or absent. Staff in positions requiring substitutes must contact both their immediate supervisor and a substitute to work for the day.

An employee who is absent from duty without approval shall report the reason to his/her supervisor as soon as reasonably possible. Unauthorized and/or unreported absence shall be considered absence without leave, and deduction of pay may be made for each period of such absence. Unauthorized absences include, but are not limited to, days that result in the employee failing to meet his/her contract commitment. Such absences without leave may be grounds for suspension or termination of employment. Three (3) or more such absences shall be cause for termination. Please refer to the OVEC attendance procedure for additional guidance.

Leave Authorization

In order to provide the highest level of service, employees are expected to be at work and on time every day. However, when circumstances dictate, OVEC provides various types of leave under which absences may be authorized. Please note that in many cases, a written request must be submitted and approved before the leave begins. Authorization of leave shall be made in accordance with the specific leave policy.

Short-Term Unpaid Leave of Absence

Provided an employee has exhausted all other available leave, the Chief Executive Officer may grant leave without pay for a period or periods not to exceed thirty (30) working days in any fiscal year.

The CEO may grant leave of absence without pay for a period not to exceed the length of the contract for the following purposes:

- Assignment to and attendance at college, university, or business school for the purpose of training in subjects related to the work of the employee; and
- Other purposes that are deemed to be in the best interest of the Cooperative.
- Special leave of absence may be granted to all staff of the Cooperative in accordance with the limits set forth by the Board. When all paid leave options have been exhausted, a written request for unpaid leave of absence may be granted to employees for extended personal illness, educational or professional purposes, or for immediate family illness, maternity, adoption of a child or children, or other disability.
- When an employee is on leave without pay, they must follow the guidelines in the Appendix for continuing health insurance benefits if the employee qualifies for health insurance.

Holidays While on Unpaid Leave

Employees shall not be paid for holidays that occur during the unpaid leave period.

FMLA

Eligible employees may apply for leave under the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. (See Policy 03.12322 FMLA.)

604 Special Leaves of Absence

Extended Disability Leave

Unpaid extended disability leave may be granted only after accumulated sick leave days have been exhausted.

A physician's statement shall be required when requesting an unpaid extended disability leave of absence. The statement shall indicate the nature of the illness and the estimated recovery time. A second physician's statement may be required at either the request of the CEO or the employee. The cost of the second physician's statement shall be borne by the party requesting the statement.

The length of extended disability leave shall be based on the recommendation of the employee's physician. Leave shall normally not exceed three (3) months.

OVEC may lengthen the period of extended disability leave granted based on the recommendation of the employee's physician and upon the employee's request. The requested party will choose and pay for any physician charges. A second physician's statement may be required. The cost of the second opinion shall be borne by OVEC.

Employees on extended disability leave shall notify the HR department in writing of their intent to return to OVEC on or before the date prescribed. Employees who fail to notify the CEO of their return by the date prescribed may not be guaranteed employment for the following year.

When, in the opinion of the CEO, there is evidence that an employee is no longer able to satisfactorily perform the assigned duties, the CEO may require the employee to provide evidence of fitness in the form of an examination and report by a physician of the CEO's choosing. OVEC shall bear the cost of this examination. The CEO may place the employee on involuntary disability leave pending the physician's examination.

When the CEO's personal health is in question, the Board may place the CEO on involuntary disability leave pending a physician's examination.

In compliance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, medical leave shall be granted in accordance with Board Policy 03.12322.

Military/Disaster Leave

Employees shall be entitled to military leave, without loss of time, pay, regular leave, impairment of efficiency rating, or of any other rights or benefits to which they are entitled. Determination of the period of military leave to be granted shall be made according to statutory requirements and shall be based on the federal fiscal year.

The employee is responsible for notifying his/her immediate supervisor as soon as s/he is notified of an impending military-related absence.

Under KRS 61.395, the Board may grant disaster services leave to request eligible employees.

605 Political Activities

Employees of the Board shall not engage in political activities during office hours. At no time shall OVEC equipment be used for political purposes by employees. Any employee engaging in political activity during office hours shall be subject to disciplinary action that could result in termination.

An employee may apply to the Chief Executive Officer for leave of absence to engage in political activities. (See Policy 03.123.) However, such leave is subject to approval by the CEO.

Legislative Leave

Upon written request, personnel shall be granted a leave of absence, without pay, to serve as a member of the General Assembly. Leave shall be for the period of service.

The Board may require personnel to take leave of absence, without pay, while campaigning for any elective position.

606 Family and Medical Leave

In accordance with the federal Family Leave and Medical Act of 1993, OVEC provides family leaves of absence without pay to eligible employees who wish to take time off work duties for their own personal illness and to fulfill family obligations relating directly to the birth or illness of a child; the care for a newborn child; the adoption of or the placement of a child for adoption or foster care; or to care for the employee's seriously ill spouse, child or parent. In addition, FMLA may be requested for the following military-related reasons:

1. To address a qualifying exigency (need) defined by federal regulation arising out of the covered active duty or call to active duty involving deployment to a foreign country of the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent who serves in a reserve component or as an active or retired member of the Regular Armed Forces or Reserve in support of a contingency operation; and
2. To care for a covered service member (spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin) who has incurred or aggravated a serious injury or illness in the line of duty while on active duty in the Armed Forces that has rendered or may render the family member medically unfit to perform his/her duties or to care for a covered veteran with a serious injury or illness as defined by federal regulations.

Leave to care for an employee's healthy newborn baby or minor child who is adopted or accepted for foster care must be taken within twelve (12) months of the birth or placement of the child.

Notices and Deadlines

Employees who may be eligible for or who request leave for any of the above reasons shall be provided with an FMLA notice of eligibility and rights and responsibilities. OVEC may require that a request for leave be supported by a certification for health care or military-related situations as permitted by federal law, but such requirements must be set out in the required notice. Employees must request non-emergency leave thirty (30) days in advance. Employees must request emergency leave within two (2) working days of the emergency or as soon as practicable. Employees must submit their leave requests to the CEO or designee. If necessary, verbal requests may be made to the immediate supervisor or other administrator, who shall immediately inform the Human Resources Department, which shall properly document the leave and discuss the details of the FMLA and necessary FMLA documentation with the employee.

Deadline for Notice to be Provided: Absent extenuating circumstances, within five (5) business days of OVEC's receipt of a request or OVEC being made aware of a potentially qualifying reason.

OVEC shall designate an employee's leave, paid or unpaid, as FMLA-qualifying and shall provide a designation notice indicating whether the request is approved or if additional information is needed. Leave may be delayed if the employee does not provide proper notice (30 days' advance notice for a foreseeable leave; otherwise, notice as soon as the need becomes known).

Deadline for Notice to be Provided: Absent extenuating circumstances, within five (5) business days of learning that an FMLA reason supports the leave.

Eligibility

Regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible to request family leave if they have been employed by OVEC for at least twelve (12) months directly before the leave would start. OVEC calculates FMLA eligible leave on a rolling twelve (12) month period. In determining whether returning veterans meet the minimum 1,250-hour standard, hours actually worked for OVEC during the twelve-month period are to be combined with hours they would have worked for OVEC had they not been called for military service.

Eligible employees may request up to twelve (12) weeks of family leave within any twelve (12)-month period. FMLA leave is generally unpaid. When a family and medical military caregiver leave is taken based on a serious illness or injury of a covered service member, an eligible employee may take up to twenty-six (26) workweeks of leave during a single twelve-month period. OVEC will require an employee to use any available sick, annual leave, or non-work time concurrently with the FML if applicable, except that the employee may request to reserve (10) days of sick leave. This requirement shall not apply to employees taking workers' compensation leave.

FMLA may be taken intermittently (when medically necessary) or on a reduced-hour basis. It is the employee's responsibility to obtain proper documentation to be given to the Human Resources Department for review with the Chief Executive Officer.

Unless the employee waives medical coverage while on leave, medical coverage provided by the State of Kentucky's health insurance plans through OVEC will continue. The State of Kentucky will continue to make the State's portion of the premium payment while an employee is on FMLA. If the employee makes a contribution to his/her health insurance, then during the leave, the employee must continue to make their contribution for medical coverage after the first thirty (30) days of family or medical leave. Failure to make this payment will, after a forty-five (45) day grace period, result in termination of that employee's medical coverage by the State of Kentucky.

OVEC will reinstate employees, upon their return to work, into the health insurance plan with no break in coverage or pre-existing conditions. This shall apply even if the employee waives coverage or lost coverage during a family

or medical leave. OVEC will suspend holiday benefits during unpaid family leave. Email access will be turned off while an employee is on extended unpaid family leave.

When a family leave ends, OVEC will return the employee to the same position, if it is available, or to a similar available position at the same level of pay and benefits provided before the leave period. If an employee fails to report to work promptly at the end of the approved leave period without approval from OVEC, OVEC will assume that the employee has resigned, and their employment will be terminated.

Notice

OVEC shall notify employees of family and medical leave provisions by posting appropriate notices in conspicuous places in the main office and each worksite and distributing notices as required by law.

607 Personal and Emergency Leave

OVEC provides personal leave with pay to eligible employees who wish to take time off from work duties to fulfill personal obligations or to meet an emergency. Only employees who have completed six months of employment in the following employment classifications who work at least 185 days, and no more than 239 days, are eligible to request personal leave as described in this policy:

- * Regular full-time employees
- * Regular part-time employees

Personal leave may be granted for a period of up to two (2) calendar days every fiscal year (July 1 to June 30).

Requests for personal leave will be evaluated based on a number of factors, including anticipated workload requirements and staffing considerations during the proposed period of absence.

Any unused personal leave on June 30 will be credited to the employee's sick leave account.

608 Paid Parental Leave

OVEC employees are eligible for paid parental leave in connection with a qualifying birth of a child or the placement of a child with an employee for adoption. Paid parental leave of up to 8 work weeks (40 workdays) is available in connection with the birth or placement (adoption) of a child occurring on or after January 1, 2025.

Paid parental leave granted in connection with a qualifying birth or placement is paid for 8 weeks of unpaid FMLA leave and is available immediately following the birth or placement. In order to be eligible for paid parental leave, an employee must be eligible for FMLA leave and must meet FMLA eligibility requirements (see section 606 Family and Medical Leave). Employees must submit to the Human Resources department documentation of a qualifying birth (e.g., birth certificate which includes the employee's name) or adoption (e.g., judgment of adoption which includes the employee's name).

Paid parental leave is limited to 8 work weeks (40 workdays) and may be used one time annually per employee. Within these 8 work weeks, paid parental leave is available as long as an employee has a continuing parental role with the child whose birth or placement was the basis for the leave entitlement.

An employee may not use any paid parental leave unless (1) the employee participates in a mandatory leave meeting with the Human Resources department and (2) the employee agrees in writing, before commencement of the leave, to subsequently work for OVEC for at least 8 weeks after the paid parental leave. This 8-week work obligation begins on the employee's first scheduled workday after such paid parental leave concludes.

Failure to complete the 8-week work obligation may result in (1) forfeiture of OVEC paid benefits, including accrued vacation, (2) ineligibility for re-employment, and (3) administrative pay corrections (see section 403 Administrative Pay Corrections).

*Employees are encouraged to review the terms of any short-term disability insurance coverage benefit, if applicable. *

Template: Agreement to Complete 8-Week Work Obligation Example

I, [insert employee's name], understand that the usage of paid parental leave requires that I complete an 8-week work obligation at OVEC at the time I conclude using paid parental leave granted in connection with the birth or placement (for adoption or foster care) of my child.

I agree to return to work and complete the required 8 weeks of work. When returning, my work schedule will be consistent with my pre-leave work schedule.

I understand that the required 8-week work obligation is fixed and not proportionally reduced if I use less than 8 weeks of paid parental leave. I understand that only actual work periods when I am on duty (during my scheduled work hours) will count toward the 8-week work obligation. I understand that periods (paid or unpaid) of leave and time off (including holiday time off) do not count towards the completion of the 8-week work obligation.

I understand that only work performed after the use of paid parental leave concludes counts toward the 8-week work obligation. I understand that any period(s) of work during intermittent usage of paid parental leave (i.e., work performed prior to the conclusion of the use of paid parental leave) does not count toward the 8-week work obligation.

I understand that, if I fail to return to work and fully complete the required 8-week work obligation, I may (1) forfeit OVEC paid benefits, including accrued vacation, (2) be ineligible for re-employment, and (3) be subject to administrative pay corrections (see section 403 Administrative Pay Corrections).

I understand that, if I separate from OVEC before completing that obligation, such separation is considered to be a failure to meet that obligation. I understand that, in that circumstance, I will not be allowed to complete the work obligation at a later time.

If an OVEC determines that the reimbursement requirement applies, I agree to make the required reimbursement to OVEC and to permit administrative pay corrections to recover the amount owed.

Employee's Signature:

Date:

Note: Employee's paid parental leave request must be attached to this work obligation agreement.

701 Search, Inspection & Investigation

It is the policy of OVEC that, when deemed necessary by management, authorized persons may search and inspect both company property and personal items, including vehicles, brought onto company property. An employee's refusal to cooperate in a search, inspection, or investigation will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Decision to search: In most situations, a Regional Area Manager and OVEC's CHRO or designee will be involved in a decision to conduct a search. The individuals involved in the decision to search must document the reason(s) for the search.

Conducting searches: A minimum of three management representatives are required to conduct a search. Two of these representatives should search, and the third representative should record the inventory. Items found and identifying locations should be documented.

One of the company representatives searching must be of the same sex as the person whose belongings are being searched.

The search should be conducted in the following manner:

- The employee involved will be taken to a private location and informed that OVEC would like to conduct a search and inspection of the employee's personal possessions (including the employee's vehicle), in accordance with company policy. The company representative shall articulate the reason for the search to the employee. The company representative conducting this meeting should ask the employee if he or she will cooperate with the search.
- The search should not begin until the employee gives written consent to the search.
- In the presence of all required OVEC representatives and the employee, the designated company representatives will search as necessary through the employee's locker, work area, personal items or vehicle. The designated company representative should record an inventory of all items found during the search and secure relevant items.
- After the search is completed, the designated company representative should:
 - Conclude the search by either thanking the employee for cooperating or by placing the employee on unpaid suspension pending the outcome of the investigation.
 - Set up a specific time for the employee to meet with the department director or other designated OVEC representative.

An employee who refuses to cooperate with a search request from an authorized OVEC representative should:

- Not be detained in any way or for any reason, but should be informed that any sort of refusal to cooperate will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- Be immediately relieved of duty and placed on unpaid suspension pending investigation.

The following may be searched:

- Any property of OVEC, including lockers, desks, and other individually assigned spaces.
- Any personal property brought onto OVEC premises by the employee, including:

- Pockets

- Purses/wallets
- Briefcases
- Automobiles
- Shopping bags/boxes
- Removable clothing

The employee may be asked to remove a coat, sweater, or similar type of clothing so that it can be inspected. The employee may be asked to empty all pockets in the employee's clothing. The search should not include any form of body searching.

Each OVEC representative present during the search/investigation must immediately write an independent report of the incident, or if all parties involved agree, a joint statement/summary may be written and signed by all involved in the search, including the employee(s). The report(s) should be delivered to the Director of Human Resources.

The following information must be included in the report:

- The reason for the search.
- Who was involved in the search?
- Where the search was conducted.
- The date and time of search.
- What, if anything, was found during the search?
- What actions were taken with the employee involved?
- What items were seized, and what action was taken with the item(s)?
- What instructions were given to the employee?

The HR Department should immediately report to the appropriate authorities any illegal items that are found and should document such notification.

702 Drug and Alcohol Use

Believing that illicit drug use by employees is both harmful to the individual and to the efficient operation of the Cooperative, the Board adheres to the intent of the federal Drug-Free Workplace Act. For all purposes of this policy the term workplace shall be defined as inclusive of all OVEC facilities or work sites to which staff may be assigned in local school districts.

Prohibitions

Employees shall not manufacture, distribute, dispense, be under the influence of, purchase, possess, use, or attempt to obtain, sell, or transfer any of the following in the workplace or in the performance of duties:

1. Alcoholic beverages.
2. Controlled substances, prohibited drugs and substances, and drug paraphernalia; and or any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, or any other controlled substance as defined by federal regulation.
3. Substance that “looks like” a controlled substance. In instances involving look-alike substances, there must be evidence of the employee’s intent to pass off the item as a controlled substance.

In addition, employees shall not possess prescription drugs for the purpose of sale or distribution.

OVEC reserves the right to drug test employees who OVEC, in its sole determination, has a reasonable suspicion to believe is under the influence of any sort of drugs or alcohol while at work. OVEC shall pay all costs associated with any drug test. Any employee who tests positive for a prohibited substance shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. To the extent permitted by law, employees who refuse to take the drug test or fail to complete the test after it is assigned will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Definitions

“Controlled substance” shall mean any substance or immediate precursor listed in Chapter 218A of the Kentucky Revised Statutes or any other substance which may be added by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Human Services under regulations pursuant to KRS 218A.020.

Prohibited drugs include, but are not limited to, any substance that an individual may not sell, possess, use, distribute, or purchase under Federal or Kentucky law.

Prohibited substances include:

1. All prescription drugs obtained without authorization, and
2. All prohibited substances, however taken or used, include but are not limited to inhaling, ingesting, and/or injecting. These include, but are not limited to, prescribed and over-the-counter drugs and prohibited volatile substances as defined in KRS 217.900 or synthetic compounds/substances that are used or intended for use for an abusive and/or intoxicating purpose.

An employee who personally uses a drug authorized by and administered in accordance with a prescription from a health professional shall not be considered in violation of this policy.

Any employee who violates the terms of this policy may be suspended, non-renewed, or terminated. In addition, violations may result in notification of appropriate legal officials.

As a condition of employment, the Board requires that each employee sign a statement agreeing to abide by this policy and to notify the Chief Executive Officer of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace, no later than five (5) days after such conviction. In the event of a conviction, the CEO shall take personnel action against the employee, up to and including termination.

As an alternative, the CEO may choose that an employee who violates the terms of the OVEC drug-free/alcohol-free workplace policies shall satisfactorily participate in an OVEC-approved drug/alcohol abuse assistance or rehabilitation program. The employee shall be required to provide progress reports on a schedule established by the CEO. If the employee fails to satisfactorily participate in such a program, the employee may be suspended or terminated.

Following determination by an administrative or judicial proceeding that s/he engaged in misconduct involving the illegal use of controlled substances, a teacher who has been reprimanded or disciplined for misconduct involving illegal use of controlled substances shall submit to random or periodic drug testing in accordance with applicable Kentucky Administrative Regulation for a period not to exceed twelve (12) months from the date of such reprimand or disciplinary action.

Reporting

An employee shall promptly make a report to the local police department, sheriff, or Kentucky State Police, by telephone or otherwise, if they know or have reasonable cause to believe that conduct has occurred that constitutes the use, possession, or sale of controlled substances on the school premises or within one thousand (1,000) feet of school premises, on a school bus, or at a school sponsored or sanctioned event.

The CEO shall establish a drug-free awareness program to include, but not be limited to:

- 1) The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;
- 2) Information regarding drug counseling, rehabilitation, and drug assistance programs available;
- 3) The Cooperative's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace; and
- 4) The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace.

703 Harassment/Discrimination

Definition

OVEC defines Harassment as any unwelcome behavior, whether verbal, physical, written, or visual, that is intended to offend, humiliate, intimidate, or create a hostile or uncomfortable environment for another individual. It can occur in person, online, or through any form of communication.

Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive jokes, slurs, or insults
- Unwanted physical contact
- Sexual advances or comments
- Threats or bullying behavior
- Displaying or sharing offensive images or materials
- Persistent unwelcome communication

OVEC defines Discrimination as unfair or unequal treatment of an individual or group based on characteristics that are protected by law or recognized as personal identity traits.

Discrimination can occur in various forms, including:

- Direct Discrimination – Treating someone less favorably because of a protected characteristic
- Indirect Discrimination – Applying a rule or policy that appears neutral but disadvantages a particular group
- Harassment – Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that creates a hostile environment
- Victimization – Retaliating against someone for raising a concern or complaint about discrimination

Harassment/Discrimination of employees is unlawful behavior based on the race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex (including sexual orientation or gender identity), genetic information, disability or limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions in employment, educational programs or activities of an employee involving intimidation by threats of or actual physical violence; the creation, by whatever means, of a climate of hostility or intimidation, or the use of language, conduct, or symbols in such manner as to be commonly understood to convey hatred or prejudice. For purposes of this definition, charges of sexual harassment may include persons of the same or opposite sex.

Prohibition

Harassment/Discrimination is prohibited at all times on OVEC property and off OVEC grounds during OVEC-sponsored activities. This prohibition also applies to volunteers or visitors to OVEC who may come into contact with employees and students. OVEC staff shall provide for a prompt and equitable resolution of complaints concerning harassment/discrimination.

Disciplinary Action

Employees who engage in harassment/discrimination of another employee or a student on the basis of any of the areas mentioned above shall be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, termination of employment.

Guidelines

Employees who believe they or any other employee, student, or visitor is being or has been subjected to harassment/discrimination shall, as soon as reasonably practicable, report the incident. People authorized to receive reports of harassment/discrimination include the Chief Executive Officer, Program Director, or Human Resources personnel. Complaints of harassment/discrimination, whether verbal or written, shall lead to a documented investigation and a written report.

If the CEO is an alleged party to the harassment/discrimination complaint, provision shall be made for addressing the complaint to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

If allegations are made against any party other than the CEO, the CEO shall provide for the following:

1. Investigation of allegations of harassment/discrimination to commence as soon as circumstances allow, a prompt response shall be given to the complainant, regardless of the manner in which the complaint is communicated to the CEO, a program director, or Human Resources personnel. A written report of all the findings of the investigation shall be completed within forty (40) calendar days, unless additional time is necessary due to the matter being investigated by a law enforcement or governmental agency.

The CEO/designee may take interim measures to protect complainants during the investigation.

2. A process to identify and implement, within five (5) working days from the submission of the written investigative report, methods to correct and prevent recurrence of the harassment/discrimination. If corrective action is not required, an explanation shall be included in the report.
3. A process to be developed and implemented to communicate the requirements of this policy to all staff, which may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - written notice provided in publications such as this manual, staff memoranda, and/or pamphlets.
 - postings in the same location as documents that must be posted according to state/federal law; and/or
 - such other measures as determined by the CEO.
4. Training explaining prohibited behaviors and the necessity for prompt reporting of alleged harassment/discrimination.
5. Development of alternate methods of filing complaints for individuals with disabilities and others who may need accommodation.

Field-based staff assigned to a work site in a member school district shall notify the Chief Executive Officer of any complaint of harassment, sexual or otherwise, perpetrated on the employee by a district employee. The CEO shall notify the employee of the name of the district's staff member assigned to handle harassment complaints. The responsibility for handling the complaint will reside with the district involved.

Complaint Process

Employees filing a complaint concerning alleged harassment/discrimination shall follow the process and timelines set out for other grievances. (Please refer to Section 822 of this Handbook and Policy 03.16.)

Confidentiality

OVEC employees involved in the investigation of complaints shall respect, as much as possible, the privacy and anonymity of all parties involved.

Failure to Act

Failure by an employee and/or the CEO to report, notify, and/or initiate an investigation of alleged harassment/discrimination as required by this policy or to take corrective action shall be cause for disciplinary action.

Notifications

In circumstances also involving suspected child abuse, additional notification shall be required by law.

In applicable cases, employees must also report harassment/discrimination to appropriate law enforcement authorities in accordance with KRS 158.156.

Retaliation Prohibited

No one shall retaliate against an employee because s/he submits a grievance, assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing regarding the charge of harassment/discrimination of an individual or because s/he has opposed language or conduct that violates this policy. Upon the resolution of allegations, the CEO or designee shall take steps to protect employees against retaliation. Other Claims When a complaint is received that

does not appear to be covered by this policy, administrators shall review other policies that may govern the allegations.

Other Claims

When a complaint is received that does not appear to be covered by this policy, administrators shall review other policies that may govern the allegations.

704 Attendance and Punctuality

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, OVEC expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on OVEC. In the rare instances when employees cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they should notify their supervisor as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence.

Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive. Either may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

705 Personal Appearance

Employees shall dress appropriately and professionally according to their assigned position and related job description. Immediate supervisors shall address any issues concerning inappropriate dress with those employees under their supervision. Consideration should be given to the type of work being performed.

Employees whose appearance is determined to be inappropriate will be directed to leave and return in proper attire. However, OVEC shall not pay them for the time required to do so.

706 Return of Property

Employees are responsible for all OVEC property, materials, or written information issued to them or in their possession or control. Employees must return all OVEC property immediately upon request or upon termination of employment. Where permitted by applicable laws, OVEC may withhold from the employee's check or final paycheck the cost of any items that are not returned when required. OVEC may also take all action deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property.

707 Anti-Bullying

OVEC defines Bullying as repeated, intentional behavior that seeks to intimidate, degrade, humiliate, or harm another individual. It creates a hostile, offensive, or threatening environment and often involves a misuse of power or authority. Bullying can take various forms, including verbal (insults, threats), physical (hitting, damaging property), psychological (rumors, exclusion), and cyberbullying (online harassment or intimidation).

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Persistent or repeated actions
- Intent to cause harm or distress
- Imbalance of power between the bully and the target

Prohibition

Bullying is prohibited at all times on OVEC property and off OVEC grounds during OVEC-sponsored activities. This prohibition also applies to volunteers or visitors to OVEC who may come into contact with employees and students. OVEC staff shall provide for a prompt and equitable resolution of complaints concerning harassment/discrimination.

Disciplinary Action

Employees who engage in acts of bullying of another employee or a student on the basis of any of the areas mentioned above shall be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, termination of employment.

Complaint Process

Employees filing a complaint concerning alleged bullying shall follow the process and timelines set out for other grievances. (Please refer to Section 822 of this Handbook and Policy 03.16.)

710 Security Inspections

OVEC wishes to maintain a work environment that is free of illegal drugs, alcohol, firearms, explosives, or other improper materials. To this end, OVEC prohibits the possession, transfer, sale, or use of such materials on its premises. OVEC requires the cooperation of all employees in administering this policy.

Desks and other storage devices may be provided for the convenience of employees, but remains the sole property of OVEC. Accordingly, they, as well as any articles found within them, can be inspected by any agent or representative of OVEC at any time, either with or without prior notice.

712 Solicitation

In an effort to ensure a productive and harmonious work environment, persons not employed by OVEC may not solicit or distribute literature in the workplace at any time for any purpose.

OVEC recognizes that employees may have interests in events and organizations outside the workplace. However, employees may not solicit or distribute literature concerning these activities during working time. (Working time does not include lunch periods, work breaks, or any other periods in which employees are not on duty.)

Examples of impermissible forms of solicitation include:

- The circulation of petitions
- The distribution of literature not approved by the employer
- The solicitation of memberships, fees, or dues

In addition, the posting of written solicitations on company bulletin boards is prohibited. Bulletin boards are reserved for official organization communications.

715 Gifts

No employee or Board member of OVEC shall receive, directly or indirectly, any gift, reward, or promise of reward in exchange for influence in recommending or procuring the use of any goods, services, property, or merchandise of any kind for which funds are expended.

No employee shall accept, for personal use, gifts from current or potential vendors.

Any gift accepted on behalf of OVEC becomes the property of OVEC to be used in a fair and equitable manner. Disposition of any gift valued at more than \$25 presented to an OVEC employee for OVEC use shall be determined by the CEO/designee.

Appeals to community organizations for support shall be authorized in writing by the CEO prior to the collection of funds. All donations/contributions will be voluntary.

750 Disrupting the Workplace

Any employee who participates in or encourages activities that disrupt the orderly administration of OVEC activities or operations may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

Behavior that disrupts the educational process includes, but is not limited to:

- Conduct that threatens the health, safety, or welfare of others;
- Conduct that may damage public or private property (including the property of staff or visitors);
- Illegal activity; or
- Conduct that disrupts the delivery of services, completion of work responsibilities, or interferes with the orderly administration of OVEC and OVEC -related activities or OVEC operations.

No employee, employee organization, or any affiliate, including but not limited to state or national affiliates thereof, may take part in, promote, or assist in a strike against the OVEC.

The Board may, in any action of law, suit in equity, or other proper proceedings, take action against any employee organization, any affiliate thereof, or any person aiding or abetting in a strike, for redress of such unlawful act.

OVEC will not pay salary, wage, or related fringe benefits to or on behalf of any employee for any day when the employee fails, as a result of a strike, to report for work as required by his/her contract.

Neither an employee organization, its officers, its agents, its members, nor any employee may assist, engage, or take part in, or cause, induce, or encourage any strikes, sanctions, slowdowns, sit-ins, picketing or refusal to cross picket lines, boycotts, interruptions of work, other public demonstration, or any concerned effort that interferes with, Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative Employee Handbook 44 impedes, or impairs the normal operation of OVEC

Violation by an employee of any or all of the above conditions allows the CEO, at his/her sole determination, to take such disciplinary action as it may decide up to and including dismissal of the employee.

780 Employee Discipline, Termination, and Resignation

Any employee who violates an OVEC rule or regulations, policy, procedure, or standard of employee conduct and behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions may be taken against an employee when, in the judgment of the supervisor, such action is warranted. Discipline shall be commensurate with the behavior.

Employees may be subject to the following disciplinary actions by the CEO, including, but not limited to:

- Documented verbal warning or reprimand

- Written warning or reprimand - may include Improvement Plan with scheduled follow-up
- Probation imposed – may include Corrective Action Plan with scheduled follow-up
- Reassignment (temporary or permanent)
- Suspension without pay
- Nonrenewal
- Dismissal (termination)

An employee may be relieved from duty for the remainder of the workday by the immediate supervisor, pending action by the CEO, when drugs, alcohol, and/or the safety of employees or others are involved.

Causes for Personnel Action

Reasons for which an employee shall be subject to discipline, or job action, shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Dishonesty, neglect of duty, incompetence, inefficiency, or insubordination.
2. Reporting to work under the influence of or use or possession of alcohol while on duty, or the illegal use or possession of controlled substances at any time.
3. Unauthorized possession or use of firearms, dangerous weapons, or explosives on OVEC property.
4. Unsatisfactory evaluation of any factor on the employee's performance evaluation report and/or failure to improve.
5. Unexcused absence, tardiness, absence without notification, or abuse of sick leave.
6. Violation of or refusal to obey OVEC policies or state regulations adopted by the Kentucky Board of Education or by the Board.
7. Falsifying information supplied to OVEC, including information on application forms, absence reports, time sheets, calendars, travel reports, or any other information.
8. Criminal convictions for felonies or other acts of conduct occurring on or off the job which are directly related to job performance, or reflect adversely upon OVEC or its operations, or are of such nature that to continue the employee in the assigned position could constitute negligence in regard to duties to students, program participants, employees, and to the general public.
9. Immorality or other unprofessional conduct.
10. Loss of licensure or certification required for the assigned position.
11. Behavior that poses a threat to the operation of OVEC or to the safety and well-being of the individual or others or to property.
12. Unauthorized use or misuse, stealing, or unauthorized removal of OVEC, agency or government property or records.
13. Breach of confidentiality regarding students, program participants, or employees of the agency.

14. Failure to maintain confidentiality of information about students or staff obtained in the course of employment, unless disclosure serves a legitimate job-related purpose or is required by law.
15. Engaging in any sexually related behavior with a student with or without consent, including but not limited to, behavior such as sexual jokes; sexual remarks; sexual kidding or teasing; sexual innuendo; pressure for dates or sexual favors; inappropriate physical touching, kissing, or grabbing; rape, threats of physical harm; and sexual assault
16. Engaging in behavior that constitutes discrimination or harassment, as defined in Section 703 of this Handbook.
17. Engaging in activities that disrupt the workplace: Employees who engage in or encourage activities that disrupt operations may face disciplinary action, including termination. Disruptive behaviors include threats to health and safety, property damage, illegal activities, and interference with operations.
18. Corporal punishment or physically abusive behavior, which is defined as intentional use of physical force that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical injury. Examples may include, but are not limited to, hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, pushing, restraining, force feeding, or dragging.
19. Sexually abusive behavior, which is defined as any completed or attempted sexual act, sexual contact, or exploitation. Examples may include, but are not limited to, behaviors such as inappropriate touching, inappropriate filming, or exposing a child to other sexual activities.
20. Emotionally harmful or abusive behavior, which is defined as behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being. Examples may include, but are not limited to, using seclusion, exposing a child to public or private humiliation, or name-calling, shaming, intimidating, or threatening a child.
21. Neglectful behavior, which is defined as the failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs, including access to food, education, medical care, appropriate supervision by an adequate caregiver, and safe physical and emotional environments. Examples may include, but are not limited to, leaving a child unattended on a bus, withholding food as punishment, or refusing to change soiled diapers as punishment.

Resignation

If an employee voluntarily resigns, the resignation shall be in writing and shall become binding on the date the resignation is accepted. Employees send a resignation to their direct supervisor and HR. The resignation is effective on the date specified in the letter of resignation. A resignation, once accepted, may be withdrawn only with the approval of the CEO. Resignations must come before a Holiday if the employee will not be returning to work after the Holiday. In the absence of a specific policy or written agreement to the contrary, employees are free to resign at any time. However, all employees are expected to give written notice of their intent to resign. OVEC requires the following resignation notices:

- Certified staff – twenty (20) working days
- Non-certified/Classified staff – ten (10) working days

Failure to give the required notice may result in forfeiture of OVEC-paid benefits, including accrued vacation, and ineligibility for re-employment. Once a resignation is received, HR will send an exit interview survey link to the resigning employee in Paychex. All OVEC equipment and property should be returned upon departure. Should an employee have company benefits, Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) paperwork will be sent in the mail to employees by KEHP.

782 Non-Renewal and Staff Reduction

In the event the Board chooses, upon the recommendation of the CEO, to non-renew a limited contract, written notice shall be provided to the employee no later than May 15th of the year in which the contract is in effect. Upon written request by the employee, the CEO shall provide a written statement containing the specific, detailed, and complete grounds upon which non-renewal of the contract is based.

In the event of a decrease in or loss of funding, the Board shall have full authority to reduce the number of employees. Upon recommendation of the CEO and approval of the Board, a reduction of staff for any position may occur. Further suspension of contracts may be made pursuant to KRS 161.800.

Non-renewal of contracts or staff reduction of those employees who are hired pursuant to and as a direct result of an agreement with an outside agency shall occur upon termination of the agreement between OVEC and the agency under which they were hired, upon voluntary resignation of the employee, or upon such other terms in said agreement.

Failure to meet a contract could result in a non-renewal, reduction in pay, and pension benefits.

805 Documentation of Performance Concerns

Documented Conversation

While not part of the formal disciplinary process, there may be times when a manager needs to have a discussion one-on-one with an employee about the employee's performance or their behavior. After such a coaching or verbal discussion, it is necessary to create a documented record to memorialize what was discussed. This documentation should be factual and objective, capturing exact words or observable behaviors rather than interpretations or emotional judgment. Key details include the date, time, location, participants involved, and context of the conversation. If the issue is recurring, track patterns over time and reference any relevant company policies or expectations that were violated. A documented follow-up summary should be sent to the employee confirming the discussion to ensure clarity and accountability.

Copies of any documented conversations and follow-ups to employees must be provided to HR.

Reprimand

Except in the case of a serious violation, a reprimand should be preceded by a warning. Reprimands shall be placed in writing and must contain the specifics of the conduct for which the employee is being reprimanded and signed by the employee and the supervisor. The employee's signature assures only that the reprimand has been discussed with the employee and does not necessarily constitute the employee's agreement with the contents of the reprimand. The appropriate program director must receive a copy of the reprimand and forward it to the Human Resources Department to file in the employee's personnel file. If employees receive two (2) reprimands for the same offense during a twelve (12) month period or three (3) reprimands for any problem during that same period, they are automatically placed on a corrective action plan.

Employee Corrective Action Plan

Employee corrective action plans shall not exceed twenty (20) working days each. An employee on a corrective action plan shall receive a written explanation of the reason for the action, signed by the program director and the employee, with a discussion of the corrective actions the employee must take and the supervisory assistance that will be available to help the employee improve performance. The employee's signature assures only that the plan, corrective measures, and time period have been discussed with the employee and does not necessarily constitute the employee's agreement with the reason for the plan. The program director and the employee must receive a copy

of the action plan, and a third copy is to be forwarded to the Human Resources Department to be placed in the employee's personnel file. At the end of the specified period, the appropriate program director shall remove probationary status or, if no improvement has been made, shall recommend to the Chief Executive Officer the employee's suspension without pay or termination.

Any employee may be placed on a corrective action plan when work performance deteriorates, and the program director believes it is necessary to impress upon the employee the need for improvement. Employees who improve satisfactorily during the probationary period may be restored to regular status. Failure to gain a satisfactory performance rating during probation will result in transfer, demotion, suspension, or termination.

Any employee placed on a corrective action plan more than twice during a twelve (12) month period will be subject to being suspended without pay for one to two working days or recommended for termination by the employee's program director to the CEO.

Employees who have been placed on corrective action are eligible for paid holidays but may not take annual leave during the corrective action period.

810 Suspension and Administrative Leave

Suspension with Pay/Administrative Leave

Employees may be placed on administrative leave with pay when the CEO or designee determines there is a safety concern, a need to prevent disruption to the workplace or educational environment, or when an internal investigation is required.

When allegations involve potentially harmful interactions between an employee and a child, the employee must be immediately removed from the classroom while the matter is reviewed. Program leadership must consult with HR and divisional leadership as soon as possible.

For internal investigations conducted by OVEC, employees may be placed on administrative leave during the investigation period. Administrative leave should generally not exceed five (5) working days unless circumstances require additional time.

- If the investigation determines that the allegation is **unsubstantiated**, administrative leave will be **paid**.
- If the investigation determines the allegation is **substantiated**, administrative leave will be **unpaid** and may result in additional disciplinary action up to termination.

Employees placed on administrative leave must remain available for communication and may be required to participate in the investigation process.

Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigation

If a report is referred to CPS, OVEC will follow all CPS requirements and guidance.

- If CPS determines the employee may remain on-site, the employee may be reassigned to non-caretaking administrative duties such as office support, meal preparation, cleaning and organization, online training, or other tasks assigned by management. Employees may not return to the classroom duties until the CPS investigation concludes.
- If CPS determines the employee may not remain on-site, the employee will be placed on administrative leave for the duration of the investigation.
 - If the allegation is **unsubstantiated**, leave will be **paid**.
 - If the allegation is **substantiated**, leave will be **unpaid** and may result in disciplinary action up to termination.

Suspension Without Pay

Employees may be placed on suspension without pay when the CEO determines that the employee's actions are serious enough that continued presence in the workplace may create a risk to students, staff, cooperative property, or the employee.

Suspension without pay shall not exceed twenty (20) working days unless otherwise required for investigation.

Employees placed on suspension will receive written notice of the reason for suspension. The employee's signature acknowledges receipt and discussion of the notice but does not indicate agreement with the action. Documentation will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

Employees on suspension without pay will **not receive wages or fringe benefits during the suspension period**, unless otherwise required by law. Employees may arrange to maintain insurance coverage by paying applicable premiums.

Extraordinary Circumstances

In situations where an employee's behavior presents an immediate safety risk to themselves or others, the employee may be removed from the workplace immediately while the situation is reviewed. Administrative leave (paid or unpaid) will be determined based on the outcome of the investigation.

Disciplinary Action

If an investigation determines that allegations are substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, probation, or termination, may occur in accordance with organizational policies.

815 Reinstatement of Staff Members

The CEO shall have the authority to reinstate personnel immediately upon receipt of information that s/he believes justifies reinstatement or upon the reinstatement of an agreement with the outside agency under which the employee was previously employed.

The CEO shall report to the Board the reinstatement and the rationale for such action at the next meeting following the reinstatement.

820 Due Process

All employees have the right to request due process in the resolution of a dispute regarding adverse action taken against them.

An employee who is being disciplined due to poor job performance or for other compelling cause has the following rights:

1. The right to know the specific reason(s) for the disciplinary action.
2. An opportunity to be heard, including
 - a. The right to present witnesses on his/her behalf;
 - b. The right to representation at the employee's expense by a person of their own choosing (subject to the restrictions of these policies and procedures);

3. A prompt decision rendered in writing;
4. Redress for OVEC's failure to follow its own policies and procedures, including the employee's right to due process.
5. Redress for gross disregard of the facts or evidence in a case at earlier stages of an appeal, whereupon, if the employee alleges and can prove in writing such disregard, the CEO may review the merits of the case; and
6. The right to appeal the decision of OVEC or its governing bodies to independent external bodies, such as the State or local Human Rights Commission, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or courts of law.

822 Conflict Resolution

Problems, misunderstandings, and frustrations may arise in the workplace. It is OVEC's intent to be responsive to its employees and their concerns. Therefore, an employee who is confronted with a problem may use the procedure described below to resolve or clarify his or her concerns.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a quick, effective, and consistently applied method for a nonsupervisory employee to present his or her concerns to management and have those concerns internally resolved. Employees may file a formal complaint regarding any personnel decision that affects their work schedule, compensation, or job responsibilities. However, conflicts with co-workers, managers, or leadership do not qualify as valid grounds for grievance. Likewise, employees cannot file grievances related to disciplinary actions or matters concerning the performance of their assigned job duties.

Procedures

Step 1: Discussion with supervisor: Initially, employees should bring their concerns or complaints to their immediate supervisor. If the complaint involves the employee's supervisor, the employee should schedule an appointment with that supervisor to discuss the problem that gave rise to the complaint within five working days of the date the incident occurred. The immediate supervisor should respond in writing to the complaint within a reasonable amount of time.

Step 2: Written complaint and decision: If the discussion with the immediate supervisor does not resolve the problem to the mutual satisfaction of the employee and the supervisor, or if the supervisor does not respond to the complaint, the employee may submit a written complaint to the employee's director/department head.

The employee's director/department head should forward a copy of the complaint to the HR department. The submission of the written complaint is due within a reasonable amount of time from the supervisor. The complaint should include:

- The problem and the date when the incident occurred.
- Suggestions on ways to resolve the problem.
- A copy of the immediate supervisor's written response or a summary of his or her verbal response, and the date when the employee met with the immediate supervisor. If the supervisor did not respond, the complaint should state this.

Upon receipt of the formal complaint, the director/department head must schedule a meeting with the employee within a reasonable amount of time to discuss the complaint. After the discussion, the director/department head should issue a decision both in writing and orally to the employee filing the complaint.

Step 3: Appeal of decision: If the employee is dissatisfied with the decision of the director/department head, the employee may, within five working days, appeal this decision in writing to the HR department.

The HR department may call a meeting with the parties directly involved to facilitate a resolution. Or the HR department may refer complaints to a review committee if it believes that the complaint raises serious questions of fact or interpretation of policy. The HR department may gather further information from parties involved.

If an employee fails to appeal from one level to the next level of this procedure within the time limits set forth above, the problem should be considered settled on the basis of the last decision, and the problem should not be subject to further consideration.

OVEC believes problems are best resolved on an individual basis and encourages employees to utilize this procedure only on their own behalf. We recognize, however, that some situations may lend themselves to being addressed in a group, and OVEC will consider group requests under the conflict resolution procedure if it is appropriate under the circumstances.

OVEC reserves the right to impose appropriate disciplinary action for any conduct it considers to be disruptive or inappropriate. The circumstances of each situation may differ, and the level of disciplinary action may also vary, depending on factors such as the nature of the offense, whether it is repeated, the employee's work record and the impact of the conduct on the organization.

No OVEC employee will be subject to retaliation for filing a complaint under this policy.

APPENDIX

Sample FMLA Memorandum

TO:
FROM:
DATE:
SUBJECT: Guidelines for Benefits While on Approved Family Medical Leave (FML)

This letter is to inform you of your health insurance responsibilities as an employee on Family Medical Leave (FMLA). As an employee on FMLA, your employer will continue to make the employer contributions for your health insurance or Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA), if applicable. It is your responsibility to make timely payments of any employee contributions that have been previously deducted from your check for health insurance and/or Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs).

- **Medical-** \$0.00 x 2= \$0.00
- **Dental-** \$0.00 x 2= \$0.00
- **Vision-** \$0.00 x 2= \$0.00
- **FSA-** \$0.00 x 2= \$0.00
- **Total Balance owed= \$0.00**

Health Insurance

While on FMLA, two conditions must be met to qualify for the employer's insurance contribution:

1. You must maintain the plan option and the coverage level that was in effect before going on leave.
2. You must pay the employee contribution, if applicable.

To continue your health insurance, you must choose from the options below:

- **Option 1-** Submit a check made payable to **OVEC**, in the amount of **\$0.00** (employee contribution). Your check must be received by HR before **[DATE]**.
- **Option 2-** Contact HR by **[DATE]**, to arrange to double up your deduction before you go out on FML.
- If you have any questions or need help with arrangements, please don't hesitate to contact me.

If you have any questions or need help with arrangements, please don't hesitate to contact contacthr@ovec.org.

Payments for Health Insurance and Flexible Spending Accounts should be submitted to the following address:
OVEC 100 Alpine Dr, Shelbyville, KY 40065.

Sample LWOP Memorandum

TO: (Employee on LWOP)
FROM: (Insurance Coordinator or HR Coordinator)
DATE:
SUBJECT: Guidelines for Benefits While on Approved LWOP

As an Employee on Leave Without Pay (LWOP), you are eligible to continue your Health Insurance, Health Reimbursement Arrangement and Healthcare Flexible Spending Account at your own expense through COBRA. You must contact (Insurance Coordinator/HR Coordinator) to make arrangements to continue your benefits.

Health Insurance: To continue your group Health Insurance coverage, you must pay the premiums, or you may elect COBRA.

- A. If you are on LWOP and you have a paycheck during the semi-monthly period the leave starts, please check with the Insurance Coordinator/HR Coordinator for information as to when your Health Insurance, Waiver General Purpose HRA, Waiver Limited Purpose only HRA or FSA will terminate. If your pay for the semimonthly period is not sufficient to cover the Employee's portion of the premium, you will need to submit a check for the amount due.

Any portion of a premium due by you must be submitted to the Insurance Coordinator/HR Coordinator by the 20th of the month. The check must be payable to Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC).

NOTE: If you fail to submit appropriate premium payments due within the specified deadline, your Plan(s) will be terminated.

- B. If you are on LWOP and lose eligibility under the Plan, you may continue your coverage through COBRA. You will need to complete the COBRA election form and submit it, with your payment, to HealthEquity. Follow the instructions provided with your COBRA materials.

Healthcare Flexible Spending Account: If you are eligible and you decide to continue your participation in the Healthcare FSA, you must submit a check to the Insurance Coordinator/HR Coordinator, in the amount of \$ made payable to the Kentucky State Treasurer.

When you return to work after being on LWOP, please check with the Insurance Coordinator/HR Coordinator to see when your coverage will become effective. When you return from LWOP, your length of absence may affect your Health Insurance.

When you return to work after being on LWOP, you will not be eligible to make any changes to the Health Insurance coverage in which you were enrolled before LWOP unless one of the following occurred:

- You experience a Qualifying Event, and you apply for an appropriate change within 30 days of returning to work.
- Your return to the new Plan Year or after missing the Open Enrollment period, and you apply for a coverage change no later than 30 days after your return.
- The coverage in which you were enrolled before the beginning of the LWOP is not available upon your return. You will have no more than 30 days after your return to apply for an appropriate change.

The Insurance Coordinator/HR Coordinator must provide the necessary applications upon return. Should you have any questions, you may contact HR at contacthr@ovec.org.

ADA/ADAAA

As used in this ADA policy, the following terms are defined as:

- **Disability:** A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of the individual, a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.
- **Major life activities (but are not limited to):** This includes caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.
- **Major bodily functions (but are not limited to):** Body systems such as neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, immune, circulatory, hemic, lymphatic, skin and endocrine that could be affected by a physical or mental impairment such as any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement or anatomical loss affecting one or more.
- **Other impairments:** Also covered are any mental or psychological disorders, such as intellectual disability, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.
- **Substantially limiting:** In accordance with the ADAAA final regulations, determining whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity requires an individualized assessment, and an impairment that is episodic or in remission may also meet the definition of disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active. These types of impairments may include asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, hypertension, major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.
- **Direct threat:** A significant risk to the health, safety, or well-being of other individuals.
- **Qualified individual:** An individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position that such an individual holds or desires.
- **Reasonable accommodation:** Includes any changes to the work environment and may include making existing facilities readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities; job restructuring; offering part-time or modified work schedules; working remotely; reassignment to a position; acquiring or modifying equipment or devices; appropriate adjustment or modifications of examinations, training materials or policies; providing qualified readers or interpreters; and other similar accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Vacant
- **Undue hardship:** Significant difficulty or expense that would be incurred by the employer if an accommodation were implemented. In determining whether an accommodation would impose an undue hardship on a covered entity, factors to consider include: The nature and cost of the accommodation.
- The overall financial resources of the facility or facilities involved in providing the reasonable accommodation, the number of persons employed at such facility, the effect on expenses and resources, or the impact of such accommodation on the operation of the facility.
- The overall financial resources of the employer; the size, number, type and location of facilities.
- The type of operations of the company, including the composition, structure and functions of the workforce; administrative or fiscal relationship of the particular facility involved in making the accommodation to the employee. Essential functions of the job: Job activities the employer determines are essential or core to performing the job; these functions cannot be modified.
- The examples provided in the above terms are not meant to be all-inclusive and should not be construed as such. They are not the only conditions that are considered to be disabilities, impairments or reasonable accommodations covered by the ADA/ADAAA policy.