



## **Staff Handbook**

2022-2023



# Welcome to Atlas Public Schools!

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As an Atlas employee you are an integral part of our team effort to build a flourishing, diverse, and empowered community and to ensure that our students have the skills and habits they need to be successful. Our school embodies a mix of backgrounds, instructional approaches, and people. We are committed to providing a workplace where our team members have the skills and resources needed to be successful while maintaining a healthy work-life balance. We hope that you will find your position with Atlas Public School rewarding, challenging, and productive.

We know and value the role our team members play in our students' trajectory, and believe that there is a direct correlation between the quality of personal relationships at school and the overall success of our students. We carefully recruit, develop, and retain high quality faculty and staff members (like you!) and are invested in your success. We are so excited to have you as a member of our team and value your unique perspective and experiences. Together, we will push ourselves to new heights as we work to prove what's possible in our school system while providing a transformative learning experience for our students.

This employee handbook summarizes Atlas' policies, procedures, benefits and rules of conduct, which are periodically reviewed and updated by the Leadership Team and Board. Please take the time to review and familiarize yourself with this document, and use it as a reference as questions arise over your career with us.

We want to thank you in advance for all the very big and super small things you do each and every day that are in service to our team and the students and families we serve. We look forward to working together in the coming years as we continue to build a school that is reimagining education and creating a rich and enduring community for our students, staff, families and partners.

We are thrilled you are here, and can't wait to get started!

In partnership,

*Colby Heckendorn*

# ATLAS ELEMENTARY

## About this Handbook

This employee handbook applies to all employees and is intended to provide guidelines and summary information about Atlas' policies, procedures, benefits and rules of conduct. This handbook is not intended to be a contract, but to summarize the policies and practices in effect at the time of publication. It is important that you read, understand, and become familiar with the handbook and comply with the standards that have been established.

It is obviously not possible to anticipate every situation that may arise in the workplace or to provide information that answers every possible question. As a result, Atlas reserves the right to modify or revise any policy, benefit, or provision, with or without notice, as it deems necessary or appropriate. The information in this employee handbook supersedes and replaces all previous handbooks and HR policies.

Please feel free to talk to any member of the Leadership Team if you have questions or need additional information.



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# Who We Are

## ***Our Vision***

At Atlas, we envision a time when all students in St. Louis have the skills and habits needed to be successful in the 21st century and where St. Louis is heralded as a model of a flourishing, diverse, and empowered community. We believe that high-quality public schools will be the catalyst for community transformation that will result in a thriving city.

## ***Our Mission***

The mission of Atlas Public Schools is to educate the whole child by combining a rigorous academic program with authentic, real-world experiences so all students thrive in middle school, high school, and beyond.

## ***Our Values***

Atlas community members are kind, respectful, show integrity, demonstrate excellence, and are stewards of the community. These values serve as the foundation of all that we do, and we do our best to live them out on a daily basis. We also appreciate that it's not easy to always model our values - especially in times of challenge - and we rely on each other to help us see and understand when our values are not being upheld. As we teach our children, we approach challenges with an inquiry mindset by asking questions, seeking to understand, and collaborating to find a solution.

- **Kindness:** We treat others the way we want to be treated. We are friendly, generous, and considerate and choose to be kind, not only when it's easy, but when it's hard to be.
- **Integrity:** We do the right thing, even when nobody's watching. We are honest, keep our commitments, and take responsibility for our actions.
- **Respect:** We are proud of who we are and respect ourselves. We treat others with consideration and understanding, respect their point of view, and treat them fairly.
- **Excellence:** We have a growth mindset and learn from our mistakes to grow stronger. We focus on achieving our goals, and when we reach them, we raise the bar even higher.
- **Stewardship:** We are change-makers. We are empowered to be active citizens and work to make a difference in our community.





## **Foundational Beliefs**

The following beliefs serve as the pillars of our school. Each pillar is upheld in every element of our school design, and manifests in our work with students, families, educators, and the community. These beliefs help guide our actions, reinforce what matters most, and communicate broadly who we are.

### **We Celebrate Diversity & Practice Equity**

We believe there are real and lasting benefits to representing varied perspectives and cultures within a school community. For this reason, we are diverse by design with a schoolwide approach that reflects and actively includes the rich socio-economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds of students and families

### **We Learn Through Meaningful, Real-World Experiences**

We seek to instill a true love of learning in each of our students that lasts well beyond their elementary school experience. At Atlas, we believe that students learn best when they are engaged in experiences that are relevant and allow them to apply their prior knowledge in meaningful ways. By grounding the learning in real-world topics and authentic experiences, we give students the opportunity to work collaboratively, think critically, and be true problem solvers.

### **We Acknowledge the Power of Excellent Educators**

We know and value the role educators play in our students' trajectory, and believe there is a direct correlation between teacher quality and the overall success of our students. We believe that we must recruit, develop, and retain excellent educators who are equipped with the resources, structure, and creative autonomy needed to support all students.

### **We Hold High Expectations while Instilling a Growth Mindset**

At Atlas, we know that all kids are capable of rigorous work which is why we set high expectations and lofty goals for each of our students. We also understand that there will still be times when our students will undoubtedly struggle. This is why we will work to instill a growth mindset in our students. We will never lower the bar when a student does not reach their goal. Instead, we work as a team to provide the personalized instruction each child needs to thrive.

### **We Build Community Through Partnerships**

Our most significant partners are our families. They play an active role in their child's learning, and staff will build long-term relationships to ensure students develop personally and academically. We will also establish strong relationships with local organizations so that our students engage with the city as a living classroom, our families receive supports to thrive, and we learn alongside others to iterate on and contribute to best practices in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

## **Expanded Definition of Student Success**

Atlas' curriculum, teaching methods, and services are designed specifically to meet the educational needs of our children. Atlas believes, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that all students are capable of excellence and can learn at high levels when supported properly. Atlas aims to develop students who are creative and critical thinkers, lifelong learners, culturally competent citizens, well-rounded individuals, collaborative team players, and academically exceptional scholars. In order to ensure that all students realize these graduate aims, we put supports and structures in place that are tailored to meet the individual needs of each student. Below are Atlas' Graduate Aims:

- **Creative and Critical Thinkers:** Our graduates think outside of the box. They see every opportunity as a learning experience and approach vexing challenges with perseverance and creativity.
- **Lifelong Learners:** Our graduates have a true passion for learning. They are insatiably curious and question everything. Our graduates are self-aware and can identify both their strengths, and areas for growth. They are highly motivated and have the ability, and desire, to self-direct their learning. They have a growth mindset and work hard. They show academic grit and do not give up. Our students are ambitious goal setters and know how to stay organized in order to achieve their goals.
- **Culturally Competent Citizens:** Our graduates know why diversity is important and why it makes the world a better place. Our graduates know who they are and what makes them unique. Students use culture as a vehicle for learning.
- **Well-Rounded Individuals:** Our graduates are well-rounded individuals, having interests and passions both inside and out of the classroom. When our students graduate they are responsible decision makers, socially and self-aware, have strong relationship skills, and are good at self-management.
- **Collaborative Team Players:** Our graduates are collaborators. They are able to work together in a group as equals to reach a common goal. They have the ability to delegate tasks, communicate effectively, and produce quality outcomes with other individuals.
- **Academically Exceptional Scholars:** Our graduates excel academically, and leave us performing on or above grade level. They are on a trajectory to thrive in middle school, high school, college or in the career of their choice.



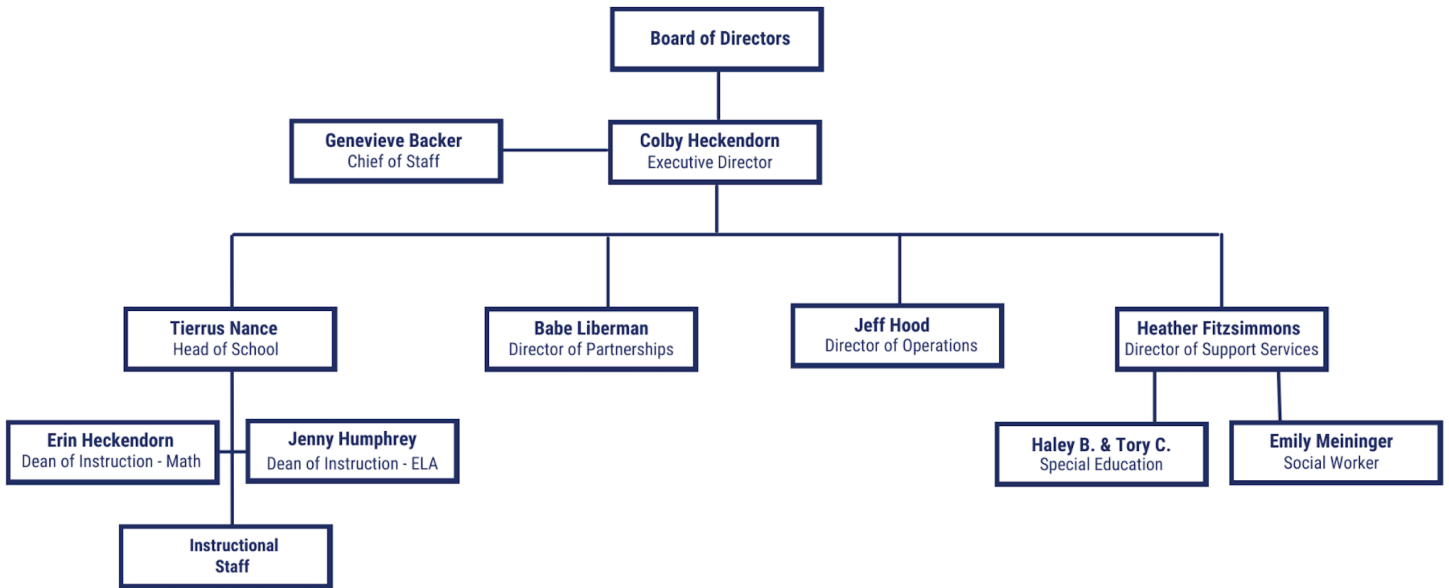
## **Atlas Team Members**

Colby Heckendorn	Executive Director	colby.heckendorn@atlaspublic.org
Genevieve Backer	Chief of Staff	genevieve.backer@atlaspublic.org
Tierrus Nance	Head of School	tierrus.nance@atlaspublic.org
Heather Fitzsimmons	Director of Support Services	heather.fitzsimmons@atlaspublic.org
Jeff Hood	Director of Operations	jeff.hood@atlaspublic.org
Babe Liberman	Director of Strategic Partnerships	babe.liberman@atlaspublic.org
Jenny Humphery	Dean of Instruction - ELA	jenny.humphery@atlaspublic.org
Erin Heckendorn	Dean of Instruction - Math	erin.heckendorn@atlaspublic.org
Emily Meininger	Social Worker	emily.meininger@atlaspublic.org
Derron Cason	Building Operations Manager	derron.cason@atlaspublic.org
Iris Jackson	Building Support Specialist	iris.jackson@atlaspublic.org
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Erika Byrd	Math Specialist	erika.byrd@atlaspublic.org
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Carolyn Bryant	Visual Arts Teacher	carolyn.bryant@atlaspublic.org
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Barbara Gammage	Second Grade Teacher	barbara.gammage@atlaspublic.org
Matt Candelario	Second Grade Teacher	matt.candelario@atlaspublic.org

**Atlas Team Members Cont.**

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Myra Stull	Assistant Teacher	myra.stull@atlaspublic.org
Dwayne Upchurch	Assistant Teacher	dwayne.upchurch@atlaspublic.org
Dateeral Williams	Assistant Teacher	dateeral.williams@atlaspublic.org

**Organizational Chart**



**Leadership Team**

Colby Heckendorn	Executive Director
Genevieve Backer	Head of School
Tierrus Nance	Head of School
Heather Fitzsimmons	Director of Support Services
Jeff Hood	Director of Operations
Babe Liberman	Director of Strategic Partnerships

**Board of Directors**

Russ Kirk	President
Alice Dickherber	Secretary
Kwofe Coleman	Treasurer
Mark Minden	Member
Lorna Sanchez McClellen	Member
Scott Malin	Member



# Caring for All

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## ***Diversity Commitment***

At Atlas, we are committed to attracting and retaining a diverse staff. Atlas will honor the experiences, perspectives and unique identity of applicants and employees. Together our community strives to build and maintain an inclusive, equitable and positive working and learning environment to ensure all students achieve their extraordinary potential.

## ***Notice of Non-Discrimination***

Atlas Public Schools is committed to maintaining a workplace and educational environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs, services, activities and facilities. In accordance with law, the school strictly prohibits discrimination and harassment against employees, students or others on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, familial status, disability, age, veteran status, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law. Atlas Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer.

## ***Anti-Harassment***

Atlas is committed to providing an environment free of harassment. All harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, familial status, disability, age, veteran status, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law is prohibited and must be promptly reported to the Executive Director for investigation of any incident which could constitute harassment, discrimination or retaliation.

## ***Equal Employment Opportunity***

Atlas is an equal opportunity employer and seeks to create a workplace free of discrimination and harassment. Atlas is committed to compliance with all applicable laws providing equal employment opportunities.

## ***Reasonable Accommodations***

Any individual with a disability requiring an accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of the job should contact the Executive Director and discuss the need for an accommodation. The school will engage in an interactive process to identify possible accommodations, if any, which will help the employee perform the job. If the accommodation is reasonable and will not impose an undue hardship, Atlas will make the accommodation in accordance with law.

# Hiring, Development and Separation

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## ***Employee Classification***

Employees are classified as either exempt or non-exempt for pay administration purposes, as determined by the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and Missouri's wage and hour laws. The definitions of the worker classification categories can be summarized as follows:

- Exempt Employees: Professional and administrative employees, whose positions meet FLSA standards, are exempt from overtime pay requirements.
- Non-exempt Employees: Employees whose positions do not meet the FLSA exemption standards will be paid overtime when required according to state and federal law.
- Part-Time Employees: Part-time employees are those who are scheduled for and work fewer than 30 hours per week. Part-time employees are not eligible for employee benefits except those mandated by applicable law, such as Paid Time Off (PTO Days).

## ***At-Will Employment Status***

Atlas employees are employed on an at-will basis. Employment at-will means that the employment relationship may be terminated, with or without cause and with or without advance notice, at any time by the employee or Atlas. Nothing in this handbook shall limit the right to terminate at-will employment.

## ***Voluntary Resignation***

There may come a time when you would like to part ways with us. We ask that you provide as much advance notice as possible and when at all possible, resignations should be timed with the end of the school year. Staff who resign mid-school year are generally not eligible for rehire.

## ***Job Duties***

As part of your onboarding, the leadership team will explain your job responsibilities and the standards expected of all Atlas team members. As a brand new school, be aware that your job responsibilities may change at any time during your employment as we continue to grow. Atlas sees our staff as "building" employees, rather than simply "classroom" or "office" employees, as we work collectively to ensure all students are set up for success. From time to time, you may be asked to work on special projects, or to assist with other work necessary or important to the operation of your department or Atlas. Your cooperation and assistance in performing such additional work is expected within reason. Atlas reserves the right, at any time, to alter or change job responsibilities, reassign or transfer job positions, or assign additional job responsibilities.

## ***Strategic Planning & Professional Development***

We select employees who are curious, open-minded and have an innate love of learning. We foster these characteristics by making significant investments in professional development for teachers and other staff.

Professional development activities will vary from year to year and from job to job. Development includes a combination of robust on-the-job opportunities to grow and learn, as well as more formal opportunities such as conferences and workshops. Similar to how we approach student learning, we take a collaborative approach to professional development for staff and take into account each employee's unique strengths and aspirations. Teachers participate in weekly grade level team meetings and 30 full days of strategic planning throughout the school year.

## ***Performance Evaluation***

We believe that having high quality staff members is critically important to the long-term success of Atlas and that all staff members need coaching, time for reflection, and professional development. Evaluation is meant to be a way for us to coach and support our team members in their ongoing growth and development. Atlas believes feedback is critical to job performance and career development and views our processes first and foremost as a way to bring out the absolute best in our staff.

### *Evaluations for Instructional Staff*

The Co-Heads of School, with support from the Executive Director, are responsible for coaching and supervising the instructional staff. The evaluation process consists of goal setting, observations, post observation feedback and discussion, professional development opportunities, and summative evaluations.

### *For Non-Exempt and Support Staff*

The Co-Heads of School, with support from the Executive Director, are responsible for evaluating the non-exempt and support staff. The evaluation process consists of goal setting, feedback and discussion, professional development opportunities and annual evaluations.

## ***Performance Improvement Plans***

In the event an employee is not meeting expectations and/or struggling with core aspects of their role, Atlas will take steps to notify the individual and provide greater interventions and scaffolds when appropriate. An improvement plan is one such intervention to support employees in meeting the responsibilities of their roles.

## ***Internal Job Opportunities***

We want our employees to join us for a career, not just a job. If you are interested in a different role based on your passions, skills, and experience, please talk to a leadership team member about your career goals.



# Scheduling & Wages

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## **Work Schedules**

The Atlas school day is from 8am to 3:30pm. Atlas' leadership team will assign your individual work schedule. All employees are expected to be at their work location at the start of their scheduled day, ready to work. Hours for teaching and instructional support staff are: 7:45am - 3:45pm.

## **Punctuality and Attendance**

Employees are expected to report to work as scheduled, be on time, and prepared to start work. If you are unable to report for work on any particular day due to unforeseen circumstances, please email or text as early as possible the following members of our Leadership Team: Genevieve Backer, Tierrus Nance, and Jeff Hood.

Atlas defines excessive absenteeism as more than three late arrivals or unapproved absences in a school year. If you fail to report for work without any notification to the leadership team and your absence continues for a period of three days, Atlas will consider that you have voluntarily abandoned or quit your employment.

## **Timekeeping for Non-Exempt Employees**

All non-exempt employees are required to sign the log in the office when you arrive at work and when you leave; this is required by law for payroll purposes. Employees also must sign-out whenever they leave the building for any reason other than Atlas business. Employees are not allowed to work "off the clock." Any work performed in addition to a regularly scheduled shift must be approved in advance by one of the Co-Heads of School. *Ref. Bd. Policy: Working Hours and Salary Deductions*

## **Overtime for Non-Exempt Employees**

Non-exempt employees may be required to work overtime as necessary. Only actual hours worked in a given workday or workweek can apply in calculating overtime. All overtime work must be previously authorized by one of the Co-Heads of School. Atlas provides compensation for all overtime hours worked by non-exempt employees in accordance with the law.

## **Rest and Meal Periods**

All full time non-exempt employees are entitled to two fifteen-minute paid rest breaks during their work day. The Co-Heads of School will advise of the schedule of breaks and the employee is expected to return to work promptly at the end of any rest break.

Employees may leave the premises for the 30-minute unpaid meal periods. Meal periods must be taken and may not be skipped to be able to end the shift thirty minutes earlier. As a courtesy, we ask that if you are leaving the building for lunch that you let the office manager know.

### ***Payment of Wages***

All employees of Atlas are paid twice a month on the 15th (or the Friday before if the 15th falls on a holiday, Saturday or Sunday) and on the last day of the month (or on the Friday before, if the last day of the month falls on a holiday, Saturday or Sunday) for work performed during the previous month.

Atlas' policy is to comply with all legal or other valid claims against the wages of employees. If a wage garnishment, child support order, or some other valid claim is received by the school against your wages, you will be notified about the amount and details of the garnishment or wage order.

### ***Automatic Deposit***

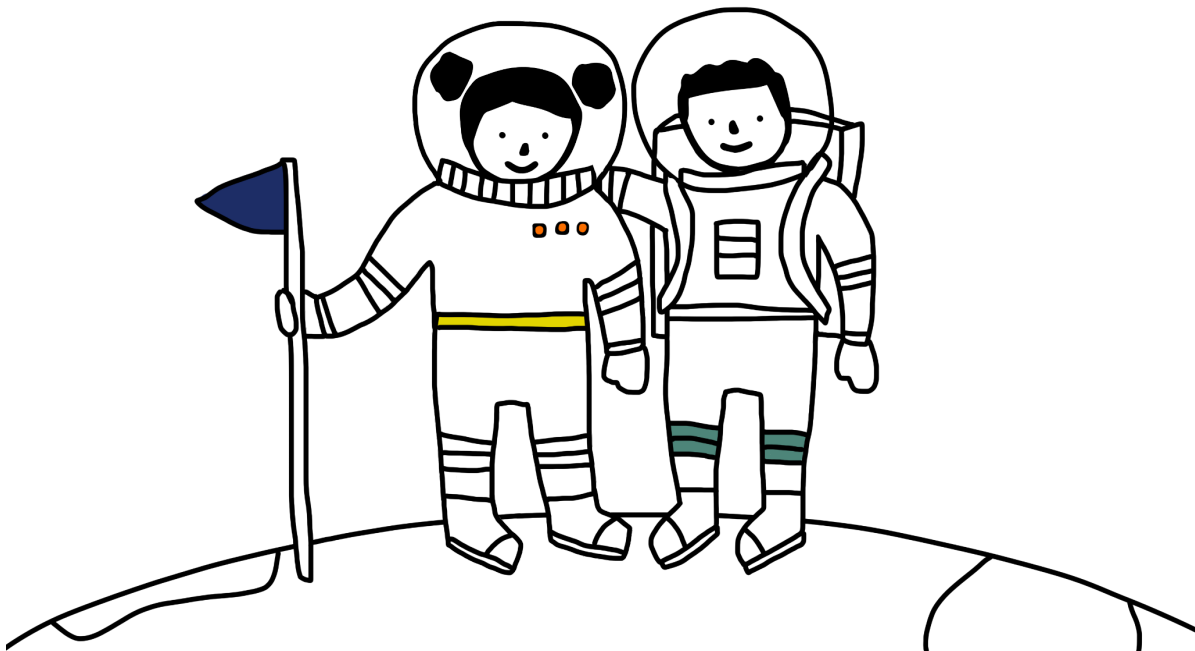
Atlas requires employees to use direct deposit; however, if this requirement creates a hardship for you, please speak with the Office Manager.

### ***Deductions for Exempt Employees***

Employees paid on a "salary basis" regularly receive a predetermined amount of compensation each pay period.

Deductions from pay are permissible when an exempt employee:

- Is absent for one or more full days due to personal reasons, other than sickness or disability, and does not have any accrued Paid Time Off (PTO Days) available
- Is absent for one or more full days due to sickness or disability, and does not have any accrued Paid Time Off (PTO Days) available



# Benefits and Leaves

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## ***Healthcare & Income Protection Benefits***

Atlas provides healthcare and income protection benefits for eligible employees and their dependents starting on your first day of employment with Atlas. Benefit eligibility may be dependent upon your employee classification (full-time versus part-time, for example) and on length of continuous employment at Atlas. Benefit eligibility requirements may also be imposed by the plans themselves. A summary of the key benefits offered by Atlas include:

- Paid time off (PTO Days), including holidays
- Health insurance, including medical, dental, and vision
- Life, accidental, short-term disability, and long-term disability insurance
- Retirement Plan through the Public School Retirement System of St. Louis (PSRSSTL)

Upon becoming employed at Atlas, you will receive information explaining the benefits in greater detail. For information regarding employee benefits and to answer any questions you may have contact Colby Heckendorn, Executive Director.

The school reserves the right to modify, amend, or terminate benefits and to modify or amend benefit eligibility requirements at any time and for any reason, subject to any legal restrictions. In general, however, changes to the Atlas Employee Benefits Program will be announced during our open enrollment in October of each year.

## ***Insurance Benefits Eligibility***

*Full-Time Employees:*

- Eligible full-time employees, working 30 or more hours per week, whether exempt or non-exempt will be able to enroll in the Atlas Employee Benefits Program insurance plans.

*Part-Time Employees:*

- Part-time employees, working fewer than 30 hours per week, are not eligible to participate in Atlas' insurance benefits, but are eligible for paid-time-off.

## ***Holidays and Breaks***

Atlas observes the following paid school holidays and breaks (see school calendar on next page).



## 2022-2023 School Calendar

September 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	
Session 1: September 7-October 14 (28 Days)						
October 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					
Intersession 1: October 17-28						
17-21: Staff Inservice - No Students						
24-28: All School Recess						
31: First Day of Session 2						
November 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			
11: Veterans' Day - No School						
23-25: Thanksgiving Recess - No School						
Session 2: October 31-December 20 (33 Days)						
December 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
21: Staff Inservice - No School						
Dec. 22-Jan. 2: Winter Recess - No School						
January 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
3-4: Staff Inservice - No School						
5: First Day of Session 3						
16: Martin Luther King Jr. Day - No School						
Session 3: January 5-February 10 (26 Days)						
February 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				
13-15: Staff Inservice - No School						
16-17: All School Recess - No School						
20: Presidents' Day - No School						
21: First Day of Session 4						

March 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
20-31: Spring Recess - No School						
27-31: Staff Inservice - No School						
Session 4: February 21-March 17 (19 Days)						
April 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						
3: First Day of Session 5						
Session 5: April 3-May 12 (30 Days)						
May 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
15-17: All School Recess - No School						
18-19: Staff Inservice - No School						
22: Start of Session 6						
29: Memorial Day - No School						
June 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	
19: Juneteenth Observed - No School						
Session 6: May 22-June 16 (19 Days)						
July 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					
June 19-July 14: Summer Recess - No School						
4: Independence Day - No School						
12-14: Staff Inservice - No School						
17: Start of Session 7						
Session 7 Extended Term: July 17-August 11 (20 Days)						
August 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
14-25: All School Break - No School						
September 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1: Staff Inservice - No School						
4: Labor Day - No School						
5: Staff Inservice - No School						
6: Start of 2023-2024 School Year						

### ***Paid Time Off (PTO)***

Full-time employees will receive ten (10) Paid Time Off days per year. An employee may not use PTO days during the employee's initial thirty (30) days of employment with Atlas Public Schools except with prior written permission from the Executive Director or designee. PTO requests of three (3) or more consecutive days must also be approved by the Executive Director.

PTO days may not be used the day before or after a long weekend or scheduled school break. Exceptions of a highly unusual nature must be approved by the Executive Director and the staff member will be expected to provide a written explanation for the request. Staff members may be requested to provide medical certification for absences for illnesses occurring the day before or after a long weekend or scheduled school break.

Employees may carry over to the following school year a maximum of five (5) unused PTO days per year, not to exceed a maximum of fifteen (15) days of Paid Time Off. Employees who resign or whose employment is terminated will not receive payment for any unused PTO days nor will employees receive any payment for unused PTO days accumulated beyond the maximum allowed.

*(Ref.: Bd. Policy Staff Leaves and Absences)*

### ***Leave for Illness***

PTO days may be used for sick leave for the illness, injury or incapacity of the employee, a member of the employee's immediate family (and for which it is necessary for the employee to be with the family member during the incapacity) or in special cases, for the illness, injury or incapacity of other relatives with permission granted by the Executive Director or designee.

Atlas reserves the right to require a healthcare provider's certification attesting to the illness or incapacity of the employee, the employee's immediate family member or other relatives and inclusive dates of the incapacitation.

### ***Long-Term Medical Leave***

Under certain circumstances, you may have to request medical leave time for a serious health condition such as complications during pregnancy, childbirth, health care, chronic conditions requiring treatment or other related medical conditions. If you have a serious health condition and require leave time as a reasonable accommodation, you must present written information from a medical provider. These leaves will be considered consistent with Atlas' obligations under any federal and state disability laws.

### ***Bereavement Leave***

Atlas grants leave of absence to employees in the event of the death of the employee's current spouse, domestic partner, child, parent, legal guardian, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild; or mother-, father-, sister-, brother-, son-, or daughter-in-law. An employee with such a death in the family may take up to three consecutive scheduled workdays off with pay. The Executive Director or designee may approve extending the bereavement leave with the use of accrued paid-time off (PTO days). If unavailable or insufficient, additional unpaid time off may be used.

## ***Jury Duty***

Atlas supports employees who are summoned to serve on jury duty, however, given the nature of our work as a school, we appreciate it when team members ask for postponement of jury duty to a school break when possible.

Employees will receive full pay while serving jury duty. You must provide a copy of your jury summons to the office manager as soon as a notice or summons from the court is received. You may be requested to provide written verification from the court clerk of performance of jury service.

## ***Parental Leave***

Atlas will provide up to twelve weeks of paid parental leave to employees following the birth of an employee's child or the placement of a child with an employee in connection with adoption. The purpose of paid parental leave is to enable the employee to care for and bond with a newborn or a newly adopted or newly placed child. This policy will run concurrently with Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave, as applicable. This policy will be in effect for births and adoptions.

### **Parental Leave Eligibility**

Eligible employees must meet the following criteria:

1. Have been employed with Atlas for at least 12 months (the 12 months do not need to be consecutive).
2. Have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the date the leave would begin.
3. Be a full or part-time, regular employee (temporary employees are not eligible for this benefit).

In addition, employees must meet one of the following criteria:

1. Have given birth to a child.
2. Be a spouse or committed partner of an individual who has given birth to a child.
3. Have adopted a child age 17 or younger. The adoption of a new spouse's child is excluded from this policy.

### **Amount, Time Frame and Duration of Paid Parental Leave**

Eligible employees will receive a maximum of twelve weeks of paid parental leave per birth or adoption. The fact that a multiple birth or adoption occurs (e.g., the birth of twins or adoption of siblings) does not increase the twelve-week total amount of paid parental leave granted for that event. In addition, in no case will an employee receive more than twelve weeks of paid parental leave in a rolling 12-month period, regardless of whether more than one birth or adoption event occurs within that 12-month time frame.

Each week of paid parental leave is compensated at 100 percent of the employee's regular, straight-time weekly pay. Paid parental leave will be paid on regularly scheduled pay dates.

Approved paid parental leave may be taken at any time during the twelve-month period immediately following the birth or adoption. Paid parental leave may not be used or extended beyond this twelve-month time frame.

Employees must take paid parental leave in one continuous period of leave and must use all paid parental leave during the twelve-month time frame indicated above. Any unused paid parental leave will be forfeited at the end of the twelve-month time frame.

Upon termination of the individual's employment at Atlas, the employee will not be paid for any unused paid parental leave for which the employee was eligible.

### **Coordination with Other Policies**

Paid parental leave taken under this policy will run concurrently with leave under the FMLA, if such leave is available; thus, any leave taken under this policy that falls under the definition of circumstances qualifying for leave due to the birth or placement of a child due to adoption, the leave will be counted toward the 12 weeks of available FMLA leave per a 12-month period. All other requirements and provisions under the FMLA will apply. In no case will the total amount of leave—whether paid or unpaid—granted to the employee under the FMLA exceed 12 weeks during the 12-month FMLA period. Please refer to the Family and Medical Leave Policy for further guidance on the FMLA.

Atlas will maintain all benefits for employees during the paid parental leave period just as if they were taking any other company paid leave such as paid vacation leave or paid sick leave.

If an Atlas paid holiday occurs while the employee is on paid parental leave, such day will be charged to holiday pay; however, such holiday pay will not extend the total paid parental leave entitlement. If an intersession break occurs while the employee is on paid parental leave, employees will be paid during the intersession; however intersessions will not extend the total paid parental leave entitlement.

### **Requests for Parental Leave**

The employee shall provide notice of the need for use Parental Leave leave as soon as is reasonably possible, but at least thirty days prior to the commencement of the anticipated leave. In circumstances where employees are requesting leave prior to the birth of a child or for longer than twelve weeks, Atlas Public Schools may require that a request for leave be supported by certification issued by the appropriate health care provider. Such extended leave, if approved, would be unpaid.



## Safety and Health

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The safety of our students, staff, and community is our top priority. All employees are responsible for their own safety, as well as that of students and others in the workplace. Concerns about unsafe situations, facilities or equipment should be reported to the Executive Director. There will be annual training provided, included in the area of safe schools.

### ***Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect***

Protecting the safety of our students is paramount to our roles as employees of Atlas Public Schools. By law, all Atlas employees, regardless of position or assignment, are mandated reporters. If you suspect child abuse or neglect, you are obligated to report directly to the Missouri Child Abuse Hotline by calling 1-800-392-3738. Non-emergency reports may be submitted online at: <https://apps.dss.mo.gov/OnlineCanReporting/default.aspx>.

When you make a hotline call or submit an online report, please immediately notify a member of the Leadership Team to make them aware that you have made a report. Additionally, please do not hesitate to reach out to a member of Atlas' Leadership Team if you have questions about your status and responsibilities as a mandated reporter. Keep in mind that:

- Abuse need not occur at school or during school hours
- Any suspicion that a child may have been the subject of physical, sexual or emotional abuse must be reported
- Requires exercise of professional judgment
- Does not require conclusive proof

### ***Drug and Alcohol Policy***

It is expected that all employees will assist in maintaining a work environment free from the effects of alcohol, drugs or other intoxicating substances.

Drug and/or alcohol testing may be required based upon the school's reasonable suspicion that the employee is under the influence of (both legal and/or illegal) drugs and/or alcohol. All drug and alcohol testing will be carried out in compliance with any applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Failure to comply with requested testing may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. *Ref. Board Policy: Drug Free Workplace Model/Employee Alcohol and Drug Testing*

### ***Emergency Guidelines***

Although we hope that emergency situations never arise, we are prepared in case they do. Regular drills for fire, tornado, earthquake, and intruders will be held. Atlas Public Schools will ensure every classroom is equipped with an emergency kit that includes accurate contact information for all students, among other necessary items. A 'quick guide' is also posted for reference in each classroom, covering the procedures for all emergencies. Students may only be released from the office; never from the classroom.

## ***Maintenance and Housekeeping***

All employees are expected to keep their work areas clean and organized. People using common areas such as lunchrooms and shared offices are expected to keep them sanitary and free of clutter. Please clean up after meals and dispose of trash properly, including recycling or composting whenever possible.

## ***Smoking***

We are a drug-free and smoke-free campus. This policy includes the use of electronic cigarettes and smoking outside on the sidewalk.

## ***Student Behavior and Discipline***

Our teachers and staff are responsible for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. In general, consequences are rehabilitative rather than punitive in alignment with our restorative approach to discipline.

### *Corporal Punishment*

Corporal punishment is prohibited.

### *Suspension and Expulsion*

Atlas will use suspension and expulsion as a last resort and suspension decisions will be made by the Co-Heads of School in rare circumstances. Recommendations for expulsion will be made by the Executive Director to the Board of Directors.

### *Discipline of Students with Special Needs*

In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all students, the following procedures are applicable to students with disabilities. Students for whom the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be disciplined in accordance with the BIP.

### *Bullying, Cyber Bullying & Hazing*

Any form of bullying, hazing, cyberbullying and student intimidation is strictly prohibited by Atlas Public Schools. Employees, staff, coaches, sponsors, or volunteers shall not permit, participate or encourage such conduct. All incidents should be reported to the Co-Heads of School for investigation.

### *Disciplinary Legal Compliance*

Atlas complies with all state and federal statutes pertaining to school safety, including but not limited to RSMO 160.261, the Missouri Safe Schools Act.

### *School and Workplace Violence*

The safety and security of Atlas Public Schools students and employees is of the utmost importance. Atlas Public Schools will continually strive to prevent and minimize the potential of violence in the workplace.

## **Security**

Atlas has developed guidelines to help maintain a secure workplace and all employees are expected to be familiar with our security protocols. Be aware of persons loitering for no apparent reason in walkways, entrances and exits, and service areas. Report any suspicious persons or activities to a member of the Leadership Team. Secure your desk, office or classroom at the end of the day. When called away for an extended length of time, do not leave valuable and/or personal articles in or around your work area that may be accessible.

## **Visitors and Volunteers**

We welcome parent volunteers and other designated visitors to our campus. Please familiarize yourself with the following protocols regarding visitation:

- Visits and appointments with teachers must be arranged in advance.
- Visitors and volunteers should not interfere, disrupt, or cause disorder in any classroom or school activity.
- All visitors and volunteers must sign the visitor's log in the entrance hallway; drop-in classroom or playground visits are not allowed.
- A visitor's sticker/badge must be retrieved upon signing the visitor's log and worn at all times while on campus.
- Any individual who disrupts a school site or fails to follow school rules and/or procedures is subject to removal from the school site and may be further restricted from visiting the school.
- Care should be taken to ensure that visitors and volunteers do not have access to protected student information as detailed under FERPA.

If you encounter a visitor or volunteer in violation of these protocols, please remind them of our visitor expectations, and if necessary, request assistance from a member of the Leadership Team. All employees are responsible for monitoring the presence of family members and unknown persons at school. If you notice anyone on campus without a visitor badge, please inquire about the purpose of their visit and escort them to the front desk to sign in, as appropriate. Suspicious persons or activity should be reported to a member of the Leadership Team immediately.

## **Weapons in the Workplace**

Possession of weapons of any classification or type on Atlas Public School property is prohibited, including in vehicles or any other place of storage.

## **Workplace Safety**

To help us maintain a safe school and workplace, everyone must be safety-conscious at all times. Staff must report all work-related injuries or illnesses immediately to the Office Manager.

## Additional Expectations

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### ***Employee Property***

An employee's personal property, including but not limited to packages, purses, and backpacks, may be inspected upon reasonable suspicion of unauthorized possession of Atlas property, possession of dangerous weapons or firearms, abuse of the school's drug and alcohol policy, or of any other item that jeopardizes the safety of the Atlas community.

### ***Dress Code and Appearance Standards***

Because each employee is a representative of Atlas in the eyes of the public, each employee must report to work wearing appropriate clothing. Employees are expected to dress neatly and in a manner which models professionalism and is functional given the nature of each employee's position.

### ***Meeting Attendance***

Every employee is expected to attend meetings as required, and to arrive on time and be prepared to contribute. This includes completing any deliverables you have committed to share within the deadlines agreed upon, actively participating in discussions and communicating with respect and appreciation for others. If you are the meeting facilitator, be prepared with an agenda, actively manage discussions to stay on task, and take responsibility for sharing notes and action items coming out of the meeting.



# Working Together

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## ***Cash Management Policy***

In order to establish sound cash management practices and ensure efficient utilization of cash, Atlas' board of directors has established a Cash Management Policy which provides guidance on how Atlas Team Members should handle cash transactions. See Atlas' [Cash Management Policy](#) for more information.

## ***Legal Compliance***

As part of our commitment to maintaining a culture of compliance, every employee at Atlas has an obligation to:

- Be sensitive to situations that could lead to unlawful or unethical conduct and avoid engaging in such conduct;
- Comply with all applicable governmental laws, rules and regulations and school policies in the performance of their job duties;
- Learn and follow any subject-specific policies and procedures related to the employee's job;
- Promptly raise any concern that the employee or others may have about possible violations of law or procedure;
- Understand the options every employee has for raising compliance concerns; and
- Cooperate with any investigations by the school or its legal counsel into concerns about a possible violation of law or policy.

If you would like assistance in understanding the policy or the laws and policies that apply to you in your work, please contact the Executive Director or any member of the Leadership Team.

## ***Whistleblower Protection***

It is Atlas' policy that Board members, employees, volunteers, students, vendors, alumni, and applicants shall be free, without fear of retaliation, to make known allegations of alleged misconduct existing within the school, that they reasonably believe constitutes the following: wire fraud, mail fraud, bank fraud, securities fraud or questionable accounting, internal controls and auditing matters.

Complaints and all relevant information regarding evidenced misconduct should be directed to the Heads of School. Complaints involving one or both Heads of School may be brought to the Executive Director. If there is a complaint involving the Executive Director, that concern may be brought to the President of the Board of Directors. All complaints may be brought without fear or reprisal.

## ***Reporting Responsibility***

Each individual has an obligation to report what they believe is a material violation of law or policy or any questionable accounting or auditing matter by Atlas Public Schools, its directors, officers,

advisors, employees, volunteers, or other representatives. The types of concerns that should be reported include for purposes of illustration and without being limited to, the following:

- Providing false or misleading information on Atlas Public Schools' financial documents, grant reports, tax returns or other public documents;
- Providing false information or withholding material information from Atlas' auditors, accountants, lawyers, directors or other representatives responsible for ensuring Atlas' compliance with fiscal and legal responsibilities;
- Embezzlement, private benefit, or misappropriation of funds;
- Material violation of Atlas Public Schools policy, including among others, confidentiality, conflicts of interest, whistleblower, ethics and document retention;
- Discrimination based on any protected class;
- Sexual harassment or abuse;
- Facilitating or concealing any of the above or similar actions.

## ***Reporting Concerns***

### *Employees*

Whenever possible, employees should seek to resolve concerns by reporting issues directly to their supervisor or to the next level of management as needed until matters are satisfactorily resolved. However, if for any reason an employee is not comfortable speaking to a supervisor or does not believe the issue is being properly addressed, the employee may contact the Executive Director. If an employee does not believe that these channels of communication can or should be used to express his/her concerns, an employee may contact the President of the Board of Directors who will assign a committee based on the nature of the complaint. Whenever practical, reports should be in writing. Complaints directed to the President of the Board of Directors should be e-mailed to [concerns@atlaspublic.org](mailto:concerns@atlaspublic.org).

### *Board Members, Advisors, and Other Volunteers*

Board members, advisors, and other volunteers may submit concerns to the Executive Director. If a volunteer, advisor, or board member is not comfortable reporting to the Executive Director, or if he/she does not believe the issue is being properly addressed, he/she may report directly to the President of the Board of Directors.

### *Handling of Reporting Violations*

Atlas Public Schools will promptly investigate all reports filed in accordance with this policy with due care. Matters reported internally without initial resolution will be investigated to determine if the allegations are true, whether the issue is material and what actions, if any, are necessary to correct the problem. Atlas staff will issue a full report of all matters raised under this policy to the committee designated by the President of the Board of Directors. The selected committee may conduct a further investigation upon receiving the report from the Executive Director.

For matters reported directly to the President of the Board, the appropriate chair shall promptly acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant if the identity of the complainant is known and conduct an investigation to determine if the allegations are true and whether the issue is

material and what, if any, corrective action is necessary. Upon the conclusion of this investigation, the appointed Committee shall promptly report its findings to the Atlas Public Schools Board of Directors.

#### Authority of Board Director Assigned Committee

The Assigned Committee shall have full authority to investigate concerns raised in accordance with this policy and may retain outside legal counsel, accountants, or any other resource that the Committee reasonably believes is necessary to conduct a full and complete investigation of the allegations.

#### Retaliation

This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable board members, advisors, employees and volunteers to raise serious concerns within the organization for investigation and appropriate action. With this goal in mind, no director, advisor, employee or volunteer who, in good faith, reports a concern shall be threatened, discriminated against or otherwise subject to retaliation or, in the case of an employee, adverse employment consequences as a result of such report. Moreover, a volunteer or employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a concern in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from the volunteer position or termination of employment.

#### Acting in Good Faith

Anyone reporting a concern must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the matter raised is a serious violation of law or policy or a material accounting or auditing matter. The act of making allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated, and that prove to have been made maliciously, recklessly, with gross negligence, or with the foreknowledge that the allegations are false, will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and may result in discipline, up to and including dismissal from the volunteer position or termination of employment. Depending on the circumstances, such conduct may also give rise to other actions, including civil or criminal lawsuits.

#### Confidentiality

Atlas Public Schools will treat all communications under this policy as confidentially as possible, but may need to disclose information for business reasons, including 1) to conduct a complete and fair investigation, or 2) for review of Atlas' operations by Atlas Public Schools' board, Finance Committee, independent public accountants, and/or legal counsel.

#### **Political Activity**

Atlas' status as a tax-exempt organization (under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code) prohibits it from participating or intervening in any political campaign. The school may not endorse a candidate or ballot proposal, provide or solicit financial or other support for candidates or political organizations, or establish political action committees. It is Atlas' policy not to participate in or to intervene in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

School employees may participate in political activity only as private citizens, not as representatives of the school.

## **Communicating With Our Stakeholders**

In all our communications, we consider our school's values in how and when we communicate. Here are some examples of the expectations we hold ourselves responsible to:

- *Responsiveness:* You are generally expected to respond to email inquiries from parents and others within our community no longer than 24 hours after receiving the communication (not including weekends and evenings after 8 PM).
- *Accessibility:* We work to ensure that all our families can access our communications in their home language. As such, we ask that most communications are done on Dojo, which all our families have access to and allows for translation. Please communicate using simple language (no jargon) and simple sentences to make translation stronger.
- *"Being kind to Inboxes"* Please be as efficient with email communication as possible, so that we are not spending hours a day responding to emails. Family members should be directed to the Atlas Family Handbook for further guidelines regarding email communication.
- *Tone:* We know that email is efficient, yet tone can often be misinterpreted over email. Consider your language carefully, and choose an in-person conversation over email for sensitive issues or difficult conversations.
- *Modeling our Values:* As always, we strive to embody our values in all that we do, especially in how we communicate. Conversations that lead with integrity are far more productive for all involved.

If a problem develops or you encounter a situation that you are uncomfortable with, ask the Heads of School for assistance.

## **Electronic Communication between Staff and Students**

Staff members are encouraged to use electronic as well as other modes of communication to interact effectively with students and their families for educational purposes. In all cases, staff members must maintain professional boundaries with students, regardless of whether the communication resources are provided by Atlas or the staff member uses their own personal electronic communication devices, accounts, web pages or other forms of electronic communication. Staff members are expected to maintain a professional level of communications with students and to discourage inappropriate communications from students.

Atlas Public Schools' policies, procedures, and expectations regarding in-person communications at school and during the school-day also apply to electronic communications, regardless of when those communications occur.



## ***School as a Learning Community***

Atlas is an intentional community. As a small and growing school with limited staff and resources, we rely on one another to step up when needs arise and to take on roles with enthusiasm and a spirit of service even if those responsibilities may fall outside of traditional job descriptions.

All staff members are assigned rotating school-wide responsibilities outside of their core duties, such as monitoring pick-up, drop-off, lunch or outside playground time. These duties are assigned in advance, and the assigned individual is responsible for making sure the obligations are fulfilled. This means finding a replacement in the event you are unable to personally fulfill your assignment due to absence or tardiness.

## ***School Ethics***

Atlas is committed to promoting high standards of honest and ethical professional conduct in everything we do. In performing your duties, you should maintain the highest standards of ethical behavior, as well as adhere to the following specific rules of engagement:

- Avoid conflicts of interest. No employee may accept gratuity or other compensation from any student, family member, vendor, supplier, or other person doing business with Atlas.
- Limit acceptance of gifts to what is reasonable. Employees may accept unsolicited gifts, other than money, that conform to the reasonable ethical practices of the education sector. Tangible gifts (including tickets to events or expenses paid for meals or trips) that have a market value less than \$100 may be accepted.

## ***Problem Resolution and Open-Door Policy***

Direct and open communication is fundamental to Atlas' culture. Good communication is paramount to building a relationship of mutual trust and respect between employees and school leaders, and your suggestions for improving Atlas are always welcome. Atlas values your observations and you should feel free to raise issues of concern, in good faith, without the fear of reprisal.

## ***Confidentiality***

All employees have a continuing responsibility to protect the school's confidential and privileged information, during and after their employment with Atlas. The protection of confidential information is vital to the interests and the success of the school.

- *Employee Information* - The school collects and maintains job related information on its employees. This information is held in confidence in your personnel file. You have a right to review your personnel file, by making an appointment to do so.
- *Student Information* - The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. All employees are required to take necessary steps to protect student information in accordance with law. Any conversation about a student or sensitive matter should be conducted in a private setting and only with those staff members who have a need to know in connection with the child.

## ***Technology Usage***

Atlas maintains a voice mail system, an email system, stationery, laptop computers and hand-held devices (including but not limited to smart phones and other electronic tablets) to assist in conducting school business. Computers, computer files, the email system, software, and the phone system furnished to employees are the property of Atlas Public Schools and are intended for school business use. These systems are and remain at all times, the property of Atlas Public Schools whether such systems are accessible by your personal cell phone or located in your home, at a remote location or in an office. Devices are to be returned to Atlas in good working order at the time of employee separation.

Incidental and personal use is permitted, although employees should be aware that passwords and search histories may be saved and accessible to future users.

The use of personal cell phones and other electronic devices not promoting student learning or documentation should be limited during working time to avoid distractions and ensure proper focus and attention on students during the school day. Urgent and personal phone calls should be taken care of during planning periods or lunch breaks.

## ***Social Media Accounts Connected to Atlas***

Employees should be familiar with the following social media guidelines:

- Use good judgment.
- Provide value.
- Respect copyright and fair use guidelines.
- Maintain your professional identity.
- Protect Atlas Public Schools' reputation.
- Uphold our confidentiality policy.
- Serve as a positive role model.

## ***Media Inquiries***

Employees may be approached for interviews or comments by the news media. Only such persons as are designated by the Heads of School may comment on school policy or events that have an impact on Atlas. If approached by the media, do not say, "No comment" – just tell the media that our spokesperson will be happy to assist them, and can be reached by contacting the school office. When possible, refer them to the Executive Director or the Heads of School.

# Confirmation of Receipt

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I acknowledge that I have received my copy of Atlas' Staff Handbook, revision date July 2022. I understand the Handbook contains important information about Atlas and that I am responsible for reading it and for knowing and complying with the standards, policies and guidelines set forth in the Handbook during my employment with Atlas. I also understand that in addition to the Handbook, my employment may be subject to policies or requirements communicated by the Leadership Team via email and documents posted to Atlas' website.

Employee's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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