

FOUNDATIONS

FOR THE FUTURE

CHARTER ACADEMY

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy

Employment Handbook

Revised July 2009

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INTRODUCTION

I. FFCA

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy opened in September of 1997 with a total of 224 students (K-8) and 12 staff members. From those first cautious steps right up to today, FFCA has demonstrated commitment to its stated purposes, excellence in student learning and a strong partnership with parents. Our school is presently housed in multiple geographically separate campuses, providing educational services to upwards of 2400 students (K-12). We employ approximately 250 staff members who provide conscientious professional leadership for student learning.

II. OUR VISION

“Excellence in student achievement and character development through distinctive teaching and learning.”

III. OUR MISSION

“To provide a safe and caring environment where academic excellence, character development, parental involvement and staff leadership are valued and fostered.”

IV. About this Handbook

In this handbook, we outline what FFCA expects from you and what you may expect from FFCA. We believe this understanding is essential to good working relationships.

This handbook provides relevant employment information and does not constitute a contract between FFCA and its employees. FFCA reserves the right to change policies, working conditions and benefits as set forth in this handbook. As a general rule, this will not happen without consultation with the staff members who are affected. Revisions will be posted in the public folder and on the website.

This handbook applies to all employees with exclusions appropriately noted. If any statement in this handbook is not completely clear to you, please contact our Human Resources office at 520-3206, extension 153 or 150.

Throughout this handbook, reference will be made to the *School Act* and the *Employment Standards Code*. Copies of each publication are provided to each campus. They can also be obtained on the Internet at the following addresses:

<http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/documents/Acts/s03.cfm>

http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/documents/Acts/E09.cfm?frm_isbn=0779709438

We sincerely hope you will enjoy working at FFCA and that you will find many opportunities for growth and success.

Employment

All employment in FFCA is authorized by the *Province of Alberta School Act*.

I. Policy

Given the FFCA's needs and financial resources, FFCA shall employ staff members who are the best qualified and most knowledgeable to meet the standards and requirements of each position.

GUIDELINES

1. Employment of all staff shall be subject to obtaining a satisfactory Police Information Check and an Alberta Children's Services Intervention Record Check.
2. The Charter Board shall expect employees to:
 - a. Provide a high standard of professional performance.
 - b. Behave in a manner that recognizes they are role models for students.
 - c. Respect the confidential nature of sensitive information their roles expose them to in relation to staff, students, and their families.
 - d. Be active learners in relation to their professional responsibilities.
 - e. Be willing to change assignments, for which they are qualified, for reasons of personal professional growth or to meet the needs of FFCA.
 - f. Be free of conflict of interest in the provision of goods and services to FFCA.
 - g. Attend work on a regular basis.
 - h. Familiarize themselves with expectations and guidelines contained in the FFCA Employment Handbook (located on the FFCA website).

II. Your Job

You have been selected to join FFCA because we believe you possess the qualifications, skills, and qualities needed to succeed in the position to which you have been assigned. Whether you are an administrator, a teacher, or are in a support position, you are an important member of the FFCA family. By way of training and support, you will be given every opportunity to be successful.

III. Job Classification

A. Teaching Staff

1. The employment of teaching staff is covered in Part 4: Division 1- Sections 92 to 112 of the *School Act*.
2. 1 FTE (Full-time Equivalency) is based on working 200 school days.

B. Support Staff

1. Support staff are employees, other than teachers, who contribute to the

- operation of the organization whether at the campus level or at Central Office.
2. Allocation of support staff to the campuses and Central Office is determined by a variety of factors.
 3. 1 FTE (Full-time equivalency) is based on working 1,768 hours in a school year.

C. Casual Employees

For the purpose of this handbook, casual employees are defined as employees who regularly work less than 20 hours per week or on an as-needed basis. These employees do not qualify for any of the board benefits. This may include:

1. Substitute Teachers,
2. Noon hour assistants,
3. Instructional assistants, and
4. Substitute office assistants.

IV. Employment Procedure

All Staff

When vacancies occur, a job description will be prepared by the applicable supervisor and reviewed by the Superintendent.

1. The Human Resources Department will develop processes designed to facilitate the recruitment and selection of staff.
2. Vacant positions (excluding supervisory appointments) may be filled by transfer from within the same campus or department without advertising on an FFCA-wide basis.
3. The following conditions will apply to placement in a specific assignment:
 - a. No continuing employee will be assigned to a position where that employee's immediate supervisor is a relative. Where this situation occurs after initial assignment, the employee will be reassigned to a comparable position in another location within one year. (Relatives include: spouse, parent, son, daughter, brother, sister, parent of spouse, grandparent, and grandparent of spouse, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law and son-in-law.)
 - b. When an employee marries another employee at the same work location, an alternative place of work shall be sought for one of the employees. In such cases, the preferences of the employees affected will be taken into account.
 - c. A supervisor who is a relative of an applicant will disqualify him/herself from participating in that process.
4. Positions not filled within the campus will be advertised throughout FFCA. Only staff members with a continuing position of employment may apply to transfer into vacant positions.

5. Positions not filled from within FFCA will be advertised through various media formats.
6. The Superintendent is responsible for short-listing applicants in consultation with the supervisor.
7. Board approval must be received for permanent staff increases over and above those specified in the annual budget.
8. Prior to commencement of employment, new employees will be required to complete and/or provide the following where applicable:
 - a. Police Information Check
 - b. Alberta Children's Services Intervention Check
 - c. Direct Deposit Banking Information
 - d. Personal Tax Credits form
 - e. Employee Information form
 - f. Confidentiality Agreement
 - g. Support Staff Extra time/Overtime Agreement
 - h. Social Insurance Card
 - i. Birth Certificate
 - j. Employment Medical Certificate indicating the employee is medically fit for the position
 - k. Sun Life Benefits Enrollment Application
 - l. Network Resource Acceptable Use form
 - m. Local Authorities Pension Plan enrollment form (support staff only and if eligible)
 - n. Teaching Qualifications Statement (TQS)
 - o. Verification of Experience from previous employers
 - p. Teaching Certification
 - q. Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund – Registration and Beneficiary form.

Filling Vacancies – All Staff

Transfers will be the first option considered in the filling of vacancies.

1. Types of transfers:
 - a. Employee-Initiated: employees may request a transfer to another location. The supervisor of the receiving location hiring will participate directly in the selection of employees transferring in.
 - b. Supervisor-Initiated: transfers may be requested by a supervisor. Before initiating such a transfer, the supervisor shall consult with the employee and identify in writing the reasons for making the request. The employee shall visit the supervisor at the receiving location to discuss the particulars associated with the new placement.
 - c. System-Initiated: the Superintendent may initiate employee transfers to meet system-wide program and staffing needs. Employees affected shall consult with the supervisor of both the sending and receiving

location prior to the implementation of the transfer. The Superintendent has the authority to transfer teachers in accordance with the *School Act*.

2. Employee transfers will usually occur in the spring of each year to facilitate necessary staff allocations for the following school year. Transfers during the school year will only be considered in extenuating circumstances.
3. The Superintendent is responsible for short-listing applicants in consultation with supervisors.
4. The Superintendent is responsible for the preparation of appropriate documentation.
5. In considering teacher transfers, the following criteria will be used:
 - a. the teacher holds a continuing contract,
 - b. student and program needs,
 - c. interests, education, experience, proficiency and general suitability of staff members,
 - d. desires of the teacher, and
 - e. Superintendent.
6. In considering support staff transfers, the following criteria will be used:
 - a. student and school needs,
 - b. interests, education, experience, proficiency and general suitability of staff members,
 - c. goals and aspirations of the employee, and
 - d. other considerations deemed relevant by the Superintendent.
7. Employees will be made aware of their right to appeal a Supervisor or System-Initiated transfer. Employees wishing to appeal such a transfer must inform the Superintendent in writing within seven days of receiving transfer notice indicating:
 - a. the nature of their concerns with the proposed transfer and a request to have a hearing before the Board,
 - b. how the transfer meets or does not meet the transfer criteria, and
 - c. their preferred placement for the coming year.
8. After receiving a letter of appeal, the Superintendent will indicate to the employee, in writing, the procedure which will be followed in considering the appeal.

V. Hours

In compliance with the *Employment Standards Code*, scheduled hours of employment are set by the Superintendent and/or the Supervisor in consideration of the operation of FFCA.

Teaching Staff

The Principal Educator will establish expectations for teachers with regard to the needs of the school, in accordance with the *School Act* and the requirements of the Charter.

Support Staff

Work hours are outlined on a calendar annually by the employee's supervisor for employees working a minimum of four (4) hours per day. For employees working less than four (4) hours per day, the employee's supervisor determines the hours in consideration of the needs of the campus. The employee's hours of work are tabulated by timesheet. Breaks or "Rest Periods" will be in accordance with the *Employment Standards Code* (Part 2, Division 3, section 18).

VI. Time in Lieu – Support Staff

In compliance with the *Employment Standards Code*, (Part 2, Division 4, section 23 (1)), employees will be granted time off in lieu of compensation for exceptional workload or excessive hours of work. Such additional hours require prior approval from the appropriate supervisor. Support staff members will receive a copy of the Extra time/Overtime Agreement.

VII. Salary Administration

Salaries are paid monthly over the 12 months of the year. Teaching staff are paid on the 20th of each month, substitute teachers are paid on the 10th of each month; and support staff is paid on the last banking day of each month. Should either the 10th or 20th fall on a weekend, salaries will be paid on the last banking day before the regular pay date.

Teaching Staff

Teacher salaries are determined by grid placement. The criteria for grid placement are:

1. years of education, confirmed by a *TQS (Teacher Qualification Statement)* issued by the *Alberta Teacher's Association*, and
2. years of experience, verified by a *Verification of Experience* from previous school board employers.

Compensation is for 200 work days. If the teacher is required to work more than 200 days, the teacher will be paid 1/200th of their annual salary for each day in excess of 200.

Teachers agree that, if at any time FFCA has paid salary higher than the verified grid placement or reimbursed amounts in excess of what is due, FFCA may deduct an amount equal to that excess from future income. Teachers will receive a copy of the salary grid annually.

Substitute teachers shall be paid for the number of days or part days worked in each month. Substitute teachers working a half day will receive exactly half of the daily rate. The rate for 2009-10 is \$205.00 which includes 4% vacation pay. A substitute teacher employed for more than five consecutive full or half school days, as a replacement for the same teacher, shall be placed on the salary grid on the sixth consecutive school day, according to the substitute teacher's qualifications and experience. Determination of grid placement will require producing a Teacher Qualification Statement and verification of years of employment from previous employers.

Support Staff

Salaries for support staff are also determined by grid placement and are at an hourly rate. Copies of the FFCA support staff grid will be made available to all support staff when adjustments have been approved by the Board, or upon request. The Human Resources department determines the initial grid placement. Past relevant experience will be considered in establishing the employee's starting salary provided that the experience is in an identical or very similar type of work. Advancement on the salary grid will be dependent upon annual performance evaluation and hours worked. Most support positions are 10 month positions paid over 12 months. Should a support staff employee leave a job, the final pay would include funds held for the 12-month spread.

Holidays

Support staff employees are paid for statutory holidays as defined in the school calendar. The exception to this is for the employees that work in hourly positions such as the noon hour assistants. They are paid for the statutory holidays in accordance with *Employment Standards Code*.

Vacation

Support staff employees receive 4% vacation pay. Vacation pay increases to 6% after two years of employment and 8% after five years of employment.

VIII. Probationary Period

Teaching Staff

The first year a teacher works with FFCA they may hold a Probationary Contract as determined by Section 98 of the *School Act*.

Support Staff & Casual Employees

The probationary period for support staff is three months from the starting date of employment.

IX. Performance Evaluations

Teaching Staff

Evaluation of teaching staff is designed to ensure that each teacher's actions, judgments and decisions support optimal student learning. The evaluation process enables teachers to meet the *Alberta Education Teaching Quality Standard* and the distinctive requirements of this charter school. These procedures are outlined in the FFCA Practices and Procedures for *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation*.

Support Staff

Performance evaluations are conducted in order to achieve the following goals:

1. establish opportunities for employee growth,
2. provide performance feedback (positive and/or negative), including the recognition of accomplishments and the identification of training needs,
3. give the employee the opportunity to discuss performance expectations, goals, work satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and
4. precipitate critical decisions, such as moving from a probationary position to permanent status upon successful completion of the probationary period or the decision to terminate employment.

Where circumstances warrant and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, employees may be terminated in accordance with the laws of natural justice. Decisions to take such action are seen by the Board as a last resort.

X. Standards of Conduct - All Staff

Character Education is a fundamental component of our charter and we expect our employees to be models of respect, responsibility, self-discipline, integrity, and compassion. We also expect our staff to treat all information known or used by FFCA in its business that is not publicly known, as confidential. Information about staff, students and their families that is learned through your employment is strictly confidential. Disclosure of such privileged information can be cause for dismissal. Employees should not use FFCA facilities, materials, or equipment for any purpose not related to FFCA business without proper consent.

Employees have a duty to report to their immediate Supervisor all potential conflicts of interest or any matter that may arise in relation to their ability to maintain a clear Criminal Record status. Conflict of Interest is defined as "a conflict between the public and private interests of somebody in an official position, or conflicts between a number of public positions."

No employee is permitted to enter or remain on school property while their ability to work is affected by alcohol or illegal substances. The possession or use of these substances on the job will result in severe disciplinary action, including the consideration

of dismissal. Employees are required to notify their supervisor of any medication they are taking which could affect their work performance.

XI. Dress Standards - All Staff

FFCA expects staff members to accept responsibility for dressing in a professional manner while at work, and while representing the school in the community. Our organization embraces the concept of school uniforms and general dress standards for all students. Further, we convey, to some extent through our appearance, the importance of our mission and the primacy of learning and teaching within our schools. These two concepts should provide direction to staff in selecting their workday wardrobes.

Decisions made regarding work attire should blend professionalism with practicality and comfort. Dress your best for your students, be a role model for our young people, and if in doubt, be conservative.

Supervisors are responsible for the administration of these expectations.

XII. Network Resources Acceptable Use Protocol - All Staff

FFCA provides technology resources that support learning for students and staff, or that support administrative operations. As a condition of employment with FFCA, staff will be expected to sign the Network Resources Acceptable Use Protocol for Staff as outlined in AP-H-201.1 *Use of Information and Communication Technology*.

Benefits – All Staff (Casual employees excluded)

Eligibility

All employees that meet the minimum requirements (0.5 FTE or 20 hrs. per week) are eligible for benefit participation. Employees meeting the minimum requirement must take part in Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Weekly Indemnity, Long Term Disability, Employee Assistance Plan and Life Insurance.

Minimum Requirements

Teaching Staff

Teachers with continuing, probationary, or temporary* contracts of 0.6 FTE or more are eligible for full board paid benefit premiums.

Teachers holding contracts of less than 0.6 FTE, but not less than 0.5 FTE, will share the premium cost of the Board paid portion on a *pro-rata* basis in accordance with their FTE. (*Teachers employed under a temporary or interim contract for less than 90 school days shall not be eligible to participate in the benefit plans described in this article.)

Support Staff

Support staff employees working a minimum of 24 hours (0.6 FTE) per week are eligible for full board paid benefit premiums.

Support staff employees working less than 24 hours per week but a minimum of 20 hours will share the premium cost of the Board paid portion on a *pro-rata* basis in accordance with their FTE.

Retirees

Retiring employees with a minimum of five years service may continue on the company benefit plan for dental and extended health care by bearing the full cost of the premium.

Cost Sharing – All Eligible Staff

FFCA pays the full premium for the following plans for employees working .60 FTE (24 hours per week):

1. Workers' Compensation (where applicable),
2. Sick Leave,
3. Supplementary Health Care,
4. Dental Plan,
5. Basic Accidental Death and Dismemberment,
6. Health Care Spending Account, and
7. Employee and Family Assistance Program.

FFCA pays 50% of the premium for the Canada Pension Plan.

FFCA pays 50% of Employment Insurance (E.I.) premiums.

Teachers: the Province and you share contributions to the Alberta Teacher Retirement Fund (ATRF)

Support Staff: FFCA and you share contributions to the Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP).

Employees pay 100% of Weekly Indemnity (short term disability) and Long Term Disability.

I. Sick Leave – All Staff

Employees may access up to 20 days per school year for personal illness, medical or dental treatment, or because of personal injury. After 3 consecutive days of absence, a doctor's note must be submitted to the supervisor to be forwarded to the Human Resources Department.

Unused “Sick Days” will not be carried over to the next year or paid out at the end of the school year.

II. Medical Leave of Absence - All Staff

Weekly Indemnity

In accordance with the terms of the group benefit plan, after five consecutive days of absence due to illness or hospitalization, the employee may be eligible for Weekly Indemnity through the benefit provider. Return to work requires a medical certificate of sound health and fitness for all duties of the position.

Long Term Disability (LTD)

After conclusion of Weekly Indemnity, if the employee is not medically fit to return to the full duties of the position, the employee may then be eligible for Long Term Disability.

Note:

While you are disabled you continue to participate in FFCA’s Benefit Program based on your coverage and salary immediately prior to your date of disability.

While you are receiving Weekly Indemnity Benefits, coverage under all of the plans will continue on the same cost-sharing basis.

While you are receiving LTD benefits, your Basic Life and Basic Accidental Death and Dismemberment will continue at no cost to you. You may continue your Supplementary Health and Dental Care coverage provided you pay your portion of the premiums if applicable.

III. Family Leave – All Staff

For the purpose of this handbook this section will address Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leaves. All such leaves are employee entitlements set out in the *Employment Standards Code (Part 2, Division 7)*.

Maternity Leave

1. An employee in a continuing contract of employment will be granted job-protected leave for the full entitlement under the *Employment Standards Code* upon application. The leave is without pay.
2. The employee shall endeavor to give six weeks notice in writing of the day on which the employee intends to commence maternity leave. The employee shall provide a medical certificate from a physician indicating that the employee is pregnant and giving the estimated date of delivery.

3. An employee may return to duties prior to the expiry of the parental leave. The entitlement consists of 15 weeks maternity leave followed by 37 weeks of parental leave. Upon request, at least thirty days prior to the expiry of the original leave, an employee may be granted an extension of parental leave for the balance of the semester or the school year in which the original leave terminated. Extension of the original parental leave will be granted for a period not to exceed one year.
4. When an employee returns to duties, she will return to the assignment in the campus occupied at the time maternity leave commenced.
5. The period of absence during maternity leave will not be counted as experience toward the granting of increments.
6. An employee on maternity leave may retain group benefit coverage by prepaying the entire premium, including the Board's portion, for the period of the leave.
 - a. While total premium costs are the employee's responsibility during this period, the Board will continue to administer payment of these funds to the benefits plan provider subject to the provider's approval.
 - b. Failure by the employee to prepay premiums will result in the termination of group benefit coverage.

Paternity Leave

Staff will receive not more than one day for the birth of the employee's child with no loss of salary. In accordance with *Employment Standards Code*, fathers and/or adoptive parents are eligible for up to 37 consecutive weeks of unpaid, job-protected parental leave. This leave can be taken by one parent or shared between the two parents but the total combined leave cannot exceed 37 weeks.

Parental/Adoption Leave

In accordance with *Employment Standards Code*, adoptive parents in a Continuing employment situation may be eligible for up to 37 consecutive weeks of unpaid, job-protected parental leave. Adoptive parents can take parental leave regardless of the age of the adopted child. Leave for the purpose of adoption shall be granted on the following basis:

1. The employee shall notify the Superintendent, in writing, of the employee's application to seek an adoptive child through an appropriate authority.
2. The employee shall notify the Superintendent, in writing, at the completion of the "Home Study" interview by an appropriate authority.
3. Upon request, the Board shall grant adoption leave without pay and benefits for a period of up to one year.
4. Commencement of leave shall occur the day following the notification of the employee by an appropriate authority that a child-parent match has been completed.

5. When an employee returns to duties, he or she will return to the assignment held at the time adoption leave commenced.
6. Upon request, at least thirty days prior to the expiry of the original leave, an employee may be granted an extension of adoption leave for the balance of the semester or school year in which the original leave terminated.
7. The employee may return to duties prior to the expiration of leave.
8. The employee on leave may retain group benefit coverage by prepaying the entire premium, including the Board's portion, for the period of the leave.
 - a. While total premium costs are the employee's responsibility during this period, the Board will continue to administer payment of these funds to the benefit plan provider subject to the provider's approval.
 - b. Failure by the employee to prepay premiums will result in the termination of group benefit coverage.
9. Periods of absence for this purpose will not be counted as experience toward the granting of increments.

IV. Unspecified Leave - All Staff

Through application to the Principal Educator/Supervisor, eligible employees will be granted up to two days per year of unspecified leave. These days will not result in loss of salary.

It is preferred that this leave is not used to extend or create holiday time.

V. Personal Leave

Teaching Staff

Through application to the Principal Educator, a personal leave of absence with pay may be granted for not more than three days per school year, provided FFCA is reimbursed by deduction from the teacher's wages in the amount of \$200.00.

Support Staff

Through application to the Principal Educator/Supervisor leaves with no loss of salary, for a period not exceeding three days may be granted provided that it is mutually agreed by the supervisor and the employee that the time allowed will be made up by the employee.

It is preferred that this leave is not used to extend or create holiday time.

A need for additional personal leave must be applied for through the Superintendent. Additional personal leave may result in loss of wages.

VI. Compassionate Leave - All Staff

Compassionate leave may be granted:

1. For not more than three school days because of critical illness of spouse, parent, child, brother, sister or parent of spouse. One additional day for necessary travel may be granted. Additional days may be granted at the discretion of the Superintendent.
2. For not more than three school days because of death of spouse, parent, child, brother, sister or parent of spouse. One additional day for necessary travel may be granted. Additional days may be granted at the discretion of the Superintendent.
3. For not more than two school days because of death of grandparent, grandparent of spouse, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law or close friend. One additional day for necessary travel may be granted.

VII. Compassionate Care Leave - All Staff

All employees may be granted a job protected leave of absence to provide care or support to a gravely ill family member at risk of dying within 26 weeks. This leave will be unpaid and for a maximum of eight weeks.

1. Upon return to work, the employee will return to the position occupied at the time the leave commenced.
2. The employee may retain group benefit coverage by paying the entire premium, including the Board's portion, for the period of the leave.
 - a. While total premium costs are the employee's responsibility during this period, the Board will continue to administer payment of these funds to the benefit plan provider subject to the provider's approval.
 - b. Failure by the employee to prepay or make monthly payments will result in the termination of group benefit coverage.

VIII. Temporary Leave of Absence - Contract Staff

A temporary leave of absence with pay may be granted by the Principal Educator/Supervisor when the employee is absent for the following:

1. one day necessary for writing each examination in an academic or professional course, and
2. attending a graduation or convocation at which the employee, the employee's son, daughter, spouse or parent is receiving a degree or diploma.

Upon application, a temporary leave of absence without pay may be granted by the Superintendent.

IX. Court Appearance Leave - All Staff

A leave of absence with pay will be granted:

1. for jury duty or any summons related thereto, or
2. to answer a subpoena or summons to attend as a witness in any proceeding authorized by law to compel the attendance of witnesses.

X. Sabbatical Leave – Teaching Staff

Sabbatical leaves may be granted in accordance with FFCA Policy, Practices and Procedures.

XI. Pension Plans

Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund – (ATRF)

Participation is mandatory. Deductions are done through payroll.

Local Authorities Pension Plan – (LAPP)

Participation is mandatory. Eligibility is defined as work hours exceeding 884 annually.

XII. Professional Development

“FFCA recognizes that in order for an educational organization to continually grow, develop and prosper, all personnel must be involved in activities designed to continually improve performance in all areas. These include governance, administrative performance and procedures, curriculum content, teaching methods and above all, student learning. Professional development contributes to the overall quality of education provided for students.

The Board requires that professional development be provided as a means of improving the delivery of curriculum, the provision of services, and the performance of campuses and individuals. Support of professional development is a shared responsibility between the staff and the Board.

The Board will provide funds through its annual budget in support of the FFCA professional development program.”