



## VIBRANT MINDS CHARTER SCHOOL

TK-6 Grade, Free, Public Education

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### TELEWORKING BOARD POLICY

The telework schedule allows employees and supervisors to mutually agree upon a varied distribution of their normal work hours. It does not change the number of hours worked, but simply allows each individual the flexibility to rearrange their work schedule to better meet their personal needs while considering the needs of the school. This is currently established due to COVID-19, but may be occasionally put into place as needed and appropriate.

The major benefits of a telework schedule are:

- Improve program effectiveness and employee productivity and morale;
- Facilitate optimum utilization of office and parking facilities;
- Reduce absenteeism;
- Promote employee health and wellness;
- Improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion;
- Improve employee recruitment and retention;
- Enhance the working life and opportunities of persons with disabilities;
- Effectively continue business as a part of a disaster recovery or emergency plan.

Vibrant Minds Charter School (VMCS) allows the use of teleworking and telecommuting when it is a viable option and clearly defines the benefits to the employee and management. The school recognizes the benefits of such work options for employees when both the organization's and employee needs can be addressed.

Administrators and employees must understand that adherence to the policy and procedures are an essential requirement of the telework program.

#### Responsibilities and Approvals

Employees must submit a completed Telework Agreement to the director and/or assistant director.

Prior to approving the Telework Agreement, administrators/supervisors must consider the impact the proposed work schedule will have on fellow employees, employee morale, as well as the functional needs of the school as a whole.

In addition, the employee's attendance record shall be reviewed. Careful consideration must be given before approving a telework schedule for any employee who is non-exempt.

## **Definitions**

- **Core Time** -- The period of time during which all employees are expected to work. Administration/supervisors are responsible to ensure that staff is available to cover key unit functions during the normal work hours.
- **Regular Business Hours** – 7:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with variability in work schedule as specified in contract, with minimally a 30-minute lunch period.
- **Lunch Period** -- A minimum of 30 minutes must be taken for lunch starting on or before the employee's fifth hour of work in any given day.
- **Absences** -- If an employee becomes ill on a scheduled telework day, the employee shall follow their division's established protocol used for reporting absences.
- **Telework** -- An employee who does not come into the office to work every day but works from home or another established location for a pre-established number of days. Employee must be available and accessible by phone and email during their agreed upon scheduled core business hours as determined by their approved time base.

## **Expenses Incurred While Working a Telework Schedule**

Expenses incurred as a result of working a telework schedule, including all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by an employee in direct consequence of the discharge of his or her duties, or of his or her obedience to the directions of the employer, will be reimbursed by the school including, but not necessarily limited to: a percentage of utility costs associated with the use of telephone, computer, or occupation of the home and a percentage of cell phone costs. See Cal. Labor Code section 2802. All requests for reimbursement must be submitted using Company approved forms.

## **Termination of Telework Participation**

The Telework Agreement may be cancelled at any time by either the employee or school by written notification or at the discretion of the supervisor to include, but not limited to, the following: exceptional and verifiable needs of the department; change in the employee's work function, employee non-satisfactory performance, failure to maintain the acceptable leave balances, or abuse of the telework policy.

## **Procedures and Considerations**

In many of school's job assignments, access to the computer network is essential for obtaining work-related information, processing work, and communicating. The effectiveness of performing work at a remote location, such as a home office, may be greatly diminished if an employee does not have access to the computer network. However, under specific situations of a temporary duration, such as providing reasonable accommodation for permanently disabled and displaced employees, administration may allow an employee to telework periodically when they do not have access to a computer or the computer system.

Participation in the school telework program should be based on the ability of the employee to perform tasks that can be completed from remote locations, such as a home office and the director's and assistant director's assessment of the employee's ability to complete those tasks satisfactorily.

At all times during a telework agreement, all sections of the Employee Handbook, including but not limited to Employee Communications and Employee Conduct rules, apply.

In addition, the school is not responsible for substantiating a teleworker's claim of tax deductions for operation of a home office used to perform work pursuant to a telework agreement. Employees should seek advice from a tax advisor concerning home office deductions.

## **Telework Environment**

**Equipment, Software, Services, Maintenance, Repair, and Replacement** -- Unless otherwise agreed to in writing, the Company will not purchase computers, software, software licenses, Internet, or phone services or office equipment such as printers, fax machines, calculators, or furniture for in-home telework on non-school owned equipment. In addition, the selection, installation, maintenance, repair, or replacement of employee-owned equipment and software is the responsibility of the employee.

**Work Environment Criteria** -- The opportunity to participate in a home telework program is offered with the understanding that it is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that a proper work environment is maintained as follows:

- Designate an area that allows for working in an office setting. Ensure that the equipment necessary to perform the work is in the designated area;
- Make advance arrangements for dependent care to ensure a productive work environment (Telework is not intended to be a substitute for day care or other personal obligations.);
- Keep personal disruptions such as non-business telephone calls and visitors to a minimum;
- Obtain pre-approval from the director and assistant director for use of vacation time or sick leave to attend to family or home matters during home office hours; and
- Ensure that the home office is a safe place to work. See "Setting Up A Home Office" below.

## **Confidentiality**

Security of confidential information is of primary concern and importance to the school. Teleworkers, like all school employees, are expected to adhere to all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures regarding confidential student and employee/employer information.

## **Health and Safety**

Failure to maintain a proper and safe work environment, in accordance with this policy, may be cause for terminating an employee from the telework program.

If an employee incurs a work-related injury while teleworking, worker's compensation laws and rules apply just as they would if such an injury occurred at the main office. Employees must notify their supervisor immediately and complete all necessary documents regarding the injury.

## Setting Up a Home Office

It is important for all employees to maintain a healthy, safe, and ergonomically sound work environment while working in the office or at a remote location. The major difference between the employer's office and the home office is ownership and control over the workplace.

**Protecting Data and Equipment** -- The following computer safeguards can prevent costly computer breakdowns and the loss of crucial data:

- Position equipment away from direct sunlight or heat.
- Place equipment on well-ventilated surfaces.
- Dust the office space regularly and use dust covers.
- Do not eat or drink near data or equipment.

**Fire Protection** -- The Health and Safety Code, Sections 13113.7 and 13113.8 require that dwellings be provided with smoke detectors. Employees are responsible for assuring home compliance with these requirements. Smoke detectors placed in the home work area must meet the following criteria:

- The detector must be placed in a location, which monitors the work area, and any electronic equipment used to support teleworking.
- Must be approved by Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) and/or State Fire Marshall and have a functional test mechanism.
- Detectors should be tested at the time of installation and on a monthly basis. Detectors which are wired into the house electrical system and have a battery backup should be checked with main power both on and off. Battery operated detectors should be cleaned and equipped with fresh batteries as recommended by the manufacturer.

**Fire Extinguisher** -- The designated work area should be equipped with a UL approved fire extinguisher. Employees are responsible for assuring home compliance with this requirement. The fully charged extinguisher should be made easily and readily accessible near the work area (no more than 10 feet from electronic teleworking equipment).