

Program Standards of Conduct Policy

Arrowhead Head Start will protect the health, safety and well-being of children, families and staff members and will not tolerate discriminatory actions based on the race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, veteran status, and status with regard to public assistance or any other basis protected by applicable federal, state or local law.

Head Start staff, providers, consultants and volunteers will follow the program's professional standards of conduct and will comply with confidentiality policies. This includes discussing any child or family information outside of the immediate site team, Head Start management staff, or with the child's service providers. This also includes releasing any child or family information or documentation to anyone without a signed Consent for Release of Information form or posting/showing videos or pictures without signed consent from the family.

Employees, consultants, children and families have the right to expect a safe and secure environment, free from harassment, intimidation, and violence. Actions or threats of actions deemed verbally- or physically harmful to other persons or property are simply not acceptable and will not be permitted. It is the right and responsibility of each employee to immediately report to their supervisor, or another designated administrator, any incidents of harassment or threats toward themselves, children, staff, or families. This policy covers inappropriate behavior, harassment, or violence by an AEOA employee, contacted provider or volunteer. Failure to report any incidents of inappropriate actions or behaviors will result in disciplinary action.

AEOA Head Start staff, providers and volunteers are expected to communicate and act in a respectful, ethical, and professional manner. All Head Start staff will project a positive and professional view of the Head Start program and the AEOA agency. Any staff member engaging in practices that jeopardize the program's reputation will face disciplinary action.

Any contractor, providers or volunteers that fails to follow appropriate practices, including reporting reasonably suspected or known incidence to keep children safe may be dismissed from their work within the program and may be subject to further legal action.

Child Supervision Requirements:

- While in Head Start's care, children will be supervised at all times. No child will be left alone or unsupervised.
- Head Start staff, providers, and consultants will model positive and acceptable behaviors with children and families at all times.
- Head Start staff, providers, and consultants will use positive methods of child guidance and will not engage in any of the following activities:
 - a. Corporal punishment- Causing physical harm including but not limited to, rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, or spanking.

- b. Emotional Stress/Abuse including but not limited to name calling, ostracism, shaming, using derogatory remarks about a child or a family, or using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens a child.
- c. Separating a child from the group except within rule requirements, and with documentation of the separation.
- d. Punishments for toileting accidents or denial of bathroom privileges.
- e. Withholding, or threatening to withhold food, water, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as a punishment.
- f. Use of physical restraints other than to physically hold a child where containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm.
- g. Use of any type of mechanical restraint such as tying.

If an employee violates the Head Start's Program Standards of Conduct an internal review will be completed within 30 calendar days following outlined steps in the Child Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedure. If disciplinary actions are deemed necessary through the review process, Human Resources will be consulted to determine which of the progressive actions will be taken:

1. Verbal Warning: Depending on the severity of the violation a verbal warning may be given to the employee. The supervisor will document the verbal warning and it will be placed in the employees personnel file.
2. Written Warning: Written warning will be issued to the employee documenting the violation and any corrective actions taken. This warning is accompanied by a discussion and counseling session to discover the cause for the infraction and to emphasize the importance of compliance with the program's expectations. This letter/memo will be placed in the employee's Personnel File.
3. Suspension without Pay: In cases where an employee has received a verbal and/or written warning and has failed to correct misconduct or performance problems, the employee will be suspended without pay for 1 week (5 working days). Suspension requires the approval of the Department Director and the Executive Director. Documentation will be placed in the employee's Personnel File. Performance Contract: Following a written warning or suspension without pay, the employee may be required to sign a Performance Contract to correct his or her behavior or performance. This Performance Contract will include: a brief statement of the inappropriate behavior or cause of poor performance; a statement that clearly and specifically spells out the required correct behavior or performance; a specific, limited time frame for the employee to comply or change; the consequences to the employee if the correction does not occur; an acknowledgment of the employee understanding; the employee's signature; and the date signed. This document will be placed in the employee's Personnel File.
4. Dismissal: An employee will be dismissed who fails to improve his or her behavior or performance. An employee may also be dismissed without prior disciplinary actions if the misconduct is so severe in nature that it threatens the well-being of the employer or the safety and well-being of the employee, co-workers or Head Start children/family.

Immediate dismissal will occur when the health and safety of a Head Start child has been severely compromised due to the employee's neglect or actions while in the care of Head Start, if that neglect has caused or may have caused trauma, a severe injury or death.

This policy is not intended to limit the employer's right to terminate an employee at any time, with or without cause, and with or without advance notice, in accordance with Minnesota's laws concerning "At-will" employment.

See "Child Abuse and Neglect" policy This policy complies with Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Section 1302.90 (c) (1) (i, ii, iii, vi, v) 1302.90 (c) (2) and Standards of Conduct and MN Child Care Licensing Rule 3 9503.0055 subpart 1 & 3.

Approved by Policy Council on February 16, 1999, Revised and approved by Policy Council, April 2004, 3-22-2005, 2-8-2012, 9-9-2015, 8-10-2016, 5-9-2018, 6-2-2021

Revised and approved by Policy Council on August 12, 2024, October 7, 2024

References: AEOA Personnel Policy; APPENDIX I—CLIENT CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR POLICY DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DISCIPLINE, SEPARATIONS, AND HEARINGS

I have read and understand Arrowhead Head Start's Program Standards of Conduct.

Employee Print Name: _____ Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____