

# **Employee Handbook**

**2023**



*Approved by the RCS Board of Directors on March 21, 2023*

***“Helping People Help Themselves”***

# Table of Contents

---

<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Welcome to RCS.....	1
About RCS – Our History .....	1
<b>2. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/NONDISCRIMINATION....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. EMPLOYMENT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
A. The Employment Process.....	3
▪ Job Posting.....	3
▪ Recruitment.....	3
▪ Employment References .....	3
▪ Hiring.....	3
▪ Orientation Program .....	4
▪ Promotion .....	4
▪ Rehire.....	4
▪ Reinstatement .....	4
B. Criminal Records.....	5
▪ Head Start .....	5
▪ Home Care .....	5
▪ Other .....	5
C. Medical Examinations .....	5
D. Training and Upward Mobility .....	5
▪ Required Attendance.....	5
▪ Optional Attendance .....	5
▪ Educational Assistance .....	6
E. Other Aspects .....	6
▪ Work from Home.....	6
▪ Staff Recognition .....	6
▪ Personnel Files.....	6
▪ Name Change.....	6
▪ Cellular Phones .....	6
▪ Text Messaging While Driving.....	7
▪ Photo ID/Swipe Card.....	7
F. Anti-Weapons.....	7
G. Tobacco Free Facility .....	7
H. Complaint Procedures.....	7

<b>4. COMPENSATION POLICIES.....</b>	<b>9</b>
A. Classification of Employment.....	9
▪ Introductory .....	9
▪ Regular.....	9
▪ Part-time .....	9
▪ Full-time .....	9
▪ Substitute .....	9
▪ Contingent.....	9
▪ Temporary.....	9
▪ Exempt.....	9
▪ Nonexempt.....	9
B. Periods of Work.....	9
a. Workweek.....	9
b. Completed Year .....	9
c. Completed Month .....	9
d. Hours of Work.....	9
e. Flex Scheduling.....	10
f. Compensatory Time.....	10
C. Overtime.....	10
D. Salaries.....	10
▪ Increases .....	10
COLA .....	10
Merit .....	10
Upgrade.....	11
Head Start Staff Positions/Rate of Pay.....	11
▪ Discretionary Incentive Pay .....	11
▪ Reduction in Pay .....	11
▪ Pay Periods.....	11
▪ Payroll Deductions.....	11
▪ Direct Deposit .....	12
E. Time Sheets .....	12
F. Appraisal/Evaluation/Performance Reviews .....	12
▪ Introductory Appraisal .....	12
▪ Annual Appraisal .....	12
G. Reimbursement.....	12
▪ Mileage .....	13
▪ Airfare.....	13
▪ Baggage Fee.....	13
▪ Ground Transportation.....	13
○ Courtesy Cars.....	13

○ Airport Shuttle or Bus .....	13
○ Taxis.....	13
○ Rental Cars.....	13
▪ Parking/Tolls.....	13
▪ Hotel.....	13
▪ Meals.....	13
▪ Meal Reimbursement Rates .....	14
▪ Cell Phone Stipend.....	14
• Other .....	15
• Spouse, Family, Friend Travel.....	15
• Non-Reimbursable .....	15
• Severance Pay .....	15
<b>5. TIME OFF BENEFITS .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Attendance and Punctuality.....	16
A. Paid Annual Leave.....	16
• Teaching Staff.....	16
• Special Circumstance.....	16
• Leave Scheduling.....	16
• Abuse of Privileges.....	16
B. Transfer of Accumulated Paid Annual Leave.....	16
C. Forfeiture .....	17
D. Holidays.....	17
E. Jury and Witness Duty Leave .....	18
F. Without Pay .....	18
G. Employee Birthday .....	18
H. Unplanned Leave.....	18
I. Denied Leave.....	20
J. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).....	20
K. Leave of Absence .....	20
L. Light Duty .....	21
M. Military Leaves of Absence.....	21
N. Inclement Weather.....	21
O. Paid Annual Leave (PAL) Accumulation Rates .....	23
<b>6. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS.....</b>	<b>26</b>
A. Group Health .....	26
B. Other Health Care.....	26
C. COBRA .....	26
D. Pension Plan & Trust.....	27

a.	Retirement.....	27
b.	Life Insurance .....	27
c.	Death Benefits .....	27
E.	401(k).....	27
F.	Workers Compensation .....	28
<b>7.</b>	<b>CODE OF CONDUCT.....</b>	<b>29</b>
A.	Guidelines for Appropriate Conduct .....	29
•	General Policies.....	29
•	Compliance with the Laws and Regulations.....	29
•	Integrity of Accounting Records.....	29
•	Code of Ethics for Financial Staff.....	30
•	Whistleblower Policy.....	30
B.	Political Activities .....	30
C.	Harassment .....	31
•	Quid Pro Quo Harassment .....	31
•	Hostile Workplace Harassment.....	31
•	Reporting .....	31
D.	Internet and E-Mail Policy .....	31
•	Social Media Policy.....	32
E.	Conflict of Interest.....	32
•	Gifts to Employees.....	32
•	Gift by Employees .....	33
F.	Outside Employment .....	33
G.	Letters of Support/Leveraging.....	34
H.	Personal Appearance and Demeanor .....	34
I.	Drug-Free Workplace – Substance Abuse Policy and Procedures.....	35
J.	Personal Responsibilities .....	36
K.	Audits, Examinations, Monitoring, and Investigations .....	36
L.	Nondiscrimination .....	36
M.	Employment of Relatives and Close Personal Relationships .....	37
N.	Confidentiality .....	37
•	Client Information .....	38
•	Employee Information.....	38
O.	Fundraising.....	38
<b>8.</b>	<b>DISCIPLINE, SEPARATION, and TERMINATION.....</b>	<b>39</b>
A.	Separations.....	39
•	Resignation .....	39
•	Layoff .....	39

•	Reduction in Force.....	39
•	Disability.....	40
•	Dismissal.....	40
•	Death.....	40
B.	Disciplinary Actions.....	40
1.	Suspended.....	41
2.	Demoted.....	41
C.	Causes for Discipline or Termination.....	41
1.	Failure in Performance of Duties.....	41
2.	Failure in Personal Conduct.....	42
D.	Insubordination.....	43
E.	Termination of Employment.....	43
F.	Exit Interviews.....	43
G.	Grievance Procedures.....	43
<b>9.</b>	<b>EMERGENCY PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>45</b>
A.	Purpose .....	45
B.	Identifying Potentially Violent Situations .....	45
C.	Serious Accident, Emergency or Fatality .....	45
D.	Civil Disturbance.....	46
E.	Thunderstorms, Hurricanes, and Tornadoes.....	46
F.	Emergency Evacuation Procedures .....	47
G.	In Case of Fire .....	47
<b>10.</b>	<b>INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL.....</b>	<b>48</b>
A.	Preventing the Spread of Infection in the Workplace.....	48
B.	Limited Travel.....	48
C.	Telecommuting.....	48
D.	Staying Home When Ill.....	48
E.	Social Distancing Guidelines.....	49
F.	Telecommuting/Remote Working.....	49

# 1. INTRODUCTION

**WELCOME TO RCS** - We hope that your new position with RCS will be an interesting and challenging experience for you. We have written this handbook to answer some of the questions you may have concerning RCS and its policies and procedures. Please read it thoroughly and retain it for future reference. The policies and procedures stated in this handbook are subject to change at the sole discretion of RCS. You will receive updated information concerning changes in policies and procedures and other relevant information.

This handbook is intended merely as a guide. The language used in the handbook should not be construed as creating a contract of employment, expressed or implied, between RCS and any of its employees. Please understand that no supervisor, manager, or representative of RCS other than the Executive Director has the authority to enter into any agreement with you for employment for any specified period or to make any promises or commitments contrary to the foregoing. Further, any employment agreement entered into by the Executive Director shall not be enforceable unless it is in writing.

Although we hope that your employment relationship with us will be long-term, either you or RCS may terminate this relationship at any time. Employees of RCS are all employees - at - will, which means that either the employee or RCS has the right to terminate the relationship at any time, with or without reason.

It is important for each staffer to know that because RCS is a private nonprofit agency, all facets of employment (e.g., layoff, expenditures, and reimbursements) are contingent upon available funds. We wish you the best in your employment with RCS and hope that it will be a rewarding experience.

**ABOUT RCS – OUR HISTORY** – This agency was founded by Janice Scarborough and was incorporated under the name ***Randolph Community Services, Inc.*** on April 4, 1979, as an outgrowth of the old federally funded CETA Program. It grew from the initiative of Janice Scarborough who had worked with CETA in Randolph County and had watched with concern as the program was being phased out. As the agency grew, a name was needed that would reflect its expansion into other counties. In the summer of 1988, the agency was officially sanctioned by the State of North Carolina to do business as ***Regional Consolidated Services***. You may see this indicated by d.b.a. (doing business as), but our official incorporated name is Randolph Community Services, Inc.

With the support of a citizen board of directors, Mrs. Scarborough succeeded in expanding the federal and state financed programs beyond the borders of Randolph County and into Alamance, Caswell, Montgomery, Moore, and Orange, Counties, maintaining the headquarters in Asheboro. RCS programs are varied in scope, reaching out to the economically and sometimes the socially disadvantaged, the disabled, youth groups, and the elderly.

Founder, Janice Scarborough presided as Executive Director until her retirement July 1, 2016. She remained with the agency as Founder Emeritus until October 17, 2019.

The current agency Executive Director is Krystal Rinehart who has immense administrative knowledge and experience with RCS beginning in 2002.

Directors of the agency, each active in the community, meet at least quarterly to set policy. From the outset, the agency's mission has been defined...quite simply:

***Regional Consolidated Services wants  
to help people help themselves.***

## 2. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/ NONDISCRIMINATION

The RCS Equal Opportunity Officer is Mary Bradshaw and may be contacted at 109 North Main Street, PO Box 487, Randleman NC 27317 or by calling 336-629-5141 or for speech/hearing impaired, 711 (NC Relay).

RCS provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, creed, ancestry, religion, political affiliation, sex, national origin, age, disability, or status as a Vietnam-era or special disabled veteran in accordance with applicable federal laws. In addition, RCS complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment in every location in which RCS has facilities. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, and transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and training.

As an equal opportunity employer, we are aware of the importance of eliminating artificial barriers to employment. We consider applicants who are ex-offenders, based on the nature of their conviction, the date it occurred, the relationship of the offense to the job in question and the applicant's job qualifications. It is our policy to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. RCS also complies with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Civil Rights Act, Drug Free Workplace Act, Family Medical Leave Act, Genetic Information Non-discrimination Act, Fair Pay Act, and other applicable acts and regulations.

Employees have the right to register complaints and file grievances. General guidelines as well as program-specific guidelines may be found in this handbook. This policy is incorporated into all phases of our personnel policies.

RCS expressly prohibits any form of unlawful employee harassment. Improper interference with the ability of RCS's employees to perform their expected job duties is not tolerated.

Jobs will be structured to enable persons in entry-level positions to advance to better positions after successful performance in initial assignments. Efforts will be made to eliminate "dead end" jobs with little or no promotional potential by combining lower-level duties with jobs requiring greater skills.

We shall make our employees and applicants aware of our non-discriminatory policy by use of the following procedures.

- New employees are given an Employee Handbook when hired. The Handbook is reviewed orally, and the employee retains his/her copy.
- The Employee Handbook is available for applicant review.
- Recruitment sources are notified of our non-discriminatory and equal opportunity employment practices.
- Supervisory staff shall be responsible for helping to meet these goals.
- "Equal Employment Opportunity is the Law" posters shall be posted in those areas most accessible for viewing.
- This policy and related information is posted on bulletin boards and our web site [www.regionalcs.org](http://www.regionalcs.org)



# 3. EMPLOYMENT

## A. THE EMPLOYMENT PROCESS

Job Posting: One or more of the following means will advertise notice of job vacancies:

- ▶ Listed with NCWorks Area newspapers
- ▶ Notice to area colleges
- ▶ Local minority and women’s organizations and other interested groups
- ▶ In-house job postings Social Media
- ▶ Regional Consolidated Services website: [www.regionalcs.org](http://www.regionalcs.org)

Recruitment: Vacancies will have an application period of not less than seven days from the time the position is posted. This is the formal recruitment period. Advertisements include the position title, key duties, knowledge and skills required, minimum education and experience, and application deadline.

Qualifications will call for minimum education and experience for successful job performance and where possible, substitution of education for experience or experience for education.

***Persons who apply during the recruitment period will be given first consideration for the position.*** If a suitable candidate is not found from among those applying during that time, consideration will be given to persons who applied before and after the recruitment period including those who applied for other positions.

Supervisory personnel are encouraged to make their employees aware of career advancement opportunities; however, each employee is responsible for monitoring job vacancy notices and for completing and submitting an RCS application form. Promotions, transfers, or other management restructuring will not be subject to the foregoing requirements. Advertisements shall include the phrases:

1. “An Equal Opportunity Employer M/F” and shall avoid any reference to male or female in listing job requirements and 2. “Auxiliary aids and Services are Available Upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities” NC Relay 711 for hearing or speech impaired.

Employment Process: To secure the best employees for RCS and its clients, we regularly check the references of applicants for employment. Likewise, we cooperate with other employers in supplying reference information. Our policy regarding references is presented below and covers former and present staff.

Policy: RCS will release reference information to an inquiring employer only when the request is in writing and identifies what information is to be released. We prefer to have the employee’s written authorization to provide reference information; however, North Carolina law states that providing reference information is legal as long as the information is truthful. Under no circumstances is employment reference information to be released over the telephone.

Procedures: Employers should mail or otherwise deliver the authorization release to the RCS Human Resources Director. If the inquiry is determined to be in order, RCS will attempt to comply with the request and mail or otherwise deliver the information back to the requesting employer. When necessary, the Human Resources Director will contact the applicant’s RCS supervisor for information to which only the supervisor would be privy. If an employer or former employee should contact a staff member regarding reference information, the staff member will explain our policy and procedure.

Hiring: The Board of Directors will employ the Executive Director and the Executive Director will employ all other employees. Efforts will be made to hire all segments of the population including minorities and women for employment.

**Orientation Program:** During your first days of employment, you will participate in an orientation program coordinated and conducted by Human Resources and various members of your department, including your supervisor and others as deemed appropriate. During this program, you will receive important information regarding the performance requirements of your position, basic RCS policies, your compensation and benefits programs, plus other information necessary to acquaint you with your job and RCS. You will also be asked to complete all necessary paperwork at that time.

You will be required to present RCS with information establishing your identity and your eligibility to work in the United States in accordance with applicable federal law.

All documents required for your job must be submitted within the legally established periods. Failure to provide documents could lead to suspension or other disciplinary actions, including termination.

Please use this orientation program to familiarize yourself with RCS and our policies and benefits. We encourage you to ask any questions you may have during this period so that you will understand all the guidelines that affect and govern your employment relationship with us.

**Promotion:** RCS believes in promoting employees from within and has established two methods to achieve this objective.

**Method 1:** Competitive promotions are a result of a job-posting program that gives all employees an opportunity to apply for positions that they are interested in and for which they are qualified. This means the employee must compete with others either inside or outside the agency. To be eligible to apply for a posted position, you must:

- (a) Have successfully completed the introductory period of employment. Meet the minimum hiring specifications for the position.
- (b) Be capable of performing the essential functions of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation, and
- (c) Be an employee in good standing in terms of your overall work record.

**Method 2:** Noncompetitive means there is no requirement to compete with others. To be promoted through the noncompetitive process, the employee must first meet the above requirements (a – d). He or she must also be displaying the requisite skills and abilities associated with the position for which he/she is being considered. These skills and abilities will be technical as well as interpersonal. While some technical skills can only be acquired after assuming the position, skills such as the following should be evident at the time of promotion: communication; motivation; delegation; time management; adherence to policies, procedures, and regulations; dependability, and decision-making.

- (a) **Rehire:** Employees who have left RCS and later wish to return will be considered for rehire. The supervisor (either past and/or potential) and the RCS Executive Director will make the final determination based on the circumstances that led to the employee's leaving, the conditions at the time of the reinstatement request, qualification for position and other relevant factors.
- (b) **Reinstatement:** Employees who leave RCS and are rehired within one year (subject to the above conditions) will be allowed to return without completing another introductory period of employment. Except for Insurance benefits, which require a 90-day waiting period, benefits will immediately begin to accrue at the prescribed rates.

## **B. CRIMINAL RECORDS:**

**HEAD START** – Prior to employment, the Division of Health and Human Services (DHHS) must approve successful candidates. Detailed written instructions are given to persons recommended for hire. The candidate will be required to submit a credit card payment using the designated online payment agent with DHHS and submit his or her fingerprints electronically with a local law enforcement agency. Other persons may request this information from the RCS Human Resources Director or access it online at [www.regionalcs.org](http://www.regionalcs.org) No person may begin employment with RCS Head Start until he or she has been qualified by DHHS.

**HOME CARE** – RCS requires that CNAs hired by the agency be listed on the North Carolina Nurse Aide I and Health Care Personnel Registry with no substantiated findings of abuse. RCS has direct access to the Registry and typically verifies qualifications prior to interviewing. Persons with substantiated findings will not be considered for employment with the RCS Home Care Program.

Prior to beginning work, Home Care staff must submit to RCS a certified copy of their local criminal history record. Persons hired within the Home Care department must submit a set of fingerprints.

**OTHER** –RCS may request or otherwise acquire a criminal history check, driving record or other information/documents to ensure the safety and well-being of staff, clients, and the integrity of the agency as well as to meet the requirements of our funding sources.

## **C. MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

Staff members of the **Head Start** program are required to submit a medical report from their physician. In addition, evidence

of required tuberculin testing must be submitted. Head Start assistant teaching staff will be given the opportunity to receive the Hepatitis B vaccination. Staff members of the **Home Care** program must also submit evidence of required tuberculin testing and Hepatitis B vaccination or declination.

Any offer of employment that an applicant receives from RCS is contingent upon, among other things, satisfactory completion of this examination and screening. Employees may be required to undergo periodic medical examinations and/or alcohol and drug screenings.

## **D. TRAINING and UPWARD MOBILITY**

When a staff member receives a certificate or other documentation of training or education, we ask that he/she please forward a copy to the Human Resources Director for inclusion in the personnel file. These are valuable documents when a staffer applies for other positions within the agency as they may directly relate to qualifications.

**REQUIRED ATTENDANCE:** In-service training is provided as deemed necessary by the Executive Director or supervisor. Employees will be required to participate in training. As appropriate, documentation will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

**OPTIONAL ATTENDANCE:** Employees may attend training and educational programs offered by other agencies, related institutions, or associations (e.g., workshops, conferences, seminars, etc.). The purpose must be to upgrade the employee's job-related knowledge and skills. The employee may be granted leave with pay during normal working hours to attend such training or programs, so long as it does not interfere with on-the-job performance. Approval to attend must first be requested from your supervisor by using the RCS Request to Attend Form.

**EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE:** In certain circumstances, RCS and/or the specific program may pay for tuition, books, and/or qualifying expenses. At the discretion of the RCS Executive Director, time away from work with pay may be allowed. These opportunities must be relevant to the job the employee holds or for career advancement. Assistance for short-term training opportunities is always contingent upon funding and will be limited to modest monetary contributions. Prior written approval must be obtained from the supervisor and the RCS Executive Director.

Staff attending training that is paid in whole or in part by RCS are expected to be in attendance during the training sessions. Failure to comply may result in discontinuation of assistance, monetary and otherwise, by RCS, and disciplinary action.

#### **E. OTHER ASPECTS**

**WORK FROM HOME:** Work From Home (WFH) is a formal arrangement for a specified period. When allowing WFH, many factors must be considered. These include, but are not limited to, justification for staffer needing to WFH; whether such arrangement would be detrimental to the staffer's particular job, his or her department, RCS or the people we serve; suitability of staffer for such arrangements; the specific duties to be done from home; the days and hours staffer will be working while at home; maintaining contact with RCS and staff member's supervisor, etc. WFH may be appropriate for staff attending a course of study and need to adjust work hours, illness, and disability accommodation.

Other reasons may be considered. All WFH arrangements must be approved in writing by the supervisor, department head or Executive Director. Work from home must be documented and attached to the staffer's timesheet. The RCS WFH form must be used.

**STAFF RECOGNITION:** RCS believes in

promoting employee morale, recognizing and awarding staff accomplishments and enhancing working conditions, relationships and performance. One means of doing this is through staff recognition for things such as but not limited to educational attainment, induction or acceptance into an honor society, length of service, completion of a special program or course, retirement, and other commendable achievements.

**PERSONNEL FILES:** RCS maintains a personnel file on each employee. These files contain documentation regarding all aspects of the employee's tenure with RCS. You may review your personnel file on an annual basis. If you are interested in reviewing your file, complete the appropriate form and submit it to the Human Resources Director to schedule an appointment.

To ensure that your personnel file is always up to date, notify your supervisor or the Human Resources Director of any changes in your name, telephone number, home address, marital status, number of dependents, beneficiary designations, scholastic achievements, the individuals to notify in case of an emergency and so forth.

**NAME CHANGE:** You can only have one legal name. A legal name is defined as the name that is on your social security card. Employees who have changed their name must apply with the Social Security Administration for a new social security card. Once a new card has been issued, the employee must contact the RCS Human Resources Director to update their name change with payroll and benefits as well as other documents.

**CELLULAR PHONES:** RCS prohibits the use of handheld and non-handheld phones for business purposes while the staffer is operating a vehicle regardless of whether the vehicle is the staffer's personal vehicle or that of RCS. RCS strongly discourages the personal use of handheld and non-handheld phones when driving while on agency time and/or agency business.

Staff are required to pull over and stop the vehicle before making or taking a call. Any



moving violations, no matter how small, must be reported to the supervisor, department head, and Human Resources Director of RCS. Violations will subject the staffer to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**TEXT MESSAGING WHILE DRIVING:** RCS prohibits text messaging while driving. It is against North Carolina law and is a hazard to our staff as well as others on the roads. Staff violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**PHOTO ID/SWIPE CARD POLICY:** To ensure the safety and security of all individuals on RCS property, all employees, and certain contractors (with the approval of the Executive Director) will be required to obtain and retain a company issued identification (ID) badge while at work. As a vital part of our security system, an RCS identification badge with your name and photo will be issued to you on your first day of employment. The ID badge is also your electronic key to enter the building in which you work.

**F. ANTI-WEAPONS:** Employees may not, at any time while on any property owned, leased, or controlled by RCS, including anywhere that company business is conducted, such as customer locations, client locations, trade shows, restaurants, company event venues and so forth, possess or use any weapon.

Weapons include, but are not limited to, guns, knives, or swords with blades over four inches in length, explosives and any chemical whose purpose is to cause harm to another person. Regardless of whether an employee possesses a concealed weapons permit or is allowed by law to possess a weapon, weapons are prohibited on any company property or in any location in which the employee represents the company for business purposes, including those listed above.

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including employment termination.

Staff members having knowledge of a person having a weapon should report such knowledge to their supervisor immediately. Having knowledge and not reporting such information may be cause for disciplinary action.

Employees who carry mace/pepper spray or other items for personal protection may bring them onto an RCS worksite; however, the employee must keep these items locked in a secure place to avoid the intentional or accidental use by other persons, especially children.

**G. TOBACCO FREE FACILITY:** RCS prohibits the use of tobacco products - including both lighted and smokeless - within the confines of our offices. Tobacco use is not permitted anywhere on the premises where Head Start classrooms are located. Notices prohibiting smoking will be placed in areas accessible by staff and the public. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**H. COMPLAINT PROCEDURES:** Conflicts or misunderstandings can result from things such as but not limited to intimidation, verbal or practical jokes, unwelcome touching, offensive remarks or put-downs, gestures or displays of objects and materials that create an offensive environment. RCS hopes to resolve such occurrences before serious problems develop.

Most incidents resolve themselves naturally; but, if a situation persists that you believe is detrimental to you or to RCS, you should follow the procedure described here for bringing your concern to management's attention.

1. Discuss the problem with your immediate supervisor. If, however, you do not believe a discussion with your supervisor is appropriate, you may proceed directly to Step 2.
2. If your problem is not resolved after discussion with your supervisor or if you feel discussion with your supervisor is inappropriate, you are encouraged to request a meeting with your department head. Your department head will consider the facts, perhaps investigate, review the matter with the Executive or Human Resources

Director or take other appropriate steps, to resolve the problem. You should receive a response within ten working days of meeting with your department head.

3. If you are not satisfied with your department head's decision and wish to pursue the problem or complaint further, you may prepare a written summary of your concerns and request that the matter be reviewed by the RCS Human Resources Director. A full examination of the facts will be conducted, which may include a review of the written summary of your statement, discussions with all individuals concerned and a further investigation if necessary. A full report and recommendation will be prepared and presented to the RCS Executive Director. The decision of the Executive Director is final. Normally, you will be advised of the director's decision within 15 working days.

## 4. COMPENSATION POLICIES

### A. CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT

For purposes of salary administration and employee benefits, RCS classifies employees as follows:

**INTRODUCTORY EMPLOYEE** – A person appointed to a regular position who has not completed the introductory period. The introductory period is 90 days. (Only benefit is paid holidays)

Successful completion of the introductory period does not create a contract or guarantee of employment, nor does it establish a just cause termination standard.

**REGULAR EMPLOYEE** – A person appointed to serve for an indefinite duration who has successfully completed the introductory period. (Full benefit package available.)

**PART-TIME EMPLOYEE** – An employee who is regularly scheduled to work less than 40 hours per workweek as designated by the Board of Directors as full-time. (Benefits accrue on a pro-rata basis)

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE** – Either a regular or a temporary employee who is regularly scheduled to work 40 hours per week as designated by the Board of Directors as full time.

**SUBSTITUTE** – A person appointed to serve on an as-needed basis only to fill in for absent staff. (No benefits available)

**CONTINGENT** – A person appointed to serve as needed. This person will not fill in (substitute) for other staff; rather, he or she will work when work is available and when someone is needed to do it. (Benefits: 401(k) option, pension if plan requirements are met.)

**TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE** – A person appointed to serve in a position for a definite duration. The temporary period shall be less than one year.

This is not staff from a temporary employment agency. No benefits available.

While all RCS staff are classified as being in one of the preceding categories, not all staff are scheduled to work twelve months each year. For example, some Head Start positions may be ten or eleven months.

**NOTE:** Should a person serve successfully in a temporary position for at least 90 days, the person may be accepted by RCS as a regular employee with the temporary period fulfilling the introductory period obligation if there is no substantial time lapse between the temporary and regular appointments; however, the insurance carrier will require a 90-day waiting period.

**EXEMPT** – A person, who has successfully completed the introductory period and as set forth by the U. S. Department of Labor, meets the requirements for exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Exempt employees are not required to be paid overtime for work performed beyond 40 hours in a workweek.

**NON-EXEMPT** – A person who is subject to overtime provisions as set forth by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

### B. PERIODS OF WORK

**WORKWEEK** – A period of 168 consecutive hours commencing at 12:00 a.m. Saturday and ending at 11:59 p.m. on Friday.

**COMPLETED YEAR** – A period of 12 calendar months in which the employee is in active status. Other requirements apply for things such as but not limited to pension contribution and FMLA eligibility.

**COMPLETED MONTH** – Any month in which an employee works at least one half (1/2) of the

workdays/work hours assigned to him/her.

**HOURS OF WORK** – The regular workweek for all full-time employees is forty hours. The normal schedule for all office employees is Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00

p.m. with one hour off for lunch. Employees having unique situations may have their hours of work and attendance reviewed on an individual basis. The employee’s supervisor must approve any variation from the normal hours.

**FLEX SCHEDULING** – RCS staff members may be allowed to work a flex schedule. Following are the provisions governing flex scheduling.

1. Only Fridays will be used for flextime.
2. Persons in their introductory period of employment will not be eligible for flex scheduling.
3. Staff may only join in the flex schedules on January 1 and July 1. Staff may remove themselves or be removed from flex scheduling at any time.
4. Every staffer using flextime must first work a 40-hour workweek.
5. Any week having a holiday will not be a flex week.
6. Any week in which a nonexempt staffer uses PAL or any other leave may not have flextime that week. Exempt staff using PAL during the workweek will not be made to adjust or forfeit their flex hours IF they have otherwise satisfied the 40 hours of work requirement.
7. Supervisors must always ensure adequate coverage at all sites. This includes those times when staff must be away for meetings or trainings. If those absences will leave the site unattended or so understaffed that services are interrupted, then flextime may not be used by the staffers remaining at the site.
8. Abuse of privileges or non-adherence to the guidelines will result in that staffer

losing his/her flextime privileges.

9. If warranted, flex-scheduling privileges of some staff (or all staff) may be interrupted to meet the needs of the agency, program(s), clients, etc.

**COMPENSATORY TIME** - It is not legal for private employers, such as RCS, to give compensatory (comp) time off from work in place of pay for hours worked more than 40 for nonexempt staff. While schedules may be adjusted during a workweek to essentially compensate an employee, this will be done to keep the staffer from exceeding 40 hours of work. For example, a nonexempt staffer who works 8 hours on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, then works 9 hours on Thursday would only work 7 hours on Friday for a total of 40 hours. Exempt employees will work any number of additional hours needed to complete their duties.

- C. **OVERTIME** – Time worked more than 40 hours in a workweek is considered overtime. Because of budget constraints, every effort must be made to avoid overtime hours for nonexempt employees. If you find that you cannot complete your duties within a 40-hour workweek, discuss this with your supervisor. Should overtime occur, the staffer would be paid at one- and one-half times his regular hourly rate of pay for time worked more than 40 hours.

- D. **SALARIES:** The Executive Director, based on budget allocations and salary framework, determines Salaries. Salary increases are similarly determined. All salaries are reviewed when project budgets are being prepared for the next year. NCPReK – Compensation is based on NC PreK salary chart.

**INCREASES:** Increases in salary are given as recognition if the staff member efficiently carries out the work assigned and does it well. Attitude and the assumption of additional responsibilities are key factors in determining salary increases. Salary increases are typically available as follows:

**COLA**– Cost of Living Adjustments, given as funding allows.

**MERIT INCREASE** – Once each year, supervisors may request merit increases for their staff. The



minimum merit increase may be one percent, and the maximum merit increase may be five percent. The Executive Director will make the final determination of increase. Merit increases are given as funding allows.

Merit increases are based on the following ten criteria. Supervisors address numbers 3 through 10. The Executive Director uses criteria 1 and 2 in making the final determination.

1. Availability of funds
2. Level of responsibility
3. Performance of job duties as defined in the job description
4. Assuming additional responsibilities
5. Initiative
6. Attitude
7. Relations with peers
8. Overall performance evaluation
9. Attendance and Punctuality
10. Adherence to RCS and program policies

Requests for merit increases, as well as justification for increases, must be in writing.

**UPGRADE** – If a position is changed due to significant increased responsibilities, the position may be upgraded, and a pay increase given. If the pay scale for a position is upgraded, the salary for the individual holding that position may be increased.

**HEAD START STAFF POSITIONS/RATE OF PAY:** Each classified position is assigned to a salary range that is competitive with the rates in the external labor market consistence with the institution’s ability to pay. The numbers of funded staff positions may fluctuate upon reevaluation of program operation and need.

Position	Hourly Pay Range*	Number of Positions	Number Pays - Annually
Teaching Staff	\$13 - \$21	51	21
Administrative Lead Teacher	\$23 - \$31	6	21
Family Advocate	\$12 - \$16	8	26
Child Development Coordinator	\$24 - \$33	3	26
Administrative Component Staff	\$24 - \$26	7	26
Administrative Management Staff	\$28 - \$49	4	26

*\*Hourly pay range is determined by staff experience, performance, and years of service.*

**DISCRETIONARY INCENTIVE PAY:** Staff may be provided a discretionary incentive payment for purpose of maintaining adequate staffing. The payment will be contingent upon available funding and will be pre-approved by the program/funding source. The program director must submit a “Request for Incentive Payment” form for such incentive payments to the Executive Director for approval. The incentive will be processed through payroll but as a separate payment, specified as a bonus and taxed at the current IRS Bonus tax rate.

**REDUCTION IN PAY:** All operations of RCS and staff compensation are contingent on funding. Consequently, staff may acquire increased compensation for a limited period and at the end of that time the amount of compensation is reduced. Increased workloads may be due to but not limited to the following examples: RCS may receive funding for a limited time and for projects that increase workloads; staff may be assigned extra work for extended periods when RCS is short-staffed; staff may offer to assume extra responsibilities for an extended time; etc. Staff affected may deserve increased pay for the duration of such projects or increased workloads; however, when those funds are no longer available or when the workload decreases, staff may be subject to a reduction in pay.

**PAY PERIODS:** RCS employees are paid every two weeks on Friday. Pay periods are specifically outlined with no projecting ahead. When payday falls on a holiday, salary checks will be issued on the last working day before the holiday. **Payroll advances are not given.**

While pay periods will not be erratic, certain

circumstances may require that the pay period be more or less frequent than bi-weekly.

**PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS** – Payroll deductions required by law will be made at the prescribed times along with deductions authorized by the employee. Deductions will include:

- Payroll deductions in case of absence from work without sufficient accumulated leave.
- FICA – A part of the employee’s salary will be deducted and deposited with the Social Security Administration toward the employee’s Social Security Account. RCS will add to each employee’s account the percent provided by present Federal law.
- State Income tax and other deductions required by County, State or Federal Laws.
- Dependent/Family health care coverage, as authorized by the employee.
- Health/Dental/Vision insurance, as authorized by the employee.
- Voluntary Supplemental Coverage insurance, as authorized by the employee.
- RCS Gift Fund Account - \$12 annually deducted twice per year after completion of the introductory period of employment, and as authorized by the employee.
- Personal copies – The costs for personal copies are 15 cents per sheet. The cost may be deducted from the employee’s pay if payment is not left in the designated place.
- 401(K) – A designated portion of the employee’s salary, chosen by the employee, will be deferred to the 401(K) plans.
- Likewise, RCS will issue W-2 to employees by the last day of January annually.

From time to time, options for employees may change. Payroll deductions will be

adjusted accordingly. In the event an improper deduction is made from your pay, please contact your supervisor and/or the RCS finance office immediately. The monies will be paid back to you as soon as possible, usually in your next paycheck. If you want to file a complaint or grievance, follow the procedures outlined in this handbook.

**DIRECT DEPOSIT:** As an option, RCS staff may choose direct deposit for all or part of their paycheck. Staff may join direct deposit at the beginning of employment or at any time during employment. Changes may be made to existing direct deposit plans as needed.

**E. TIMESHEETS:** Timesheets must be submitted correctly, on time and have all required signatures. Only authorized personnel may make changes to time sheets. The person making the change must initial changes to time sheets. Timesheets are due in the RCS finance office every other Monday no later than 12:00 noon, unless otherwise notified. To accommodate pay periods that are longer or shorter than the usual biweekly pay period, timesheets may be due more or less frequent.

**F. APPRAISAL / EVALUATION**  
**/PERFORMANCE REVIEWS:**

To ensure that you perform your job to the best of your abilities, it is important that you be recognized for good performance and that you receive appropriate suggestions for improvement when necessary. To help meet this goal, your supervisor on an ongoing basis will evaluate your performance. In addition to the regular performance evaluations, your supervisor may conduct special written performance evaluations at any time to advise you of the existence of performance or disciplinary problems.

**INTRODUCTORY APPRAISAL:** Each employee is evaluated at the end of the introductory period of employment. The employee is rated in standardized categories and given an overall rating. The supervisor recommends either keeping the introductory employee as a regular staffer or releasing him/her from employment.

**ANNUAL APPRAISAL:** Annual appraisals are normally conducted in May for staff that will not be working during the summer months and in July for year-round staff. RCS uses a formal instrument for this purpose. All evaluations will be based on overall performance in relation to job responsibilities. This appraisal is for staff that has not had an introductory appraisal within the immediate past 90 days.

**G. REIMBURSEMENT:** Staff attending training, workshops, conferences, etc., that is paid in whole or in part by RCS are expected to take advantage of all training and learning opportunities related to the purpose of their business travel. Other than for reasons of illness or emergency situations, staff are required to attend. During the hours of the training, workshop, conference, etc., RCS considers the staff person “at work.” Leaving the training, workshop, conference, etc. for personal reasons may result in an unplanned absence and use of the staffer’s PAL as RCS will not consider the staffer to be “at work” while pursuing personal interests and may also result in disciplinary action. RCS employees traveling for RCS business purposes will be eligible for reimbursement of expenses as funding allows. Statements of expenses, along with paid receipts, are to be submitted to the finance department’s accounts payable staff. The request for reimbursement must be submitted **within one month of the date the expense was incurred.** Employees must receive advance approval from their supervisor to attend workshops/training/ conferences, etc. where costs may be incurred. The designated RCS staff person makes travel arrangements. Staff are not to make their own arrangements for RCS business travel.

**MILEAGE:** Employees will be allowed 55 cents per mile for automobile travel if personal automobile is used for business related travel. The RCS travel form must be used. Mileage reimbursement is contingent upon available funds. Staff

must bear the commuting cost of transportation between their residence and their regular worksite. If you are traveling from home to a location before going to your regular worksite, you may only claim additional mileage that is more than your normal daily commute. If your day ends at a location other than your normal worksite, you may only claim the additional miles that is more than your normal commute. The program in which the staffer works will determine travel mileage reimbursement for staff who do not report to a regular worksite (e.g. CNAs).

**AIRFARE** – RCS will follow the federal regulations by getting the lowest price available on the day tickets are purchased. The agency will not pay for special accommodations unless there is a justifiable need that has been pre-approved.

**BAGGAGE FEE** – Staff may claim reimbursement for their first checked piece of baggage. RCS will reimburse for more than one piece of baggage if there is a justified necessity such as materials to be used at the destination, assistive devices, accommodations for staff member, and/or extended stays.

**GROUND TRANSPORTATION** - Employees are expected to use the most economical ground transportation appropriate under the circumstances and should generally use the following, in this order of desirability:

***Courtesy Cars*** - Many hotels have courtesy cars, which will take you to and from the airport at no charge. The hotel will generally have a well-marked courtesy phone at the airport if this service is available. Employees should take advantage of this free service whenever possible.

***Airport Shuttle or Bus*** - Airport shuttles or buses generally travel to and from all major hotels for a small fee. At major airports, such services are as quick as a taxi and considerably less expensive. Airport shuttle or bus services are generally located near the airport’s baggage claim area.

***Taxis*** - When courtesy cars and airport shuttles are not available, a taxi is often the next most

economical and convenient form of transportation when the trip is for a limited time and minimal mileage is involved.

**Rental Cars** - Car rentals are expensive so other forms of transportation should be considered when practical. Employees will be allowed to rent a car while out of town if the individual's Program Director or Executive Director has given advance approval and that the cost is less than alternative methods of transportation.

**PARKING/TOLLS** – Parking and toll expenses, including charges for hotel parking, incurred by personnel traveling on company business will be reimbursed. The costs of parking tickets, fines, car washes, etc., are the responsibility of the employee and will not be reimbursed.

**HOTEL** – Reimbursement on overnight business-related stays will be made at the existing rate for the hotel if the rate is reasonable.

**MEALS** – Per Diem rates for meals will be made according to the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) website for In-State and Out-of-State travel. Per diems are a daily allowance with a specific amount of money given to an employee/or Head Start committee member or parent, on a per day basis to cover living expenses when traveling for work, first and last day of travel rules apply. The RCS Travel Expectations, Etiquette & Advance Per Diem request form must be used. Individuals must submit an agenda from the meeting or training requiring the per diem to be paid. RCS will only compensate for the maximum amount per destination per day. If a per diem is given in advance and the individual doesn't attend, the per diem must be paid back within 5 business days.

Staff will not be reimbursed for meals within their designated service area, which is the county or counties in which they provide services. Reimbursement

will only be made for allowable meals outside the staffs' service area.

**CELL PHONE STIPEND** - This policy applies to all faculty, staff, and administrators who, as a part of their official agency employment, have a constant and recurring need for using a cell phone. The cell phone stipend is intended to reimburse the employee for the business use of the device.

To qualify for the Cell Phone stipend, the employee must have an agency business need, defined, and approved by the supervisor that includes one or more of the following:

- The duties of the position may lead to potentially dangerous scenarios and situations with no other acceptable or reliable means of alternative communications.
- The duties of the position require that the employee work regularly in the field away from land line communication and needs to be immediately accessible.
- The duties of the position require response and decision making to deal with agency issues and situations.
- The duties of the position make it necessary that the employee be accessible to communicate with senior management at any time.

When a cell phone stipend has been approved and provided to an employee for the conduct of official business, the employee must comply with the following:

- The employee will provide the phone number to their supervisor and department head within five days of activation and will be available for calls.
- Management may periodically request that the employee provide a copy of the first page of the phone bill to verify that he/she has an active wireless phone plan. Management may also periodically request documentation of substantial business use.

- The employee is responsible for all charges on his/her personal wireless plan, including early termination fees. If the employee leaves the position, he/she continues to be responsible for the contractual obligations of his/her wireless plan.
- The employee is personally responsible for complying with federal, state, and municipal laws regarding the use of wireless phones and other communication devices while driving. Under no circumstances will Regional Consolidated Services be liable for non-compliance of federal, state, and municipal laws.
- The employee should use discretion in relaying confidential business-related information over any wireless devices since wireless transmissions are not secure.
- The employee does not need to maintain a log for business and personal phone calls if receiving a wireless stipend.

**OTHER** – All business-related expenses that are within reason will be reimbursed with the approval of the appropriate supervisor. RCS staff who are away from home for two days and two nights consecutively are allowed one landline telephone call home at the expense of RCS. If enough funds are not available, the employee will be notified in advance and the amount of reimbursement will be adjusted accordingly.

RCS staff will be reimbursed for the cost for facsimiles (faxes) or copies for RCS business purposes while away from the RCS worksite. To be reimbursed, you will need approval for travel, original meal receipts with your name written thereon, meal reimbursement form, and an agenda or other official documentation of attendance. For hotel reimbursement, you will need to submit your approval for travel and hotel receipts. RCS will not pay

for personal telephone calls (other than one call home when away for two consecutive days and nights), facsimiles, etc. charged to your hotel room. Parking expenses will be reimbursed, but you must submit receipts.

**SPOUSE, FAMILY, FRIEND TRAVEL** – RCS will not pay for separate or increased travel costs for a spouse, family member, or friend. Travel costs include but are not limited to airfare, hotel, food, baggage, ground transportation or any other expenses incurred due to employee travel. RCS will not prorate the cost of a hotel room, baggage, ground transportation, or other sharable costs between the employee and his or her spouse, family member, or friend.

The designated RCS staffer will make travel arrangements for RCS staff. Arrangements for others traveling with RCS employees will be the responsibility of the staffer with whom the non-staffer is traveling.

**NON-REIMBURSABLE** - RCS maintains a strict policy that expenses in any category that could be perceived as lavish or excessive will not be reimbursed. Expenses that are not reimbursable include, but are not limited to:

- Travel insurance
- First class tickets or upgrades
- Upgraded accommodations
- When lodging accommodations have been arranged by RCS and the individual elects to stay elsewhere, reimbursement is made at the amount no higher than the rate negotiated by RCS. Reimbursement shall not be made for transportation between the alternate lodging and the meeting site.
- Limousine travel
- Movies, liquor, or bar costs
- Spa or exercise charges
- Clothing purchases
- Car washes
- Toiletry articles
- Expenses for spouses, friends, or relatives.

**SEVERANCE PAY** - RCS does not offer severance pay.



## 5. TIME OFF BENEFITS

### **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Attendance is a key factor in your job performance. Punctuality and regular attendance are expected of all employees. Excessive absences (whether excused or unexcused), tardiness, or leaving early is unacceptable. If you are absent for any reason or plan to arrive late or leave early, you must notify your supervisor as far in advance as possible. For all absences extending longer than one day, you must notify your immediate supervisor within one hour of the start of each scheduled workday. When reporting an absence, you should indicate the nature of the problem causing your absence and your expected return - to - work date. A physician's statement may be required as proof of the need for any illness - related absence regardless of the length of the absence. Except as provided in other policies, an employee who is absent from work for three consecutive days without notification to his or her supervisor or the Executive Director will be considered to have voluntarily terminated his or her employment. The employee's final paycheck will be mailed to the last mailing address on file with RCS.

It is important to understand that requests for time off work will not automatically be approved. Approval depends on many factors that include but are not limited to sufficient PAL to cover the time off, adequate coverage for a department or site, excessive absences, etc.

- A. **PAID ANNUAL LEAVE (PAL):** After successful completion of the 90-day introductory period, paid annual leave will be made available on a monthly accrual basis. This benefit will be extended to employees who work a minimum of one-half of the workdays or work hours available to that staffer within the month.

Staff who are in a leave status and do not actually work one-half of the available

workdays or work hours will not accrue leave for that month. Employees will be allowed to accumulate a maximum number of days/hours.

When the maximum is reached, leave will cease to accrue. When accumulated leave drops below the maximum allowed, the employee will resume leave accumulation.

**Teaching Staff:** For teaching staff to enjoy the same privileges regarding paid annual leave as other staff, RCS will endeavor to recruit and have available substitute teachers. ***Teaching staff will be obligated to notify their supervisor of the need/desire for leave and to arrange for securing classroom coverage (e.g., an approved substitute).*** RCS will pay for a substitute teacher, if funds are available, in the event a teacher must be absent.

**Special Circumstance:** Under special circumstances and with the written approval of the Executive Director of RCS, an employee may be allowed to accumulate more than the maximum allowable.

**Leave Scheduling:** Leave may be taken as weekly periods or as individual days or hours, if the leave periods chosen, meet your supervisor's approval. You should submit a Request for Leave form to your supervisor at least 24 hours before the leave. Leave taken with less than 24 hours' notice will be classified as unplanned leave under the RCS Unplanned Leave policy.

**Abuse of Privileges:** Paid annual leave is a benefit extended to, not earned by, RCS employees. As much as possible, leave is to be scheduled and requested in advance. Staff are not to "take leave" without proper notification. If a situation occurs that does not allow for advance notice, the employee is to notify his/her supervisor, or appropriate person in chain of command, as quickly as possible.

Unplanned and excessive absences as well as tardiness or early departure cause a hardship and

interfere with our operation. Employees who fail to follow proper notification, request, etc., procedures and/or are excessively absent, tardy, or leave early will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Persons who exhibit a pattern of frequent absences or lengthy absences may be asked to submit a physician’s statement to document such need. The physician will be asked to certify the employee’s wellness and ability to perform work duties in areas of, but not limited to, physical stamina, mental and/or emotional stability. Such request may be made at any time for illness related absences.

It is important to note that consistent and regular attendance is an essential function of every job.

**B. TRANSFER OF ACCUMULATED PAID ANNUAL LEAVE** – RCS employees may transfer accumulated leave hours to another staffer. The purpose of allowing transfer of leave privileges is to assist fellow staffers **in need of** time away from work but do not have sufficient hours available to enable them to take leave with pay. **In need of** would include but not be limited to health issues or family responsibilities requiring the staffer to be away from the job.

To transfer leave privileges, the Leave Privilege Transfer form must be completed and submitted to the RCS Human Resources Director. Authorization must be in writing.

The number of hours a staff member requests to transfer may not leave the requesting staff member with fewer than 30 hours of PAL. For example, a staffer who has 40 hours of PAL requests to transfer 12 hours of PAL to a coworker. The request would not be approved because the requesting staffer would be left with only 28 hours.

**C. FORFEITURE**: Paid annual leave is not a benefit earned by the staffer; rather, it is a benefit extended to the staff by RCS for use during his or her period of employment.

When a staff person submits a notice of resignation, a freeze will be placed on all accumulated PAL. There will not be any payout for unused PAL. When employment with RCS ends – regardless of the reason – the employee will not be paid for their unused paid annual leave. Neither will staff be paid for unused PAL at any other time.

**D. HOLIDAYS** – The following days will be observed as holidays with pay without having to complete the introductory period: *Temporary staff do not qualify for paid holidays.*

- › New Year’s Day
- › Dr. ML King, Jr. Birthday
- › Good Friday
- › Memorial Day
- › Juneteenth
- › Independence Day
- › Labor Day
- › Veteran’s Day
- › Thanksgiving (2) days
- › Christmas (3 days)

Holidays may not be taken prior to the actual holiday.

When any of these holidays fall on Saturday or Sunday, the holiday will be observed on the Monday immediately following unless otherwise noted by the Executive Director.

<i>CHRISTMAS</i>	<i>RCS HOLIDAYS WILL BE</i>
Sunday	Friday, Monday, and Tuesday
Monday	Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday
Tuesday	Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday
Wednesday	Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
Thursday	Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
Friday	Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
Saturday	Thursday, Friday & Monday

Unless an employee is required to work on a holiday or receives written permission to take the holiday later, holidays are to be taken as scheduled. Employees who work on regularly scheduled holidays will be allowed to take the holiday later but must be within three months from the actual holiday.

When a holiday is taken later, the same conditions will apply as if the holiday were taken on the regularly scheduled date.

To be eligible to receive holiday pay, you are required to work your regularly scheduled hours the workday before and the workday after the holiday or have an approved or excused day off. Should the employee be unable to work either of these two days because of illness, proof of illness will be required to qualify for the paid holiday. In accordance with RCS policy, an approved or excused day off may include but is not limited to PAL, birthday, the five-day period for which RCS pays for civil leave, and other leave for which a Request for Leave form would be needed.

Staff on temporary leave will not be paid for holidays that occur during such leave and will not be allowed to take the holiday later. Temporary leave includes but is not limited to military leave, suspension, leave of absence, maternity, medical, education, FMLA, etc. Leave for which a Personnel Action Form is needed is considered a temporary leave.

Holidays may not be taken in advance.

- E. JURY AND WITNESS DUTY LEAVE** – A nonexempt RCS employee called for jury or witness duty will receive leave with pay for a period not to exceed one week (five working days). The one-week restriction will not apply if the employee's presence is required regarding an RCS related matter.

An exempt RCS employee called for jury or witness duty will receive leave with pay

for the period for which his/her presence is required. Exempt staffers are expected to ensure that job responsibilities are met during such leave.

You are permitted to retain the allowance you receive from the court for such service. This leave with pay will be given without charge to accumulated paid annual leave. While on jury or witness duty, benefits will accrue as though on regular duty. If the jury is excused, the employee is expected to report to work. To qualify for jury or witness duty leave, you must submit to your supervisor a copy of the summons or subpoena as soon as it is received.

Victims of a crime or others needing to attend court proceedings may submit a written request for "court attendance" along with verification from court personnel (i.e., letter from prosecutor/attorney, etc.) to their supervisor. Time off will either be charged to paid annual leave or taken as leave without pay as appropriate.

- F. WITHOUT PAY** Staff, such as Certified Nursing Attendants (CNA), have the option of taking leave without pay during inclement weather. CNA staff travel throughout the county to provide services in client homes. While the CNA is willing and able to provide the services, some roads are inaccessible in inclement weather thereby making it impossible for staff to reach their clients and perform their job. Therefore, the CNA, and other similarly situated staff, have the option of taking either paid leave or leave without pay in these circumstances.

Staff scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week are not eligible for PAL. The staffer may request Leave Without Pay. It is to be understood that such leave will be recorded as unplanned and will be without pay.

Staff that has exhausted all PAL may request Leave Without Pay. The request may be approved, but the leave will be recorded as unplanned.

- G. EMPLOYEE'S BIRTHDAY:** Employees may take



their birthday off with pay up to 90 days following the actual birth date. The birthday may not be taken in advance. There is no requirement as to working the day before and/or after the birthday.

**H. UNPLANNED LEAVE:** Unplanned leave is any leave that is not requested at least 24 hours in advance. Because unplanned leave is designed to accommodate unexpected events making an absence from work necessary, leave may not be requested over a weekend or holiday break. For example, if a staffer must go out of state for a family emergency on Saturday and knows s/he will not be back to go to work on Monday, the staffer may not get approval for planned leave over the weekend. Reasoning: There is no assurance the supervisor will be available to approve the staffer's request thus making the approval process unfair and inconsistent among staff.

To lessen the number of unplanned absences, the following policy has been developed. Twelve-month staff will be allowed 14 unplanned absences per year, at which point disciplinary action will be taken. For 12-month staff, the year will run July 1 through June 30.

***For 12-month staff:***

- 10<sup>th</sup> absence, supervisor remind staff of policy
- 11<sup>th</sup> absence, discussion
- 12<sup>th</sup> absence, oral warning
- 13<sup>th</sup> absence, written warning
- 14<sup>th</sup> absence, discipline

Ten-month staff will be allowed 12 unplanned absences per year, at which point disciplinary action will be taken. For 10-month staff, the year will run from the first scheduled day of work until the last scheduled day of work during the given work year.

***For 10-month staff:***

- 8<sup>th</sup> absence, supervisor remind staff of policy
- 9<sup>th</sup> absence, discussion
- 10<sup>th</sup> absence, oral warning
- 11<sup>th</sup> absence, written warning
- 12<sup>th</sup> absence, discipline

While the unplanned leave policy allows a maximum number of absences ***per year*** with the staffer returning to zero at the beginning of each year, there is a carry forward or continuation provision. Staff that reach the written warning level for unplanned absences in one year will have that carried forward as a discussion. If the same staffer reaches the written warning level a second year (years need not be consecutive), that will constitute an oral warning to be carried forward. The same staffer reaching the written warning level for unplanned absences for a third time will have that recorded as a final warning. Another occurrence of the same staffer reaching the written warning level will subject the staffer to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

The RCS Unplanned Leave Policy defines excessive absenteeism. The following information is provided to further explain the policy.

- Unplanned leave includes any time the staffer has not requested and gotten approval for an absence 24 hours in advance. For example, calling in sick, calling in because of a sick child or family emergency, leaving during the workday, etc., whether the absence is for a full or part day, is unplanned because the staffer could not foresee the need and therefore make the request 24 hours in advance. *Exception for inclement weather.*
- When an employee is prevented from reporting to work or remaining at work because of the closure of the facility due to inclement weather, the absences will not be considered unplanned. Likewise, any staffer that cannot get to or stay at work because of weather conditions, will not have the absence counted as unplanned as weather and other facility closings are beyond the staff member's control.

- Unplanned leave includes any leave for which the staffer does not have PAL to cover the absence. This includes staff working less than 30 hours per week and employees that have not completed the introductory period of employment.
- Unplanned leave for regular staff eligible for PAL includes days absent without sufficient PAL even if requested in advance.
- Employees working less than 30 hours a week are not eligible for Paid Annual Leave; however, the staffer must request Leave Without Pay at least 24 hours in advance for the absence not to be unplanned.
- If a staff member does not report to work for any unplanned reason and is then absent for several days in a row stemming from the original reason for the unplanned absence, that entire period will count as one unplanned absence.
- If a staff member is absent for an unplanned reason and after a period of time returns to work but is unable to remain at work for the whole day as a result of a continuation of the original situation, that period of absence would count as a continuation of the one unplanned absence.
- If a staff member returns to work, works for a whole day or longer, and is then absent again without prior approval, that absence will be deemed an additional unplanned absence even if it were a continuation of the original reason for absence.
- All absences during the introductory period are unplanned. Occasionally regular staff will donate PAL to introductory staff. If the donation request is approved, the introductory employee will have leave with pay; however, it will be counted as unplanned.
- If a staffer requests a certain amount of PAL but only has enough to cover a

portion of the requested time, the leave may be both planned and unplanned. First, it is the supervisor's responsibility to inform the staffer at the time of the request whether the leave will be counted as planned or unplanned. That means the supervisor is to check with the RCS finance office to determine whether the requesting staffer has sufficient PAL. If the staffer does not have enough PAL to cover the time requested, the supervisor is to tell the staffer the request can only be approved for the time available. The staffer should then change the Request for Leave form to reflect the time available. If the staffer still wants to take additional time off, it will have to be requested separately as Leave Without Pay and counted as unplanned. Please note that RCS does not support regular full-time staff being approved for leave if they do not have sufficient PAL to cover the period of absence.

- I. **DENIED LEAVE REQUEST:** A Request for Leave that is denied by the supervisor will specify the reason(s) for the denial. If the staffer disobeys the authority of the supervisor and proceeds to take denied leave, he or she will be deemed insubordinate and subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- J. **FMLA – FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE:** For Employees who qualify for a leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, leave will be granted for a period of up to the equivalent of twelve workweeks in any twelve-month period. RCS measures the 12-month period forward from the date FMLA leave begins. This means an employee would be entitled to the equivalent of 12 workweeks of leave during the year beginning on the first date FMLA leave is taken; the next 12-month period would begin the first time FMLA leave is taken after completion of any previous 12-month period in which the employee works the required 1,250 hours.

***Eligibility*** – An employee must have completed at least one full year of service with RCS and have worked a minimum of 1,250 hours in the twelve-month period preceding the leave. This

does not include either paid or unpaid time away from work. This is actual hours of work.

In addition, to be eligible for leave, an employee must work at an RCS facility that employs at least fifty employees at that facility or within seventy- five miles of that facility.

For detailed information on qualifying events, forms, what the employee must do and what RCS must do, refer to the FMLA section of this Handbook.

**K. LEAVE OF ABSENCE:** Full-time and part-time regular employees who have successfully completed a minimum of 90 days of continuous service may request an unpaid leave of absence. A leave of absence is for staff that is unable to perform any work. Leaves of Absence will be in 30 calendar day blocks of time. A staffer may be allowed a maximum of 90 calendar days in a 12-month period for a leave of absence. Each request must be submitted at least one week before the beginning of the leave. For detailed information on reasons for and conditions of leaves of absence, and return to work, refer to the Leave of Absence section of this Handbook.

**L. LIGHT DUTY:** RCS is committed to helping the injured/ill employee return to work as soon as it is safe for the staffer to do so. To assist staff in their return to work, we have developed a Light Duty Program. RCS has a variety of jobs within our organization and some departments are better able to accommodate light duty assignments. RCS cannot guarantee that light duty work will be available. Funding, as well as program performance and services to clients, will be factors. The duration of the assignment will depend on factors such as, but not limited to, the staffer's ability to perform the work, the availability of work, whether the work can be done with existing staff, and funding.

Light duty is to be a temporary assignment and will not exceed 90 calendar days.

For detailed information regarding light duty assignments, refer to the Light Duty section of this Handbook.

**M. MILITARY LEAVES OF ABSENCE** – If you are a member of the National Guard or Reserves and are directed to participate in periodic field training, you will be allowed unpaid military leave, or you may use paid annual leave. If you are called to active duty or to Reserve or National Guard training, or if you volunteer for the same, you should submit copies of your military orders to your supervisor as soon as possible.

If you are a regular employee of RCS, full time or part time, indefinitely deployed in active service via the draft or the act authorizing the President to order to active duty the National Guard and military reserve components, you are entitled to military leave. Military leave is leave of absence without pay. Holiday pay will not be given during this period.

Re-employment - Employees called to active duty for less than 31 days must report back to the employer by the beginning of the first regularly scheduled work period after the end of the calendar day of duty, plus time required to return home safely and an eight-hour rest period. If this is impossible or unreasonable, then as soon as possible. Employees called to active duty for 31 – 180 days must apply for reemployment (written or verbal) with the employer no later than 14 days after completing service. If the employee's period of service in the uniformed services was for more than 180 days, he or she must apply for reemployment (written or verbal) no later than 90 days after completing service.

Employees hospitalized or convalescing from illness or injuries incurred in or aggravated during performance of service must report to or apply for re-employment at the end of recovery period, which may not exceed two years.

**N. INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS:** The RCS administrative office will be open unless weather

conditions are extreme. Unless closed by the Executive Director or her designee, administrative staff may report to the office and work; however, staff are advised to use discretion in reporting to work in inclement conditions. Staff housed at other agencies/facilities will follow the directive of that agency/facility. Staff working at independent sites may use their own discretion unless the Executive Director or her designee closes the site.

In the case of emergency shutdowns due to weather conditions or other unforeseen reasons, employees will be notified as early as possible. Notifications will be made by the following means.

- Home Care Geriatric Attendants will follow the Randolph County Schools schedule, available on radio and television.
- Head Start closings will be aired on local television stations in the three county areas.
- RCS staff stationed at the Randleman administrative office will be notified by telephone.
- All supervisory staff will be responsible for ensuring that their staff are properly notified, regardless of the county or the program.

If employees are unable to report to work due to weather conditions and the workplace is operating, employees must contact the worksite and notify their supervisor or program director within one hour of their expected arrival. If unable to contact the worksite, staff may contact supervisory staff at home or contact the RCS administrative office. In either case, employees may use annual leave for such absences. Nonexempt employees may take leave without pay.

# PAL Accumulation Rates

## 40 HOURS PER WEEK (FULL TIME)

TENURE	PAL hrs Per month	Rate	Max Hours Per Year	Max Days Per Year
91 days -5 years	9	9 hrs PAL ÷ 8 hrs/day = 1.13	108	13.5
5 years, 1 day – 10 years	12	12 hrs PAL ÷ 8 hrs/day = 1.50	144	18
10 years, 1 day – 15 years	15	15 hrs PAL ÷ 8 hrs/day = 1.88	180	22.5
15 years, 1 day – 20 years	18	18 hrs PAL ÷ 8 hrs/day = 2.25	216	27
20 years, 1 day – 25 years	21	21 hrs PAL ÷ 8 hrs/day = 2.63	252	31.5
25 years, 1 day – 30 years	24	24 hrs PAL ÷ 8 hrs/day = 3.00	288	36
30 years, 1 day – 35 years	27	27 hrs PAL ÷ 8 hrs/day = 3.38	324	40.5
35 years, 1 day – 40 years	30	30 hrs PAL ÷ 8 hrs/day = 3.75	360	45

## 39 HOURS PER WEEK

TENURE	Rate x 7.80	PAL hours per month	Maximum hours per year	Maximum days per year
91 days -5 years	1.13	8.81	105.30	13.5
5 years, 1 day – 10 years	1.50	11.7	140.40	18
10 years, 1 day – 15 years	1.88	14.66	175.5	22.5
15 years, 1 day – 20 years	2.25	17.55	210.60	27
20 years, 1 day – 25 years	2.63	20.51	245.70	31.5
25 years, 1 day – 30 years	3.00	23.40	280.80	36
30 years, 1 day – 35 years	3.38	26.36	315.90	40.5
35 years, 1 day – 40 years	3.75	29.25	351	45

## 38 HOURS PER WEEK

TENURE	Rate x 7.60	PAL hours per month	Maximum hours per year	Maximum days per year
91 days -5 years	1.13	8.59	102.60	13.5
5 years, 1 day – 10 years	1.50	11.4	136.80	18
10 years, 1 day – 15 years	1.88	14.29	171	22.5
15 years, 1 day – 20 years	2.25	17.10	205.20	27
20 years, 1 day – 25 years	2.63	19.99	239.40	31.5
25 years, 1 day – 30 years	3.00	22.80	273.60	36
30 years, 1 day – 35 years	3.38	25.69	307.80	40.5
35 years, 1 day – 40 years	3.75	28.50	342	45

## 37 HOURS PER WEEK

TENURE	Rate x 7.40	PAL hours per month	Maximum hours per year	Maximum days per year
91 days -5 years	1.13	8.36	99.9	13.5
5 years, 1 day – 10 years	1.50	11.10	133.20	18
10 years, 1 day – 15 years	1.88	13.91	166.50	22.5
15 years, 1 day – 20 years	2.25	16.65	199.80	27
20 years, 1 day – 25 years	2.63	19.46	233.10	31.5
25 years, 1 day – 30 years	3.00	22.20	266.40	36
30 years, 1 day – 35 years	3.38	25.01	299.70	40.5
35 years, 1 day – 40 years	3.75	27.75	333.00	45

### 36 HOURS PER WEEK

TENURE	Rate x 7.20	PAL hours per month	Maximum hours per year	Maximum days per year
91 days -5 years	1.13	8.14	97.2	13.5
5 years, 1 day – 10 years	1.50	10.80	129.60	18
10 years, 1 day – 15 years	1.88	13.54	162	22.5
15 years, 1 day – 20 years	2.25	16.20	194.40	27
20 years, 1 day – 25 years	2.63	18.94	226.8	31.5
25 years, 1 day – 30 years	3.00	21.60	259.20	36
30 years, 1 day – 35 years	3.38	24.34	291.6	40.5
35 years, 1 day – 40 years	3.75	27	324	45

### 35 HOURS PER WEEK

TENURE	Rate x 7.0	PAL hours per month	Maximum hours per year	Maximum days per year
91 days -5 years	1.13	7.91	94.5	13.5
5 years, 1 day – 10 years	1.50	10.50	126	18
10 years, 1 day – 15 years	1.88	13.16	157.5	22.5
15 years, 1 day – 20 years	2.25	15.75	189	27
20 years, 1 day – 25 years	2.63	18.41	220.5	31.5
25 years, 1 day – 30 years	3.00	21	252	36
30 years, 1 day – 35 years	3.38	23.66	283.5	40.5
35 years, 1 day – 40 years	3.75	26.25	315	45

### 34 HOURS PER WEEK

TENURE	Rate x 6.80	PAL hours per month	Maximum hours per year	Maximum days per year
91 days -5 years	1.13	7.68	91.8	13.5
5 years, 1 day – 10 years	1.50	10.20	122.4	18
10 years, 1 day – 15 years	1.88	12.78	153	22.5
15 years, 1 day – 20 years	2.25	15.30	183.60	27
20 years, 1 day – 25 Years	2.63	17.88	214.2	31.5
25 years, 1 day – 30 years	3.00	20.40	244.80	36
30 years, 1 day – 35 years	3.38	22.98	275.4	40.5
35 years, 1 day – 40 years	3.75	25.50	306	45

### 33 HOURS PER WEEK

TENURE	Rate x 6.60	PAL hours per month	Maximum hours per year	Maximum days per year
91 days -5 years	1.13	7.46	89.10	13.5
5 years, 1 day – 10 years	1.50	9.90	118.80	18
10 years, 1 day – 15 years	1.88	12.41	148.5	22.5
15 years, 1 day – 20 years	2.25	14.85	178.2	27
20 years, 1 day – 25 years	2.63	17.36	207.90	31.5
25 years, 1 day – 30 years	3.00	19.80	237.60	36
30 years, 1 day – 35 years	3.38	22.31	267.3	40.5
35 years, 1 day – 40 years	3.75	24.75	297	45



### 32 HOURS PER WEEK

TENURE	Rate x 6.40	PAL hours per month	Maximum hours per year	Maximum days per year
91 days -5 years	1.13	7.23	86.4	13.5
5 years, 1 day – 10 years	1.50	9.6	115.2	18
10 years, 1 day – 15 years	1.88	12.03	144	22.5
15 years, 1 day – 20 years	2.25	14.40	172.80	27
20 years, 1 day – 25 years	2.63	16.83	201.6	31.5
25 years, 1 day – 30 years	3.00	19.20	230.40	36
30 years, 1 day – 35 years	3.38	21.63	259.2	40.5
35 years, 1 day – 40 years	3.75	24	288	45

### 31 HOURS PER WEEK

TENURE	Rate x 6.20	PAL hours per month	Maximum hours per year	Maximum days per year
91 days -5 years	1.13	7.01	83.7	13.5
5 years, 1 day – 10 years	1.50	9.30	111.60	18
10 years, 1 day – 15 years	1.88	11.66	139.5	22.5
15 years, 1 day – 20 years	2.25	13.95	167.40	27
20 years, 1 day – 25 years	2.63	16.31	195.3	31.5
25 years, 1 day – 30 years	3.00	18.60	223.20	36
30 years, 1 day – 35 years	3.38	20.96	251.1	40.5
35 years, 1 day – 40 years	3.75	23.25	279	45

### 30 HOURS PER WEEK

TENURE	Rate x 6.00	PAL hours per month	Maximum hours per year	Maximum days per year
91 days -5 years	1.13	6.78	81	13.5
5 years, 1 day – 10 years	1.50	9	108	18
10 years, 1 day – 15 years	1.88	11.28	135	22.5
15 years, 1 day – 20 years	2.25	13.5	162	27
20 years, 1 day – 25 years	2.63	15.78	189	31.5
25 years, 1 day – 30 years	3.00	18	216	36
30 years, 1 day – 35 years	3.38	20.28	243	40.5
35 years, 1 day – 40 years	3.75	22.50	270	45

## 6. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

### GROUP HEALTH AND RELATED BENEFITS

RCS has established a variety of employee benefits programs designed to assist you and your eligible dependents in meeting the financial burdens that can result from illness, disability, and death, and to help you plan for retirement, and deal with job-related or personal problems.

This section of the handbook highlights some features of our benefits programs. Our group health and life insurance and retirement-related programs are described more fully in Summary Plan Description (SPD) booklets, which you are given once you are eligible to participate in these programs. If information in this handbook and information in the master contracts or master plan documents are contradictory, the master contracts/documents shall govern in all cases.

RCS reserves the right to amend or end any of these programs or to require or increase employee premium contributions toward any benefits with or without advance notice at its discretion, and according to applicable laws that govern specific plans.

- A. **GROUP HEALTH:** RCS provides affordable insurance coverage for all regular employees working 30 or more hours per week. Regular part-time employees (working at least 30 hours a week) may join the plan, subject to any requirements of the insurance provider. Health care benefits become available after successful completion of 90 days of employment.

Based on available funds and other considerations, the RCS Executive Director will determine whether employees who are laid off or on a leave of absence (**not** FMLA or Workers Compensation) may be required to pay

their own insurance premiums during the month(s) they are not working. Such payments are to be made in advance.

Insurance coverage continues for in-school staff during normal summer leave.

**Medicare Creditable Prescription Drug Coverage Disclosure Notice:** RCS has determined that our prescription drug coverage is, on average for all plan participants, expected to pay out as much as the standard Medicare prescription drug coverage will pay. Therefore, plan participants may opt to stay on our group plan. For detailed information, refer to the SPD (Summary Plan Description).

- B. **OTHER HEALTH CARE** – Voluntary life/health/dental plans are available through various providers. Participation in these plans is solely at the discretion of the employee and all costs associated with participation are at the employee's expense.
- C. **COBRA** – **Continuing or Converting Your Group Health Insurance Coverage:** According to the Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1985, employees and their “qualified beneficiaries” (spouse and dependent child/children) who are covered under RCS's group health plan have a right to elect to continue such coverage if coverage would otherwise end because of the occurrence of one or more “qualifying events.” Continuation of coverage will be at the employee's or qualified beneficiary's own expense.

As a new employee of RCS, you will receive the Initial Notice of COBRA Rights. This document explains your and your dependents' right to “continuation” health care coverage in the event coverage is lost due to certain events called “Qualifying Events.” As required by law, the Notice of COBRA Rights will be mailed to you and a copy is included in this Handbook. Please read the Rights document for details on qualifying events, notifications, and other important COBRA information. Contact the RCS Benefits Coordinator if you need further information.



Under the law, you or a family member have the responsibility to inform a member of the RCS administrative staff of a divorce, legal separation, or a child losing dependent status within 60 days of the date of the event or the date in which coverage would end under the Plan because of the event, whichever is later. RCS has the responsibility to notify the Plan Administrator of the employee's death, termination, reduction in hours of employment, or Medicare entitlement. Similar rights may apply to certain retirees, spouses, and dependent children if your employer commences a bankruptcy proceeding and these individuals lose coverage.

When the Plan Administrator is notified that one of these events has happened, the Plan Administrator will in turn notify you that you have the right to choose continuation coverage. Under the law, you have at least 60 days from the date you would lose coverage because of one of the events or the date notice of your election rights is sent to you, whichever is later, to inform the Plan Administrator that you want a continuation in coverage.

If you do not choose continuation coverage, your group health insurance will end. If you have any questions about the law, if you have changed marital status, or you or your spouse have changed addresses, please notify the RCS Benefits Coordinator at 109 North Main Street, Randleman, NC 27317.

For detailed information regarding COBRA, refer to the Summary Plan Description (SPD) Section of this Handbook.

**D. Pension and Trust** – RCS deposits an amount up to five percent of the employee's annual salary into a pension plan and trust. Twenty-five percent (1/4) of the monies go into a life insurance policy and the remainder into a retirement account for the

employee. Employee contributions are not allowed.

a. **Retirement** - Employees will be eligible for the retirement benefit provisions after (a) completing one full year of employment during which he/she completes at least 1000 hours of service, and (b) be employed on both the date he/she meets all eligibility requirements and the entry date of the plan.

The Plan Anniversary Date is June 30. Staff will join the Plan on the July 1 closest to meeting (a) and (b) above. Part-time employees may also qualify under certain conditions. A staff member must first work three years with RCS to become 100% vested in the plan. Employees leaving RCS before completing three years of service will forfeit the account balance.

b. **Life Insurance** – RCS pays the premium on a life insurance policy for each eligible employee. Employees will have the option (at their own expense) of continuing their life insurance coverage after leaving employment with RCS.

c. **Death Benefits** - Staff who die while an active participant in the plan becomes fully vested. Your death benefit will equal the value of your fund and the proceeds of any life insurance policies purchased on your life.

**E. 401(k)** –After completing one year of employment service, employees are given the option of joining the agency's 401(k) plan. Employees may then enter the plan on July 1 or January 1 coinciding with or next following the one-year requirement. RCS does not contribute money into this plan. An employee may choose to contribute from 1 percent to 100 percent (whole numbers only) of his/her gross pay into the plan. The maximum number of contributions a person can make to his or her 401(k) plan is set each year by the IRS. The contribution amount may be increased or decreased on January 1 or July 1; however, the contribution amount may be changed to zero at any time. Rejoining the plan is allowed on January 1 or July 1, whichever comes first. No tax is paid on the money contributed to the 401(k) plan if the

employee participates. Contributions are pre-taxed. Participants who are age 50 or over at the end of the calendar year may make additional elective deferral contributions, commonly referred to as catch-up contributions. The elective deferral limit is \$5,500.

**F. Workers Compensation** - To provide for payment of your medical expenses and for partial salary continuation in case of a work-related accident or illness, you are covered with workers' compensation insurance. The amount of benefits payable and the duration of payment depend on the nature of your injury or illness. For detailed information regarding Workers Compensation, refer to the Workers Compensation section of this Handbook.

## 7. CODE OF CONDUCT

### **A. GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE CONDUCT:**

As an integral member of the RCS team, you are expected to accept certain responsibilities, adhere to acceptable business principles in matters of personal conduct, and always exhibit a high degree of personal integrity. This not only involves sincere respect for the rights and feelings of others but also demands that the public at large might view both in your business and in your personal life you refrain from any behavior that might be harmful to you, your coworkers, and/or RCS, or that unfavorable. Whether you are on or off duty, your conduct reflects on RCS. You are, consequently, encouraged to always observe the highest standards of professionalism.

**General Policies:** This Code of Conduct governs the personal conduct, actions, and work relationships of all RCS employees. This includes situations, both official and unofficial, in which employees may reasonably be perceived by others as acting as representatives of the Agency. Unless otherwise indicated, the terms “employee” and “you” refer to all directors, officers, and employees of RCS.

It is every employee’s responsibility to comply with this Code of Conduct. In many situations involving moral or ethical judgment, it may be difficult for an employee to determine the proper course of action. In such instances, employees should not rely solely on their own judgment, but should forward a written request or question to the RCS Executive Director or Human Resources Director.

This Code does not specifically address all forms of conduct that may arise; it is intended to be supplemented by good judgment and common sense to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. When there is a conflict or doubt as to what is and what is not permitted, it will be better to exercise caution and assume the act is not permitted. Employees who fail to

comply with this Code of Conduct may be subjected to disciplinary action, termination of employment, and/or prosecution.

### **Compliance with the Laws and Regulations:**

Employees shall conduct their personal and business dealings in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws, and must refrain from any form of illegal, dishonest, or unethical activities. Even where a specific law does not prohibit or restrict an activity, standards of ethics and morality continue to apply and require attention to good conduct and Agency citizenship.

### **Integrity of Accounting and Records:**

RCS requires honest and accurate recording and reporting of all agency information. All of the books, records, accounts, and financial statements must be maintained in reasonable detail, must appropriately reflect the agency’s transactions, and must conform both to applicable legal requirements and to RCS’s system of internal controls.

The law requires that we maintain books and records that accurately reflect the true nature of the transactions entered or conducted by or on behalf of the agency. In all its operations, it is against agency policy, and possibly illegal, for any employee to cause its books and records to be inaccurate in any way. Anyone involved in preparing the agency’s disclosure documents must ensure that those documents fully, fairly, accurately, and timely present the required information in an understandable manner.

Transactions must be executed in accordance with management’s authorization and in a manner, which permits the preparation of RCS’s financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), and accounting rules covering the activities of financial institutions, and other applicable criteria. In addition, expense reimbursements must accurately reflect the true nature and amount of expenses. Under no circumstances may funds, assets, or liabilities of the agency be concealed or hidden.



Records must reflect accurately and describe properly the true nature, purpose, and amount of the transactions they record. Documentation must provide an appropriate audit trail, as may be necessary, to reconstruct transaction(s) later. Falsification of any agency document (e.g., payroll time sheets, loan documentation, etc.) may be grounds for disciplinary action, termination of employment, and/or prosecution.

**Code of Ethics for Financial Staff:**

All staff affiliated with the finances of the agency are required to adhere to the following Code of Ethics:

- Engage in and promote honest and ethical conduct, including the ethical handling of actual or apparent conflicts of interest between personal and professional relationships
- Seek to promote full, fair, accurate, timely, and understandable disclosure in reports and documents that RCS files with or submits to its federal and state regulatory agencies, and in other public communications made by RCS
- Strive to comply with laws, rules and regulations of federal, state, and local governments and regulatory agencies applicable to RCS and
- Promptly report any violation of this Code of Conduct to the Treasurer of the RCS Board of Directors.

Failure to observe the terms of this Code of Ethics may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and prosecution under the law. The Board of Directors shall have the sole and absolute discretionary authority to approve any deviation or waiver from this Code of Ethics. Waivers of or changes to this Code of Ethics shall be publicly disclosed on a timely basis to the extent required by law.

**Whistleblower Policy:** This Whistleblower Policy requires directors, officers, and employees to practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. This Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious

concerns about financial irregularities within the Agency prior to seeking resolution outside RCS.

No director, officer, or employee who in good faith reports a violation of the code shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

RCS has an open-door policy and employees and others are encouraged to share their questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints with someone who can address them properly. This may be the immediate supervisor, the RCS Human Resources Director, or the RCS Executive Director. If not satisfied or uncomfortable with the open-door policy, a member of the RCS Board of Directors Grievance Committee should be contacted directly. Violations or suspected violations may be submitted confidentially or anonymously and will be kept confidential to the extent possible while conducting an adequate investigation.

The Grievance Committee will notify the sender (if known) and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five business days. All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Policy must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Policy.

- A. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES:** The Hatch Act is specifically directed at government employees. While RCS staff are not government employees, we manage this agency, operate our programs, and pay our staff with government funds. Because certain activities could be perceived as representative of RCS and/or its funding sources as supportive of one political party or idea over another, RCS imposes many of the same restrictions on its employees. RCS encourages every staff member and participant to register and vote as they see fit. Staff and participants may run for

public office in nonpartisan elections, campaign for and hold office in political clubs and organizations, actively campaign for candidates for public office in partisan and nonpartisan elections and contribute money to political organizations and attend political fundraising functions; however, these activities may only occur during non-working hours. No staff member or participant may engage in partisan or non-partisan political activities during hours for which that person is paid or funded with grants administered through RCS.

No staff member or participant may at any time

engage in partisan political activities in which such person represents himself/herself as a spokesperson of the program or funding source or of Regional Consolidated Services.

**B. HARASSMENT:** In general, "harassment" may be in the form of verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct that is unwanted by the individual(s). According to the laws, there are two forms of "harassment." They are quid pro quo and hostile work environment harassment.

**Quid Pro Quo Harassment:** Generally, quid pro quo harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct when:

1. submission to the harassment is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or
2. submission to or rejection of harassment is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual or
3. the harassment has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

**Hostile Workplace Harassment:** This term refers to any action that unreasonably interferes with work performance, or which creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment. Every employee of RCS is

assured the right to work in an environment free from unlawful workplace harassment and retaliation. Unlawful workplace harassment is unwelcome or unsolicited speech or conduct based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity and pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, or parental status that creates a hostile work environment or circumstances involving quid pro quo. One or more of these factors must exist in order for the harassment to be considered unlawful.

**Reporting:** If you experience harassment based on race, sex, creed, religion, national origin, age, color, or handicapping condition that creates a hostile work environment or circumstances involving quid pro quo and that harassment is severe and pervasive:

1. Report the information to your supervisor and the RCS Human Resources Director
2. Report it in writing
3. Be specific about the exact nature of the discrimination or harassment
4. Sign and date the complaint and keep a copy
5. Do not retaliate against the offending person

Violators of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including unpaid suspension and termination.

**C. INTERNET AND E-MAIL POLICY:** Computers that are the property of RCS are subject to the Internet and email usage policy and RCS owns all resources associated with such usage. RCS has the right and capability to monitor Internet browsing and email usage by each user on our system. By "our system," we mean all computers for which we pay the monthly usage fees whether on or off our premises. We reserve the right to always access any of this technology. If during your employment you use these systems, you have to know we may be looking at all the information in your email messages or your Internet surfing history. While Internet and email usage can enhance productivity, they may also be a distraction from productive work. Our goal is that employees will use these for our mutual benefit.

To ensure compliance, RCS has developed an Internet and Electronic Mail Usage Policy. Staff and participants will sign two copies of the



policy. One copy will be given to the staffer/participant and the other kept in his/her file.

**Social Media Policy:**

1. If you post any comment about our nonprofit, you must clearly and conspicuously state that you are posting in your individual capacity and that the views posted are yours alone and do not represent the views of our agency.
2. Unless given written consent, you may not use our nonprofit's logo on your posts.
3. All postings on social media must comply with our confidentiality and disclosure of proprietary information policies. If you are unsure about the confidential nature of information you are considering posting, consult with your manager or supervisor.
4. Do not link to the company's website or post any official agency material on a social media site without written permission from the Executive Director.
5. Remember, you are responsible for what you write or present on social media. You can be sued by other employees or any individual that views your social media posts as defamatory, harassing, libelous, or creating a hostile work environment.
6. All agency policies that regulate off-duty conduct apply to social media activity including, but not limited to, policies related to illegal harassment, code of conduct, nondiscrimination, and protecting confidential and/or proprietary information.
7. Employees may not use nonprofit equipment for non-work-related activities without permission. Additionally, our policy on *Internet and Email* apply to social media use at work, including our policy that personal use of our computers, including personal social media activities, should not interfere with your duties at work. We monitor our facilities to ensure compliance with this restriction.
8. This policy is not intended to interfere with the right to participate in concerted activity under the NLRA.

**D. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:**

No employee, officer, agent, board member, council member or other faction of RCS shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by federal funds if a real or apparent conflict of interest would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when the employee, officer, agent, etc., or any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for an award. The officers, employees, and agents of RCS shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, or parties to sub agreements, unless such item is unsolicited and of nominal value. This includes an individual's personal interests or concerns being inconsistent with what is best for RCS and any program or department thereof.

***Gifts to Employees:*** An employee may not solicit, receive, or participate in any arrangement leading to the payment of money or anything of value to the employee, the employee's family, friends, or any business in which the employee or the employee's family has an interest in consideration for a past or prospective agency business.

It is important that employees avoid any appearance of potential bribery or improper influence by service recipients, competitors, consultants, suppliers, and vendors. Employees may not solicit gifts of any value from any person in return for any business, service or confidential information of RCS or accept anything of value from anyone in connection with the business of the agency, either before or after a transaction is discussed or consummated. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the RCS Executive Director or Human Resources Director, employees may not solicit gifts of any value or accept gifts of significant value from a customer, supplier, funding source, contractor or subcontractor, or competitor.

The term “gift” includes but is not limited to substantial favors, money, credit, special discounts on goods or services, free services, transportation tickets, reimbursement for travel and subsistence, loans of goods or money, tickets to expensive entertainment or sporting events, hotel expenses, or excessive entertainment. Gifts to an employee’s immediate family (spouse, domestic partner, children, parents and siblings) are included in this policy.

Gifts that create a feeling of obligation between an employee and customer should neither be given nor accepted. RCS does recognize that situations may arise when it would be appropriate for an employee to accept the benefit of another’s expenditure. Such situations include:

- ▶ Gifts of nominal value given at Christmas, other holidays, or special occasions which represent expressions of friendship, if the gifts are entirely voluntary and are not sought or suggested;
- ▶ Reasonable entertainment at luncheon, dinner, or business meetings with present or prospective customers and suppliers, when the expenditure can properly be charged as a business expense;
- ▶ Unsolicited advertising or promotional material (e.g., pens, calendars, etc.) of a value not exceeding \$25.00; and
- ▶ Gifts or bequests based upon family or close personal relationships that existed long before any agency business.

If the circumstances surrounding a gift are such that rejection or return of the gift would cause embarrassment or potentially damage friendly relations between the giver and the agency, the employee must promptly report the gift and its estimated value in writing to the Executive Director or Human Resources Director of RCS who may require that the gift be returned or donated to charity.

***Gifts by Employees:*** Gifts provided to business associates using agency money is forbidden. Promotional items may be allowed.

**E. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT:** RCS is aware that employees may need or want to work elsewhere while employed with RCS; however, employees may not work at other employment while employed by RCS if the nature of the business or position interferes with the work, including Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP), duties of the employee during hours for which the employee is paid with RCS, including CACFP funding.

Employees are expected to devote their full time and ability to the agency’s interests during regular working hours. RCS discourages employees from holding outside employment that could interfere with their responsibilities at RCS. Employees may not engage in outside employment that interferes, competes, or conflicts with the interests of RCS. Outside work may not interfere with normal working time nor may it necessitate such long hours as to impair an employee’s ability to meet regular job responsibilities to RCS. Examples of situations arising from outside employment that may involve a conflict of interest are:

- a. Employment which involves the use of RCS equipment, supplies, or facilities
- b. Employment which involves the preparation, audit, or certification of statements or documents upon which RCS may place reliance in business dealings
- c. Employment that may reflect adversely on the employee or on RCS
- d. Employment which involves the rendering of investment, legal, or other advice, or exercising judgment which is based upon information, reports or analysis that are accessible primarily from or through employment with RCS
- e. Employment which may infer sponsorship or support of RCS on behalf of the outside employer or an outside organization
- f. Employment contingent on employment with RCS or which is designed to use confidential information from the employee’s position with RCS



Employees may not use RCS's name (including letterhead or personal websites), facilities or relationships for personal benefit or for outside work.

#### F. **LETTERS OF SUPPORT/LEVERAGING**

RCS staff are often approached for letters of support. While we do support many endeavors, it is necessary to impose limitations. The following guidelines must be observed when writing letters of support or collaboration. Any deviation from the following procedures must have the approval of the RCS Executive Director.

- Requests for letters of support should be submitted in writing
- Requests should include a brief description of the program, project, etc., for which support is being solicited.
- No letter of support from RCS staff may include any reference to monetary value. For example, the cost for three children to attend Head Start would have a value of X dollars.
- A copy of the request for support letter and the letter of support written by RCS staff must be submitted to the RCS Executive Director.

#### G. **PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND DEMEANOR**

Discretion in style of dress and behavior is essential to the efficient operation of RCS. Employees are, therefore, required to dress in appropriate business attire and to behave in a professional, businesslike manner. Please use good judgment in your choice of work clothes and remember to always conduct yourself in a way that best represents you and RCS.

Office staff are in a business setting and are expected to present a professional rather than a casual image. You are often a role model for the clients of RCS. Always be neat, clean and well groomed. Attire worn must be appropriate for the place and type of work.

All staff are expected to dress in **professional business** attire when attending meetings, conferences, training sessions, etc. as a representative of RCS.

**Casual business** attire is acceptable for day-to-day office work or casual training, meetings, etc. True business casual is simply a comfortably relaxed version of traditional business attire with no sacrifice of professionalism. Following is a general overview of appropriate business casual attire. The lists tell you what is and is not generally acceptable as business casual attire.

#### **Generally, Not Acceptable:**

- Inappropriate slacks or pants include sweatpants, exercise pants/clothing, Bermuda shorts, short shorts, shorts, or bib overalls.
- Short, tight skirts that ride halfway up the thigh are inappropriate for work. No hemlines are to be more than three inches above the knee when standing. The only "shorts" that may be worn in the office are the skort or split-skirt style.
- Sundresses, beach dresses, and spaghetti-strap dresses are inappropriate for the office ***unless worn with*** an over-shirt or under-shirt, sweater, jacket, etc.
- Inappropriate attire for work includes tank tops; midriff tops; shirts with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, cartoons, or slogans; halter-tops; tops with bare shoulders and t-shirts unless worn under another blouse, shirt, jacket, or dress. Shirttails must be long enough to be tucked in.
- Hats are not appropriate in the office.

#### **Generally Acceptable:**

- Slacks wool pants, flannel pants, dressy Capris, and nice-looking dress synthetic pants are acceptable.
- Casual shirts, dress shirts, sweaters, tops, golf-type shirts, and turtlenecks are acceptable attire for work. Most suit jackets or sport jackets are also acceptable attire for the office if they violate none of the listed guidelines.
- Dress and skirt length should be at a length at which you can sit comfortably in public. No hemlines more than three inches above the knee when standing.
- Tights and leggings must be accompanied by a fingertip length or longer top or dress

- Loafers, clogs, boots, flats, dress heels, and leather deck-type shoes are acceptable for the office.

**Exceptions:**

- Teaching staff, CNAs, and Home Management personnel staff may wear shorts (hemline not more than three inches above the knee when standing), warm-up suits, and athletic shoes while working in the field.
- In addition, Home Care staff making home visits are expected to wear smocks and a nametag.

**H. DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE – SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**Policy** - Regional Consolidated Services (RCS) is committed to maintaining a drug free workplace in compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that work environments are free from the presence of illegal drugs and alcohol, that employees can perform their tasks safely and efficiently, and that employees are not under the influence of any illegal drug or alcohol. RCS reserves the right to require drug and/or alcohol screening for the purpose of enforcement of this policy.

To educate employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, the RCS policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace, and available drug counseling and rehabilitation, we have established a drug-free awareness program. Information will be presented through various methods including, but not limited to, posters, pamphlets, formal training, fliers, and distribution to each employee of our Workplace Substance Abuse Policy and Procedures.

RCS has the right to test for any drug, including prescription medications, if we suspect drug abuse. Employees who violate any aspect of this policy will be terminated.

**Testing of Employees** - Reasons for testing include but are not limited to:

**All RCS Staff**

- ▶ Reasonable suspicion – only staff of RCS who have certification of Reasonable Suspicion Training may call for such testing.

**Head Start Staff**

- ▶ CDL bus drivers - pre-employment and random selection to promote safety and prevent accidents occurring during and in the course and scope of employment.
- ▶ All Head Start - random selection as required by The Federal Highway Administration and Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991 and the Federal Transit Administration.

**Procedures**

- Applicability** – This substance abuse policy applies to all employees of Regional Consolidated Services.
- Searches** – Employees may be required to empty the contents of their apparel, purses or other personal belongings where RCS has reason to suspect the presence, sale, use and/or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol or in connection with a post-accident investigation.
- Positive test results** – Employees who have positive illegal drug or alcohol screening results will be immediately discharged. Any employee who tests positive may request a confirming test of the original sample at his/her expense.
- Sale, Distribution or Possession** – Employees involved in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, sale, or use of a controlled substance, including alcohol, in the workplace or while engaged in RCS business off RCS premises shall be immediately discharged.

Employees convicted of the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, sale, of a controlled substance, including alcohol, and those convicted of driving while

impaired shall be immediately discharged.

RCS prohibits such conduct during non-working time to the extent that it impairs an employee's ability to perform on the job or threatens the reputation or the integrity of RCS.

- e) Confidentiality – Information obtained through implementation of this policy is intended to be for protecting the health and safety of employees, customers, and others. The confidentiality of all test results and employee treatment and/or rehabilitation will be strictly maintained, to the extent allowed by law, with only those persons having a need to know being informed of the results. Violation of confidentiality will result in termination of employment.
- f) Notification of Criminal Drug Statute Conviction – As a condition of employment, employees convicted of controlled substance related violations in or out of the workplace, including driving while impaired and pleas of no contest must inform RCS within five days after such conviction or plea.
- g) Failure to Cooperate – An employee's refusal to allow a drug search, to permit confiscation of suspected material, to submit to a drug screen, or to cooperate fully with the enforcement of this policy will result in termination.
- h) Required Consent and Release form – Employees are required at time of employment and at other times requested by RCS to sign a Consent and Release of Liability for Drug Testing. As part of this substance abuse policy, each employee is required to have a signed copy of this form in his personnel file. Failure to sign this form upon request by RCS is grounds for termination.
- i) Prescription Drugs – Employees who are required to take prescription drugs are expected to take such medications as prescribed. Abuse of prescription medications shall result in immediate termination.

**I. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES:** From time to time, all staff must attend to personal responsibilities while at work. This need may require personal copies, personal telephone calls, and may even require personal long distance telephone calls or faxes. Staff are allowed these conveniences provided the employee reimburses RCS for the costs.

- Personal calls that will take extended time - whether one or many - should be made during non-work hours.
- Because certain things cannot be charged to the programs and other monies must be used for payment, RCS must charge 15 cents for each personal copy. Staff may either leave change in the designated location or allow the deduction from their paycheck.

Staff are to limit their use of work time in attending to personal responsibilities.

**J. Audits, Examinations, Monitoring, and Investigations:** All employees are expected to cooperate fully and truthfully with auditors and monitors. Withholding or omitting material facts or information may result in the audit or other reports being incomplete or incorrect. Declining to cooperate with audits, monitoring, examinations, or investigations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

**K. NONDISCRIMINATION:** RCS is committed to allowing employees to progress based on their talents. No employment decision may be based on, for example, an employee's or employment applicant's race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity and pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, or parental status. Every employee is subject to this standard. Employees who believe this policy has been violated should contact the RCS Human Resources Director

**L. EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES AND CLOSE**

**PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS:** For purposes of this policy, “relative” is a spouse, child, parent, guardian, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, plus the various combinations of half, step, in-law and adopted relationships that can be derived from those named. Close personal relationships include, but are not limited to, unmarried couples, dating relationships, live-in relationships, business partners or others with whom the employee has business or financial dealings or any other close personal friendship that might influence the employee’s judgment. RCS permits the employment of qualified relatives of employees or others with whom the employee has a close personal relationship as long as such employment does not, in the opinion of RCS, create actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

RCS will exercise sound business judgment in the placement of such employees in accordance with the following guidelines:

Employment of individuals who are related by blood or marriage or who have a close personal relationship with an RCS staffer is permitted provided no direct reporting or supervisory/ management relationship exists. That is, no employee is permitted to work within the “chain of command” of a relative or someone with whom the staffer has a close personal relationship such that one person’s work responsibilities, salary, or career progress could be influenced by the other.

No relatives or person with whom an RCS staffer has a close personal relationship are permitted to work in the same department or in any other positions in which RCS believes an inherent conflict of interest may exist.

Relatives of Head Start teaching staff may work as paid substitutes within the Head Start program, substituting for their relative(s) or other Head Start staff.

It is to be clearly understood that such relative (substitute) shall not be eligible for a regular position within the Head Start program until/unless the regular staffer is no longer employed within the Head Start program.

This could affect the advancement of employees. It is the responsibility of each employee and supervisor to observe and adhere to this policy in applying for and recommending for in-house job changes. This policy applies to all categories of employment at RCS, including regular, temporary, and part-time classifications.

RCS staff members affected by this policy at the time of its adoption will be exempt and thus grandfathered in under the former policies.

**M. CONFIDENTIALITY:** Employees must maintain the confidentiality and security of all confidential information that comes into their possession during their employment with RCS. Confidential information includes any information, whether in tangible form, that is not generally disclosed to the public and that is useful or helpful to or required by the agency. This includes but is not limited to personnel matters regarding RCS staff, pension, 401(k), salary, evaluations, medical information, etc. Confidential information acquired by an employee through his/her employment is privileged and must be held in the strictest confidence.

The only proper way to discard confidential information is shredding. It will be a violation of the confidentiality policy of RCS to discard confidential information in any other manner.

It is the policy of RCS to provide confidentiality to all individuals (past and present) served by this agency. Employees shall not divulge agency or client/participant information outside the confines of agency offices. This is to include media and governmental representatives without approval from the Executive Director. Employees shall not relay information from one

work site to another, one employee to another, or other service agencies/providers except where appropriate for business purposes. Confidential matters may be discussed with immediate supervisors or in team conferences/staff meetings where a matter of importance or a problem needs to be reviewed. Any RCS employee who violates this confidentiality shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

▪ **Client Information:** It is the policy of RCS to safeguard the confidential aspects of its relationship with clients/customers/service recipients. Examples include but are not limited to names, addresses, income, and any information regarding the eligibility of clients for services from RCS. All Social Security numbers are to be kept confidential and used only for legitimate business purposes and kept out of public view. Living conditions, adversities, services received from RCS or other providers, relationships, health, and medical information, and/or other private information of RCS clients is to remain confidential.

▪ **Employee Information:** It is the policy of RCS to safeguard the confidential aspects of its relationship with employees, satisfy the requirements of applicable labor laws, and maintain uniformity in replies to inquiries regarding present and former employees. In order to ensure that this policy is consistently maintained, any request for employment information regarding present or former employees must be referred to the RCS Human Resources Director. Salary verification should be directed to the finance office and questions regarding pension, 401(k), or other benefits should be directed to the Benefits Coordinator. Unless prior approval from the Human Resources Director is obtained, employees should not write a letter of recommendation for a current or past employee of RCS.

RCS recognizes and protects the privacy and confidentiality of employee medical and

personnel records. Such records must not be shared or discussed inside the agency except for legitimate business purposes or outside the agency except as authorized by the employee or as required by law, rule, regulation, or a subpoena or order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction or requested by a judicial, administrative, or legislative body. The RCS Human Resources Director must approve requests for such records from anyone outside the agency.

N. **FUNDRAISING:** Because there are certain business operating expenses for which grant monies cannot be used, RCS participates in fundraising activities to cover those expenses. RCS believes that philanthropy is based on voluntary action for the common good. We strive to attain and maintain the respect and trust of the public and ensure that donors and prospective donors can have full confidence in our agency and in our causes. To accomplish this, the RCS Board of Directors will exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities and RCS will:

1. Assure contributors that their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given.
2. Inform the public of our mission.
3. Make known the identity of those serving on our Board of Directors and make accessible our most recent financial statements.
4. Give appropriate acknowledgement and recognition to contributors.
5. Assure contributors that information about their donation is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by law.
6. Assure contributors that relationships with individuals representing organizations of interest to the donor will be professional in nature.
7. Make known whether those seeking donations are volunteers, employees of RCS, or hired solicitors.



## 8. DISCIPLINE, SEPARATION, AND TERMINATION

Employment with RCS is "at-will." This means that you may terminate your employment at any time with or without notice or cause. It also means that RCS can terminate your employment, at any time, with or without notice or cause. While RCS generally exercises progressive discipline, it is not bound or obligated to do so. Discipline may begin at any step depending on the seriousness of the offense.

As an at-will employee, you are not guaranteed, in any manner, that you will be employed for any set period. No one in the company, except the Executive Director, in a written, signed contract, may make any representation, or promise to you that you are other than an at-will employee. Any employee, manager or supervisor who makes such a representation or promise to you is not authorized to do so.

### A. SEPARATIONS

**Types of Separations:** All separations of employees from positions in the service of RCS shall be designated as one of the following types and shall be accomplished in the manner indicated.

These are resignation, reduction in force, disability, retirement, dismissal, death or other.

**Resignation:** Employees holding an administrative, supervisory position or other key position must give and work a four-week notice of resignation. These include but are not limited to all exempt staff, lead teachers, component coordinators, assistant directors, Benefits Coordinator, and payroll clerk. Other employees are required to give and work a two-week notice. Notice of resignation must be in writing.

If you submit notice of resignation, a freeze will be placed on your leave privileges. This will be done so that you cannot substitute accrued leave for time worked and thereby not

actually work the full period of notice. If you need a short period of time off, submit the Request for Leave to your supervisor. The supervisor will then approve or disapprove the leave as they would during any other time of your employment.

**Layoff:** RCS may temporarily separate an employee due to shortage of funds or other operating necessities. Affected staff will be given as much notice as possible and instructed to register with the North Carolina Division of Employment Services for unemployment insurance payments. Temporary layoffs will be for a specified time and will require a Personnel Action Form. At the end of the layoff period, the staffer will be expected to return to work at his/her assigned time and place. At the discretion of the RCS Executive Director, staff on temporary layoff may be required to pay the cost of their own health insurance premiums if funding is not available.

**Reduction in Force Policy**– RCS may separate an employee whenever it is necessary due to shortage of funds, shortage of work, abolishment of a position, or other material change in duties or organization. Retention of employees shall be based on systematic consideration of all the following factors: type of appointment; relative efficiency; actual and/or potential adverse impact on protected group individuals; and length of service.

**Agency Responsibility** – RCS has developed written guidelines for reduction in force, which meet its particular needs and provide assurance to employees that potential reductions shall be considered on a fair and systematic basis.

It is the responsibility of RCS to inform the employee of separation as soon as possible and to inform the employee, in writing, of the reasons for the reduction in force, his/her eligibility for reemployment consideration, appeal rights, and other benefits available.

RCS shall provide employees with a minimum of



two weeks' notice of separation unless extenuating circumstances make this impossible.

**Assurance** – Separation of employees through reduction in force will not occur until RCS has exhausted every feasible alternative available. Therefore, a reduction in force decision will be reached only after measures such as a hiring freeze on vacant positions and limits on purchasing and travel have been initiated.

A reduction in force necessarily compels a thorough evaluation of the funding levels and accomplishments of specific programs, the need for positions, and the relative value of specific employees so that RCS can provide the highest level of service possible with a reduced work force.

**Guidelines** – RCS's guidelines for reduction in force will include, in addition to or instead of other factors, the following criteria:

1. Determination of the number of positions that must be terminated to meet the established goal.
2. The feasibility of eliminating entire programs or parts of programs.
3. Identification of areas where the number of positions must be reduced or eliminated.
4. Identification of positions to be eliminated to determine whether personnel can be interchanged with other work units. Before deletion, attention will be given to using vacant positions to use employees who would otherwise be separated.
5. Exploration of all measures that would avoid the involuntary separation of employees.
6. Evaluation of employees subject to reduction in force by using the following criteria, where possible, and other where appropriate: •Needs of agency to deliver services, •Relative skills, knowledge, productivity and value of employees,

•Length of service of employees.

7. Statement that guidelines have been followed in reduction in force.

**Disability:** An employee may be separated for disability when the employee cannot perform the required duties because of a physical or mental impairment. The employee or Executive Director may initiate action for disability separation, but in all cases, consideration for disability separation shall be supported by medical evidence as certified by a competent physician. Before an employee is separated for disability, a reasonable effort shall be made to locate alternative positions within the agency's service for which the employee may be suited. Reasonable accommodations will be considered if appropriate for the employee and RCS, and if they do not impose undue hardship on the operation of a program or the agency.

**Dismissal: *Introductory Employee*** – An employee may be dismissed during or at the conclusion of the introductory period. An introductory employee who is dismissed may not appeal such action.

***Regular Employee*** - All dismissals of regular employees will include a written summary giving the circumstances and facts leading to the dismissal. A copy of the summary will be placed in the official employee file and a copy given to the employee upon his/her request.

**Death:** All compensation due in accordance with this policy will be paid to the estate of a deceased employee. The date of death shall be recorded as the separation date for computing compensation due.

**B. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS:** A regular employee may be suspended, demoted, or dismissed, as well as being subjected to a reduction in pay or reduction in work hours, being reassigned or other action considered appropriate by RCS. Such action would be taken because of failure in performance of duties or failure in personal conduct and, as appropriate, the laws and regulations governing specific

programs. The employee will be given a written notice including the recommended effective date, reasons for the action, and appeal rights available to the employee.

**1. Suspended:** RCS recognizes two types of suspension:

***Disciplinary***– An employee who is suspended for disciplinary reasons shall be relieved temporarily of all duties and responsibilities and shall receive no compensation for the period of suspension. Periods of suspension: one full working day to five full working days.

A written summary giving the circumstance and facts leading to the suspension shall be prepared. One copy will be delivered to the employee and one copy filed in the official employee file.

***Immediate***– The RCS Executive Director or Executive Committee of the RCS Board of Directors may suspend or authorize suspension of an employee without warning. Such suspension would be due to complaints or conditions requiring extraordinary procedures to avoid an undue disruption of the work or the project; to protect the safety of persons or property; or for other serious reasons.

*Immediate suspension is not disciplinary.* It is to allow an opportunity for the Executive Director or Executive Committee to determine the facts and ready a decision regarding the employees continued status with RCS.

A written summary giving the circumstance and facts leading to the suspension shall be prepared. One copy will be delivered to the employee and one copy filed in the official employee file. If the employee is found to be at fault or responsible, the immediate suspension period will be without pay. Otherwise, the employee will be paid for the period of suspension, which may be after the regular pay date(s).

**2. Demoted:** RCS recognizes two types of demotion.

***Disciplinary Demotion*** – Employees who fail in the performance of duties or demonstrate failure in personal conduct may be demoted to a lesser position and pay rate for disciplinary reasons. Employees who do not maintain certification, educational requirements, or other position requirements may be demoted.

***Demotion for No Cause*** - An employee who wishes to accept a position with fewer duties and responsibly may be required to accept reduced pay.

### **C. CAUSES FOR DISCIPLINE OR TERMINATION** –

While RCS generally exercises progressive discipline, it is not bound or obligated to do so. Discipline may begin at any step depending on the seriousness of the offense.

The following is only a guideline. RCS reserves the right to terminate at will.

**1. *Failure in Performance of Duties:*** An employee whose work is unsatisfactory will be notified in what way the work is deficient and what must be done if the work is to be satisfactory.

An employee who is suspended, demoted, dismissed, reduced in pay or hours, or reassigned for unsatisfactory performance of duties may be given up to three warnings before disciplinary action is taken. For example, the employee's supervisor may initiate one or more discussions. An oral warning may be issued that advises the employee that if the problem continues, more forceful corrective action will be taken and/or a final and written warning may be issued thereby serving notice upon the employee that corrective action must be taken immediately to avoid disciplinary actions. The written warning will contain a general description of the problem and guidelines for improvement. A record of the dates of discussion(s) and oral warning(s) along with a copy of the written warning will be placed in the employee's personnel file. Discipline may begin

at any step depending on the seriousness of the offense. The employee will be allowed ten working days to respond to a final written warning. This response may be prepared by the employee or his/her representative, as he/she may direct in writing.

In the event similar problems occur, disciplinary action may be initiated without repeating the above steps.

The following causes relating to failure in the performance of duties are *representative* of those considered to be adequate grounds for disciplinary action:

1. Inefficiency, negligence, or incompetence in the performance of duties.
2. Excessive absences
3. Failure to follow instructions, guidelines, policies, etc.
4. Careless, negligent, or improper use of agency property or equipment.
5. Physical or mental incapacity to perform duties.
6. Discourteous treatment of the public or other employees.
7. Absence without approved leave. It should be noted that any employee absent from the work or training site for three consecutive days without notifying his/her supervisor may be terminated from work or training without notice at the request of the supervisor.
8. Habitual improper use of leave privileges.
9. Habitual pattern of failure to report for duty at the assigned time and place.
10. Violation of health and safety procedures and precautions.

**2. *Failure in Personal Conduct*** - An employee may be subjected to immediate disciplinary action for causes relating to personal conduct detrimental to agency service. Action would be taken to avoid any undue disruption of work, to protect the safety of persons or

property, or for other serious reasons.

The following causes relating to failure in personal conduct are *representative* of those considered adequate grounds for immediate disciplinary action:

1. Fraud in securing appointment
2. Conduct unbecoming of an employee
3. Harassment
4. Conviction of a felony or of a misdemeanor which would adversely affect performance of duties, or entering a plea of “no contest” to either
5. Misappropriation of funds or property
6. Falsification of records for personal profit or to grant special privileges
7. Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or narcotic drugs or partaking of such things while on duty or while on agency property. It is to be noted that prescribed medication may be taken within the limits set by a physician so long as medically necessary and which are not disruptive to the employee’s regular duties and/or job performance. A drug-free workplace policy form is required to be signed by every employee
8. Willful damage or destruction of property
9. Willful acts that would endanger the lives and property of others
10. Willful acts that cause damage to or jeopardize the program(s) or agency.
11. Acceptance of gifts in exchange for “favors” or “influence”
12. Incompatible employment or conflict of interest
13. Violation of political activity restrictions
14. Violation of RCS and/or program specific policy regarding things such as, but not limited to, confidentiality, child abuse, and anti-weapons.
15. Gross Insubordination.

An employee subjected to immediate disciplinary action for causes relating to personal conduct will be given a statement of the charges, be allowed ten working days to respond in writing, and be given a prompt written statement of the decision of the Executive Director or Executive Committee.

**D. INSUBORDINATION:** - The legal definition of insubordination is "willful failure to obey a supervisor's lawful orders." In short, an employee is required to follow any reasonable request by the employer to maintain the right to work for that employer.

Three elements constitute insubordination. First, the supervisor or employer gave a direct order to the employee. Second, the employee understood the order. Third, the employee blatantly refused to follow the order whether through action, words, or both.

Where appropriate, progressive discipline will be used for insubordination; however, in some instances insubordination may lead to immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination. Immediate discipline or termination may result from gross insubordinate behaviors such as but not limited to:

- Threats to harm RCS, or a supervisor, manager, or other employee of the company.
- Abusive or profane language to a supervisor in front of other employees, or abusive or profane language to other employees in front of supervisor or manager is not tolerated.
- Refusal to adhere to a criminal background check, or a drug and alcohol test.
- Fighting / physical abuse.
- Indecent behavior.
- Theft.
- Making inappropriate, unprofessional, or disparaging comments about management

**E. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT:** Employees planning to terminate their employment relationship with RCS are urged to provide adequate notice. Certain staff will be asked for a four-week notice; they include but are not limited to all exempt staff, lead teachers, component coordinators, assistant directors, benefits coordinator, assistant HR manager, LA monitor, and payroll clerk. Others are

asked for a two-week notice. Notice is to be submitted in writing to your supervisor or the Executive Director of RCS. Proper notice may be given either through use of the RCS Voluntary Resignation Form or through a personal letter of resignation.

Employees who plan to retire are urged to provide RCS with a minimum two-month notice. This will allow time for the processing of appropriate forms.

Employment with RCS is at-will. Although RCS hopes our relationships with employees are long term and mutually rewarding, RCS reserves the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time.

**F. EXIT INTERVIEWS:** An attempt will be made to conduct exit interviews with both outgoing employees and employees moving from one department to another within RCS. The purpose of an exit interview is to give employees an opportunity to discuss their job-related experiences. The exit interview with out-going employees includes a review of eligibility for benefit continuation and conversion, to ensure that all necessary forms are completed, and to collect all RCS property that may be in the employee's possession.

**G. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES:** An applicant or employee who feels they have been discriminated against may file a grievance with the Human Resources Director of RCS. The RCS Grievance Form must be used. The complainant (employee) will have an opportunity for an informal resolution and be notified of this in writing upon receipt of the grievance. If the attempt for informal resolution is not successful or if the employee does not want to pursue an informal resolution process, the Human Resources Director will proceed with a fair and impartial finding of fact investigation.

The finding of fact report will be given to the Executive Director. The Executive Director and/or her designee will issue a decision and recommendation.

The decision and recommendation may be

appealed to the Executive Committee of the RCS Board of Directors. The Human Resources Director will be responsible for convening a hearing.

If an employee who has been suspended, terminated, or reduced in pay successfully follows through the appeal/hearing procedures and obtains an award favorable to the employee from the Executive Committee of RCS, then the Executive Committee may, if the circumstances so indicate to them, reinstate the employee with back pay from the time of the initial disciplinary action.

Failure of the complainant to appear at the hearing shall act as a waiver of further appeals to the Executive Committee of the RCS Board of Directors.

In every instance, the employee will be advised to follow specific program requirements regarding grievances and complaints.



## 9. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

**A. PURPOSE** - The purpose of RCS's emergency procedures is for the protection of lives and property. This may be accomplished through preventive measures, awareness, and cooperation with staff, police, fire departments, and medical rescue teams.

**B. IDENTIFYING POTENTIALLY VIOLENT SITUATIONS:** If you ever have concerns about a situation that may turn violent, alert your supervisor immediately. It is better to err on the side of safety than to risk having a situation escalate.

*The following are warning indicators of potential workplace violence:*

- Intimidating, harassing, bullying, belligerent, or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior.
- Numerous conflicts with customers, co-workers, or supervisors.
- Bringing a weapon to the workplace (unless necessary for the job), making inappropriate references to guns, or making idle threats about using a weapon to harm someone.
- Statements showing fascination with incidents of workplace violence, statements indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve a problem, or statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides.
- Statements indicating desperation (over family, financial, and other personal problems) to the point of contemplating suicide.
- Direct or veiled threats of harm.
- Substance abuse.
- Extreme changes in normal behaviors.

*Once you have noticed a subordinate, co-worker, or customer showing any signs of the above indicators, you should take the following steps:*

- If they are a co-worker, you should

notify the employee's supervisor immediately of your observations.

- If they are a customer, notify your supervisor immediately.
- If they are your subordinate, then you should evaluate the situation by taking into consideration what may be causing the employees problems.
- If they are your supervisor, notify that person's manager.

It is very important to respond appropriately, i.e., not to overreact but also not to ignore a situation.

### **C. SERIOUS ACCIDENT, EMERGENCY, OR FATALITY:**

1. If the need is critical, the supervisor or a co-worker will either call or have someone else call 911. Have someone meet the medical rescue at the entrance to direct him or her.
2. If the need is not critical, the supervisor or co-worker will arrange transportation to the doctor's office or emergency room.
3. In all cases, the supervisor or co-worker will make out a detailed accident report and notify the Human Resources department of RCS. The report will be prepared in a chronological order.

### **Action to be taken:**

1. Give priority attention to providing all reasonable care for the injured person or persons. Secure doctor, ambulance, and police, as appropriate. Get the names, addresses, and telephone number of all witnesses, and a written statement of what happened if the witnesses must leave before the police arrive.
2. In case of a fatality, always notify the police. See that no disturbance of the victim or the surroundings is permitted until the police have assumed authority.
3. Retain a responsible adult at the scene of the accident.



4. Contact any of the following to secure additional assistance as needed:

Executive Director Krystal Rinehart  
336-963-0518  
HR Director Mary Bradshaw  
910-975-9754  
Finance Director Iriana Garcia  
910-975-7312

Anyone involved in a serious accident, emergency or fatality shall make no statement orally or in writing that could be interpreted either as an assumption or as rejection of responsibility for the accident until all facts are known.

5. No comments shall be made to the news media. Refer news media to the RCS Executive Director.
6. Using the Emergency Information forms, the supervisor or co-worker will contact by telephone the family member listed and follow the directions below. If emergency information is not available at the worksite or if there is any question regarding emergency information, contact the RCS administrative office at 336-629-5141.
7. Ensure the employee's spouse (or close relative) knows whom to call at RCS about benefits, etc.
8. CDL bus drivers involved in an accident are to follow the RCS Head Start Accident Policy.

### **Accident**

1. Report on the nature of the emergency.
2. Report the condition of the injured person.
3. Regarding Head Start children, secure the parent's wishes regarding medical treatment, hospitalization, transportation, personal attendance, etc.

### **Death**

1. Do not break the news of the death over the phone.
2. Tell the emergency contact that there was an accident, and the injured person has been/is being transported to the hospital.
3. Allow emergency personnel to inform the appropriate person of the death.

## **D. CIVIL DISTURBANCE**

### **1. Preventative Measures**

- A. RCS maintains an open policy with all employees to enable anyone with a problem to be heard. Strict confidence is maintained.
- B. The Human Resources Director will attempt to keep informed of any possible friction between employees and assist them in working out their differences.

### **2. Corrective Measures**

Disturbances that occur during working hours:

- The supervisor should be notified immediately and should attempt to eliminate the disturbance.
- If management cannot quiet the disturbance, the local police department should be contacted at 911.

## **E. THUNDERSTORMS, HURRICANES AND TORNADOS**

1. In case of tornadoes, hurricanes, or severe thunderstorms, the Executive Director or Human Resources Director will keep you informed and will decide whether to close the administrative office, and perhaps other worksites.
2. Head Start staff outside the administrative office are to follow the local education agency directive. The responsible Child Development Coordinator or Administrative Lead Teacher may close sites prior to an LEA decision due to imminent dangerous weather to ensure the safety of children and staff, and then notify the

Head Start Director as soon as it is feasible to do so.

3. All personnel will be informed, to the best of our ability, of the steps to take for their safety.
4. In the case of an emergency shutdown, management will try to use the local radio stations and telephone for communication.

**F. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES:**

Evacuation of the building will be necessary for

- Fire
- Fire drill
- Bomb threat
- Natural disaster

If there is a need for evacuation, the following procedures will be followed.

1. The person in charge or the person taking the telephone call will announce the following message in a clear and steady voice:  
  
***“We have a fire (bomb threat, etc.). All personnel please evacuate the building immediately.”***
2. Repeat the message three times.
3. The person in charge will take the daily sign in/sign out log with them.
4. Everyone from the building is to assemble in one pre-designated location.
5. Every supervisor is to count his/her staff to make certain everyone is accounted for. The daily log will also be used to account for all staff.
6. The person in charge at the scene will complete the evacuation report form and record the date, time of evacuation, and the total number of employees in each department, including themselves and visitors. Attach this form to the daily log.

7. It is the responsibility of employees to ensure that their visitors (persons not listed on the daily log) are evacuated and guided to the assembly point.

8. Absolutely do not leave the premises until you are dismissed by the person in charge. No one will be dismissed until it is certain that everyone is accounted for.

**G. In Case of Fire**

To extinguish the fire,  
Get to a fire extinguisher and **PASS**.

- P = pull out the locking pin**
- A = aim the nozzle at the base of the fire**
- S = squeeze the handle**
- S = use a sweeping motion**

Close all doors and windows to the affected area. In other words, contain or confine the fire to the area of origin.

## 10. Infectious Disease Control

Regional Consolidated Services will take proactive steps to protect the workplace in the event of an infectious disease outbreak. It is the goal of Regional Consolidated Services during any such time to strive to operate effectively and ensure that all essential services are continuously provided and that employees are safe within the workplace. Regional Consolidated Services is committed to providing authoritative information about the nature and spread of infectious diseases, including symptoms and signs to watch for, as well as required steps to be taken in the event of an illness or outbreak.

### A. Preventing the Spread of Infection in the Workplace

Regional Consolidated Services will ensure a clean workplace, including the regular cleaning of objects and areas that are frequently used, such as bathrooms, break rooms, conference rooms, door handles and railings. A committee will be designated to monitor and coordinate events around an infectious disease outbreak, as well as to create work rules that could be implemented to promote safety through infection control. We ask all employees to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of infectious disease in the workplace. The best strategy remains the most obvious— frequent hand washing with warm, soapy water; covering your mouth whenever you sneeze or cough; and discarding used tissues in wastebaskets. We will also endeavor to supply staff and visitors with alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas. Unless otherwise notified, our normal attendance and leave policies will remain in place. Individuals who believe they may face challenges reporting to work during an infectious disease outbreak should take steps to develop any necessary contingency plans.

For example, employees might want to arrange for alternative sources of childcare should schools close and/or speak with supervisors about the potential to work from home temporarily or on an alternative work schedule.

### B. Limited Travel

All nonessential travel should be avoided until further notice. Employees who travel as an essential part of their job should consult with management on appropriate actions. Business-related travel outside the State of North Carolina will not be authorized until further notice. Employees should avoid crowded public transportation when possible. Alternative scheduling options will be provided on a case-by-case basis. Contact human resources for more information.

### C. Telecommuting

Telework requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis. While not all positions will be eligible, all requests for temporary telecommuting should be submitted to your manager for consideration.

### D. Staying Home When Ill

Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to work even though they feel ill. During an infectious disease outbreak, it is critical that employees do not report to work while they are ill and/or experiencing the following symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people with an infectious illness such as the flu remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C) without the use of fever-reducing medications. (The Centers for Disease Control, NC DHHS, and our Local Health Department guidelines will be observed in all cases. Employees who report to work ill will be sent home in accordance with these health guidelines.

#### **E. Social Distancing Guidelines for Workplace Infectious Disease Outbreaks**

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, Regional Consolidated Services may implement these social distancing guidelines to minimize the spread of the disease among the staff.

During the workday, employees are to:

1. Avoid meeting people face-to-face. Employees are encouraged to use the telephone, online conferencing, e-mail, or instant messaging to conduct business as much as possible, even when participants are in the same building.
2. If a face-to-face meeting is unavoidable, minimize the meeting time, choose a large meeting room, and sit at least one yard from each other if possible; avoid person-to-person contact such as shaking hands.
3. Avoid any unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone nonessential meetings, gatherings, workshops, and training sessions.
4. Do not congregate in workrooms, breakroom, lobby, copier rooms or other areas where people socialize.
5. Bring lunch and eat at your desk or away from others (avoid lunchrooms and crowded restaurants).
6. Encourage members and others to request information and orders via phone and e-mail to minimize person-to-person contact. Have the orders, materials, and information ready for fast pick-up or delivery.

**Outside activities** Employees might be encouraged to the extent possible to: **1.** Avoid public transportation and avoid rush hour crowding on public transportation. **2.** Avoid recreational or other leisure classes, meetings, activities, etc., where employees might be exposed to contagious people.

#### **F. Temporary Telecommuting / Remote working policy**

In the event of an emergency such as a weather disaster or pandemic, Regional Consolidated Services may allow or require employees to work from home temporarily to ensure business continuity.

**Procedures:** In the event of an emergency, Regional Consolidated Services may require certain employees to work remotely. The department manager will advise these employees of such requirements. Employees and managers should prepare well in advance to allow remote work in emergency circumstances. This includes appropriate equipment needs, such as hardware, software, phone, and data lines. The IT department is available to review these equipment needs with employees and to provide support to employees in advance of emergency telework situations. For voluntary telework arrangements, either the employee or department manager can initiate a temporary telecommuting agreement during emergency circumstances. The employee and manager will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement, including equipment needs, workspace design considerations and scheduling issues. A telecommuting agreement will be prepared by human resources and signed by the employee and his or her manager. The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within his or her home for work purposes. Regional Consolidated Services will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture, or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space. Regional Consolidated Services will determine contingent upon available funding, the equipment needs for each employee on a case-by-case basis. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary company and customer information accessible from their home office. Employees should not assume any specified period of time for emergency telework arrangements, and Regional Consolidated Services may require employees to return to regular, in-office work at any time.

