



Durango Early Learning Center Personnel Policies

Welcome to Durango Early Learning Center!

We are excited that you are part of our team. Whether you are newly hired or have been a valued teacher for years, you have an important role at our school, and we value your skills, abilities and experience.

DELC was established in 1978 in Durango, Colorado. We are a not-for-profit corporation working in partnership with the Department of Human Services and the Colorado Preschool Program. We welcome students of all abilities and pledge to build on individual strengths, learning styles and interests in a safe, nurturing environment.

At DELC, we strive to promote a sense of community amongst our teachers and families and instill pride and ownership in our school's uniqueness and success. The policies and procedures outlined in this manual provide guidance toward achieving those goals and shape how we work together. Some policies are legally required, and others we set for ourselves—we embrace and abide by them all.

We are fortunate to have you as part of the DELC community. We have great expectations for what you can help our students achieve, and for how you can grow as a professional. We look forward to the part you'll play in a productive, creative and enriching school year for our staff, our children and our families.

Becca Trefry

Executive Director, Durango Early Learning Center

SECTION I: WELCOME

Vision

Durango Early Learning Center's vision is to be a role model in early childhood education in La Plata County, fostering a culture of equity and inclusion among families of diverse economic, social, cultural and racial/ethnic backgrounds, while upholding the highest standards in teaching and staffing practices.

Mission

Nurturing child development in partnership with families of diverse backgrounds.

Values

The principles that guide our organizational strategy and our individual actions:

- We are inclusive
- We are leaders
- We are honest
- We are curious
- We are playful and fun

Who We Are

Durango Early Learning Center (DELIC) is a non-profit 501(c)3, early childhood center that was founded in 1978. DELIC is a year-round program, serving children ages 2 to 5 years and licensed for 55 students per day. We value all children as individuals and recognize that each child has something special to bring to our community. We believe that the education of young children is a collaborative process, encompassing the child, their family, the school, and the larger community. We put these philosophies into action through learning by:

- Implementing a play-based approach to learning, utilizing daily observations on each child's interests and developmental needs to inform individualized learning experiences and adaptations to the classroom environment.
- Preparing children for kindergarten, and more importantly becoming functioning members of our larger community, is at the core of our social-emotional focus.
- Using a respectful and supportive approach to all aspects of behavior, striving to make connections with children to help them navigate the complicated nature of their emotions and interactions with others.
- Engaging families as active participants in their child's first formal educational experience and require annual family hours. Families support

the school through participation in classroom activities, purchasing of supplies and helping with facility upkeep.

- We cultivate programs to support diversity among our DELC community.

Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment

We at Durango Early Learning Center are committed to the following core values statements, adopted from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

- We appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human cycle of life.
- We base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn.
- We appreciate and support the bond between child and family.
- We recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community and society.
- We respect the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual (child, family members, colleagues).
- We respect diversity in children, families and colleagues.
- We recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect.

This code of conduct will be reviewed with new staff and a training refresher will be carried out during the staff work week in August and throughout the year if applicable.

Employment at Will

The employment relationship between DELC and employees is at-will. This means that employees are not hired for any specified period of time and their employment may be terminated at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice, by either DELC or the employee. DELC policy requires that all employees are at-will; any implied, oral, or written agreements or promises to the contrary are void and unenforceable, unless approved by an officer with the power to create an employment contract. There is no implied employment contract created by this Personnel Policy or any other Company document or written or verbal statement or policy.

Statement from the Board of Directors of DELC

The Board of Directors (Board) of DELC has adopted the personnel policies outlined in this document to establish performance and workplace expectations that serve the best interests of the school and our families. Our core values and policies are designed to promote and foster wholesome interpersonal relationships, professionalism and standards of excellence. Each employee is expected to contribute wholeheartedly to an atmosphere of positive collegiality. DELC expects open communication and sharing of ideas, knowledge and materials, which is beneficial to all staff members. We strive to keep DELC as a unique learning community where adults and children grow and learn together. All DELC employees are expected to comply with these policies.

SECTION II: RESPECT AT DELC

Ensuring a Respectful Workplace

We promote a dignified and respectful workplace at DELC. To help us achieve this, we:

- Foster professionalism among all our staff members.
- Value and celebrate differences in staff members, all our children and their families.
- Encourage all staff in pursuits of professional growth and development.
- Enforce a zero-tolerance policy for any conduct not conducive to a positive early learning environment, including threatening behavior, corporal punishment (including but not limited to hitting, spanking, shaking, and screaming at a child), and discrimination of any kind.

Equal Opportunity Employment

DELC is an equal employment opportunity employer. We consider individuals for employment or promotion according to their skills, abilities and experience. We believe that it is an essential part of the school's overall commitment to attract, hire and develop a strong, talented and diverse workforce. DELC is committed to complying with all applicable laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religious creed, age, national origin or ancestry, as well as those based on physical, mental or developmental disability, sex, military status, marital or registered domestic partnership status, medical condition, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, transgender status, or any other category protected by federal, state or local laws. All such discrimination is unlawful, and all persons employed by DELC are prohibited from engaging in discriminating conduct.

The Company takes allegations of discrimination, intimidation, harassment and retaliation very seriously and will promptly conduct an investigation when warranted.

Equal employment opportunity includes, but is not limited to, employment, training, promotion, demotion, transfer, leaves of absence and termination.

Grievance Policy

At DELC, we value respectful and open communication. We believe in solving issues and concerns by working together, through direct communication and positive attitudes in the workplace. If issues or concerns arise, please talk directly to the Executive Director. If you feel your concern was not addressed after speaking directly with the Executive Director, your next course of action is contacting a board member. Board member information can be found on our website: www.durangoeearlylearning.com.

Non-Harassment, Non-Discrimination and Non-Retaliation

DELC is committed to providing all staff members with a workplace that is free of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation of any kind. Our values include treating everyone with respect and dignity. DELC prohibits harassment and discrimination based on race, color, religious creed, age, national origin, ancestry, physical, mental or developmental disability, sex, military status, marital or registered domestic partnership status, medical condition, gender, gender identity, transgender status, or sexual orientation, as well as any other category protected by federal, state or local laws. This policy also prohibits unlawful harassment and discrimination based on the perception that anyone has a protected characteristic or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having a protected characteristic.

Unlawful harassment is defined as unwelcome verbal, visual or physical conduct which is based on a protected characteristic and creates a threatening, offensive or hostile work environment or unreasonably interferes with work performance. Examples of harassment include verbal conduct (slurs, jokes, insults, teasing), visual conduct (offensive posters, symbols, cartoons, drawings, computer displays or e-mails), or physical conduct (gestures, physically threatening another, or blocking someone's way) that puts down or shows hostility or dislike toward an individual because of any protected characteristic.

If an employee feels she/he has been subjected to unlawful harassment, or an employee knows (or suspects) of a situation at work where someone else may have been subjected to conduct which violates this policy, the employee should immediately notify the Executive Director or contact the Board of Directors. Retaliation is strictly prohibited against any staff member for making a good faith complaint of harassment or discrimination. If an employee believes he/she has experienced or witnessed retaliation, it must be promptly reported to the Executive Director or the Board of Directors.

DELC will take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment, discrimination or retaliation from occurring. All complaints of harassment and discrimination will be handled promptly and discreetly. If DELC determines that this policy has been

violated, it will take appropriate remedial action commensurate with the severity of the offense, up to and including immediate separation of employment of any person found to have violated DELC's policies.

Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace

DELC has a vital interest in ensuring a safe and healthy environment for our students and families. The unlawful or improper use of illegal drugs, alcohol, marijuana, and/or controlled substances in the workplace presents a danger to everyone. DELC does not allow the possession or use of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs and/or substances during working hours, while on school premises or while performing school business. Employees are not allowed to be under the influence of any of the above substances during working hours.

DELC understands that employees may need to use lawful prescription and over-the-counter medications. If prescription or over-the-counter medicine makes it unsafe for an employee to work, the employee must personally notify the Executive Director before reporting for a scheduled shift. Every employee must follow this policy. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Safety at DELC

The overall safety of every DELC community member is of paramount importance. Each DELC employee is responsible for the safety of each child, all colleagues and themselves. *Failure to directly and appropriately supervise students and ensure their safety is grounds for immediate termination and may result in additional individual liability.* To ensure appropriate safety measures:

- All staff members must complete all required pre-service early childhood training listed in the "Professional Development" section found on page 26 - 27.
- All employees are considered mandatory reporters and must have annual training on how, where, and when to report suspected or known child abuse or neglect.
- Teachers are required to move around and interact with the children while supervising outdoor areas. There must be a teacher present in all outdoor areas that children are occupying.

- Any employee witnessing a child displaying difficult or unusual behavior will inform the Executive Director as soon as possible. The Executive Director, along with appropriate staff, and where applicable, parents/guardians, will develop a plan for addressing/resolving such behavior.

Specific behavior guidelines are outlined in the family policy handbook as well as each employee's employment agreement, playground policies, and position job description.

SECTION III: WORKING AT DELC

Period of Employment

DELC operates on a year-round academic calendar commencing Monday of the last week of August through Friday of the third week of August of the following year.

Employment Classifications

Employment classification is either non-exempt or exempt from certain provisions of federal and state laws. The differences affect how the school schedules and pays you.

- **EXEMPT:** Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and applicable state law and who are exempt from overtime pay requirements are paid a set salary regardless of the number of hours worked per week. Employees may be called upon to work an irregular schedule, particularly in emergency situations; to help prepare for meetings, open house or other special events; and in connection with individual responsibilities. Employees are expected to commit their full time and attention to employment at DELC and may not work for other employers during the school year without prior approval from the Board of Directors.
- **NON-EXEMPT:** Employees whose positions do not meet FLSA and state exemption tests are considered non-exempt. Unless notified otherwise in writing by the Board, all employees of DELC are non-exempt. Employees who are classified as non-exempt (hourly) are entitled to overtime pay and subject to specific provisions of the federal and state wage and hour laws. An hourly employee may, upon approval of the Executive Director, be employed by another employer so long as that employment does not interfere with his/her employment with DELC.

Employee Status

Full-time employees: 32 or more hours per week.

Part-time employees: fewer than 32 hours per week but a minimum of 18 hours in order to be eligible for part-time PTO allotment and other school benefits.

Standard Work Week Hours

An average working week for full-time lead teachers will be approximately 40 hours, including off-site planning time outside the classroom.

- Full-time lead teachers will be paid one (1) hour per week for classroom planning/preparation and one (1) hour per week for uploading TS Gold observations and assessments (2 hours total per week). The afternoon float teacher will be paid (1) hour per week for off-site classroom planning/preparation.
- Assistant teachers will be paid one (1) hour per week off-site to help support their classroom lead teacher.

Teachers are able to complete these hours at their discretion. However, the Executive Director can mandate these hours to be completed at DELC during the work week if it is found that staff is not completing their planning/preparation time as designated above.

Any further hours worked must have the approval of the Executive Director. The Executive Director must approve overtime before a non-exempt employee works overtime hours.

Wellness verification

Prior to beginning employment with DELC, each employee must provide a valid statement from a licensed physician declaring that the employee is able to work with children and is free from communicable diseases. The statement will be kept on file and must be renewed annually or when the licensed physician requires.

In addition, the Executive Director may require that an employee submit to a more frequent examination, if the Executive Director believes that the employee may not be able to work with children or may have a communicable disease. Also, prior to employment, each employee must certify that she/he meets all applicable immunization requirements and has passed a tuberculin test. All staff members are required to be current with their immunizations and have evidence in their personal files or sign a form stating that to the best of their knowledge they have received required immunizations.

Salary and Wages

The Board of Directors will set the annual salary for the Executive Director based on level of education, relevant experience and qualifications, and years of employment at DELC.

With annual approval by the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will set salary and wages for all employees. Salaries and wages will be based on the employees ECE Credential 3.0 Level and years of employment at DELC.

Pay Scale based on ECE Credential 3.0

Credential Level	Starting Pay
Paid Intern	Colorado minimum wage
Level 1 (Assistant)	\$15
Level 2 (ECE Teacher)	\$16
Level 3 (Large Center Director)	\$17
Level 4	\$18
Level 5	\$19
Level 6	\$20

The ECE Credential 3.0 awards points based on formal education, experience in early childhood, early childhood coursework, ongoing professional development, and demonstrated competencies.

Pay Increases

Pay increases are used to respond to changes in cost of living and recognize increased experience in a particular position. They are determined yearly by the Board of Directors, based on the amount of funds budgeted in the pay increase pool and on DELC's overall financial health. Increases generally are established by the final pay period of the academic year and then put into effect for the first paycheck of the following fall term (each September). Certifications that move an employee up the pay scale will be put into effect in the next school year and must be maintained in order to keep at that pay level. (i.e. current director's certification letter or Level 4 credential above). In the case that an employee is eligible for a cost of living raise as well as a credential raise, the employee will receive whichever amount is higher.

Job Transfers

DELC aspires to promote qualified internal candidates to fill open positions whenever possible and practical. When job openings occur, current employees are encouraged to apply. The Executive Director and Board reserves the right to place an employee in whatever job it deems useful or necessary. All job transfers, reassignments, promotions, or lateral transfers are at the discretion of the Executive Director and/or Board.

Pay Periods

The designated pay period for all employees is semi-monthly. Paydays are 7th and 22nd of the month. Except as otherwise provided, if any date of paycheck distribution falls on a weekend or holiday, employees will be paid on the preceding scheduled workday. For overtime calculations, the standard seven-day payroll work week will begin at 12:00 a.m. Monday.

Benefits

- Full pay during all school closures: Thanksgiving break (three days; the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Thanksgiving week); winter break (two weeks); spring break (one week in March); bank holidays (Labor Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth); and summer break (one week in July that falls over Independence Day). **Total: 27 school days.**
- Full pay for any Durango 9-R School District designated snow days.
- In your first year of employment, you are eligible for paid sick time in accordance with the Colorado Healthy Families and Workplaces Act. You will receive 1 hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked, with a maximum payout of 48 hours. On your one-year anniversary of employment at DELC, you will no longer be accruing sick leave. Instead, you will be awarded 56 hours of Personal Time Off (PTO) which covers personal/vacation/sick time in addition to any unused sick time from your first year only. On each anniversary moving forward, you will have 56 PTO hours added to your PTO bank (not to exceed our 72-hour cap total).
- DELC offers \$200 a month towards an Individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangement (ICHRA) **after the 60-day waiting period.** If enrollment is waived, the employee will still receive \$200/month (full-time) or \$100/month (part-time) as a taxable medical stipend. In the instance that DELC does not participate in the ICHRA, all employees will still receive \$200/month (full-time) or \$100/month (part-time) as a taxable medical stipend.
- Cell phone reimbursement of \$50 a month (\$25 per paycheck) to recognize staff's use of cell phones for work purposes including, but not limited to documentation to be uploaded into the Teaching Strategies Gold program and taking photos for bi-monthly required newsletters.
- The opportunity to join the school's AFLAC plan, which offers supplemental medical, disability, and life insurance plans.
- The opportunity to partake in a 403B plan.
- Opportunity for funding to pay for early childhood education college courses and/or Childhood Development Associate (CDA) certification.
- 50% of tuition fees for employee's children is added per month as taxable income

Paid Time Off

The PTO program combines vacation, sick and personal days into a single PTO bank. If an employee wishes to use PTO for vacation, time off must be scheduled and approved by the Executive Director in advance with as much notice as possible under the circumstances. The Executive Director reserves the right to deny a request to use PTO for vacation based upon the needs of the school. Employees may also use PTO for illness or injury to the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family. DELC understands that unforeseen illness and injury may occur and expects all employees to comply with the school's communication policy to report any absences from school.

All employees regardless of full-time or part-time status may carry 16 PTO hours into the next school year. No further PTO will accrue once an employee has 72 hours of unused PTO.

Employees are responsible for knowing their PTO balance by logging into the automated timekeeping system and notifying the Executive Director if any questions arise. Any requests for additional unpaid time off shall be subject to the discretion of the Executive Director considering the needs of the school. Employees who have not used their PTO hours will receive priority for scheduling PTO over employees who have used all their PTO hours. No more than one classroom teacher may schedule to take the same day off without appropriate coverage in place and the expressed approval of the Executive Director.

DELC is proud to offer these PTO hours in addition to 27 paid days for scheduled school closures: Thanksgiving break (3 days), winter break (10 days), spring break (5 days), summer break (5 days), and Labor Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, and Juneteenth. DELC offers employees PTO hours in recognition that special and sometimes unexpected circumstances arise that require time off from work outside of designated school closures.

DELC compensates employees for any accrued but unused PTO at separation. DELC does not compensate employees for paid school closure days at separation because those benefits are accrued and contingent upon continued employment during the paid school closure time period.

Because consistent attendance for every DELC employee is vital to the well-being of the children assigned to each employee's classroom, DELC expects employees to schedule vacations whenever possible during school closures, and to use their best efforts to take PTO in a manner that fosters respect and consideration for colleagues and families.

Please be mindful of the cold and flu season that generally impacts the school from October through February each school year. Employees who exhaust all of their PTO days before the end of the cold and flu season will have to take unpaid time off for illness for the remainder of the school year.

Employees may not schedule unpaid time off above the maximum 72 hours of PTO. Any additional time off above the 72 will only be approved for sickness or emergencies and will be unpaid.

Public Health Emergency Leave

While Colorado is in a "Public Health Emergency" status, employers must provide employees with up to two weeks of paid leave (80 hours if full-time, less if part-time) for COVID-related needs. The current 80-hour requirement took effect on January 1, 2021, and remains in effect.

Employees may still have PHE hours available to use if they didn't use them in 2021, however employees don't get a new 80 hours each time they have a COVID-related need, and don't get a new 80 hours of PHE leave in 2022, except for newly hired full-time employees. Employees may use PHE leave until four weeks after a PHE ends.

PHE leave is usable for a range of COVID-related needs, not just for confirmed cases. COVID-related needs include:

- Illness with COVID symptoms
- Quarantining or isolating due to COVID exposure
- COVID testing
- Vaccination and side effects
- Inability to work due to health conditions that may increase susceptibility or risk of COVID
- COVID-related needs of family (illness, school closure, etc.).

Employers cannot require documentation from employees to show that leave is for COVID-related needs.

If an employee has unused, accrued PTO and/or Sick Leave when their need for PHE-related leave occurs, DELC will count this accrued leave as a "credit" toward the amount of PHE-related leave. Employees are allowed to use PHE-related supplemental leave for any of the above-listed PHE qualifying conditions, before using their accrued leave, if their reason for leave would qualify for both kinds of leave. For example, take a full-time employee who has 30 hours of accrued but unused paid sick leave, who then requests PHEL because he gets COVID. At the time of the PHEL request, the employee would get a 50-hour supplement to bring

him up to 80 hours of paid leave. The employee would then draw down the 50-hour supplement *first*, and—if the leave spanned longer than 50 hours—would draw down the 30 hours of accrued sick leave.

Paternity/Maternity leave

Employees who have been with DELC for three years or more will receive their salary for 240 school hours (30 school days) for maternity leave, on top of any unused PTO hours. Employees on maternity leave will not receive compensation exceeding 30 business days, unless engaged in specific tasks for DELC that have been requested and detailed by the Executive Director. Employees on maternity leave who choose to take more than three months' leave are not guaranteed their original job position; however, every effort will be made to re-employ employees in some capacity at DELC.

Compassionate Leave

Regardless of status and in addition to the paid personal leave described above, each employee shall receive five days of paid leave (working week) upon the death of an immediate family member (parent, spouse, child, sibling).

Transfer of PTO

Compassionate Transfer of Leave is defined as contributions of PTO from employees to other employees who are unable to work due to circumstances as outlined in the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act. Employees must have exhausted all forms of paid leave before they can receive transfers of leave from other employees, and they must not be receiving benefits from Worker's Compensation or Long Term Disability. Requests for Compassionate Transfer must be approved by the Executive Director; requests for receiving Compassionate Transfer of Leave by the Executive Director must be approved by the DELC Board of Directors.

Leave Without Pay

All regular full-time and regular part-time employees may be granted the following leaves of absence without pay:

- **Medical Leave:** Employees who are temporarily unable to perform their usual and customary work due to a personal illness or injury, including a pregnancy-related disability, will be granted a medical leave of absence. Medical leaves will be granted on the basis of a physician's written statement that an employee is no longer able to work due to a medical disability.

Employees who are absent for more than three consecutive calendar days will be required to provide a certification from a licensed medical provider supporting the need for leave and may be required to provide periodic recertification.

An employee who plans to take medical leave must provide the Executive Director reasonable notice of the date the leave will commence, the estimated duration of the leave, and the date on which it is expected that the employee will be able to return to work.

When an unplanned medical situation or emergency occurs that does not allow the employee to provide advance notification of the need for a medical leave, the employee must notify the Executive Director of the situation as soon as reasonably possible, but no later than three working days of an absence. If an employee is absent for more than three working days without notifying the Executive Director, the employee will be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

Unless otherwise required by law, the maximum amount of leave that will be granted for any medical disability is three months. Employees returning to work after any disability leave must have a written release from a physician verifying that they are able to return to work without presenting an immediate and significant risk to their health or safety or the health or safety of others.

- **Intermittent or Reduced Schedule Leave:** Leaves of absence under this policy may be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule when medically necessary. Leave due to a qualifying exigency may also be taken on an intermittent basis with approval from the Executive Director.

Timekeeping

All non-exempt employees must promptly record all time worked by clocking in and out using the provided time clock, located in the office. Employee time cards are DELC's way of ensuring employees receive the correct amount of pay. Employees may not work without recording their time (e.g., "off the clock"). Any questions about whether a task or project counts as time worked should be raised to the Executive Director.

Employees must always accurately mark the start and end of their shift by using the time clock, including their start and end times for lunch breaks. DELC provides employees with access to their time clock entries online and expects employees to review and ensure that all time entries are accurate. Clocking in early (more than 2 minutes before your scheduled shift) or late (more than 5 minutes after your scheduled shift) requires the Executive Director's approval.

Any inaccuracies should be reported to the Executive Director in order to be fixed immediately. Falsifying a timecard or working off the clock is strictly prohibited and may result in termination.

Payroll Advances

Employees may request a payroll advance no more than once a quarter. Payroll advances are only provided if the employee has already worked the equivalent number of hours and the advance will come out of the pay period immediately following. It is at the discretion of the Executive Director to grant additional payroll advances on a case-by-case basis.

Meals breaks and rest periods

In view of applicable legal requirements, on the days that non-exempt employees work more than 9 hours, you shall take a 1-hour unpaid meal break in which you are relieved from all duties and may leave the school premises. In the case that you work less than 9 hours but more than 5 hours, you shall take a 30-minute unpaid meal break in which you are relieved from all duties and may leave the school premises.

Non-exempt employees are required to record the beginning and end of their lunch breaks using the time clock.

The school schedule requires that you be prepared to resume work promptly at the end of your scheduled meal break.

Employees may take a paid 10-minute rest period during a four hour shift insofar as practicable. These rest periods may not be combined or added to an employee's lunch break. Before taking any break/rest period, employees must ensure that appropriate coverage exists for their students based on ratio requirements and consult with the Executive Director.

Attendance

Teamwork is essential at DELC, and all staff members depend on one another to arrive at work on time and keep to their set schedules. This allows us to meet student needs in the best way possible, ensure consistency in classrooms, and minimize disruptions in the schedule. Every employee is expected to maintain a strong attendance record.

Employees who are unable to report for work on time for any reason must inform the Executive Director with as much advance notice as possible. In an emergency situation, employees must tell the Executive Director as soon as it is practical. Employees shall not leave a message with another employee or leave a voice message on the school phone. Employees must personally tell the Executive Director by telephone or text message why they will be absent and when they expect to return to work to ensure appropriate coverage is in place. If texting, you must have confirmation with a return phone call or message from the Executive Director to ensure the message was received.

Absenteeism, early departures from work, and late arrivals to work negatively impact coworkers and students. Excessive or habitual absenteeism or tardiness will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees who fail to come to work and do not personally tell the Executive Director for three consecutive scheduled days will be viewed to have abandoned their job and voluntarily resigned.

Substitutes

Each employee who intends to take paid or compassionate leave is responsible for finding a substitute to cover her/his class(es). The Executive Director will keep a record sheet, on which each employee will mark the days and name the substitute on the master calendar in the kitchen and give a written record to the Executive Director. Due to school needs and to ensure adequate teacher/child ratios, no more than one teacher will be absent at any one time without the express approval of the Executive Director. Teachers must provide substitutes with the daily schedule, plans, and a list of any special requirements for the children in their care to be kept easily accessible in their classroom.

Healthy Workplace

DELC requires all employees to be aware of their own health and the potential impact their health has on co-workers and children. In keeping with this concern, employees who are absent from work for more than three (3) consecutive days due to illness or injury must provide a satisfactory physician's written statement which verifies that an illness or injury existed, and confirms the employee's ability to return to work without representing an immediate and significant risk to the employee's own health and safety, or the health and safety of others. When requested, such verifications and releases may be a condition to receiving leave benefits and returning to work. Although a physician's written statement normally will not be requested for absences of less than three working days, DELC may request such a statement in situations where it is warranted. DELC will make reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities where it does not result in an undue hardship to do so and is consistent with the school's legal obligations.

Employees who are unable to report to work due to illness or injury must attempt to contact a substitute to cover their scheduled hours and contact the Executive Director by telephone by 6:30 a.m. the day they will be absent. If the Executive Director cannot be reached by 7:00 a.m., contact the Director-on-Duty. You must have verbal or texting confirmation from the Executive Director or Director-on-Duty in order to ensure the message was received.

If an employee becomes sick during the day, the Executive Director must be notified before the employee leaves the school unless it is not possible to do so. Failure to follow these procedures may result in the day being declared an unexcused absence and may result in disciplinary action as well.

Class Assignment

Since DELC is a small school and enrollment varies from year to year, teachers must be flexible about both class size and room assignments. The Executive Director will consider teacher preferences for age level and room, but changes may need to be made each August until enrollment stabilizes.

Classroom Wellness

All employees must abide by the school's hand washing and glove wearing policies, per state licensing requirements. Classroom surfaces must be sanitized regularly and with appropriate cleaning products the school provides, using the following three step process: clean with soap and water, rinse with plain water, spray with sanitizing bleach and leave on to air dry or for at least 2 minutes prior to wiping off.

Employees are responsible for cleaning and sanitizing all toys, per state licensing requirements. Toys must be washed on a weekly basis for preschool classrooms and on a daily basis for toys that have been used in the toddler classroom.

Administering Medication/First Aid/CPR

No employee may administer medication to students unless the employee has received medical administration training and has been authorized to administer medication under DELC's nurse consultant, and the child's medical permission form is on file in the office. Staff members may only administer medications as a treatment if a completed medical administration form is on file.

No employee may administer first aid and/or CPR to students unless the employee has received first aid and CPR training and their current training cards are on file in the office.

Dress Standards

DELC asks employees to set an example of professionalism in personal appearance. Comfortable clothes that allow you to get on the floor when playing with children and run around outside are recommended. Please avoid soiled clothes, large accessories that the children could pull on, and perfume/essential oils.

Professional Freedom of Materials

It is essential that the teachers and Executive Director of DELC offer one another mutual support to grow as professionals. DELC strives to give each teacher academic freedom; professional resource books and teaching materials are plentiful. In the case of specific materials, teachers can make requests to the Executive Director for approval to purchase. In order for funds to be reimbursed, the Executive Director must receive a receipt for the purchased items.

Technology Resources

Employees have access to a staff computer in the work room as well as a school laptop with internet access on-site. Employees may check out the school laptop for off-site planning purposes with prior approval from the Executive Director.

DELC offers hands-on learning experiences. Screen time, which includes television, recorded media, computer, tablet, cell phones, video games, and other media devices, is prohibited for children less than two (2) years of age. Screen time is prohibited during snack or meal times.

Teachers may utilize screen time for educational purposes only (i.e. a virtual field trip, researching student topics of interest, extending classroom learning, encouraging vigorous movement). Screen time is limited to no more than 15 minutes per day for preschool-aged children. Technology must always be used under the supervision and active involvement of a teacher.

All children must be provided with a developmentally appropriate alternative activity once the child(ren) loses interest in the media activity.

DELC supports the use of assistive technology for supporting individual developmental needs. Assistive technology will be utilized in the classroom once a meeting with the family, teacher/s, support staff, and the Executive Director has taken place and all team members have agreed that it is appropriate for classroom use. DELC will ensure that our staff has been properly trained in the use of specific assistive technology equipment/devices prior to their use in the classroom.

School Building and Classroom Housekeeping

Each teacher is responsible for keeping his/her classroom neat and clean during the day, including but not limited to ensuring that materials and chairs are off the floor at the end of the day, sweeping after snack and lunch, minimizing clutter on personal shelves, etc. Each individual is responsible for cleaning up after his/herself and not leaving dishes or other items for colleagues to address. Collectively teachers are responsible for all areas of the school, taking care to minimize damage and wear to the facilities and for advising the Executive Director of any facility problem as soon as it arises. Employees will be assigned a schedule for completing the daily playground checklist and are expected to complete the checklist on their scheduled day(s).

Confidentiality

Each employee is required to comply with applicable state and federal confidentiality laws. Each employee must strictly protect confidential information regarding students and their families, including but not limited to medical records, contact information, protected health information, or personally identifiable information of any nature. See the Executive Director for any questions regarding confidential information.

Cell Phone Use

Employees shall not utilize cell phones for personal means during work hours, either in the school or on the school grounds during recess periods. Employees are free to use their cell phones for personal means during break and lunch periods. In the event of a personal emergency, an employee may wear a cell phone discreetly and set to silent mode provided the employee obtains the approval of the Executive Director in advance of doing so.

Personal cell phones may be used to document child observations through written notes, photos, and videos and then uploaded to the school's assessment program, Teaching Strategies Gold. In recognition of cell phone use for school purposes, DELC offers a \$50 per month cell phone reimbursement credit to all employees.

Social Media Use

All employees are expected to exercise proper judgment regarding social media use. Employees speak for themselves, not the school—online postings should only reflect personal points of view and not suggest DELC's point of view. Employees shall not share *any information regarding a student or family* on social media, including but not limited to photographs of children. Under no circumstance should employees share any confidential information about DELC. Employees shall not post statements about DELC that are intentionally false or misleading. Employees shall not post statements that are harassing or that invade the privacy of others. Employees shall use social media sites only when on scheduled breaks. These guidelines, applicable when using any social media including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok, and blogs posts, have been put in place in order to protect you, DELC and the children and families of our school.

SECTION IV: STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Hiring Process

DELC advertises open positions locally through the Early Childhood Council of La Plata County, on the DELC website, and the DELC facebook page. Online forums, such as Indeed.com and Craig's List, are also used to advertise open positions.

Applicants must fill out DELC's application specific to the open position and submit a resume and cover letter. Once an applicant meets the initial requirements, the applicant is invited to do an in-person or Zoom interview and participate in a 1-hour classroom visit for DELC staff to observe interaction with children. Interviews include the Executive Director, one parent representative, and one staff representative, when possible. Every effort will be made to include both a current parent and a current teacher in all interviews. No decision will be made until feedback is received from the interviewers as well as the observing classroom teacher. DELC will confirm a minimum of one professional reference and one personal reference prior to offering a hiring agreement.

Staff Orientation

Prior to employment at DELC, the new hire will also undergo an orientation regarding school policies, procedures and mandated training with the Executive Director. The new employee is required to sign the DELC Policy and Procedure Agreement, initialing that they have read, reviewed with the Executive Director and agree to the Family Policies, Personnel Policies, Emergency Procedures, Abuse Statement, Job Description, Playground Policies, Procedures for Suspected Abuse, and Licensing Rules and Regulations.

During this orientation meeting, the Executive Director will support the new hire in setting up their account in the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS) or connecting their profile in PDIS to DELC. New hires are required to complete the Educator self-assessment and set a personal goal in PDIS within 1 month of starting work at DELC as well as apply for their Early Childhood Credential 3.0 in the PDIS system.

Prospective employees are required to pass state, federal, and TRAILS criminal background checks. DELC will cover the cost for the fingerprinting and

background check.. Prospective employees that have lived outside of Colorado in the past 5 years will have to undergo further background checks in those states. The employee is responsible for covering the cost of all associated out-of-state background checks.

Prospective employees must complete the following paperwork for their personnel file:

- Employee Information Sheet
- Copies of college transcripts/degrees, ECE Credential 3.0, and professional development trainings if applicable
- I9
- Direct Deposit Form
- Payroll Department New Employee Information Sheet
- W4
- Complete a wellness check signed by a doctor clearing the employee for work at a childcare facility within 30 days of employment
- Building and Premise Safety Training

Prospective employees must complete early childhood training prior to working at DELC that includes the following courses that can be found through the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS). Certificates of completion must be copied for the personnel file, and employees will be paid their hourly rate upon completion. All of the following trainings can be used towards the required 15 hours of professional development required annually for all employees:

- **Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma** – Required for employees working with children under the age of three upon hire and must be renewed every 2 years.
- **Recognition and Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect** – Required for all employees upon hire, and must be renewed annually.
- **Standard Precautions** – Required for all employees upon hire, and must be renewed annually. After course completion, all employees must review the DELC Exposure Plan with the Executive Director.
- **Recognizing the Impact of Bias on Early Childhood Professionals** - Required for all employees upon hire and only needs to be completed once.

- **Introduction to Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Programs** - Required for all employees upon hire and only needs to be completed once.
- **FEMA – Multi-hazard Planning for Child Care OR Disaster Preparedness** - Required for all employees upon hire and only needs to be completed once. Employees may complete the Multi-hazard Planning for Child Care course online through the FEMA website or complete the Disaster Preparedness training online through the PDIS system.
- **Introduction to Child Care Health Consultation** - Required for the school's Executive Director and Assistant Director upon hire, and only needs to be completed once.
- **Working with a Mental Health Consultant-** Required for the school's Executive Director and Assistant Director upon hire, and only needs to be completed once.
- **Child Care and Preschool Immunization** – Required for the school's Executive Director and Assistant Director upon hire, and must be renewed annually.

New employees will participate in on-the-job training directly in classrooms for a minimum of three days, paid at their hourly rate, to allow for a smooth transition for the employee to learn DELC policies and procedures and to familiarize the children with the new employee.

Staff Retention

At DELC, we understand that quality care aligns with consistency of care in order for staff to build strong relationships with children and families. Therefore, the DELC Board of Directors has set a goal of 80% staff retention annually. We want all staff to understand that their contributions are valued and an integral aspect of running a high quality program. As important stakeholders in DELC, their feedback is welcomed. All staff are involved in curriculum development, program goal setting, and annual planning by providing feedback at monthly staff meetings. Another way of supporting retention is through benefits offered. A comprehensive list of staff benefits can be found on page 14 of this Personnel Policies Book.

Teacher Leadership Program

Once an employee has worked at DELC for a minimum of 1 year, they are eligible to apply for the teacher leadership program for the new school year. The Teacher Leadership Program provides paid opportunities for employees to learn about different aspects of being a Large Child-Care Center Director as well as running a non-profit organization. Employees will meet with the Executive Director to determine project assignments. Expectations of the program include:

- Discuss the project progress at monthly staff meetings to all attendees.
- Check in with the Executive Director every month on project progress. Date of check in will be mutually agreed upon between the Executive Director and teacher.
- Keep a detailed record of how many hours are spent on each project using the provided tracking form. Hours must be turned in by the 15th and the 30th of the month in order to record them in the appropriate pay period.

Compensation for the teacher leadership program is time and a half of the teacher's current hourly pay rate. It will be coded in the payroll system as "Teacher Leadership." These hours are above and beyond the scheduled 40 hours a week as a classroom teacher, (they cannot replace scheduled working hours).

SECTION V: PERFORMANCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Standards of Conduct

DELIC has formed certain rules of conduct to ensure a well-run and pleasant working environment for its employees. Violation of any of these rules could result in some type of disciplinary action, ranging from verbal and/or written warnings to reprimand and possible termination. Although it is impossible to provide a complete list, examples of this type of infraction include, but are not limited to:

- **Respect for Staff/Children/Families**

Violations include, but are not limited to, failing to treat others with respect, rudeness, discrimination, retaliation, harassing behavior, profanity, and other inappropriate conduct.

- **Integrity/Ethics**

Violations include, but are not limited to, misuse of school property, falsifying documents, data or school records, failure to participate fully or honestly in a school investigation, misuse or falsification or time manipulation, fraud, disclosing confidential information, being convicted of, or pleading guilty or no contest to a crime that impairs the desirability of continued employment (e.g. theft, fraud, sexual or physical assault, etc.).

- **Sound Judgment**

Violations include, but are not limited to, decisions made that can place the school, staff or children at risk of negative impacts to safety, business, finances, legal, or other similar issues. Off duty conduct that harms the school's interests or reputation in the community or negatively impacts the work day, may jeopardize continued employment with DELIC.

- **Safety**

Violations include, but are not limited to, failure to follow safety standards, becoming a danger to others, possessing a weapon on school premises, failing to report an accident or injury when required to do so, threats, or workplace violence.

- **Unsatisfactory Performance**

Violations include, but are not limited to, failure to follow instructions, insubordination, failing to meet performance goals or standards, poor leadership, or failure to comply with school policies.

- **Attendance and Punctuality**

Violations include, but are not limited to, excessive tardiness, excessive absenteeism or patterned absences on a recurring basis, unexcused absences, no call/no show.

DELC reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of discipline at its discretion, up to and including immediate separation of employment.

Conflict Resolution

In the case of issues with a fellow staff member, employees agree to speak with the co-worker directly first to resolve the issue. Issues should be discussed in a timely manner and privately, not in front of other employees, children, and/or families. If the issue is not resolved, staff will bring it to the attention of the Executive Director, who will host a mediated meeting between the parties. If staff do not feel the issue was addressed directly by the Executive Director, the grievance policy (page 7) would apply.

Managing Performance

DELC strives to maximize each employee's performance and value to the school and wants all employees to be empowered to reach their highest level of success. However, there may be times when an employee's performance or conduct does not meet DELC's standards. The performance management policy and process are used to give employees notice when performance improvement is needed, when the employee's conduct does not meet DELC standards, and/or that DELC is ending the employment relationship. The performance management process may include 1) a verbal warning, 2) a documented counseling notice, 3) a documented disciplinary warning, or 4) immediate separation of employment. The actions taken will depend on the individual circumstances.

In keeping with the policy of employment at will, DELC has the right to take appropriate measures when an employee's job performance or conduct is unacceptable. This policy does not guarantee that any particular sequence of disciplinary "steps" will be followed. Immediate separation of employment can and

will result when deemed appropriate by the Executive Director, in their sole discretion. This policy does not alter the at will status of any employee.

Staff Evaluations and Renewal

The Executive Director will meet with every employee quarterly for a one-on-one check-in meeting during school hours. The Executive Director will arrange classroom coverage for employees during each check-in meeting.

One-on-one check-in meetings are an opportunity for the employee to express what is going well and what support they need from the Executive Director. An education action plan will be completed in collaboration with the employee and the Executive Director to set goals and determine appropriate support and action steps, including any professional development resources.

The Executive Director will conduct a minimum of two unannounced classroom observations per school year based on the position's job description and other areas of focus as pre-determined by the Executive Director and employee. Feedback from classroom observations will tie in with employees one-on-one check-in. Areas of strength and growth will be highlighted.

The Executive Director will evaluate each employee on an annual basis utilizing a self-assessment completed by the employee, anonymous feedback from co-workers, and anonymous feedback from families. The Executive Director will provide feedback based on position job description, classroom observations, and the employees educator action plans.

New employees will have an additional evaluation after one month of employment entailing a self-assessment and one-one-one check-in with the Executive Director..

Based upon his/her annual evaluation, an employee's contract may be renewed for the following school year. Decisions regarding renewal offers are at the Executive Director's discretion.

Professional Development

Employees shall complete CPR/First Aid training on the dates designated by the school and receive compensation for their training hours. DELC will make every effort to schedule CPR/First Aid training on teacher work weeks or designated staff development days. If the school's nurse consultant is unavailable on these dates, DELC shall provide employees with as much advance notice as possible so that employees can arrange an alternative method for completing the training. Employees who fail to participate in required training on designated days must confirm an alternative arrangement to complete the training; this arrangement must be authorized and approved by the Executive Director.

DELIC shall compensate employees for participating in medical administration training and renewal training that is at the discretion of the Executive Director. If the required training is not provided through DELIC, the school shall compensate employees to participate in the training outside of their scheduled work hours.

All DELIC employees must enroll in Colorado Shines PDIS, which is a web-based system that provides free and easy access to professional development courses. The Colorado Shines PDIS system tracks training and education, provides online professional development, and offers a variety of other resources. Employee profiles are linked to the employee, and not to DELIC. Upon registering with Colorado Shines PDIS, employees must upload their transcripts and professional development hours completed outside PDIS as well as complete the self-assessment and create a professional development plan with goals. All employees must share their professional development plan and goals with the Executive Director to ensure that the school's overall professional development plan reflects and incorporates each employee's personal goals. Employees must update their professional development plan and goals on an annual basis.

All employees are required to complete a minimum of 15 training hours per year, beginning from their hire date. Three clock hours of training must focus on social emotional development and 12 hours of training must focus on the following eight competencies:

- Child growth and development and learning or courses that aligns with the competency domains of child growth and development
- Child observation and assessment
- Family and community partnership
- Guidance
- Health, safety and nutrition
- Professional development and leadership
- Program planning and development
- Teaching practices

Employees who complete and pass a semester-long course at a regionally accredited college or university focused on one or more of the above early childhood competency areas shall satisfy their 15 hours of training for the employment year. DELIC does not compensate employees for college courses.

DELIC provides designated work hours for staff to complete pre-service/orientation training, professional development training, and signing up, updating, and maintaining their PDIS profile during teacher work weeks, staff development days, breaks during parent-teacher conference days, or prior to starting at DELIC, for which they are compensated. DELIC requires employees to

submit professional development certificates to confirm their completion of required training, and to receive payment for participating in such training.

Employees who wish to participate in a voluntary training that is not required by DELC or a licensing agency must obtain approval from the Executive Director for course payment. Optional training outside of designated working hours are at the employee's cost. Should DELC require training for all staff outside of working hours, employees will be paid at their hourly rate for hours attended and training costs will be covered by DELC.

Employees are encouraged to share training materials and highlights of training at staff meetings with their co-workers. DELC encourages employees to become members in professional organizations related to early childhood education.

DELC Personnel Policies Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the revised DELC Personnel Policies (effective February 24, 2023) and understand that it contains important information about the school's personnel policies and my privileges and obligations as an employee. I acknowledge that I am expected to read, understand, and adhere to the school policies and will familiarize myself with the material in the handbook.

I understand that I am governed by the contents of the personnel policies. New situations develop constantly and it is understood that DELC reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to change, supplement, or rescind all or any part of the practices, procedures, or benefits described in the DELC Personnel Policies, other than the at-will nature of the employment relationship, as it deems that circumstances warrant.

Signature

Date

Print Name