

# PURPLE BOOK

## Non-Exempt ECE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



SOUTHEASTERN CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE- OFFICE OF EDUCATION

[www.secceducation.org](http://www.secceducation.org)

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

It is the mission of the Southeastern California Conference Early Childhood Education and Care to provide young children with Christ-Centered, developmentally appropriate experiences in safe, nurturing environments that are aligned with the beliefs and values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Southeastern California Conference Early Childhood Education and Care (ECE) has its foundation in the Biblical imperative for purposeful training of the young child. As Christians we are admonished to teach the words of the Bible “diligently unto the children,” and to “train up a child in the way they should go”. (Deut. 6:7 and Prov. 22:6) The Southeastern California Conference recognizes that the early education and care of young children is the beginning of a continual growth process. In partnership with the home and Church, it is essential that a balanced ECE program be established to meet the needs of a child’s spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development from birth to entrance into formal schooling.

The Southeastern California Conference employees are committed to this philosophy. Each employee has accepted the responsibility of properly representing the Seventh-day Adventist Church in attitude, philosophy, and conduct.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

It is the goal of every Early Childhood Education Centers to see young children growing in their love for God and love for others through purposeful integrated learning experiences in a caring Christian environment.

## **COMMITMENT AND VALUES OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH**

As a ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, our school exists to support the spiritual, academic, social, and physical development of students within a Christ-centered environment. Employees play an essential role in advancing this mission.

Employees are expected to uphold and represent the beliefs, values, and educational philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist education in both professional responsibilities and personal conduct.

Employees are expected to:

- Support the mission, beliefs, and fundamental values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- Demonstrate Christian character through interactions with students, families, colleagues, and the community.
- Maintain professional conduct that is consistent with the values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- Foster an environment that reflects Christ’s love, respect, integrity, service, and compassion.

- Respect and support the spiritual programming, worship experiences, and faith practices of the school.
- Serve as positive role models for students in speech, behavior, and relationships both on and off campus when representing the school.

All employees will review and sign the Seventh-day Adventist Faith-Based Commitment Agreement, acknowledging their understanding of and agreement to support the mission, values, and expectations outlined above as a condition of employment.

# **GENERAL INFORMATION**

## 100 GENERAL INFORMATION

### 101 Employee Handbook

This employee handbook is provided to answer common questions posed by employees. It is a summary of Southeastern California Conference policies, benefits, and procedures and how they will affect the employee. Please read it carefully and learn its contents. If questions arise which are not answered in this handbook, discuss them with your director, Office of Education and/or Human Resources. Understand that the policies and practices set out in this handbook are not a contract and are not intended to imply any form of contractual relationship.

In addition, this handbook provides information on the employee's responsibility to communicate with the SECC Human Resources Department with regard to any and all information relating to the employee or dependents enrolled in employer provided benefits. All employees who are classified as Benefit Eligible are expected to and must actively cooperate in the management of their benefits. SECC depends on information from each employee to maintain appropriate benefits in place. By keeping SECC up to date on personal information benefits may be assigned or discontinued as required according to policy. Lack of information from employees on life-changing events (births, deaths, divorce) not reported to SECC in a timely manner, in writing, may create a financial liability to the employee, or the denial of benefits. To assist in providing information to employees on what is needed to keep benefits current, please refer to sections entitled Employee Responsibility. These sections alert employees when documentation or forms are needed from the employee. For most up-to-date employee benefits visit the HR website (<https://seccadventist.org/human-resources/>). (See Appendix 601 for reference.)

This handbook replaces all previous SECC handbooks and shall be adhered to except as it shall be amended by subsequent actions of the Conference Executive Committee / Education Board in its whole and absolute discretion.

### 102 Changes in Employee Handbook

Southeastern California Conference (also referred to as “the Conference”) retains the authority to revise, modify, or delete any provision(s) in the employee handbook at any time. Policies and procedures may change or be deleted at any time and for any reason. The most current policies will be available at the Human Resources Office or Office of Education.

### 103 Equal Employment Opportunity

Southeastern California Conference is a religiously qualified, equal opportunity employer, with the right to give preference to Seventh-day Adventists in hiring. Southeastern recruits, hires, and promotes all job classifications on the basis of merit, qualification, competence, attitude, and spiritual commitment. This applies to all categories of employment. No aspect of employment shall be influenced by race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap.

**104 At-Will Employment**

All hourly ECE employees fall under an employment “at-will” relationship. This means that the employee or employer may terminate the employment relationship at any time for any reason or no reason with or without notice. No representative of the employer, other than the Conference Executive Committee or its delegates, has any authority to enter into any agreement with the employee for any specified period of time or to make any agreement contrary to the foregoing.

**105 Employment Records**

The Human Resources Department maintains a file of the employment records of each employee. These records include the completed application form, resume, information sheet, service record, written reports of periodic performance reviews and other employment related documents.

Employee Responsibility: To keep personnel records current, the Human Resources Department must be notified in writing of any changes in name, marital status, address, telephone, dependents, or other pertinent information.

The Personnel files are the property of Southeastern California Conference. However, an employee may examine the personnel file, excluding records of criminal investigations and letters of reference, in the presence of the Human Resources Director or representative. Requests to do so should be made in writing in advance and inspections shall be done in the Human Resources Department during regular business hours.

**106 Conference Office Hours**

The regular hours during which the Conference Office is open to the public are:

Monday	9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday – Thursday	8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Friday	Closed

**107 Equipment**

The equipment and materials at each preschool site have been purchased for and maintained by the preschool and are to be used for the work of the preschool only, not for personal use or favors for others. All equipment and materials are to remain on the premises at all times for the convenience of the employees in their work and for insurance purposes as well, unless prior authorization is granted. Any broken equipment and/or any situation that appears unsafe must be reported on a repair notice or work order so attention can be given to these situations as soon as possible.

## **108 Personal Property**

The preschool site assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to personal property when brought to work unless previously authorized by ECE administration.

## **109 Phones and Cell Phones**

Telephones are installed for center business. Personal calls are allowed on an emergency basis. Personal cell phones are not to be used by employees during working hours except at designated breaks and lunch. This includes phone calls, texting, or browsing.

## **110 Media**

Teachers are not to respond to questions from newspaper reporters or any media interviewers. Refer media personnel to the ECE Director.

## **111 Mail**

Employees are not to use the preschool address for personal mail. Employees should not be sending or receiving personal email during work hours.

## **112 Security**

Purses and wallets are to be kept in locked storage, as available in the classroom. This protects your personal property and prevents child access. The preschool site assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to personal property.

Any unfamiliar or suspicious person on the campus is to be reported immediately to the ECE Director and all security procedures outlined by the center need to be followed.

## **113 Keys**

Preschool keys are issued upon employment. Keys are not to be duplicated for any reason. Keys must be returned at the time of employment separation. Lost keys should be reported to the ECE Director immediately. The employee will be charged a replacement fee for any key not returned or lost.

## **114 Care of Children**

Employees are expected to make appropriate childcare arrangements for their own children. Even if an employee's child is enrolled in the center, it is discouraged to have their child with them during work hours.

ECE employees are not to provide personal childcare services for families with children enrolled in the ECE program. This is considered a conflict of interest. Employees with questions on this matter should contact the ECE Director.

**115 Selling & Solicitation**

Solicitation, distribution, and/or selling to fellow employees are not permitted unless pre-approved by the ECE Director. Selling to parents is not permitted.

**116 Information Updates**

The SEC Human Resources website (<https://seccadventist.org/human-resources/>), provides up-to-date information regarding employment opportunities, employee benefits, benefit forms, payroll procedures, and other HR-related resources.

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Handbook is also available on the SECC Education website (<http://secceducation.org>).

(See Appendix 601 and Appendix 602 for reference.)

# **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

## 200 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

### 201 Non-Exempt Employee

Employees classified as working 20 hours per week or more may be eligible for the leave policies described below (798 hours per year is required if working only 10 months of the year). Exceptions to this will be noted within the specific section.

### 202 Healthy Families Illness Leave Policy | Part-time, Non-Benefit Eligible

This policy is effective July 1, 2015 and complies with California AB 1522 Healthy Workplace Healthy Family Act of 2014. This policy covers all employees working less than .50 FTE or 20 hours per week and considered non-benefit eligible.

### 203 Eligibility for Leave

Employees who work 30 days in a year from their date of hire are entitled to receive up to 3 days or 24 hours of paid sick leave each year. This leave may be taken for personal illness or to care for the illness of the employee's spouse, children (biological, adopted or foster child, stepchild, legal ward or a child to whom the employee stands in loco parentis, regardless of age or dependency status), parents (biological, adoptive or foster parent, stepparent or legal guardian of the employee or the employee's spouse or a person who stood in loco parentis when the employee was a minor child), siblings, grandparents, or grandchildren. Sick leave may also be used for the diagnosis, or treatment of an existing health condition of, or preventative care for the employee and family members as defined above. In addition, sick leave may also be used for an employee who is the victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking as set forth in California Labor Code.

*Implementation-* Beginning July 1, 2015

- a) Employees hired prior to July 1, 2015, who work 30 days within a year, will receive 3 days or 24 hours of paid sick leave. These leave days are advanced (not accrued) to the employee when he/she qualifies and every January 1.
- b) Employees hired after July 1, 2015, who work 30 days within a year, will receive 3 days or 24 hours of paid sick leave. These leave days are advanced (not accrued) to the employee when he/she qualifies and every January 1. However, the employee must wait 90 days from the date of hire to use any paid sick leave.

Employees who are not paid an hourly rate (e.g., Student Literature Evangelists and Pine Springs Ranch summer camp contract employees) OR employees whose hourly rate changes (within 90 days prior to the leave request) will have their earnings averaged over the 90 days prior to the paid sick leave request to calculate the hourly rate for paid sick leave.

### Qualifying

These 3 days or 24 hours are advanced to employees as they qualify (work at least 30 days in a year) and then again each January 1. However, employees hired after July 1, 2015, must wait 90 days from the date of hire to use any paid sick leave.

## **204 Bereavement Leave**

Benefit-eligible employees are allowed up to five days with pay, according to distance and circumstances, to attend funeral services, make arrangements, or take time to grieve the death of an immediate family member. An immediate family member includes spouse; child (stepchild and foster-child); parent; brother; sister; father-in-law; mother-in-law, and grandparents.

## **205 Jury Duty**

Employees who are called to serve jury duty must notify the department director and the Human Resources Department as soon as notice is received. Employees will continue to receive pay for jury time served up to 10 workdays per calendar year. Because the State of California currently reimburses jurors only for mileage and meal expenses, this reimbursement need not be turned in to the conference office. Hourly paid employees need to note on their timecard "jury duty".

## **206 Requesting and Recording Sick Leave**

Employees should give advance notice, if possible, when requesting paid sick leave, to the immediate supervisor. It is important that the immediate supervisor has knowledge of the absence as soon as possible to allow for department coverage. As possible, the request must include the expected duration of the leave.

## **207 Recording Sick Leave**

Paid sick leave hours must be properly recorded on the timecard by the employee or supervisor and approved by both. Paid sick leave may be used in full days or increments as requested and approved. Paid sick leave hours should be recorded on the timecard, and no more than the regularly scheduled work hours are to be entered for the day(s) taken and no more than 24 hours of sick time will be granted per calendar year.

The paid sick leave days will not be convertible to personal leave, paid leave or be considered as credit payable at the end of the employee's service. Paid sick days do not carry over to the following year. However, employees who have a separation date of less than 1 year will have the unused paid sick leave restored and will not have to requalify.

*Voted: 4/2015 Executive Committee, 5/2015 Education Board*

## 208 Tuition Discount for Dependent Children of Full-time ECE Teachers

Educational assistance of 35% of tuition and fees shall be provided for dependents of full-time ECE teachers. Students must be enrolled in an SECC school in grades K-12. The cost will be shared as follows: 17.5% from SECC, 12.5% from the school where the child attends, and 5% from the ECE where the teacher is employed.

1. Eligibility: To be eligible for the tuition discount, the student must be:
  - a. an unmarried dependent of the employee;
  - b. claimed as a dependent on the employee's income tax return;
  - c. born to, legally adopted, or a stepchild by marriage, receiving less than 50 percent of support from his/her natural parents;
  - d. enrolled full-time in a SECC school;
  - e. the child of a full-time hourly employee of that or another SECC school.

A full-time hourly employee is one who works at least 1596 hours annually (42 weeks x 38 hours). A full-time hourly employee hired after the beginning of the school year is entitled to benefits on a prorated basis.

2. Discount: The discount of 35 percent of tuition and all required fees shall be shared as follows: 17.5% from SECC, 12.5% from the school where the child attends, and 5% from the ECE where the teacher is employed. This discount is calculated on the gross charges for tuition and required fees according to the current bulletin, before family or other discounts. On-time discounts may be deducted before calculating this discount.

*Voted: Education board 09/1999, EMT 11/1999*

## 209 Insurance Plans

### Who is Eligible?

Insurance plans are available to full-time, benefit-eligible employees when first employed. Anyone who wishes to join at a later time, must show evidence of eligibility and apply within the specified open enrollment time for the specific plan requested.

### The Following is a Listing of Insurance Plans Available to You:

1. **Health Plans** - Full-time employees have the option to choose Adventist Risk Management (PPO) or Kaiser (HMO) for their medical, chiropractic, and mental health care. The premium cost for the medical plan is borne entirely by the employer. Employees may buy-in for spouse and dependent children.

The Health Care Assistance Plan (HCAP) self-funded plan covers vision and is available as an employee benefit to all full-time employees.

The Delta Dental PPO Plan covers dental and orthodontics and is available as an employee benefit to all full-time employees.

New employee enrollment form must be submitted as soon as the contract is signed. An identification card will be issued when the enrollment form is completed. **Enrollment forms, received more than 30 days after contract begins, may not be accepted by the Health Plan Carrier until the next open enrollment.** For specific information about the Health Plans, contact the Human Resources Department or visit <http://secchr.adventistfaith.org>.

Eligible employees who opt out of all medical coverage are given a \$150 per month reimbursement. (Employees who choose to opt out of medical coverage, must show proof of other coverage.) Employee Contribution - (Subject to change at the beginning of each year.)

	Adventist Risk Management	Kaiser
Employee only	\$75.00 per month	\$30.00 per month

2. **Long-Term Disability** - A program of long-term disability protection is provided for employees, at 66<sup>2</sup>/3% benefit through VOYA, should you suffer a long-term disability resulting from an accident or illness. Benefits commence after a 90-day elimination period. Contact the Human Resource Department for more information.
3. **Other Insurance Benefits** - The Conference has approved the payroll deduction option of the following benefits:
  - Tax Sheltered Annuities:
    - Valic
    - Zahorik
  - AFLAC
    - Flex Spending Account (FSA):
      - -unreimbursed medical and dependent care
      - -savings account (pre-taxed buy-in benefits)
    - Cancer Insurance
    - Short-term disability insurance
    - Accident Insurance
  - Supplemental Group Universal (Life Insurance)
  - Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D)
4. **State Disability Insurance and Unemployment Insurance** - Church organizations are exempt from these programs, thus, **no contribution** is made for employees. Full-time employees, with two or more years of service to the church, may be eligible for a termination settlement. Paid leave may be available for lost work time,

due to injury or illness. See the "Leave Policy" in this book for details.

## 5. **Worker's Compensation Insurance**

**On Duty** - All conference employees are covered by worker's compensation insurance for work-related injuries or illnesses. This protection covers all medical care, statutory payments for lost wages, permanent disabilities, rehabilitation services, if appropriate, and death benefits to eligible dependents, if applicable.

If an employee is injured or becomes ill, arising out of or occurring during the course of the job, it must be reported immediately to the supervisor. The supervisor will provide the employee with a claim form (DWC) on which to describe the injury or illness. This form is submitted to our claims carrier through the Human Resources Department. The employee may be kept on employment status for up to 6 months, as per Leave Policy schedule.

**Off Duty** - Concerning off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activities, the California Labor Code specifically states that:

Your employer or its insurance carrier may not be liable for the payment of worker's compensation benefits for any injury, which arises out of an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity, which is not a part of the employee's work-related duties.

## 210 **Fitness for Life**

Fitness for Life is an employee and spouse wellness promotion program.

### **Our Vision**

For SECC employees and their families enjoy life and health at its best by maintaining health-enhancing lifestyle practices.

### **Our Goal**

For SECC employees to begin and/or maintain a personal and/or family wellness program for improved quality of life and to promote wise-use of available health care; resources, and reward employees for their participation in the wellness program including partial reimbursement for the employee health care contribution costs.

### **Criteria for Reimbursement**

- a) Regular Employee who is at least 25% of full-time
- b) Submission of Employee Wellness Participation Application
- c) Monthly submission of completed Aerobic Training Log due the 15th of the following month.

Monthly Logs Rewards Quarterly Deadline:

1st quarter April 15  
2nd quarter July 15

3rd quarter October 15  
4th quarter January 15

Submit complete Aerobic Training Logs to:  
Human Resources  
Southeastern California Conference  
PO Box 79990  
Riverside, CA 92513  
(951) 509-2352, Fax (951) 509-2395

## 211 Prepaid Legal Service

Benefit-eligible employees can participate, on a payroll deduction basis, in the Legal Shield program. Legal Shield is a company that provides legal services at a low cost to its members, much the same as a health insurance company providing a means to low-cost medical help. Coverage is provided for the member, his/her spouse, and dependent children until age 21 or age 23 if a full-time student. As a member of the Legal Shield program, employees have access to attorneys who can assist them with legal questions and problems. Members can call an 800 number to reach a Provider Attorney firm. Some of the areas that are covered by this service are: preventive legal services; motor vehicle legal services; trial defense services; IRS audit; etc. For a sign-up package, contact the Human Resources Department.

## 212 Survivor Benefit

The Basic Life coverage is purchased through the VOYA Life Insurance Company for all full-time, benefit-eligible employees and is paid in full by the Southeastern California Conference. This benefit is paid to the designated beneficiary as assigned by the employee. The current coverage is as follows:

### Benefit scale:

- |                                              |           |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|
| a. Employee                                  | \$100,000 |
| b. Spouse                                    | \$ 50,000 |
| c. To the employee whose dependent has died: |           |
| Stillborn                                    | \$ 750    |
| Other children                               | \$ 10,000 |

This is an excellent benefit that we are happy to provide. There are, however, tax implications for an employer-paid benefit of this type.

According to IRS rules (IRC section 79), the first \$50,000 of an employer-provided life insurance benefit is non-taxable. But, any amount over \$50,000 for an employee, over \$2,000 for a spouse, or over \$2,000 for a child is considered taxable income, also called "imputed income." If coverage exceeds \$2,000 for a spouse or child, then the entire amount, either \$50,000 or \$10,000 is considered imputed income.

Because of these tax consequences, the increased benefit is not mandatory. You may elect to waive the increased life insurance by completing a Waiver and Release form. Because this is the only employer paid death benefit offered to our employees, it is very important that you consider this carefully before waiving the benefit. **If you decline the increased coverage, you are not allowed to opt back into the higher coverage at a later date.** If you experience a "qualifying event" such as marriage, birth of a child or divorce, or change of employer, you will have an opportunity at that time to opt back into the higher amount.

## 213 Retirement Program

### **Defined Contribution Plan (DC)**

Employees, working 20 hours per week or more are automatically enrolled in the Defined Contribution Plan. This 403(b) retirement plan is administered through EMPOWER and provides for both the employer and employee to set funds aside for retirement. Employees covered with this benefit are automatically vested for benefits. Vesting means that employees have access not only to the funds they contribute to their EMPOWER account, but to funds contributed by the employer on their behalf, keeping in mind that there are plan and IRS rules that govern access to personal funds and contributions.

*Account Management* - Employees are responsible for managing their EMPOWER accounts. At the onset of this retirement plan, contributions are invested under the NAD default plan. Employees are expected to contact EMPOWER, either directly or through the employer representative, to obtain information on the options under this plan and make personal decisions on the investment and management of their account.

*Employee Contribution* - The employee has an option to contribute, on a pre-tax basis, to their account each pay period. When an employee makes a contribution to their EMPOWER account, they are eligible for an employer match. We encourage all employees to contribute to their retirement account of at least 3% to receive the maximum Employer Match (see below).

*Employer Match & Contribution* – When an employee makes a pre-tax contribution to their EMPOWER account, the employer will make a 100% match to the account up to a maximum equivalent of 3% of earnings each pay period. The employer generally matches on a dollar-for-dollar basis for the first 3% of eligible compensation you contribute each pay period. Your employer generally will also make an additional basic contribution of 5% of your compensation. Your employer determines which employees are eligible for matching contributions or basic contributions.

*Automatic Escalation* – If an employee is not contributing at a 7% level by July 1, 2023, the employee's salary reduction contributions will automatically increase by 1% every July 1 thereafter until the employee's salary reduction contributions reach 7% of eligible compensation. Employees may opt out of the Plan's automatic escalation feature by choosing a different level or notifying Empower each year. Employees can elect to make different percentage contributions to the Plan or elect not to contribute on Empower's website. Employees will

receive communication from Empower regarding upcoming automatic escalation. If employees do not want the salary reduction contributions increased for that year, employees must follow the instructions from Empower to opt out.

### ***Defined Benefit Plan (DB)***

Employees who were denominationally employed prior to January 1, 2000 may be eligible for benefits under this (frozen) church owned retirement plan. Eligibility for benefits requires vesting of 10 years of service credit. Benefits from this plan can begin at age 59½ with early retirement penalties and full benefits at the normal age of retirement under Social Security rules.

Employees, even though they are not planning to retire, should apply for Medicare Part A three months before the employee or spouse reaches age 65 to protect their future medical benefits.

## **214 Tax Sheltered Annuities**

Tax sheltered annuity programs are available to employees on a biweekly payroll deduction basis. The companies currently on the payroll are: EMPOWER or Zahorik. Representatives from these companies are available at the Conference Office monthly to be accessible to our employees. Information is available on the HR website.

## **215 Unemployment Insurance**

ECE employees who leave employment are not eligible for unemployment compensation since the Southeastern California Conference is exempt from state and federal unemployment insurance program requirements and does not participate in state unemployment insurance.

## **216 Professional Growth**

Continual professional growth is an expectation for all early childhood employees. Staff are encouraged to use the Pacific Union Professional Development Program (PDP) Manual as a primary guide for professional development planning and advancement within the field.

The SECC provides educational reimbursement opportunities for qualifying employees to support ongoing professional growth and certification goals. (See Section 306 for additional details and Appendix 605 for the application process.) In addition, the Pacific Union may offer grant opportunities for employees enrolled in the PDP, contingent upon available funding and eligibility. (See Appendix 603.3 for the grant application.)

(See Appendix 603 for the PDP Program Manual, forms, and qualification matrix.) Additional PDP resources are available at: <https://paucedu.adventistfaith.com/ece-resources/certification/>

## **217 Credit Union**

All employees of the Conference are eligible for membership in the La Loma Employees Federal Credit Union. Payroll deductions are available for transferring funds to members'

accounts with the La Loma Credit Union. Information on La Loma Information is available on the HR website <https://seccadventist.org/human-resources/>.

(See Appendix 601.)

# EMPLOYEE POLICIES

## 300 EMPLOYEE POLICIES

### 301 Selection Policy

Southeastern California Conference is a religiously qualified, equal employment opportunity employer with the right of preference to Seventh-day Adventists in hiring. All applicants must be in full harmony with the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and maintain the high moral and Christian standards that the church represents.

Whenever possible, positions will be advertised through the conference HR website. All prospective ECE employees desiring employment with the Conference must complete an SECC employment application along with a licensing application. All employment documentation is submitted to the conference Office of Education for employment processing and benefits designation.

All new employees, as well as former employees being rehired, must report to the Human Resources Department to complete the hiring process. An applicant may not begin working until all forms are completed. Job descriptions are provided by the local center in collaboration with the conference Office of Education.

As explained earlier, all hourly ECE employment at the Southeastern California Conference is at-will.

### 302 New Hires

All offers of employment are contingent on verification of the individual's right to work in the United States. On the first day of work, the employee will be asked to provide original documents verifying their right to work and to sign a verification form required by federal law (I-9 Form). If an employee at any time cannot verify his/her right to work in the United States, the Conference will be obliged to terminate employment.

*Hiring Non-SDA* – Because the SECC places a high value on its employees reflecting SDA values and supporting the mission of the SDA church and Adventist Education, every effort should be made to hire a qualified SDA employee at an ECE. However, if a qualified SDA applicant cannot be found, a qualified non-SDA applicant may be hired according to the following steps:

1. ECE Director contacts the Office of Education Superintendent Associate to support ECE's with a potential applicant.
2. Submit in writing the need/rationale for the non-SDA employee, including their qualifications for the position.
3. The request to hire must be approved by a majority vote of the superintendents.
4. If approved, the applicant must attend an orientation with the SECC before the start of employment.
5. Quarterly evaluations will be done during a trial period at each location that uses non-SDA employees for mission impact.

### **303 Introductory Period**

The first three months of employment is an introductory period. The Center will use this time to see if the employee is able to meet the employment expectations.

### **304 Employment Status**

*Introductory employees* – employees who have not yet completed the first three months (90 days) of employment.

*Full-time employees* – employees who have completed their introductory period and work a minimum of 38 hours per week. These employees are eligible for benefits.

*Part-time, benefit eligible employees* – employees who have completed their introductory period and work from 20 to 37 hours per week on a regular basis. These employees are eligible for some benefits on a prorated basis. Beginning January 1, 2015 employees working 30 hours per week or more will be eligible for health care benefits.

*Part-time, non-benefit eligible employees* – employees who have completed the introductory period and work less than 20 hours per week. These employees are not eligible for benefits.

*Temporary employees* – employees who are hired for a specific period or specific project, usually not exceeding 90 days. These employees are not eligible for benefits.

*Student employees* – employees who are enrolled as students at a high school/academy or college/university and need a flexible work schedule to accommodate their classes. These employees are not eligible for benefits.

### **305 Credentials**

The following qualifications have been reviewed and approved by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, as meeting the requirements for childcare center teachers under the California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 12:

- Valid Child Development Permit
- State Child Development Permit
- Pacific Union Conference Certificate of Achievement
- Completion of the required Early Childhood Education/Child Development coursework, such as:
  - Child/Human Growth and Development
  - Child, Family, and Community
  - Program/Curriculum
  - Principles and Practices.

Employees must also meet experience requirements.

Additional education, units, and experience may be required depending on the position held. For more information on child development permits, see the Commission on Teacher Credentialing for the state of California. [Child Development Permits \(CL-797\) | Commission](#)

(See Appendix 604 for the Child Development Permit Matrix.)

### **306 Educational Reimbursement**

To support excellence in early childhood, growth, and leadership, the organization provides reimbursement opportunities for employees pursuing the following educational qualifications:

- 12 Core ECE Units
- Infant & Toddler Units
- Site Supervisor or Directors Permit

#### **306a ECE Teacher Coursework Reimbursement**

Educational reimbursement for core ECE units is typically available to employees serving in an aide or assistant role who are completing required early childhood education coursework while employed at an SECC Early Childhood Education Center. Employees must remain employed at the center for at least 12 months following the completion of the coursework to be eligible for reimbursement. Approval is subject to administrative review of eligibility requirements and availability of program funds at the time of submission.

Employees are encouraged to complete required ECE coursework through an accredited junior college, as this option aligns with reimbursement guidelines. Coursework completed at a junior college will be reimbursed according to the school's tuition rate.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Complete at least 12 months of employment at the SECC ECE center following the completion of the coursework.
- Complete an ECE Teacher Coursework Reimbursement Request Form.
- Provide official proof of course completion and a passing grade (e.g., transcripts).
- Provide receipts or proof of payment for the course(s).

All required documentation must be submitted to your program director, who will submit the request to the conference for review and approval. Approval is not guaranteed; it is subject to administrative review. Administration will consider eligibility, fund availability, etc.

(See Appendix 605 for the ECE Teacher Coursework Reimbursement Request Form.)

#### **306b Infant & Toddler Coursework Reimbursement**

Educational reimbursement for Infant and Toddler coursework may be available to employees serving in an SECC ECE center. Employees will follow the same procedures listed in 306a.

In some programs, Infant and Toddler coursework may be required to support licensing requirements and program needs. Employees who are asked to take Infant and Toddler coursework may request reimbursement upon completion of the coursework. Approval is subject to meeting eligibility requirements.

These employees are encouraged to complete coursework through an accredited junior college, as this option aligns with reimbursement guidelines. Coursework completed at a junior college will be reimbursed according to the school's tuition rate.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Be employed at an SECC ECE.
- Complete an ECE Teacher Coursework Reimbursement Request Form.
- Provide official proof of course completion and a passing grade (e.g., transcripts).
- Provide receipts or proof of payment for the course(s).

All required documentation must be submitted to your program director, who will submit the request to the conference for review and approval. Approval is not guaranteed; it is subject to administrative review and availability of program funds at the time of submission.

(See Appendix 605 for the ECE Teacher Educational Reimbursement Request Form.)

### **306c Administration and Supervision Coursework Reimbursement**

#### **Directors Permit or Site Supervisor**

Employees who have already met the requirements to serve as a teacher, including a degree, the required ECE unit, and experience requirements as required by California State Licensing, may request educational reimbursement to pursue the administrative and adult supervision units required for a Site Supervisor or a Child Development Director's Permit.

Applicants may receive **up to \$500**. Funding is only available for up to 4 individuals per year. The applicant must meet all eligibility requirements.

All required documentation must be submitted to your program director, who will submit the request to the conference for review and approval. Approval is not guaranteed as it is subject to administrative review and availability of program funds at the time of submission.

Reimbursement Conditions/ Eligibility Requirements:

- Complete at least 12 months of employment at an SECC ECE center following the completion of the coursework.
- Complete an Admin and Supervision Coursework Reimbursement Request Form.
- Provide official proof of course completion and a passing grade (e.g., transcripts).
- Provide receipts or proof of payment for the course(s).

Other Reimbursement Conditions:

- Up to \$500 total per applicant.
- Limit to one applicant per center per year or only four total individuals per year.

(See Appendix 606 for the Admin and Supervision Coursework Reimbursement Request Form.)

### **307 Employment of Relatives**

It is the policy of Southeastern California Conference to prohibit the employment of immediate family members in the same department. If departments are spread over a wide area and divided into sections, exceptions to this policy may be authorized by the appropriate committee.

### **308 SDA Transfer**

Employees who come from another SDA institution, in which they have served at least six months, with the separation date at the previous institution of less than 30 days prior, will be considered SDA transfers. SDA transfer status allows a new employee to utilize employee benefits immediately upon hire.

### **309 Internal Transfer**

Internal transfer may be initiated by the employee or ECE Director. If an employee wishes to transfer, he/she should discuss the situation with the ECE Director. If there is a business need to transfer an employee, the conference retains the right to make assignment changes as necessary.

### **310 Conflict of Interest**

Employees of denominational organizations have a duty to be free from the influence of any conflicting interest when they represent the ECE in negotiations or make representations with respect to dealings with third parties. These individuals are expected to deal with all persons doing business with the ECE on a basis that is in the best interest of the ECE without favor or preference to third parties or personal considerations.

A conflict of interest arises when an employee of the ECE has such a substantial personal interest in a transaction or in a party to a transaction that it reasonably might affect the judgment he/she exercises on behalf of the ECE. He/she is to consider only the interests of the ECE, always avoid inappropriate practices, and faithfully follow the established policies of the center.

Although it is not feasible in a policy statement to describe all the circumstances and conditions that might have the potential of being considered a conflict of interest, the following situations are considered, by way of example only, to have the potential for being in conflict and therefore are to be avoided:

1. Engaging in outside business or employment that permits encroachment on the denominational organization's call for the full services of its employees even though there may not be any other conflict.
2. Engaging in business with or employment by an employer that is any way competitive or in conflict with any transaction, activity, or objective of the organization.
3. Engaging in any business with or employment by a nondenominational employer who is a supplier of goods or services to the denominational organization.
4. Making use of the fact of employment by the denominational organization to further outside business or employment or associating the denominational organization or its reputation with an outside business or employment.
5. Owning or leasing any property with knowledge that the denominational organization has an active or potential interest therein.
6. Lending money to or borrowing money from any third person who is a supplier of goods or services or a trustor or who is in any fiduciary relationship with the denominational organization or is otherwise regularly involved in business transactions with the denominational organization.
7. Accepting any gratuity, favor, benefit, or gift of greater than nominal value beyond the common courtesies usually associated with accepted business practice, or of any commission or payment of any sort in connection with work for the denominational organization other than the compensation agreed upon between the denominational organization and the employee.
8. Making use of any confidential information acquired through employment by the denominational organization for personal profit or advantage, directly or indirectly.
9. Using denominational personnel, property, equipment, supplies, or goodwill for other than approved activities, programs, and purposes.
10. Expending unreasonable time, during normal business hours, for personal affairs or for other organizations, to the detriment of work performed for the ECE.
11. Using one's connections within the organization to secure favors for one's family or relatives.

Employees at the time of initial employment, on an annual basis, or when an issue of possible conflict of interest arises, employees are required to complete and sign the Statement of Acceptance. Signing the Statement of Acceptance constitutes the employee's declaration of compliance with the Conflict of Interest and Statement of Ethical Foundations policies.

### **311 Appearance/Dress**

Employees are expected to maintain a professional, modest, clean, and appropriate appearance while at work. Clothing should be practical for working with children and allow for movement, such as bending, kneeling, lifting, and active supervision without inappropriate exposure.

For staff safety and effective supervision of children, appropriate footwear is always required. It is highly recommended that employees wear secure, closed-toe shoes that allow for safe movement, outdoor supervision, and quick response in the event of emergencies. Footwear should provide adequate support and stability for working in an active childcare environment and coverage to prevent foot injuries.

Extreme or distracting styles of dress or appearance are not permitted. Jewelry, accessories, hairstyles, and overall grooming should be appropriate for the early childhood setting and support a safe and professional environment. Tattoos must be covered unless otherwise approved by the center administration.

Detailed dress code expectations may be established by individual centers. Please refer to the site-specific dress code guidelines for further details.

### **312 Confidential Information**

All information about employees is private. The unauthorized use, possession, or dissemination of confidential information is considered sufficient cause for discipline, including immediate termination.

### **313 Reduction-in-force**

Economic slowdown or financial concerns may make it necessary at some point in time to reduce the number of employees. Should this happen, the ECE may reduce staff and/or hours, based on, but not limited to: the employee's length of service with the Conference; total denominational service; skill and education; willingness to transfer (to another assignment and/or location), performance evaluation(s); position availability. Every effort will be made to place the affected employee in another suitable position. The ECE will endeavor to provide a 30-day notice if at all possible.

### **314 Attendance and Absences**

One of the most basic indicators of an employee's performance is regular attendance. Employees must be at work when scheduled. If an employee cannot come to work, he/she must notify the ECE Director or designee of the expected absence as soon as practical.

An absence is defined as a failure to report to work as scheduled. It excludes vacation, personal holiday, funeral leave, jury duty, witness duty, or approved sick leave or leaves of absence, as provided in this handbook. If one is sick or injured and unable to come to work, the ECE Director or designee needs to be notified to have proper coverage. If an employee is absent three days without contacting the ECE Director or designee, the ECE will assume a voluntary resignation. Planned absences need to be arranged in advance.

Excessive absence(s) or failure(s) to report such absences on time will lead to discipline, up to and including termination. Absences are considered excessive if they occur frequently or if they show a pattern.

### **315 Tardiness**

Employees must arrive at the job location and be ready to start work at the designated time, and be ready to resume work on time after authorized breaks and lunch periods. Tardiness may lead to discipline up to and including termination. The employee must notify his/her ECE Director or designee if the employee is going to be late to work. Tardiness is excessive if one is frequently or unnecessarily late, or if one demonstrates a pattern of tardiness. Centers are affected if employees are not present. An employee's tardiness can impact the quality of care for children. It may also impact the center's ability to meet state ratio requirements as outlined in Title 22.

### **316 Disciplinary and Termination Procedures**

The purpose of the disciplinary policy is to provide a means of addressing unacceptable practices or performances and to assist the employee in correcting the problem and achieving success in the job. If disciplinary measures are to be imposed, it is essential that the ECE Director or designee involved first investigate the facts, maintain confidentiality, use corrective rather than punitive action and respect the dignity of the employee. In consultation with the SECC Office of Education Designee, the following steps are available to the ECE Director, whenever unacceptable practices or performances occur:

1. *Verbal Warning* – The ECE Director will speak to the employee regarding a problem and explain the corrective action given. A written record of the date, those present and the content of the discussion should be kept by the ECE Director.
2. *Written Warning* – If problems continue, a formal written warning stating the extent of the problem, suggested course(s) of action, and the time period for resolution should be prepared by the ECE Director. Prior to giving the document to the employee it must be reviewed by the SECC Office of Education Designee. The written warning should also advise the employee of the consequences if the problem continues. The written warning should allow space for the employee's comments, the date and the employee's signature. The employee should be advised that his/her signature indicates that the information was discussed, and a copy given to them and not necessarily that he/she agrees with the contents of the document. If the employee refuses to sign the document,

another supervisor or administrator should sign as a witness that the employee refused to sign but was provided a copy of the document. The original document must be sent to the Human Resources Department to be placed in the employee's official personnel file and a copy should be provided to the employee.

3. *Follow-up Review* – At the end of the noted time period during which correction or improvement was expected, the SECC Office of Education Designee must be informed if the desired improvement has not been met. Another meeting between the ECE Director and the employee should be held, wherein the ECE Director discusses the results or improvement since the initial written warning. A written confirmation of the discussion, agreement, and future expectations should be provided to the employee, with a copy sent to the Human Resource Department to be placed in the employee's official personnel file.
4. *Additional Discipline* – If the desired improvement has not been achieved during the time stated on the written warning or follow up, the ECE Director or designee will inform the Office of Education of the status of the employee's progress or lack thereof. Upon review of the matter, the Office of Education may choose an appropriate level of discipline, based on the severity of the offense, including but not limited to: administrative leave(s) with or without pay, suspension, probation, or termination. A meeting with the employee will be held in which the employee is advised of the Office of Education recommended and imposed action. A letter will be sent to the employee by the ECE Director confirming the discussion of the meeting and stating the disciplinary status, if any. A copy shall be maintained in the employee's official personnel file.
5. *Release* – If disciplinary or corrective measures have failed to remedy the situation and if termination seems to be appropriate, the matter shall be forwarded to the SECC Office of Education Designee. Employees terminated will receive the full pay earned at the time of discharge. Gross violation of conduct may result in immediate termination.

The procedures outlined above are for guideline purposes only and may be changed or omitted by the employer without notice. Nothing contained herein is intended to nor should it be construed to limit or alter the at-will employment status of each employee.

### **317 Grievance Policy**

SECC's Children's Centers are committed to maintaining a Christian environment where the employees can work in an atmosphere of acceptance, civility, and mutual respect for the rights, duties, and sensibilities of each individual. It is extremely important for employees to communicate with each other in a respectful manner. When one employee has a problem with another employee, she/he will be expected to meet each other and resolve their differences. When a disagreement between employees is not resolved, it will affect the atmosphere of the center. Children are perceptive and sensitive to the tone of voice, body language, and any change in personality. It is our goal to provide a safe, happy, and nurturing environment for all who come through the doors of our Children's Centers.

However, whenever people work together, misunderstandings may occur because of differences in personality and viewpoint, communication problems, and work pressures. SECC encourages all misunderstandings to be handled at the classroom level wherever possible. But if the employee is hesitant to discuss her/his concerns with the Head Teacher, the next person would be the ECE Director or Assistant Director. The grievance should be put in writing and given to the ECE Director in person or by e-mail. The employee should also request a meeting where the employee and ECE Director will discuss the grievance and hopefully come to a mutual consensus. The written form of the grievance should be signed by both the employee and the ECE Director. The employee may request a representative from the SECC Office of Education be present during a meeting between the employee and ECE Director when discussing the grievance.

### **318 Sexual Harassment Policy**

As representatives of Christ here on earth, employees of the Southeastern California Conference are to model themselves Christ-like in every action, thought, and deed. "Purity is demanded not only in the outward life, but in the secret intents and emotions of the heart." *Patriarchs & Prophets, p. 308*

We are instructed to honor and uplift one another. As such one must never place another worker in a position of embarrassment or disrespect/harassment due to sexual gestures, pictures, or comments. To do so would be a violation of God's law and the law of the land which protects human rights in the workplace.

**Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964)**, administered by the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has issued guidelines which relate to sexual harassment as follows:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Specific examples of the above-mentioned sexual harassment guidelines may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Verbal harassment or abuse (e.g., degrading comments, propositions, jokes, tricks, pictures, posters, etc.);
2. Subtle pressure or requests for sexual favors or activity;
3. Unnecessary or inappropriate touching of an individual (e.g., patting, pinching, hugging, repeated brushing against another individual's body, etc.);

4. The threat, suggestion, or action making the individuals' job, future promotions, wages, or any terms and conditions of employment dependent on whether or not he/she submits to sexual demands or tolerates sexually related harassment.

The Southeastern California Conference recognizes its responsibility to all employees to maintain a working environment free from sexual harassment. To achieve this goal, certain appropriate methods are utilized to alert employees of this issue. To do this, all employees are made aware that sexual harassment violates the law and is prohibited by the Southeastern California Conference. Further, each employee is advised that appropriate sanctions will be utilized if sexual harassment is found to have occurred.

Sexual harassment of employees of Southeastern California Conference will not be tolerated in any form. If an employee encounters verbal or physical sexual harassment from supervisors, fellow employees, clients or non-employees on the premise, the following steps should be taken immediately:

1. The complainant should report the incident(s) to the ECE Director immediately. In lieu of the ECE Director, a liaison may be designated by Conference Office. Originally the complaint must be communicated verbally and in writing. A discussion should be conducted in an objective and thorough manner with both parties and both parties should be notified not to discuss the matter elsewhere due to the confidentiality of the complaint and the investigation process.
2. The designee will talk confidentially to all involved persons and determine whether an act of unwanted sexual harassment did occur. Written statements will be obtained as appropriate. If it is determined the complaint is valid, immediate and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Depending on the severity of the harassment, discipline may include a written warning, relocation, suspension, or termination.
3. The designee will then notify the complainant and explain that appropriate corrective action has been taken.
4. All employees of the Southeastern California Conference who are aware of incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace are responsible for reporting such incidents immediately to the ECE Director, or designee, supervisor, department head, or another official for investigation.

## **319 Harassment**

Harassment of any kind is unacceptable behavior at SECC. We expect all employees to respect and uplift one another and to abide by God's Law which protects human rights. SECC will not tolerate harassment and doing so can lead to termination. If an employee is affected, the process to follow is the same as the one described above under the Sexual Harassment Policy.

## **320 Sexual Misconduct/Child Abuse**

It is the policy of the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to educate employees on signs and symptoms, do appropriate investigation of complaints, and discipline employee as appropriate.

### **Definition**

Sexual misconduct as used in this policy refers to sexual behavior by an adult, volunteer or employee, toward a minor. Sexual misconduct includes any type of touching for a purpose of sexually stimulating the adult or minor. It also includes conversation or comments by an adult that are sexual in nature and said for the purpose of sexual stimulation.

Child abuse includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, and/or neglect.

### **Prevention**

The center will attempt to prevent sexual misconduct and child abuse by:

1. Carefully screening adults before employment begins. This includes a completed application, reference checks and criminal record check where required by law.
2. All adults having child contact will have periodic training regarding sexual misconduct and child abuse reporting requirements.

### **Complaint**

When reasonable suspicion of child abuse has occurred, it must be reported in the manner required by law. When adults have reasonable suspicion of child abuse it must be reported to the ECE Director and child protective services.

When reasonable suspicion exists that an adult has committed sexual misconduct that rises to the level of child abuse as defined by law, a report must be made in the manner provided by law including notification of the appropriate child protection agencies (CPS and Community Care Licensing), administration, and Human Resources Director. ECE Directors and teachers must cooperate with civil authorities during any investigation. The Human Resources Director may conduct an independent investigation for any acts which fall outside the legal definition of child abuse when an issue exists independent of any criminal investigation. The investigation should be conducted thoroughly and as confidentially as possible. Employment discipline decisions should be made in the same manner and following the same procedure as set forth elsewhere in this Handbook. If it appears necessary to provide for the safety of children it is in the best interest of the center, that the employee may be suspended with pay during the investigation.

## **321 Safety and Health in the Workplace**

It is our policy to provide and maintain a safe and healthful workplace. To that extent, we have implemented the Injury and Illness Prevention Program. Members of management are expected to do everything within their control to assure a safe environment and to always be in compliance with federal, state, and local safety regulations.

Employees are expected to obey safety rules, follow established safe work practices and exercise caution in all their work activities. All employees are expected to immediately report any unsafe conditions to the ECE Director. Employees at all levels of our organization who are responsible for correcting unsafe conditions should do so. Working together, Centers can succeed in having a safe, healthful and profitable workplace from which all will benefit.

### *Safety Rules*

1. All injuries must be reported to your ECE Director immediately.
2. Report unsafe conditions in the workplace – including defective equipment, to your ECE Director immediately.
3. Established safe job procedures must be followed by all employees. Deviations from established procedures require the approval of your ECE Director.
4. If unsure of how to operate equipment or perform any assigned task – ask your ECE Director before proceeding.
5. Use safety guards when needed.
6. Personal protective equipment *must* be worn or used in any area for which it has been issued.
7. Use only the proper tool for the job. Do not use defective equipment. If the proper equipment is not available, request assistance from your ECE Director before proceeding.
8. Get assistance in lifting any item which is so bulky, awkward, or heavy that you feel you are unable to lift it safely.
9. If a repetitive task causes you discomfort, or you feel it is unsafe or unhealthy, report it to your ECE Director immediately.
10. Cigarettes, Alcohol, drugs, or weapons of any kind are prohibited in the workplace.

## **322 Professional Conduct**

The purpose of this policy is to provide all employees with guidelines to maintain appropriate boundaries and professional relationships within the workplace. It is our responsibility to build and maintain a safe, secure, respectful, and professional work environment that is free of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and bias. All employees are expected to maintain the highest professional, moral, and ethical standards in their interaction with colleagues, parents, and children. Interactions should be conducive to an effective, safe learning environment. The interactions and relationships between employees, parents, and children should be based upon mutual respect and trust, and an understanding of appropriate boundaries.

Examples of professional conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Demonstrate kindness, courtesy, and politeness.
- Treat others with dignity and respect. Treat others the way you'd like to be treated.
- Avoid conduct that negatively impacts the workplace and/or relationships.
- Refrain from engaging in behaviors that offend or demean others.
- Maintain open communication practices and honesty.

- Comply with the center policy and procedures.
- Work collaboratively and ask for help.
- Adapt to new ideas, and be team minded.
- Set and maintain professional boundaries and professionalism with colleagues, parents, and children (e.g., refrain from befriending parents). Make boundaries clear and demonstrate your willingness to cooperate.
- Be dependable by honoring commitments and taking initiative when appropriate.
- Strive for growth and take pride in your work.

All employees must sign the ECE Personnel Professional Conduct/Expectations/Boundaries form at their local ECE center.

### **323 Lactation Accommodation Policy**

The Southeastern California Conference supports employees who choose to express breast milk during the workday for their child and will provide reasonable accommodation in accordance with applicable law.

Whenever possible, lactation breaks should run concurrently with regularly scheduled paid rest or meal breaks. Additional time needed beyond paid breaks may be provided; however, unpaid for non-exempt employees and must be accurately recorded using the Center's timekeeping procedures.

Employees will be provided with access to a private space that is clean, safe, and shielded from the view of others. Employees will also be provided with access to a sink and refrigeration or an appropriate cooling device.

Employees are encouraged to communicate their lactation accommodation needs with their supervisor so that appropriate scheduling and classroom coverage can be arranged.

# REMUNERATIONS

## **400 REMUNERATIONS**

### **401 Non-Discrimination**

The wage scale policy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is in harmony with the spirit of non-discrimination, equal pay, and other requirements, as well as being in conformity with the teachings and beliefs of the church.

### **402 Remuneration Scale**

Employee wages are set within a wage category according to one's experience and qualifications. Inquiries regarding your rate of pay should be brought to your ECE Director.

### **403 Pay Days**

Paydays are set up on a bi-weekly basis. Paychecks are mailed or direct deposited every other Friday. A current schedule of paydays is available in the Human Resources Department. Employees may sign up for Direct Deposit in the Human Resources Department. Information is available on the HR website: <https://seccadventist.org/human-resources/>

### **404 Annual Increments**

Generally, in July, an employee may receive a remuneration increment if the maximum for the remuneration category has not been reached. Increases are based on employees' positive performance evaluation(s) and the financial status of the ECE.

### **405 Cost of Living Increases**

Because of inflationary trends and circumstances, employees may receive an annual cost of living percentage increase. This has no relationship to your wage level. When such a cost-of-living increase is voted by the Conference Executive Committee, employees automatically receive this percentage increase, unless (as stated in the wage scale policy) the employee is receiving salary equal to or above an average community rate for the same classification of work.

## **406 WAGE & HOUR SUMMARY NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES: REGULAR WORKWEEK**

### **407 Recording Time**

All hourly, non-exempt employees must record all hours worked on a timecard or according to the time-keeping system in place at the work site. Employees must accurately record the actual time and hours worked. You may not work off the clock. Time is recorded by entering the time you begin work, the time you clock out for your meal period, the time you return to work following the meal period, and the time you end your workday.

At the end of the pay period the employee and the supervisor should review the hours, and both must sign the timecard. Employees must submit timecards to payroll according to the Southeastern California Conference pay date schedule. Please be advised that a timecard or any document that contains incorrect or inaccurate information must never be signed. Failure to properly record time worked may lead to disciplinary action including immediate termination.

#### **408 Rest Periods**

All hourly, non-exempt employees are permitted to take a rest period, which insofar as practicable are in the middle of each work period. The authorized rest period shall be based on ten (10) minutes rest time per each period of four (4) hours worked. Employees whose total daily work time is less than three and one-half hours are not permitted breaks. Breaks are taken with the knowledge of the supervisor, away from the immediate place of work, remaining on the premises of the employer. Authorized rest period time shall be counted as hours worked. ECE Directors will coordinate employee rest periods. Please ensure there is appropriate coverage (ratios) before leaving for your rest period.

#### **409 Meal Periods**

All hourly, non-exempt employees that work for a period of more than five (5) hours are provided a duty-free meal period of not less than 30 minutes and are free to leave the premises (except that when a work period of not more than six (6) hours will complete the day's work, the meal period may be waived by mutual written consent of the employer and employee). The meal period must begin no later than five (5) hours into the employee's shift (e.g., work begins at 8:00 a.m., then the meal period must begin before 1:00 p.m.). The goal shall be that all employees begin their meal period no later than four and one half (4 1/2) hours into their shift.

Should an employee work ten (10) or more hours in a day, the employee is provided with a second duty-free meal period of not less than 30 minutes and must be taken prior to the beginning of the 10th hour of work. If the total hours worked in the day are no more than twelve (12) hours, the second meal period may be waived, in writing, provided that the first meal period is not waived.

Meal periods must be taken away from the immediate place of work and should be coordinated with supervisors. The meal period is taken off the clock and is not paid.

Non-exempt employees are relieved of all work duties during their meal and rest periods. Employees must record their meal periods by clocking out at the beginning of the meal period and clocking in before beginning work following the meal period. The meal period must be at least 30 minutes.

In the event you did not receive an uninterrupted meal period you must advise your supervisor and indicate on your timecard and secure the signature of your immediate supervisor prior to the end of the workday. Supervisors will be notified by email each time an employee clocks out for a meal period after the commencement of the 5th hour of work or misses a meal period. A

notation must be made in the time clock system to explain the reason for each missed meal period and approved by both employee and the supervisor.

If any supervisor or manager impedes or discourages you from having a meal or rest period, you must notify Human Resources immediately so appropriate corrective action may be taken.

Failure to comply with the meal period or any policy could result in disciplinary action, including and up to termination.

#### **410 Workday and Workweek Defined**

The workday begins at midnight and ends at 11:59 p.m. The work week begins at midnight on Sunday and ends at 11:59 p.m. on Saturday.

#### **411 Overtime**

Overtime will be compensated in accordance with the California Wage & Hour overtime standards. Overtime is based strictly on hours worked, not hours paid. Hours taken from paid leave and sick banks as well as hours paid for funeral leave, jury duty, or 'gift' days are not considered hours worked in the calculation of overtime.

All overtime must be authorized in advance by the supervisor. Non-exempt employees who have been requested to and/or have permission to work more than 8 hours in a day or 40 hours in one workweek or the first eight (8) hours on the seventh consecutive day of work in the work week will be compensated at time and one-half the employees' regular rate of pay.

Double time will be compensated in accordance with the California Wage & Hour overtime standards. Non-exempt employees working more than twelve (12) hours per day or in excess of eight (8) on the seventh consecutive day of work in the work week will be compensated at double the employee's regular rate of pay.

#### **412 Make-up Time**

Make-up time allows non-exempt employees to request time off for a personal obligation and make up work time without receiving overtime pay. Make-up time may not be solicited by the employer, must be requested in writing, and agreed upon with the supervisor in advance, and work time must be made up within the same work week. The employee may not work more than 11 hours on another workday, and no more than 40 hours in a workweek to make up the time off. Make-up Time Request Forms are available in the Human Resources Department or on our website: <https://seccadventist.org/human-resources/>

(See Appendix 601 for reference)

#### **413 EARNING CONTINUATION IN CASE OF DEATH**

SECC follows the NAD working policy, which applies to full-time employees only.

#### **414 Withholding of Taxes**

Federal income, state and city or local taxes and Social Security (FICA) are withheld from the employee's paycheck according to law. The amount withheld for federal income tax purposes is based on the W-4 exemption certificate completed by the employee at the time of employment. Any changes in status should be reported to the payroll office. An annual statement of taxable earnings including federal, state, and social security contributions withheld is issued in January on the W-2 Form.

#### **415 Payroll Deductions**

Deductions from personal payroll checks for such things as credit unions, insurance, and tax-sheltered annuities may be made only for regular status employees.

#### **416 Payroll Advance**

In case of an emergency, an employee may request up to a two payroll advance, through the Treasury Department. The payroll advance is limited to one per year and will be paid back within 30 days. As such, the payroll advance cannot exceed the amount that could be repaid over the following two pay checks. Payroll advances need to be approved by the ECE Director. For more information, contact the Conference Treasurers' Office.

#### **417 Garnishment/Levies**

Personal business affairs should be conducted in such a way that the Conference will not become involved. If court garnishments or IRS levies are received, the Conference will process the deductions through payroll.

#### **418 Paydays**

Paydays are set up on a bi-weekly basis. Paychecks are mailed or direct deposited every other Friday. Employees may sign up for direct deposit in the Human Resources Department or Payroll Department. A current schedule of paydays is available in the Human Resources Department.

#### **419 Earning Continuation in Case of Death – NAD**

**Y 25 05 Surviving Spouse Benefits**—When a regular full-time employee dies while in service, the surviving spouse receives certain benefits which are continued for two months from the date of the employee's death. (See NAD Y 34 Employee Basic Life Insurance, NAD Y 46 12-7, NAD Y 46 17 Death Benefit and GC S 60 60. Death Benefit Plans.).

**Y 25 10 Continuation of Employee Remuneration**—When a regular full-time employee dies while in denominational service the surviving spouse is eligible to receive a payment equivalent to the deceased employee's remuneration for five months.

**Y 25 15 Hospitalization and Comprehensive or Family or Spouse Medical Coverage**—The surviving spouse shall continue to be eligible for health care under the selected SECC Health Care Plan six (6) months to the extent that the deceased employee was eligible at the time of death. This benefit is available to all full-time denominational employees, the spouse thereof, and dependent(s) as defined in the SECC Health Care Policy.

**Y 25 25 Tuition Assistance for Dependent Children of Deceased Employee**—The surviving spouse shall continue to receive tuition assistance for eligible dependent children until the end of the current school year to the extent that the deceased employee was eligible at the time of death. This benefit is available to all full-time denominational employees, the spouse thereof, and dependent(s) as defined in NAD Y 24 Tuition Assistance for eligible children of employees.

# TRAVEL POLICIES

## 500 TRAVEL POLICIES

### 501 Travel

When an employee is asked to travel, the employee will be reimbursed for actual mileage incurred and per diem where applicable. In some cases, employees will be compensated for travel time.

All travel must be authorized by the ECE Director.

*Please be advised that the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are subject to revision at any time without prior notice. If you have any questions, please contact your ECE Director.*

# APPENDIXES

## 600 APPENDICES

601 SECC HR Website: <https://seccadventist.org/human-resources/>

602 SECC Education Website: <https://secceducation.org/>

603 ECE PUC Professional Development Program (PDP):  
<https://paucedu.adventistfaith.com/ece-resources/certification/>

**603.1 PDP Manual:**

[NAD ECE Professional Development Program Manual](#)

**603.2 Letter of Request and Application for Professional Development Program Certificate:** [PDP Letter of Request and Application](#)

**603.3 Pacific Union ECE PDP Grant Application:**

[Grant Application](#)

**603.4 Other Professional Development Program Fillable Forms:**

[PDP Fillable Forms](#)

**603.5 PDP Qualification Matrix:**

[Professional Development Program Qualification Matrix](#)

**604 Child Development Permits- Levels of Permits**

[Permit Stipend Matrices | Child Development Training Consortium](#)

[Child Development Permit Matrix - with Alternative Qualification Options Indicated](#)

[Commission of Teacher Credentialing](#)

**605 ECE Teacher Coursework- Reimbursement Request Form**

SECC OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**ECE TEACHER COURSEWORK  
REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST FORM**

The SECC office of Education offers reimbursement for eligible employees for units taken to complete core ECE coursework needed to become a teacher, as well as units for infant and toddler coursework needed to work in an Infant and Toddler program at an SECC ECE Center.

**Eligibility Requirements:**

- Must be employed at an ECE within the SECC.
- Must complete at least 12 months of employment upon completion of coursework before applying for reimbursement.
- Applicants must submit transcripts showing proof of class completion and proof of a passing grade.
- Must submit receipts showing proof of payment.

**Date of Request:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employee Information:**

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Center: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Current Position: \_\_\_\_\_

**Request Type:** Core ECE Units      Infant & Toddler      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

The infant and toddler coursework was requested by my ECE center as a condition of employment:      Y      N

**School Information:**

Name of School Attending: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Course(s) & Credits: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Total Credits: \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Information:**

Semester:                      Summer                      Fall                      Winter                      Spring  
 Academic Year:                      \_\_\_\_\_ (Month/Yr.) to \_\_\_\_\_ (Month/Yr.)  
 Amount Requested\*:                      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Amounts requested are not guaranteed. Requests are subject to administrative review and the availability of funds. Copies of final grades and documentation of the cost of tuition paid must be provided for consideration.

By signing below, I understand that this request does not guarantee reimbursement. In addition, I understand that I must teach full-time in an ECEC within the SECC for 12 months upon completion of the coursework to be eligible for reimbursement.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**To be completed by the Office of Education:**

Employee Eligible?      Yes      No                      Payment Authorized: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Approval Signature/Date \_\_\_\_\_

**606 ECE Admin and Supervision Coursework- Reimbursement Request Form**

SECC OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**ECE ADMIN AND SUPERVISION COURSEWORK  
REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST FORM**

The SECC office of Education offers reimbursement for the administration and supervision units taken to obtain a Preschool Director’s Permit or a Site Supervisor Permit for eligible employees. Eligibility requirements: must be a current ECE teacher within the SECC, must have met the requirements to serve as a teacher (degree and/or credits, and experience) as required by CA state licensing and the SECC, and must complete the reimbursement request form.

*Reimbursement Conditions:*

- Up to \$500 total per applicant.
- Limit to one applicant per preschool per year or only four total individuals per year.
- Applicants must be employed at an ECE within the SECC.
- Applicants must complete at least 12 months of employment upon completion of coursework before applying for reimbursement.
- Applicants must submit transcripts showing proof of class completion and proof of a passing grade.
- Applicants must submit receipts showing proof of payment.

**Date of Request:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employee Information:**

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Center: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Position: \_\_\_\_\_

**School Information:**

Name of School Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Permit Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Course(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Credits: \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Information:**

Semester: Summer Fall Winter Spring

Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_ (Month/Yr.) to \_\_\_\_\_ (Month/Yr.)

Amount Requested\*: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

The amount above should not exceed the \$500 maximum. Applicants must complete 12 months of employment before applying for reimbursement. Copies of final grades and documentation of the cost of tuition paid must be provided before reimbursement will be made.

By signing below, I understand that this amount will count toward the \$500 maximum reimbursement that I may be eligible for. In addition, I understand that I must teach at an SECC ECE for 12 months upon completion of the coursework before applying for reimbursement. Should I leave my position prior to the completion of 12 months, I will become ineligible to apply for reimbursement.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**To be completed by the Office of Education:**

Employee Eligible? Yes No Payment Authorized: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Approval Signature/Date \_\_\_\_\_