The Opportunity Tree Employee Handbook

Standards of Conduct

The Opportunity Tree is committed to providing a nurturing, educational environment for young children. As an employee, you represent our organization and its values. We expect all staff members to uphold high standards of professionalism, ethics and care.

Appearance and Attire

Employees are expected to dress appropriately for their role. Clothing should allow free movement, be comfortable for sitting on the floor with children, and project a professional image. Good judgment should be used regarding cleavage, midriffs, short skirts, etc. Closed toe shoes are required. Tattoos and piercings should be modest. Staff should appear well-groomed and neat.

Interactions with Children and Families

Employees are expected to treat children with kindness, patience and respect at all times, using positive reinforcement and redirection. Harsh verbal discipline, physical punishment or shaming techniques are strictly prohibited. Staff should nurture healthy attachments through warm, responsive relationships. Confidentiality of children's behavior, development and family circumstances must be maintained. Employees are mandated reporters of any suspected child abuse or neglect per California law. Families should be treated as partners in their child's education. Ongoing, positive communication with parents is key. Any violations of professional boundaries with children or parents will result in termination.

I aimed to cover the key areas you specified in a tone that is reasonably formal for an employee manual while remaining welcoming. Please let me know if you would like me to modify or expand this draft further.

Attendance Policy and Vacation Time

Employees are expected to adhere to their assigned schedules and be punctual for all shifts. Advance notice is required for any scheduled time off; vacation requests may be denied if they interfere with adequate staffing needs. Call outs should be extremely rare and only for emergency situations.

The Opportunity Tree has a three strike policy regarding absences and tardiness. On the first unscheduled late arrival or absence, a verbal warning will be issued. The second instance will result in a written warning. The third unscheduled late/miss will lead to termination. Advance communication about unavoidable issues is strongly advised to attempt to find coverage or scheduling solutions.

The care, education and safety of the children in our center is the utmost priority. Failure to arrive for scheduled shifts deprives children of continuity and quality care. Excessive absences, late arrivals or denial of vacation requests due to coverage needs should be expected as part of the commitment to this field.

Gross Violations

Any breaches of policy regarding professional standards of conduct, positive interactions with children/families, or attendance expectations as outlined above will be considered gross violations of expected ethics and performance. Such violations will be dealt with swiftly, including written warnings, immediate leave or suspension pending investigation, or termination. Progressive discipline may be utilized unless offenses risk significant harm to the wellbeing of our center community.

Social Media Policy

The Opportunity Tree values its public reputation and requires employees to uphold professional standards in their public conduct, including on social media. Employees must ensure their personal social media presence aligns with representing our center appropriately.

Content reflecting poorly upon our organization, such as indecent photos, inflammatory opinions, and participation in illegal or disreputable activities are prohibited. Staff must be mindful they are ambassadors for The Opportunity Tree at all times and exercise wise judgment.

Employees are discouraged from interacting closely with current clients on social media to maintain appropriate boundaries. Comments criticizing our center, staff, families or policies are unacceptable. Any content contributing to discrediting our reputation will result in disciplinary action or termination.

Attending protests, rallies or events for causes that conflict with the ethics and safety standards for early childhood education may be grounds for separation or dismissal. We ask staff to consider the visibility and message communicated by their public choices in light of protecting and role modeling for vulnerable young minds.

Quality of Care Provision

All employees are expected to provide attentive, nurturing, age-appropriate care and educational experiences for the children at The Opportunity Tree. Shortcuts that compromise children's needs, development, safety or wellbeing are considered failures to perform duties as assigned and violations of trust.

Any observations or reports of substandard care or negligence by a staff member will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension without pay or termination of employment. The director and/or ownership reserves full discretion in determining appropriate consequences per incident.

Establishing and upholding excellent quality of care is the cornerstone of our center’s mission. We have no tolerance for misconduct or inadequate attention/effort toward the children under our care. Parents and children deserve our fullest commitment to positive development. All employees share responsibility for reporting concerning incidents they observe at our center. We take all accounts of substandard care very seriously with the children’s best interest as our priority.

Remember our we strive to provide a place where families become family!

By your signature you declare and agree to abide by all rules and regulations that may change at any time with verbal or written notice. Our goal is to provide excellence in child development and care.