

## Teacher Qualifications

A preschool teacher must have completed at least 2 semester units or the equivalent quarter units to satisfy California educational requirements.

To be a fully qualified preschool teacher, you must have 1 of the following: 12 post secondary semester units or the equivalent quarter units in early childhood education or child development completed at an accredited or approved college or university, and at least 6 months of work experience in a licensed child care center or comparable group program.

The units specified above shall include courses which cover the general areas of child growth and development or human growth and development; child, family and community or child and family; or program/curriculum.

Experience shall be verified as having been performed satisfactorily, at least 3 hours per day for a minimum of 50 days in a 6 month period, as a paid or volunteer staff member under the supervision of a person who would qualify as a teacher or director under these regulations.

A photocopy of the teacher's transcripts documenting successful completion of the required coursework shall be maintained at the center.

Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers must have at least a Bachelor's Degree in Education or an equivalent educational requirement.

## Teacher Aide Qualifications

Each aide must be at least 18 years old, a high school graduate, and currently participating (if enrolled as a student) in an occupational program conducted by an accredited college.

## Positive and Pro-active Direction

Avoid telling children what not to do. Focus instead of what they can do. Time your directions appropriately: younger children need more time to comply with a request. A confident pause is valuable as you allow them time to process and carry out instructions.

Do not interfere with other classes or teachers. You were hired to work in a specific class or area of responsibility.

Offer students a choice only when they have a choice. If you give students a choice, let them choose. Compromising and rewarding are effective motivators for pro-active teaching.

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**[www.StartingGateSchool.com](http://www.StartingGateSchool.com)**

# Starting Gate School Employee Handbook

**California State Licensed  
Private – 4 Decades of Education**

**Preschool thru 12<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Achieving Excellence Together**



**Home of the Eagles**

## History

For 4 decades, we have celebrated the educational methodology developed by Genevieve Reignierd. In 2008, Mrs. Reignierd left a legacy of memories and educational excellence for future generations, to uphold the belief that quality education can still be affordable.

## Philosophy

We focus on individual students and their maturation in a diverse community of life long learners devoted to intellectual and ethical development.

Students are taught basic curriculum in order to learn important 21st century skills. Children are our most important resource. Each child must be treated with respect and allowed to develop to their greatest potential. We want to enhance each student's self-esteem, build confidence, and encourage them to succeed.

Students are challenged to observe high standards of integrity and pursue knowledge. They are stimulated to think creatively. Parents are encouraged to participate in school activities. We welcome the experience that parents bring to the classroom. We seek to inspire our students to learn through different venues such as field trips, classroom presentations, class activities, and holiday parties.

Each classroom is designed to fully engage students and provide greater enthusiasm for learning. We are excited about the opportunities and challenges ahead to stimulate and develop our students academically.

## Goals

Our goal is to provide students with a basic education, teaching individuals how to find and use the resources they need to achieve and contribute to their community. We have built our reputation through the quality of our faculty and excellence in teaching. The faculty holds degrees from colleges and universities throughout the United States.

Starting Gate is rooted in tradition and is culturally diverse. We offer a safe environment for students enrolled in preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. We begin each day with the Pledge of Allegiance and end each day with a ceremonial closing with the U.S. Flag.

We work with each student as the unique individual that each one is. We involve students and parents in:

- Mapping student's educational future
- Promoting academic excellence and leadership
- Creating a bond between school and community
- Bringing a new sense of possibilities to students
- Problem solving and cooperation between students
- Transforming students to become future leaders
- Excursions to cultural events and attractions

## Unacceptable, prohibited behavior:

- Ø Theft or removal of school property without authorization is ground for termination.
- Ø Use, possession, or distribution of alcoholic beverages, narcotics, or drugs on school property is not allowed, nor is reporting for work under the influence of same.
- Ø Striking, fighting with children or staff members, regardless of reason, is not allowed. Disorderly or immoral conduct, horseplay or practical joking, running or scuffling while attending to students is not allowed.
- Ø Insubordination or refusing to carry out a job assignment or instructions from the principal or preschool director.
- Ø Falsification, altering or omitting information from school records, i.e. student's record, employment application, time sheet, etc. Signing another employee's time sheet.
- Ø Absence for 2 consecutive workdays without notifying the principal will result in your automatic termination.
- Ø Revealing confidential business information to another employee not authorized to receive it or to any unauthorized person.
- Ø Discussion of pay rates with other employees will result in your termination.
- Ø Misuse or removal of school or employee information or records from school property without authorization.
- Ø Working overtime or on holidays without authorization.
- Ø Creating or contributing to unsanitary conditions.
- Ø Failure to immediately report injuries to yourself or students.
- Ø Affiliation with any political party or other group whose activities are judged subversive by the U.S. government.
- Ø Failure to arrive at work, ready to work at the start of your shift.
- Ø Failure to clock in and out and fill out your time sheet daily.
- Ø Working for another employer or a competitor without prior authorization.
- Ø Reading any material during working hours unless the material pertains to the school work you are doing.
- Ø Use of the school name without authorization.
- Ø Making personal phone calls or transacting personal business during working time without advance permission.
- Ø Leaving the school for any reason during your shift without authorization.
- Ø Failure to observe posted safety rules and procedures set forth by the school and/or California regulations.
- Ø Wasting time or loitering anywhere on campus during working time.
- Ø Wage garnishments (as provided by law).
- Ø Malicious gossip or false accusations.
- Ø Circulating written or printed materials not authorized by the principal or preschool director during working time. Collecting money or signatures from other employees during working time.

## Problem Solving

If you have a problem or complaint, please discuss it with the principal or preschool director. The matter will be treated with dignity and respect as a solution is achieved.

## Personal Conduct on the Job

The following rules of conduct are to be maintained while at work:

- ☆ A current medical clearance must be on file at the school. A 30 day grace period at the start of new employment and a 15 day grace period for annual renewal is allowed.
- ☆ Clock in and out of the main office and report working hours each shift on your time sheet.
- ☆ No overtime will be paid without authorization by the principal in advance, who must initial your time sheet to approve overtime.
- ☆ All absences are to be reported in advance and sufficient time allowed for your temporary replacement to be notified to cover for you.
- ☆ Chewing gum, smoking, and/or rude/impolite language are not allowed on school property.
- ☆ All employees must wear respectable attire and maintain a clean, neat appearance.
- ☆ Show proper care for all school equipment. Immediately report any equipment failures.
- ☆ Conserve supplies, electricity, & natural gas.
- ☆ All employees must enter and leave by the front office.
- ☆ Check the office daily for any new school news or information.
- ☆ Personal items such as purses or clothing items are your responsibility.
- ☆ For your protection, discussions with parents of students regarding any class or child behavior must be first cleared through the principal.
- ☆ When outside at recess time, circulate so that children are in your view at all times.
- ☆ Make sure items (sweaters, lunch bags, etc.) are not left outside. Enrolled children of staff members are expected to follow school rules and the class program without special treatment.
- ☆ Problems with students (discipline, health, accident) must be reported immediately. This includes abnormalities such as a bruise that a child may have when arriving at school.
- ☆ Check students in and out through the main office. No child is to be released at any time without physically passing through the main office.
- ☆ Before leaving the classroom, be sure the area is clean and ready for the next class or day.
- ☆ The kitchen must be kept clean.

## Mission and Vision

Our Mission is to provide each student with academic resources needed in today's world.

Today's students need communication skills to survive. A framework of learning skills, both intellectual and social are needed in today's world as never before. As our student body enrollment increases, so does our team spirit. Each classroom is designed to fully engage students and provide them with greater enthusiasm for learning.

A well planned curriculum to the smallest detail makes for a memorable experience that students, teachers, and parents are proud to contribute to. Our teachers and staff remain dedicated in addressing the needs of each student academically.

As partners with our students we know the importance of providing them with the fundamentals of a strong and basic education.

**At Starting Gate School**, we value each faculty and staff member as a unique team member. We work together to accomplish our goals for the benefit of each student. The Principal and the Preschool Director are your resources for support & career guidance.

We regard each team member, & applicant as well, equally without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, physical handicap, medical condition, marital status, or ancestry as provided by law.

We provide working conditions which are safe, healthful, and harmonious.

We encourage frequent and continuous communication with the Principal or the Preschool Director concerning any possible improvements in working conditions or procedures at the school.

Everyone will receive fair treatment and must resolve any concerns or issues as promptly as possible.

Daily work is to be performed in a spirit of friendship, cooperation and teamwork.

## New Hire Probationary Period

New employees are on probation for 90 days (3 months). Upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period new employees assume regular employee status and benefits. Length of employment is calculated from the day he/she was first hired.

## Notification of Absence

All faculty and staff must phone the school whenever she/he will be absent as soon as it is known, but no later than 1 hour before their scheduled shift starting time. Arrangements to fill in for you will then be made. Absences will be recorded in your permanent record. If you are absent without notifying the school for 2 consecutive workdays, you will be considered to have self-terminated yourself from employment here.

## Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance is very important to you, the school, and your students as well. Think of the role model you are providing to the students. Employees must be at school on time, but preferably 15 minutes before the scheduled shift starting time. It is understood that at times absence is unavoidable. However, unscheduled absences create a loss of productivity which affects other employees who must cover for absent staff members. Students are adversely affected also. Poor attendance is not allowed and is grounds for disciplinary action or termination.

## Absence

All faculty and staff must be at the location within the school campus where they begin their work shift at their scheduled starting time (i.e.: your classroom, the playground, etc.) or they will be considered late for work. You are late or absent for work if you do not clock in and sign-in on the time sheet on time. Hourly employees must clock out when leaving the school property for personal reasons, including lunch, and clock in upon returning. If you must leave the campus during your working hours for other than authorized school business, you must first obtain permission from the Principal or the Preschool Director, except for lunch.

## Excused Absences

Sometimes it is impossible to come to work. Excused absences which are part of an employee's record are:

- Approved medical leave of absence, doctor's work excuse required;
- Approved personal leave of absence, usually in summer;
- Approved maternity leave of absence;
- Approved vacation time off;
- Court subpoena or jury duty;
- Approved time off, requested in advance;
- Other absences may be excused through discussion with the Principal.

## Unexcused Absences

- Any partial day's absence is one-half day of an unexcused absence.
- On any day an employee is absent and has not phoned the principal, he/she will receive an unexcused absence.
- Each employee is allowed 2 unexcused absences.

Faculty/staff attendance records will be maintained for each year that is worked at Starting Gate School. On the employee's employment anniversary date, any unexcused absences accumulated during that year will be eliminated and will start another employment year with zero unexcused absences.

## Payday

Paychecks are issued on the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month for all work performed through the preceding month. If you are absent on payday, you will receive your paycheck when you return to work unless you have made other arrangements in writing.

## Professional Status

Each employee is expected to perform and conduct themselves in a manner which is professional and will bring credibility to the school. This includes working with children in an understanding manner, doing it well and in a conscientious fashion. It also includes appropriate attitude and consideration towards fellow staff members as well as the school in general.

Starting Gate School will be judged based on staff member's behavior and appearance. Well dressed employees depict a professional environment and we want to put our best foot forward at all times.

**The following dress code should be followed during normal working hours by all school faculty/staff. Think of yourself as a role model.**

Female employees are requested to wear suitable yet comfortable clothing, dresses, slacks, or skirts with blouses. Appropriate capri shorts (knee length or just above the knee), non-advertisement sweatshirts with designer jeans and tennis shoes are also acceptable.

Unacceptable for the work environment: flip flops, mini-dresses and skirts, low neckline cut, backless, strapless, spaghetti strap dresses and blouses, faded denim jeans with holes or rips, leotard tops, tube or tank tops, etc.

Male employees are requested to wear suitable attire as well: slacks, designer jeans, dress and casual shirts, & comfortable sports wear including shoes.

Unacceptable: sandals, cut-offs, message t-shirts, tank tops, faded denim jeans with rips or tears or low hip/waist. Hair must be kept clean and neatly trimmed. Beards and moustaches are allowed, provided they are neatly trimmed.

Employees who are not in direct contact with children or sponsors are not expected to come under this requirement: i.e., groundskeeper, janitor, etc.

## Office Calendar

The event calendar is located in the main office and the community lobby. For our convenience and that of our clients, all scheduled dates, i.e., field trips, fire drills, walks, etc. are posted each month as well as in the monthly newsletter. Please read the calendar often and give suggestions at the monthly staff meeting.

## Time off to Vote

Any employee may, if they do not have sufficient time outside of working hours, make arrangements to take time off from work to vote.

## Personal Information and Employee Records

It is your responsibility to keep personal data such as your address, telephone number, and tax withholding information accurate and up to date.

## Restrooms

Restrooms should be kept clean.

## Physical Examinations

The California State Licensing Dept. requires a health screening for preschool employment which includes a T.B. test or equivalent. Any expense incurred for the examination is absorbed by the employee, applicant or new hire.

## Worker's Compensation

All employees of Starting Gate School are covered under Worker's Compensation insurance and laws in the event they are injured or contract an illness while on the job. In the event you are injured on the job, you must report the injury to the principal immediately.

Starting Gate School pays 100% of the premiums for that insurance. It provides medical and hospital benefits at no cost to you, as well as death benefits arising from an occupational injury or illness. It also provides payments in lieu of wages after a waiting period is served. The amount of each benefit is established by law. The state of California determines eligibility.

Starting Gate School is concerned about your well-being. Please call the principal at least every 10 days while you are off of work due to a disability.

## Disability Insurance

State law requires that a percentage of your income be deducted from your paycheck to provide for S.D.I. (State Disability Insurance). If you are injured or disabled while off the job, causing you to be unable to work, you should file a claim for SDI. Your doctor's office can help you file a claim.

## Unemployment Insurance

This program is for obtaining weekly payments, job training, and job placement services when you lose your job. Apply through the Employment Development Dept., state of California.

## Social Security Insurance

This is a federal program available to eligible persons for retirement insurance, survivor's insurance, disability insurance, and hospital and medical insurance benefits. Each of these is administered by the Social Security Administration.

## Telephone Calls

The school phone is for school business. Personal use during working time, disrupts the flow of work and may block a parent/sponsor from reaching the school. Please do not use the school phone for personal calls. In cases when you may receive a personal call, or in the event of an emergency, you will be notified as quickly as possible to receive or make your call.

Discussion of employee pay rates will be grounds for dismissal.

## The following disciplinary action will be taken as unexcused absences are accumulated:

Number of Unexcused Absences	Corrective Disciplinary Action
½ to 5 ½	Recorded but no action taken
6	1 <sup>st</sup> warning - recorded
6 ½ to 8 ½	Recorded but no action taken
9	2 <sup>nd</sup> warning – recorded
9 ½ to 10	Recorded but no action taken
11	Final cause warning
12	Automatic termination

## Poor Attendance = Poor Work Attitude

Employees who abuse the system by accumulating unexcused absences at a rate faster than 2 in a calendar quarter may be given a verbal warning and/or a warning letter.

Examples of abusing the system include:

- ✓ Pattern of tardiness or leaving early;
- ✓ Pattern of absence on Monday or Friday;
- ✓ Consistently absent when scheduled for hours you don't like;
- ✓ Large number of personal emergencies, family crises, auto troubles;
- ✓ Consistently absent more than other employees.

## School Hours of Operation

Starting Gate School is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

### Normal preschool shift hours

6:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (Ext. Day) to 3:30 p.m. – 1 hour lunch  
 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (Ext. Day) to 5:00 p.m. – 1 hour lunch  
 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (Ext. Day) to 5:30 p.m. – 1 hour lunch  
 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (Ext. Day) to 6:00 p.m. – 1 hour lunch  
 10:30 to 12:30 Kitchen Help Position (2 hours maximum)  
 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. includes working lunch on campus

## Employee Working Hours

Your specific scheduled hours of work are determined by the number of enrolled students per session. If you have any questions about your hours, please ask the principal or Preschool Director.

Normal hours may vary slightly depending on special events: i.e., Graduation Day, Halloween, etc. If your hours are changed, you will be notified in advance so that you can plan for it.

## Breaks

Two 15 minute paid breaks are normally taken during each scheduled 8 hour shift.

## **Lunch**

A 30 minute unpaid lunch period is normally scheduled for each employee near the mid-point of each workday.

## **Performance Reviews**

We want you to know how you are doing in your work and how you can improve. Therefore, each employee will be given formal performance reviews based upon the following:

All newly hired employees will be given a review just prior to the end of their 90 day probationary period. They may also be given other reviews during the first 90 days.

For each of the reviews, the principal will prepare a written performance review which is based on the performance standards and position responsibilities for the class which you have been assigned. The review will be discussed with you and you will be asked to comment on anything that is related to the review. You will be asked to sign and date the review. Your signature does not indicate your agreement or disagreement with the review, but indicates that you have read the review.

Some of the areas considered in the review: quality and quantity of work, knowledge of early childhood education (preschool only), attendance and punctuality, client service, attitude, dependability, housekeeping, appearance, adaptability, etc.

## **Job Performance Corrective**

If any employee is performing at a level that is marginally acceptable or unacceptable, the principal may at any time initiate a job performance corrective review. For the preschool faculty/staff, the purpose of this review is to inform the employee that their performance is unsatisfactory by the standards set forth by the Community Care Licensing Dept., state of California, for Early Childhood Education.

For the Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade faculty/staff, the principal will review job performance based on the grade level.

Suggestions of what must be done to improve performance must be achieved within 30 days. At the end of the 30 days, a new review will be completed for all school faculty/staff.

## **Employment Warning**

Violation of staff rules or policy may result in the issuance of a warning to notify an employee of a serious or consistent violation. If after sufficient time is given for correction and a second violation is issued, that warning will result in dismissal.

## **Clearance**

The Community Care Licensing Dept. of California requires that all employees provide fingerprints for a background check. That is a one-time expense at the employee's expense.

## **Paid Holidays**

New hires will be eligible for holiday pay after their 90 day probationary period. Employees who do not work a minimum of 3 hours per day are not eligible for holiday pay. Paid holidays include: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, President's Weekend, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, & Christmas Day.

## **Paid Vacation Time**

Employees who work 8 hours daily are eligible for paid vacation time after completion of 1 year of employment. Starting with the second year of employment, each eligible employee will receive 2 weeks of paid vacation to be taken in 1 week increments. Pay will not be substituted for unused vacation time. Vacation time must always be scheduled in advance.

If your employment is terminated and you have unused vacation time accumulated for the current calendar year, you will be paid for the unused vacation time. Part-time employees are not eligible for paid vacation time.

## **Personal Leave of Absence**

During the time you are on approved personal leave, and you engage in other employment, file for unemployment insurance benefits, or fail to return to work as agreed at the expiration date of your leave, or you are not available for work, you will be considered as having self-terminated your employment effective on the first day of personal leave.

## **Maternity Leave**

As soon as an employee becomes aware that she is pregnant, she must promptly provide the principal with a statement in writing by her doctor as to her expected continued employment, with due consideration for the duties that she performs for the school. This statement must indicate the date after which her doctor no longer feels that she may work, and at that time the school will grant her a maternity leave.

Maternity leave is normally granted for a period not to exceed 4 months, but may be extended for an additional 30 calendar days. Depending upon the circumstances and the opinion of the doctor in charge of your care, extensions to maternity leave may be extended again, but must not exceed 6 months from the original date of maternity leave of absence.

During approved maternity leave, if you engage in other employment, file for unemployment insurance benefits, or fail to return to work as agreed at the expiration date of your leave, or you are not available for work upon release by your doctor, you will be considered as having self-terminated your employment, effective with the first day of your maternity leave.

## **Suggestion System**

If you have an idea or suggestion to improve our service to students or sponsors, please communicate that with the principal or the preschool director.