

Lex-is School Law Services

North Carolina Charter School Policy Series Introduction and Table of Contents

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INTRODUCTORY NOTES

Purposes. Effective policies and handbooks are essential for every charter school's long-term success. They provide a guide for (1) developing and implementing a school's mission and strategic plan; (2) the school community to understand the school's values, expectations, and procedures; (3) consistent, orderly, and fair procedures; and (4) fostering compliance with legal requirements and reducing conflicts, costs, and liability.

Topics. This School Board Policy Series is prepared as a guide for North Carolina charter schools, addressing issues involving school board, personnel, student, operational, and technology issues.

Scope and Detail. The Policy Series is designed to be reasonably comprehensive, with the view that it is better to start with a broad set of policy options and then eliminate, reduce, or modify the policies to suit the school's unique needs.

Policies Versus Procedures. The Policy Series does not distinguish between board-approved policies and administrative procedures to implement policies. Many schools may wish to leave the implementing details – the “nuts and bolts” – to their administration to determine. Thus, in adapting this Series, drafters should consider whether some template policies are better left for such administrative implementation.

Handbook Adaptability. The Series is also drafted comprehensively so that its various components can be easily adapted to the creation of school handbooks. For instance, the sections on personnel (Section 200) and students (Section 300), lend themselves to production of a school’s Employee and Student Handbooks, respectively.

Formatting Features. The Policy Series contains several key formatting features:

- **Blue text** indicates essential or important legal provisions. It is important that these provisions not be deleted or substantively changed without legal consultation.
- **Green text** offers suggestions, questions, or legal explanations.
- Regular, black text indicates those sections that may be freely modified (deleted, revised, expanded, etc.) to reflect the values, policies, and procedures unique to a particular school.
- Numbered headers may be modified to suit school purposes. Keep in mind, however, that each section of the Series comes with an automated MS Word **Table of Contents function**. The school’s policy drafters should be mindful not to alter these functions if the Table of Contents feature is to be retained.

It is important to note that the adoption of this Policy Series does not assure sufficient legal protection. School officials using it are urged to have an education attorney help prepare or at least review final policies before it they are formally adopted. The law is, in some respects, very case-specific. Legal expertise and consultation are important to ensure that any school document addresses the school's unique legal concerns and circumstances. Furthermore, we recommend annual training for board members and staff to optimize understanding and compliance with all policies.

We hope you find this helpful. Please contact us if you have any questions at (919) 442-8593 or Services@Lex-is.com.

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Lex-is School Law Services

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