



**The Founders Academy
Faculty/Employee Handbook
2023-2024**

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1 Mission Statement

The Founders Academy is a public charter school encompassing grades 5-12 that is free and open to all New Hampshire students. The Academy develops citizens and leaders, who understand and apply the lessons of the past, demonstrate exceptional character, participate knowledgeably in community activities, and lead by example. The Academy recognizes the importance of balance in the development of each person and respects each student's individual journey.

Principled leadership and good citizenship are fostered by means of a curriculum of classical studies that includes analyzing the lives of great men and women of history, mining the rich

classical ideals of the Western tradition, and tracing the evolution of the precious and costly idea of liberty.

The Founders Academy Board of Trustees Statement of Support for the Mission of the School

The Founders Academy community, including the students, staff, and parents, are hereby notified that it is the chief purpose of the Board of Trustees to support the mission of the school. That mission includes the study of our history, the honoring of our heroes, an emphasis on good character, many opportunities to learn and practice leadership, knowledge of important values, service to the community, and, ultimately, guardianship of our nation's liberty as the final goal of this educational experience.

The Board has resolved to take an active role in supporting the administration in its efforts to make the mission of the school an everyday practice in all aspects of school life, most especially in Round Table, but also across the curriculum and into the social life and extracurricular activities of the school.

The Board has created a document outlining the required responsibilities of Round Table teachers to actively lead students in basic themes related to the mission during the course of the school year and to participate fully in the specific programs put forth by the faculty's own mission committee.

The Board's commitment to its emphasis on the mission will also extend to visiting Round Table groups and academic classes during the course of the school year.

It is the hope of the Board that as a result of these efforts to make the mission the core of every student's experience at The Founders Academy, we will assist the school community in creating a deeper and richer school experience.

2 The Vision

The Founders Academy prepares wise, principled leaders by offering a classical education and providing a wide array of opportunities to lead.

3 Teacher Code of Excellence

Faculty and staff are obligated to uphold the following Teacher Code of Excellence which was written and adopted by faculty in February, 2017. The Code truly emphasizes the manner in which faculty and staff conduct themselves as employees of Founders both in and out of school.

Accountability	To the mission and vision of the school.
Inspiration	Inspire good character in each of our students.
Leadership	Promote leadership opportunities for students wherever possible.
Self-Improvement	Pursue personal education and development for your own teaching methods and management.
Integrity	Guarantee integrity and fairness in all areas of teaching.
Respect	Respect student individuality and encourage student growth.
Professionalism	Maintain professional discretion and respect for all members of the Founders' community.
Communication	Communicate simply, clearly, and in a timely way to Founders' community members. Bring concerns directly to administration and/or other involved parties for quick resolution.
Support	Support the entire Founders' community by sharing your knowledge and ideas.
Fulfillment	Fulfill all obligations and duties as stated in the handbook to the best of your ability.

4 Definitions

Board of Trustees: The Board of Trustees consists of up to nine members and governs Founders in accordance with RSA 194-B:5. Appointment as a Trustee does not constitute employment at the school.

Dean: The Dean of School (“Dean”) is the head of the school responsible for the day-to-day business and operations of The Founders Academy. See Charter School Application 2019, page 18.

Employees: Employees are full, part time, and per diem members of The Founders Academy who are salaried and charged with specific tasks and duties.

Full-Time Faculty: Full-Time Faculty consists of teachers hired to teach, lesson plan, and assess students for a minimum of 40 hours per week. Full-Time Faculty are expected to be at school from 7:20 am- 3:20 pm on regular school days, participate in school functions, events, faculty meetings and assigned duties.

Independent Contractors: An Independent Contractor is hired on an hourly or contractual basis up to twelve (12) months on a 1099 status to assist the school with specific assignments and duties for a specified time period. Contractors are not considered employees of the school, nor are they considered faculty or staff.

Part-Time Faculty: Part-Time Faculty consists of teachers hired to teach, lesson plan, and assess students for a minimum of 20 hours per week. Part-Time Faculty are expected to participate in school functions, events, faculty meetings and assigned duties. Such faculty are considered employees.

Per Diem Faculty/Staff: Per diem faculty/staff are employees of The Founders Academy paid on an hourly basis.

Staff: Staff are hired employees of The Founders Academy who assist with the day-to-day operations of the school but do not teach. Staff can be considered either full or part-time depending on the minimum number of hours worked per week.

The Founders Academy: The Founders Academy or “Founders” or “school” is the public chartered school located at 5 Perimeter Road in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Volunteers: Volunteers are unpaid members of The Founders Academy community who contribute their time to assist the school in various ways. Volunteers are not considered employees of the school, nor are they considered faculty or staff.

5 Non-Discrimination Policy

The Founders Academy shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, age, religion, handicap or sexual/gender orientation, ethnic origin or marital status in the selection of students or employees, or in the administration of its educational program or in any other way as is

prohibited by relevant state and federal law. The Board of Trustees had developed and adopted a policy to create administrative procedures to address complaints or concerns.

Complaints and concerns may be reported to the Dean, or if the incident involves the Dean the matter may be reported to the Board of Trustees.

6 Faculty and Staff

All appointments or hires as faculty or staff are made by the Dean in consultation with the Leadership Committee, and approved by the Board of Trustees. Each newly appointed member of the faculty or staff is required to read, sign and return a Founders Employment Agreement which establishes in writing the employee's title, terms of employment, compensation, expectations and commitment to The Founders Academy mission statement. Founders Employment Agreements are "at-will" agreements. Compensation is determined before an appointment is made to commensurate with experience. Faculty and staff must complete a background check and all new hire paperwork prior to starting at Founders. Founders may also request a background checks periodically during the employment period. The time and cost for this will be covered by the school.

Throughout the academic year, faculty are subject to periodic assessments and reviews. Such assessments may be in the form of self-assessments, peer assessments, classroom observations (announced and unannounced) and/or Dean (or designee) reviews. The purpose of the review process is to assist the teacher in improving themselves as an instructor, lesson planner, and curriculum developer. Staff and other employees may be assessed and reviewed.

In the event that Remote Learning is called for, all faculty and staff agree to maintain their regular job responsibilities either off-site or in the building while students are off-site. Any changes in responsibilities will be communicated by administration. This may include supporting students who are challenged by a lack of technology in the home, removal of normal duties at school, participation in remote meetings and other responsibilities determined by the situation and duration of Remote Learning.

Employees are expected to be available throughout the summer months for questions and follow up if needed. Employees must notify the Dean if they are unavailable for a specific amount of time.

7 The Founders Academy Employment Agreement

Faculty and staff of The Founders Academy are required to review, sign and return a Founders Employment Agreement. Within this agreement are the terms of the employment, expectations, duties, familiarity with the charter, as well as other provisions outlining employment at The Founders Academy.

8 Integrity

The Founders Academy is a school whereby leadership and positive character traits are emphasized and taught to students in grades 5-12. Employees of The Founders Academy are held to a high standard of integrity and professionalism both in and outside of school.

9 Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

Teachers at The Founders Academy have the right to teach, develop curriculum and lessons, and grade their classes in accordance with the charter, mission, and vision of the school. Academic publications, lectures and other means of demonstrating academic ability shall also be in accordance with the purpose and charter of The Founders Academy.

Teachers have the right to receive advance notice and if a parent or other person from outside the school wishes to observe their classroom. If the day is not appropriate due to testing or other activities where a distraction will be detrimental to learning the teacher will respond with an alternative date.

Teachers have the responsibility to uphold the Teacher Code of Excellence and infuse the mission of The Founders Academy into the day to day operations of the school.

Teachers have the responsibility to handle all cash according to the cash handling procedure.

Teachers have the responsibility to ensure student safety (ie. awareness of safety procedures, making sure all chaperones have background checks, keeping doors closed and locked, taking accurate attendance and maintaining CPR/First Aid certification).

The Founders Academy Board of Trustees Required School Mission-Related Curriculum

This list of mission-related subject matter must be presented to students by all Round Table teachers during the course of the school year.

All teachers are required to allot two (or more) Round Table periods a week to these specific mission-related themes. The faculty mission committee will introduce the themes at the beginning of each month.

Character--with emphasis on a thorough review of the **Code of Conduct** at the beginning of the school year and with many references to it throughout the year.

Nominations of Student and Teacher of the Quarter. This exercise should be thoughtfully presented and discussed with references to the student Code of Conduct and teacher Code of Excellence continuously during the school year.

Weekly communications between student government and Round Table. The importance of student representatives to the government and support of its activities should be emphasized.

In depth study of the monthly themes: Inspiring quotations from historical figures should be included in the presentation of monthly themes.

Monthly themes are required subjects for at least two Round Tables each week. Round Tables may work in larger groups or “houses” on these themes. In addition to discussion there are many activities available such as debates, contests, dramatizations, posters, school- or grade- wide projects, student led activities, etc. Themes may be updated by the Round Table committee as needed.

1. **September: School Functions:** getting familiar with schedules, routines, rules, use of school websites, overview of the mission, setting goals for the year based on strengths and areas that need improvement in both character and academics.
2. **October: Citizenship:** Code of Conduct, definitions and examples of citizenship in the school and in the world. Exploration of the idea of leadership. Examples of good leadership, etc. Encouragement of student leadership in Round Table and throughout the school.
3. **November: Veterans and Thanksgiving:** Honoring heroes. Stories of veterans. Veterans’ assembly. Important wars that veterans alive today have fought in. History and customs of Thanksgiving. Gratitude. What does it mean? What are you grateful for? How can we express gratitude?
4. **December: Celebrate.** Music, poems, parties, contests, etc. Christmas in America. The spirit of giving.
5. **January: Developing Self-Reliance:** Learning to be responsible for yourself and others without adult guidance. If there is no teacher or parent in a room, does your behavior change? Do you need to be told how to behave or can you self-regulate? How much responsibility do you feel for others? If someone is being teased, would you feel responsible to intervene and help the victim without being told to do so? How responsible are you for your own education? Who is more responsible, you or your teachers? Etc.
6. **February: Presidential History, Character and Leadership:** Factual activities: stories of the presidents’ lives. Who were the war presidents? The order of presidents.

- Memorizing quotations from some presidents, etc. Evaluation of presidents—their characters, leadership abilities and styles. During which presidencies did we experience the greatest prosperity? Why?
7. **March: Immigration:** Where do we come from and why? Stories of immigrants who have made huge contributions to America. Immigrant entrepreneurs.
 8. **April: Entrepreneurship:** Economic liberty and opportunity. Famous entrepreneurs in history. Emulating modern entrepreneurs. Fostering creativity.
 9. **May: Liberty: Defining the the gifts and threats to our freedom.** John Stark. Memorize parts of the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, The Bill of Rights. Discuss our rights and responsibilities. Do we have rights without responsibilities, etc.

10 Absences and Substitution

Employee absences will be documented along with the reason for the absence. Once a teacher has notified the Dean or designee of an absence, the teacher is obligated to leave organized substitute lesson plans for the substitute teacher.

11 Salary

All employees of The Founders Academy shall be paid a salary. Each full-time, part time and per diem employee shall be paid bi-weekly. Direct deposit is available to employees. Part time and per diem employees may be paid on an hourly or monthly rate with the permission of the Dean. All independent contractors will be paid on an hourly or base rate as negotiated. *See* Charter School Application 2019, page 20.

12 Worker's Compensation

Members of the faculty and staff are eligible for the benefits of Worker's Compensation in accordance with the law of the State of New Hampshire. Any accident which occurs during working hours on the property of The Founders Academy should be reported immediately to the Dean.

13 Insurance and Medical Leave

Optional medical, dental, and vision insurance are available through Founders. Various plans can be obtained through the school's insurance carrier, Simply Insured. The school will pay a

fixed amount towards each full-time (defined as working 30+hours per week) employees' premium if they choose to enroll in health insurance.

Founders recognizes the need for various types of leave during the school year. Maternity, paternity, and medical leave will be available as of July 1, 2018 to current full-time employees. Maternity leave and all other documented disabilities will be paid through short or long term disability. Short and long term disability only apply if the employee is disabled, not a family member. Paternity leave will be granted for up to two weeks after the birth of a child with 60% pay. Beyond the medical leave, benefits will continue for a maximum of 6 additional weeks during the employee's unpaid leave. After that point, the employer may, at its sole discretion, terminate this agreement. If the agreement is terminated, the employee would be eligible to apply in the future and be considered among any other applicants for hire/rehire to available open positions, if any.

14 Personal Days and Sick Leave

Full-time teachers and employees have a maximum of sixty-four (64) hours of paid sick and personal leave per year. Personal hours must be used during the school year in which they are accrued. They cannot be carried over to future years. Time is to be used during the Fiscal Year that approximates the school year (July 1-June 30).

All employees shall inform the Dean (or designee) of an anticipated absence as soon as possible, and such leave (other than for unexpected circumstances) must be pre-approved by the Dean (or designee). The Dean may request an employee verify the claimed reason for any absence and the employee may be obligated to verify the claim with an official Doctor's note. Personal time may not be used immediately before or immediately after a school vacation or holiday. If an employee takes a personal day immediately before or immediately after a school vacation or holiday, he/she may be subject to a reduction of compensation at the employee's hourly rate. Sick and personal time beyond 64 hours may result in a reduction in compensation for each hour after 64 hours that the employee is out of work due to illness or personal time and will reduce the total annual compensation described herein.

Faculty vacations are not to be scheduled while school is in session. Faculty vacation time during the school year may result in a reduction of compensation at each employee's hourly rate.

15 Leave of Absences and Bereavement Leave

Leaves of absences may be granted by the Dean for specified purposes and specified time frames. Leaves may be granted with or without pay. An employee subpoenaed for jury duty shall be granted a leave of absence with pay. The Founders Academy complies with all state and federal law relative to military leave. An employee called into military service is able to return to his/her previous position so long as the employee applies for the position within 90 days after military discharge or one year after discharge from the hospital, and is still qualified to perform the duties of his/her previous position except where the circumstances of The Founders Academy make it unreasonable or impossible to offer the previous position.

An employee of The Founders Academy may utilize up to four (4) days of sick leave for a death of an immediate family member or friend.

16 Retirement

The Founders Academy offers an optional 401k retirement plan by which full-time employees may contribute from their compensation. More information can be found by logging onto employees' Guideline account.

17 Personal Property

The Founders Academy is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged personal property belonging to faculty, staff members and other employees.

18 Internal Relations

Every employee of The Founders Academy has an obligation to participate and contribute toward the best interest, well-being and activities of the school community. Admissions Nights, Information Nights, faculty meetings and other necessary events and functions are considered mandatory for attendance. If an employee is unable to attend, he/she must notify the Dean as soon as possible. In the interest of upholding the Mission and Vision of Founders employees are strongly encouraged to refrain from engaging in publically disparaging co-workers, board members, and the school. The school has policies in place to work through concerns and the expectation is these policies will govern all employees. Derogatory comments and attitudes

expressed toward the school, employees, parents and students (whether online or otherwise) reflect poorly on The Founders Academy.

As a public school Founders welcomes every student the opportunity to apply. If an employee chooses to enroll their child/children at Founders while employed, they may be exempt from the lottery. As an employee with a student in the school it's very important to maintain professional boundaries during normal school hours. Employees with students must follow the normal procedures if it involves the parent/student relationship. This includes scheduling teacher meetings in advance, working with Student Services if needed, and following all policies and procedures outlined in this handbook and approved by the Board of Trustees.

19 External Relations

Regular communication with parents and others outside The Founders Academy community are expected throughout the year by faculty and staff. Email and telephone inquiries should be answered within 24 business hours by faculty and staff. Employees shall only use @tfanh.org email addresses when communicating with students and parents. When responding to emails, employees must use the @tfanh.org email addresses assigned to students and parents. Teachers must post to the online portal at least one assignment every ten (10) academic school days.

20 Media Relations

The Founders Academy has adopted a procedure regarding employees addressing the media. The procedure reads as follows:

- 1). In the instance television, radio, blogosphere or other forms of media communication wish to speak to, interview, quote or question a member of the faculty and staff at The Founders Academy, such inquiries must be referred to the Dean's office or Chairman of the Board.
- 2). This procedure relates to all matters pertaining to The Founders Academy, its teachers, students, bus services, the Foundation, Board of Trustees, student matters, or other subjects relative to matters pertaining to school business.
- 3). This procedure pertains to faculty, staff, independent contractors, and administration currently or in the future employed by The Founders Academy.

21 Professional Development

Throughout the academic year, professional development opportunities will be offered to faculty. Professional Development is intended to enrich, supplement and educate teachers on various subjects related to education. Such opportunities may be offered online, at other institutions or in-house. The Founders Academy can issue certificates certifying attendance and completion for professional development. An expense request form must be submitted in advance of professional development opportunities that require a fee. All professional development will be approved in advance by the Dean or designee.

Gas mileage reimbursement is permissible for professional development if the request is submitted and approved in advance by the Dean (or designee).

22 Intent to Return

Intent to return forms shall be given to faculty to review, sign and return. Such forms will indicate if the faculty member intends to return for the next academic year or not, and whether they would like to pursue a different subject or teaching level. This information is being gathered for staffing purposes only. The forms are confidential and not used in any manner against the faculty member. The form is not an offer or rejection of employment.

23 Resignations

When an employee of The Founders Academy wishes to resign their employment, they must meet with the Dean to declare his/her intentions, accompanied by a signed letter indicating a date of employment termination. Founders encourages each employee to conduct an exit interview and provide honest feedback regarding their decision when possible. When an employee resigns, he/she is obliged to turn in all equipment, keys, lesson plans, curriculum and passwords which access academic sites and online resources. Any and all other conditions to be met before the date of resignation will be discussed with the employee and Dean.

24 Termination of Employment

New Hampshire is an “employment-at-will” state. This means that an employer or employee may generally terminate an employment relationship at any time and for any reason. The Founders Academy is considered an “at-will” employer according to the terms of the Employment Agreement. Any employee at the school may be terminated either “with” or

“without cause” based on numerous contributing factors including but not limited to fulfillment of duties and responsibilities, input from parents and other employees, unsatisfactory teaching style or methods, improper conduct within or outside of school. The decision of the Board of Trustees to terminate an employee is final and may occur at any time throughout the year. Notice of termination may be relayed in person, by electronic means or U.S. postal mail or such other means as the Dean or Board of Trustees find appropriate. Terminated employees have the option of filing for unemployment benefits with the N.H. Employment Security Office.

25 Disciplinary Action

The Dean reserves the right to impose certain disciplinary actions to an employee of The Founders Academy during an investigation or after findings of negligence of duties, repeated and unexplained absences and tardiness, unethical and inappropriate conduct, misconduct, interfering with the ability of the school operations, and such other behavior that is deemed inappropriate for an academic institution. Such disciplinary actions may include suspension from duties (either with or without pay) for a specified period of time, or recommendation to terminate. Employees have the right to appeal the decision of the Dean to the Board of Trustees.

27 Employee Dress Code

Employees of The Founders Academy shall adhere to professional, business casual dress during official school hours, other than field days or trips. Employees shall strive to be an example to students in professional appearance, in conduct, and etiquette. To remain a good example to students, employees shall restrain themselves from chewing gum as it is expected from students as well. *See Student Handbook.*

26 Policies and Procedures

All employees of The Founders Academy are to adhere to the policies adopted by the Board of Trustees and the procedures as implemented by the Dean.

27 Amendments

The Board of Trustees reserves the right to amend, update, revise, or edit this Faculty/Employee Handbook at any time throughout the academic year. Founders reserves the right to annually revise or change the benefits provided to employees as well as the percentage of employer/employee contribution.

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Revised August, 2023

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on: August 23, 2023