

ST. VINCENT'S SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Share in Living the Vision ...
Every Day, Every Way



Imagine a place where every day is a good day for persons we serve and for ourselves.

Imagine a place where teaching and learning is always happening.

Believe this is possible. It can be done. Those we serve deserve it.

Believe everyone is capable of learning and use your ability and energy to teach those we serve.

Learn what you must to be successful. Help others learn what they need to succeed.

Persons we serve need your help to learn. They can't do it alone.

Achievement and success happens because we make it happen.

Those we serve are the reason we are here. Make their day the very best it can be.

95 Merritt Boulevard • Trumbull, CT 06611 • 203-375-6400
www.stvincentsspecialneeds.org

WELCOME TO ST. VINCENT'S SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

Dear New Employee,

We take great pleasure in welcoming you to the staff of the St. Vincent's Special Needs Services organization.

For over 50 years, we have been dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities and special health care needs, while following a Mission to respect the dignity and value of every life and provide services to those most in need.

What we as employees of the organization do each day — the care with which we do our jobs, how we arrive at decisions, how we treat one another and how we ultimately improve the quality of life of those we assist to full participation in the community — is evaluated in the context of our Mission and measured by our adherence to its CORE VALUES of Service to the Poor, Reverence, Integrity, Wisdom, Creativity, and Dedication.

We are proud of our Staff and their conscious decision to "live" within our Mission and by its CORE VALUES. It is only through their work and soon-to-be "your work" that the St. Vincent's Special Needs Services organization can be faithful to its past, present and future.

Thank you for becoming part of this endeavor.

This Employee Handbook is intended to be an informative overview of St. Vincent's Special Needs Services' (SVSNS) current policies, procedures, programs and benefits on various issues, and not intended to cover these matters in detail. A complete Human Resources Policy and Procedure Manual is available to you for review through your supervisor.

While the topics in this Employee Handbook are reasonably complete, it is not possible to cover everything. For this reason, the employee should check with his/her supervisor for answers to any issues that might need clarification. **Please be aware this Employee Handbook is not intended to create an expressed or implied contract of employment.** Rather, it is simply intended to describe SVSNS and its present policies, procedures, programs, and benefits. **SVSNS, at its discretion, reserves the right to change, modify, delete, suspend or discontinue any or all parts of the policies, procedures, programs or benefits in this Employee Handbook with or without prior notice.**

The employment relationship at SVSNS is one of voluntary employment "at-will". This means that either the employee or SVSNS may terminate the employment relationship at any time and for any reason, with or without advance notice. Only the President/CEO of SVSNS has the authority to enter into an agreement for employment for any specified period of time. Any such agreement must be an individual agreement in writing and signed by the employee and the President/CEO. No one has the authority to make statements of any kind to bind SVSNS. Unless otherwise stated, this Employee Handbook applies to all SVSNS employees. This Employee Handbook supersedes and revokes all previous versions of an Employee Handbook.

MISSION

St. Vincent's Special Needs Services has a Mission that charges each of its employees with a very specific task in the health care ministry, which is:

“to foster the physical, educational, spiritual, emotional and social development of persons with disabilities so they may play, learn, work and live in the community.”

CORE VALUES

As part of St. Vincent's Health Services, St. Vincent's Special Needs Services is affiliated with Ascension Health, the nation's largest nonprofit health system. Ascension Health is a Catholic health ministry dedicated to spiritually centered, holistic care which sustains and improves the health of individuals and communities. We share the Ascension Core Values which call us to:

Service of the Poor:

generosity of spirit, especially for persons most in need

We are committed to serving those who are economically and spiritually poor by providing programs and services that are truly responsive to their needs.

Reverence:

respect and compassion for the dignity and diversity of life

We recognize that each person has special value, a unique set of gifts and talents.

Integrity:

inspires trust through personal leadership

We are committed to making our words and actions consistent with our Mission and Core Values.

Wisdom:

integrates excellence and stewardship

We are committed to performance improvement and appreciate that our resources, material and human, are entrusted to us for the service of those persons we serve.

Creativity:

courageous innovation

We are committed to seeking and trying new approaches to service and care and to meeting change with enthusiasm and energy.

Dedication:

affirming the hope and joy of our ministry

We recognize that the work we do is meaningful and our workplace is a community of persons, committed to a common Mission, who depend upon and support each other.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

All SVSNS employees are expected to demonstrate the following Standards of Behavior that support the Mission and Core Values in interactions with:

- Persons served and their families
- Fellow employees,
- Colleagues or representatives from other service providers in the community, and Persons encountered in the community in the performance of job responsibilities.

Service of the Poor:

- Willingly offer support and help whenever and wherever needed.
- If you cannot directly help someone in need, take the responsibility, in a kind and courteous manner, for finding someone who can.

Reverence:

- Show respect to each and every individual, regardless of age, need or ability.
- Maintain confidentiality of personal information.
- Address every individual in positive language and manner and demonstrate patience in all communications.
- Be tolerant of other's personal opinions, choices and decisions, even in times of conflict.
- Respect and defend the rights of persons served.

Integrity:

- Report any observed incident of abuse and/or neglect of persons served.
- Perform work according to the highest ethical standards of one's profession.
- Be honest at all times.
- Comply with all SVSNS policies, procedures and work rules.
- Comply with all relevant Federal, State and local laws and regulations.
- Maintain a professional appearance and impression by maintaining good personal hygiene and grooming, and by dressing appropriately for the position you hold.

Wisdom:

- Be sure you know and understand the responsibilities of your position.
- Take responsibility for increasing your knowledge and skills in areas relevant to your position.
- Take responsibility for maintaining a safe work environment and observing safe work practices.
- Report safety hazards in the work or community environments.

Creativity:

- Strive to consider and offer a solution when reporting a problem.
- Seek ways to develop teamwork in the solution of problems and performance of shared responsibilities.
- Seek ways to improve services and supports provided to persons served.

Dedication:

- Become aware of all programs and services SVSNS offers.
- Take pride in the SVSNS organization and the contribution it makes to the community.
- Perform your work knowing that your performance each day affects the quality of the services provided to persons served by SVSNS.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

St. Vincent's Special Needs Services is an Equal Opportunity Employer. It is, therefore, the policy of SVSNS to recruit, hire, promote, and administer all employee actions and programs without unlawful regard to an individual's age, race, color, sex, religion, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, or status as a qualified individual with a disability.

All members of management are responsible for ensuring that all their decisions and actions with regard to recruitment, employment, promotion, demotion, transfer, termination, rates of pay, benefits, professional development, access to facilities, and recreation activities are consistent with this policy.

Employee Relations Policy

SVSNS values the individual dignity and rights of all employees and is committed to providing favorable, safe working conditions and competitive pay and benefits. SVSNS also has a responsibility for maintaining a fair and just relationship between the interests of employees and the interests of those persons receiving services throughout the organization. To meet this responsibility, the organization strives to provide the highest quality services within available resources.

SVSNS believes that employees and supervisors need to work hand-in-hand and communicate effectively. Such a direct and cooperative relationship between the organization and its employees is essential to ensure a working environment consistent with the Mission and goals of SVSNS.

SVSNS feels strongly that involvement by a third party, such as a labor union, has a negative impact on the relationship between management and employees. A labor union would interfere with everyone's ability to discuss issues openly and directly. Employees may be required to pay union initiation fees, monthly dues, special assessments and fines. In addition, strikes and other forms of work stoppages can have a negative effect on the quality of service and continuity of care to those persons receiving services through the organization.

Therefore, SVSNS believes that the interest of employees and those persons receiving services is best met by the organization's continued voluntary observance of fair and equitable policies, and by employees continuing to discuss issues openly and directly with management, rather than through a third party, such as a labor union.

Distribution and Solicitation

To avoid work interruption and ensure continuity of services, it is the policy of SVSNS to prohibit the following activities during work time (of both the solicitor as well as the employee being solicited), and at work areas, unless in connection with an event or activity sponsored by SVSNS:

- Distribution of materials — including the passing, handing or exchange of handbills, circulars, petitions or other printed matter;
- Solicitation - including, but not limited to, approaching an employee with a plea, subscription or contribution request.

The Director of Marketing and Community Relations verifies which purposes are sponsored by the organization.

Employees being solicited are under no obligation whatsoever to make contributions or to accept literature or materials.

"Work time" means all time on the work premises, in the community with those persons receiving services, and all time traveled to and from SVSNS' sites on official business, other than before and after work or at meal and rest periods.

"Work areas" consist of all property owned, leased, or rented by SVSNS, including parking areas and surrounding grounds. Meetings held on SVSNS' premises are for the sole purpose of conducting organization business. Any exceptions need the prior approval of the Director of Marketing and Community Relations or the President/CEO.

Harassment Policy

SVSNS is committed to maintaining a work environment that is totally free of unlawful harassment. In keeping with this commitment, SVSNS does not tolerate such behavior, in any form, against employees or prospective employees by anyone, including any member of management, co-worker, vendor, contractor, volunteer, or visitor of SVSNS.

In general, "harassment" means unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based upon a person's sex, color, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, disability, or other legally protected group status. SVSNS does not tolerate such conduct that affects tangible job benefits or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Some examples of prohibited conduct are: (a) slurs, negative stereotyping, or intimidating acts that are based on a person's protected status; and (b) written or graphic material circulated or posted within the workplace that denigrates or shows hostility toward a person or persons because of their protected status.

One of the forms of unlawful harassment is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other physical, verbal, or visual conduct based on sex when (a) submission to the conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment, (b) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision, or (c) the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Sexual harassment might be directed towards a person of the opposite or same sex, and can include, for example, explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented "kidding" or "teasing", "practical jokes", jokes about obscene printed or visual material, and physical contact such as patting, pinching or brushing against another person's body.

It is the responsibility of every member of management to provide an environment free of harassment, just as it is the responsibility of each employee to respect the rights of fellow employees. **Any employee who has experienced or witnessed harassment should immediately notify his/her supervisor, the Employee and Labor Relations Manager, or any other member of SVSNS management.**

SVSNS investigates all complaints of harassment thoroughly and promptly. To the fullest extent possible, SVSNS keeps complaints and the terms of their resolution confidential. If an investigation confirms that a violation of this policy has occurred, SVSNS will take appropriate, corrective action, up to and including immediate termination of the offender's employment.

Inappropriate Behavior/Violence in the Workplace

The safety, security and well being of all employees and persons receiving services are of primary importance at SVSNS. Threats, threatening and abusive behavior, or acts of violence against employees, visitors, persons receiving services or other individuals by anyone within organization work areas is not tolerated. SVSNS reserves the right to take any necessary legal action to protect its employees and participants receiving services.

Any person who engages in threatening or violent behavior within organization work areas will be removed from the work area as quickly as safety permits and is required to remain off SVSNS premises pending the outcome of an investigation. Following an investigation, SVSNS will initiate an immediate and appropriate response. This response may include corrective action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

All employees are responsible for immediately notifying management of any suspicious workplace activity that is witnessed, received or any related suspicious activity which the employee has direct or indirect knowledge of. Even without a specific threat, all employees should report any potentially threatening or violent behavior they may witness. Employees are responsible for making this report regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threatening behavior and the person or persons being threatened. The organization understands the sensitivity of the information requested and attempts to maintain as much confidentiality as possible and practical.

Substance Abuse Policy

SVSNS is strongly committed to a drug and alcohol-free workplace, and believes that alcohol and drug abuse jeopardizes the safety of employees and persons receiving services throughout the organization. Alcohol and drug abuse impedes job performance, compromises quality of services and impacts productivity. Therefore, being intoxicated or under the influence of illegal drugs while on duty or while on business for the organization is strictly prohibited. The sale, possession, distribution or use of alcohol or any illegal substance on the work premises or while on SVSNS business is strictly prohibited.

Random Drug and/or Alcohol Screening

A urinalysis drug screening is given to individuals as a condition of employment at SVSNS. Thereafter, random drug screens are conducted as necessary to meet Federal and State of Connecticut regulatory requirements. In addition, when there is reasonable suspicion that a current employee may be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol, SVSNS reserves the right to request that the employee submit to a drug and/or alcohol screening. The specific timing of this drug and/or alcohol screening is at the sole discretion of SVSNS. If an individual refuses to submit to a drug and/or alcohol screening, or in the event of a positive test result, the individual will be subject to appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination of employment (or revocation of the employment offer, in the case of prospective employees).

Smoke-Free / Tobacco-Free Environment

Smoking and tobacco usage is strictly prohibited on all worksites and properties owned or leased by SVSNS. Employees in violation of the smoke-free environment will be subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

Confidentiality of SVSNS and Persons Receiving Services

General Confidential Information

Employees, on occasion, might receive and/or have access to information that is confidential, including business information about SVSNS, the identity of and other information regarding persons receiving services in SVSNS programs (collectively, "Confidential Information"). Employees may not use or disclose Confidential Information to (a) any other person in the organization unless there is a legitimate business reason for doing so; or (b) any person outside the organization unless the President/CEO has expressly stated that the information can be disclosed to that person(s). This obligation exists even after the employee is no longer employed by SVSNS.

Upon hire, and annually thereafter, employees are required to sign a confidentiality agreement. This signed agreement is kept as part of the employees' personnel file.

Medical Confidential Information

In some instances, medical Confidential Information may need to be disclosed to appropriate staff or an external entity such as a medical provider's office, on a "need to know" basis in the course of providing care to persons receiving services. Employees should contact their supervisor and receive permission before releasing any medical Confidential Information. SVSNS follows all applicable laws and regulations under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which is explained during the orientation process. Specific questions relevant to HIPAA should be directed to the Privacy Officer.

Any employee who violates the Confidentiality Policy will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

Workers' Compensation

Any SVSNS employee experiencing an injury or illness in the line of duty receives Worker's Compensation in conformance with the Compensation Laws of Connecticut. The employee is required to immediately report the incident to the department supervisor and Human Resources, who will notify the Occupational Health Center. The employee, with the assistance of the supervisor, is required to complete an injury report.

Work-related injuries or illnesses that require medical treatment beyond first aid are referred to St. Vincent's Immediate Health Care, Inc. (IHC) or St Vincent's Medical Center Emergency Room, if after hours. Medical expenses, including prescriptions are processed through Worker's Compensation.

A return-to-work note from the treating physician is required before resuming duties and the employee is also required to receive a medical clearance from the IHC. At SVSNS sole discretion, an Independent Medical Examination (IME) may be conducted at any time to further assess the employee's injury.

Temporary Modified Duty and Availability of Alternative Work Environments

SVSNS strives to provide work for employees who have been restricted by a physician due to a work-related or other personal injury or illness. However, due to the nature of services that SVSNS provides and to ensure the health, safety and well being of persons receiving services, such work is provided subject to availability, especially in direct care positions. Every effort is made to place employees in positions within their own departments, but if necessary, employees are placed wherever an appropriate position is available.

When on temporary modified duty, employees continue to receive their regular rate of pay adjusted for the actual hours worked, and are required to furnish a written update of their medical condition to the Occupational Health Department from the treating physician after each visit in order to remain in the reassigned job. Temporary modified duty assignments are limited to a period of 90 calendar days, subject to review. Being placed on a temporary modified duty assignment does not excuse an employee from following all rules and regulations of that worksite and SVSNS. Employees who decline temporary modified duty, for which they are deemed qualified to perform by their attending physician and SVSNS, are considered to have voluntarily resigned their employment with SVSNS. If the employee decides to voluntarily resign, workers' compensation benefits are subject to immediate termination.

Dress and Grooming

The professional appearance of each employee reflects the quality of services provided by SVSNS. Standards for appropriate dress may vary from department to department. An employee's immediate supervisor or department head provides department-specific requirements.

In general, radical departure from conventional dress or personal grooming is not permitted in any department. Immodest attire or clothing with messages or pictures that could be deemed offensive is not acceptable within the organization or while on assignment in the community. Since most employees work closely with persons receiving services they are expected to follow regular standards of hygiene and dress appropriately for providing physical care and transfers. Sharp and dangling jewelry is discouraged as well as open toed or high heeled shoes.

SVSNS is not responsible for personal items or clothing that is lost or damaged.

Visitors

SVSNS' concern for safety and security extends beyond employees and those persons receiving services. It also extends to visitors who may not be familiar with safety standards in SVSNS work areas.

Parents, relatives, and friends of persons receiving services are welcome during appropriate times, but employees should not have personal visitors on SVSNS property while on or off duty, unless their visit has been approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. All visitors to all SVSNS locations must sign the visitor's log immediately upon entering and leaving the building. Visitors may also be required to wear badges identifying them as visitors.

Inclement Weather and Other Emergency Closings

In the case of adverse weather conditions or emergency closings, certain programs may be closed or have a delayed opening. Annually, as the time for inclement weather approaches, supervisors will review with their staff the protocols for their particular department. In the event of inclement weather conditions or emergency closings, staff will be notified via radio station and television announcements or by dialing into a recorded message left on SVSNS' main phone number, (203) 375-6400, which is available by 6:30 a.m. In the absence of any official announcement, all services will be open as usual and all employees are expected to report to work. In those situations where only a specific program is announced as closed, all other employees are expected to report to work. If there are changes to this procedure, employees are notified through their supervisor.

Closures do not apply to the residential programs, which operate 365 days a year, to the Changing Images day program or to administrative staff. Employees working in these areas are expected to plan ahead in order to report to work as scheduled. Sick pay will not be granted unless a doctor's note is provided by the employee upon their return to work.

Food and Drink Use

Employees are expected to consume food and beverages during break and meal times and not while providing services, unless otherwise specified by a supervisor. Please refer to your supervisor for specific break and meal time guidelines for your worksite. In addition, no food consumption or drinking is permitted in any SVSNS vehicle at any time.

Parking

Parking spaces are available for employees in the rear of the FEROLETO Center and in the designated areas outside the CHANGING IMAGES sites. Employees must not park in spaces reserved for vehicles used in the transport of persons receiving services. Also, parking is not allowed in non-designated areas such as fire lanes, handicap parking spaces, etc. Employees should follow any additional parking instructions from their supervisor or the Transportation Coordinator. Parking requirements for employees working in the residential group homes are specific to each home. Each Group Home Manager instructs residential employees where to park at each group home site.

SVSNS is not responsible for unauthorized possession or for loss or damage to an employee's vehicle or its contents. Employees are advised to lock their cars and not leave personal property visible.

Personal Business, Telephone Calls, Electronic Equipment, Personal Property and Mail

Personal Business

Employees having personal business to conduct, such as, but not limited to, banking, medical or legal appointments are expected to conduct these activities on their own time and during non-work hours. In the event that it is impossible for an employee to schedule such activities during off duty hours, he/she may request accrued personal time or vacation time. Requests should be made in accordance with the request for time off procedures. In any event, all non-exempt (hourly paid) employees are expected to "swipe" out upon leaving the work site and "swipe" in upon returning from personal business, if returning before the end of the work shift.

SVSNS property may not be used for personal business without advance permission. This includes, but is not limited to, vehicles, copiers, fax machines, computers and staff mail boxes.

Personal Telephone Calls

SVSNS requests employees' cooperation in limiting outgoing or incoming personal telephone calls. Normally, work should not be interrupted to make or receive personal calls except for emergency situations. In the event an emergency call is received for an employee, reasonable efforts are made to contact that employee.

Personal cell phones and ear pieces may not be used / worn while on duty. SVSNS cell phones are to be used for business purposes only.

Electronic Equipment

Employees are not permitted to use personal electronic equipment such as IPODS or the related, while on shift. Employees are asked to keep these items out of the workplace.

Personal Property

Employees who bring in personal belongings are responsible for prominently marking such items to identify ownership. SVSNS can require an employee to remove a personal property item(s) from the workplace. SVSNS is not responsible for loss or damage to staff members' personal property.

Personal Mail

Employees may not use any SVSNS property or address as their personal mailing address for any reason. Any mail, regardless of the addressee, delivered to any SVSNS address may be opened and routed as necessary. Employees may not use mail machines or postage stamps that are the property of SVSNS for their personal mail.

Lost and Found

At times, personal belongings may become temporarily misplaced or lost during the workday. Any employee who finds what they suspect is a personal belonging of another employee should return that belonging to the Human Resources Department or his/her supervisor. The supervisor will then give it to the Human Resources Department for appropriate handling.

COMMUNICATIONS

Electronic Communications

SVSNS recognizes the value of electronic media for business purposes. These assets include, but are not limited to; telephones, computers, laptop computers, databases and files, e-mail, voice mail, cell phones, internet access, and data storage. *Use of these assets is for related business purposes only, and all such assets are the property of SVSNS. Personal use of these assets is not permitted.* SVSNS reserves the right to monitor employees' use of these assets at any time to ensure compliance with SVSNS policies. Employees are not authorized to retrieve or read any electronic mail messages that are not sent to them, unless receiving prior management approval. Any unauthorized or illegitimate use of electronic communications media is subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

Supervisory staff who are assigned a cell phone through Health Services are subject to the policies and guidelines established by that system.

Communications with Employees

SVSNS has a variety of communication methods to keep employees informed of policies, activities and developments. Letters, memos or special announcements are delivered at each worksite by supervisors or through employee mailboxes. Additionally, some items may be sent to employee's home addresses. Other means of ongoing communication include:

On Target

This newsletter is published regularly by the Marketing and Community Relations Department to keep employees informed of upcoming events, new developments in the organization, additions to staff, departmental accomplishments, individual successes and other newsworthy information.

Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards are located at each work site and contain special notices, job postings and information on employee activities and services available. Each employee has the responsibility to read the information that is posted. Employees may not post material on SVSNS bulletin boards without the prior approval of the Director of Marketing and Community Relations.

SVSNS maintains a website: www.stvincentsspecialneeds.org that contains information of interest to employees.

Communication Logs

At each of the group home sites, a communication log is utilized to transfer information from shift to shift. Each shift is expected to place an entry into the log book. Group Home managers may also use the log book as a means of communicating information to staff members. Each staff member is expected to review and sign off on all entries in order to be fully informed.

Meetings

Supervisors regularly or as announced have individual or staff meetings to keep employees informed of any changes, or new information regarding SVSNS, a specific department, or individual job responsibilities. Attendance is considered mandatory unless excused by the supervisor.

Communications from the President/CEO

Employees may periodically receive special "Communications from the President/CEO" to announce important developments.

Town Meetings

Town Meetings are arranged as an opportunity for the President/CEO to meet face to face with staff members to discuss important issues, developments, and to give a general state of affairs for SVSNS. All staff are encouraged to attend and ask questions. The schedule for Town Meetings is announced by the President's office or by the Human Resources Department.

Suggestions

SVSNS encourages employee thoughts and ideas to best improve the quality of: work methods, programs for persons receiving services, working and safety conditions, or reducing operating costs or errors. Employees are encouraged to discuss with their supervisor any ideas or suggestions to improve the general work environment.

Problem Solving

SVSNS believes that keeping all lines of communication open enhances the quality of work and sustains a high level of productivity among employees. Most importantly, proper communication helps to improve the spirit of teamwork and develop sound employee relations within the organization. All SVSNS management has an 'open door' policy and communication is encouraged between employees and their supervisor. Supervisors will be available to assist employees with problem solving or other matters.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Physical Examination/Continued Fitness for Duty

All newly hired employees are required to undergo and pass a physical examination that includes a urinalysis drug screening and tuberculosis test, the cost of which is the responsibility of SVSNS. Refusal to take such a drug screening test, or, unacceptable results may, in SVSNS' sole discretion, halt the hiring process and the employment offer is deemed revoked.

For those employees who are required to obtain and hold a Public Service License (PSL), a Department of Transportation (DOT) physical will be completed as part of the pre-employment physical process. The DOT physical is valid for 90-calendar days from the examination date. Newly hired employees must utilize the DOT physical to obtain their PSL within that 90-calendar day timeframe or the employee will be responsible for completing another DOT physical at the employee's own expense. After the initial physical, employees are required to complete a re-certification DOT physical every two years, the cost of which is the responsibility of SVSNS. Newly hired employees must begin the PSL process within their first 30-calendar days of employment with SVSNS or they are subject to corrective action up to and including termination.

Employees returning to work after a sick absence of three or more work days, from a medical leave of absence, or an absence due to a work-related injury must be medically cleared through the Immediate Health Care Center. If the employee has a note from their attending physician, that should be brought to the appointment at Immediate Health Care.

Background Investigation

It is the practice of SVSNS to conduct a thorough background investigation for each new employee candidate. The background includes, but is not limited to; verification of education, professional license, employment history, professional references, social security / homeland security verification, national criminal history, driver's license check, fingerprinting and a DCF background check for those individuals working with children. Any unfavorable findings may affect employment eligibility.

Orientation

In an effort to ensure a smooth transition to SVSNS, on or about the first day of employment, all new employees begin participation in an extensive orientation process.

The first component of the orientation is lead by the Human Resources Department. During this orientation, paperwork is completed, employee expectations are reviewed, specific trainings are conducted and all benefits offered by SVSNS to eligible employees are explained. The second component is the Extended Orientation process to complete competencies necessary for their positions. The third component is the departmental orientation which is conducted at the worksite by the employee's supervisor concentrating on the employee's specific role and responsibilities. The fourth component is a team building exercise which is conducted off site. The final component of the orientation process is the mandatory in-servicing requirements which include but are not limited to CPR, First Aid, and Physical and Psychological Management Training (PMT). Employees who are required to hold these certifications must complete the trainings within the 90 calendar day introductory period of employment or they may be subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment. Employee training continues throughout the employment relationship. Supervisors are encouraged to continually instruct and coach their employees for best success in achieving job responsibilities and employees are encouraged to ask questions throughout the orientation process and beyond.

Identification Badges

SVSNS employees are issued identification badges at the start of employment which must be worn by all non-direct care employees or, for direct care employees, it must be kept on their person, in a wallet or handbag while on duty. This badge is also used to accurately record the time worked of all non-exempt (hourly paid) employees.

Employees who lose their identification badge must visit the Human Resources Department for issuance of a replacement badge. A charge of \$5.00 is assessed for a second replacement badge and for each additional replacement badge thereafter.

Workweek

The workweek starts on Sunday morning at 12:01 a.m. and ends the following Saturday evening at midnight. The organization's administrative office hours are from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. However, workweek hours of each department within the organization may vary. Employees are informed of their work schedule as part of the interview process. Employees are required to be at their worksite ready to work at the start of their shift. Employees responsible for providing direct care services for persons receiving services must remain at their worksite until appropriately relieved by another staff member or upon approval of their supervisor. Employees are not permitted to exit the worksite earlier than the end of their shift except upon approval of their supervisor.

If SVSNS needs require a change in the regular work hours, employees will be notified by their supervisor of such changes or temporary adjustments. If possible, reasonable notice is given for changes to regular work hours. In instances where additional work coverage is needed, employees may elect to work an additional number of hours, as approved *in advance* by their supervisor. No employee is allowed to work more than two consecutive shifts (16 hours maximum) at any time, unless the prior approval of senior management is issued to the employee. **However, in extenuating circumstances such as inclement weather, a late call out or an emergency situation, employees working in residential programs may be mandated to stay on shift until adequate coverage is obtained.**

Introductory Period

The first 90 calendar days of employment with SVSNS are considered an "introductory period". During this introductory period, the employee's supervisor carefully considers and evaluates the employee's overall work performance. The ability to carry out the assignments of the position, to work with fellow employees, to show evidence of good attendance and punctuality, to obtain required trainings, endorsements and/or certifications and to show the ability to abide by the work rules and expectations of SVSNS are monitored. Employees who transfer to a different position are considered to be in an introductory period until they have completed 90 calendar days in that new position.

If SVSNS determines the designated introductory period does not allow sufficient time to thoroughly evaluate the employee's performance, the introductory period may be extended for a maximum of 30-calendar days, at SVSNS' sole discretion.

Continued employment is not guaranteed during the introductory period, nor does successful completion of the introductory period assure or promise continued employment. **Employment continues to be "at-will" and may be terminated by the employee or by SVSNS at any time, during or after the introductory period, with or without advance notice.**

Attendance and Tardiness

SVSNS recognizes there are times when an employee needs to be absent from work due to illness, injury or other uncontrollable situations. However, employees are expected to maintain a good attendance and punctuality record. Excessive absenteeism and tardiness increases the workload of fellow employees, interferes with the regular flow of daily activity and affects the morale, the quality, and the costs of services and care provided by the organization. Therefore, SVSNS has established an attendance and tardiness policy, which includes standards to ensure consistency in the correction and control of excessive absenteeism and tardiness.

In the event that an employee is unable to report to work as scheduled, he/she is required to notify the supervisor or supervisor on-call directly (or have someone provide such notice, if the employee is physically or mentally unable) as soon as possible prior to the beginning of the work shift, or in accordance with specific departmental procedures. In the case of consecutive workdays of absence, an employee is expected to contact his/her supervisor each day until the employee has produced a physician's note, stipulating a specific length of time away from work or until the employee has been placed on a leave of absence. Absences of three or more workdays will require a physician's note and medical clearance from Immediate Health Care, in order for the absences to be excused, at the discretion of the Human Resources Department.

Any SVSNS employee who is absent and fails to notify his/her supervisor is subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment. For specific program and/or staff guidelines, please see your supervisor.

Meal and Rest Periods

SVSNS makes every effort to grant meal and rest periods; however, the continuity of services and the safety and well-being of persons receiving services may dictate whether and when meal and rest periods may be granted. Staff should contact their supervisor for specific meal and rest period schedules that apply to their operation.

Competencies and Meetings

In order to maintain State-mandated certifications of quality service and to ensure that SVSNS continues to provide a competent, well-trained, knowledgeable and caring staff consistent with SVSNS' Mission and Core Values, SVSNS may require certain staff to complete mandatory training requirements, including certifications and in-services and to attend staff meetings as scheduled by the supervisor.

Supervisors will inform employees of the date and time of all mandatory meetings and in-service / certification training programs. Employees are required to attend, unless excused by their supervisor. Employees who fail to report are subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

From time to time employees are invited to attend voluntary training programs. Attendance is encouraged for these programs, but would be subject to coverage needs at the employee's worksite (as applicable).

Professional Development

SVSNS attempts to assist employees to develop and advance their knowledge in areas directly related to their jobs. As the budget permits, each department director may approve an employee's request to attend a conference, educational meeting, or workshop.

A request to attend a professional development program should be submitted with a program description and the cost to the department director, who will assess the value of the program, amount of time the employee is away from his/her job, and budgetary feasibility.

Individuals who attend an approved program may be asked to provide information to other staff members upon completion of the program.

Licenses and Certifications

Those employees required to be licensed or certified to perform their job duties are responsible for keeping all required licenses and/or certifications current. Any employee who allows a license or certification to lapse is subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment. If a lapse in licensure occurs, and SVSNS allows the employee to re-instate the license or certification, the employee may be suspended from work without pay while awaiting the reinstatement. Falsification of credentials is grounds for immediate termination of employment.

Performance Evaluations

Performance evaluations are a powerful communication tool for both employees and their supervisors. They provide both supervisor and employee with an opportunity to objectively assess the employee's skills, accomplishments, and team effort. The best performance evaluations address both strengths and areas for further development and improvement. Performance evaluations establish a performance history with the organization and are used in promotion, transfer, merit increase and termination decisions. The evaluation contains important information such as goals to be attained and suggestions for improvement and further development. The evaluation form is kept in the employee's personnel file located in the Human Resources Department.

Newly hired, transferred or promoted employees receive a written performance evaluation following the completion of 90 calendar days in their new position. Thereafter, SVSNS evaluates employees annually in most cases.

Transfers and Promotions

In order to provide employees with opportunities for job change or career advancement, job openings within SVSNS are posted on the bulletin board at each worksite or in the communication log in the residential group homes and on The Source (intranet site).

Employees must have completed six months of service in their present position to be eligible for transfer/promotion. They must also have a performance score equivalent to meeting standards or above, not have any current corrective action in their file and meet all the qualifications of the position to which they are applying. Transfer forms are available in the Human Resources Department or on The Source.

Re-Hiring of Employees

At the sole discretion of SVSNS, employees who voluntarily resign from SVSNS in good standing may be eligible for re-hire. Re-hired employees will follow the same hiring process as new employees and will be required to undergo and pass a physical exam, urinalysis/drug screen, tuberculosis test and background investigation.

Employment of Relatives

While SVSNS permits hiring relatives of employees, close family members such as parents, children, spouses, siblings, or in-laws may not be hired into, transferred from, or promoted into, positions where they directly or indirectly supervise or are supervised by another family member. SVSNS reserves the right to determine if the nature of the family relationship prohibits a supervisory relationship and to make necessary changes when it determines that such a reporting relationship has occurred.

Additionally, relatives are not permitted to work within the same department except at SVSNS' sole discretion.

EMPLOYEE STATUS AND RECORDS

Employment Classifications

Regular Employee

A regular employee is one who works a defined number of hours per work week and is expected to remain with SVSNS for at least 90 days. Benefits are based on scheduled hours.

Fill-In/Per Diem Employee

A fill-in/per diem employee is not routinely scheduled to work any definite number of hours per workweek, but is called in to work as needed. Employees hired into this classification are required to be readily available as needed to report for work.

Temporary Employee

A temporary employee can be full-time or part-time but is not expected to remain with SVSNS longer than 90 days. At the end of the 90-day period, the employee must be terminated or transferred to regular status.

Personnel Files, Employee Documents and Employee Data

The Human Resources Department maintains a confidential personnel file for each employee containing information pertaining to that individual's employment with SVSNS. Employees must inform SVSNS promptly of any necessary update to their personnel file such as, but not limited to, a change of address, change of telephone number, emergency contact, marital status, or number of dependents. Employees should also inform their supervisor and the Human Resources Department of any outside training, professional certifications, education, or any other change in status.

For employment and business purposes, SVSNS also maintains personal information regarding each employee such as the employee's social security number, driver's license number, financial account numbers (for direct deposit), health insurance account numbers and passport or alien registration numbers, all as applicable. This information is handled with the utmost sensitivity and is stored securely within the Human Resources Department. SVSNS takes all steps necessary to ensure employee's confidentiality and information is only released when required by regulation, by law or at the employee's written request. When the information is no longer needed or necessary, it is destroyed according to federally established guidelines.

Due to the confidential nature of personnel files, these records may not be removed from the Human Resources Department. If an employee wishes, he/she may ask to see, or request copies of, information in his/her personnel file by submitted the request in writing to the Human Resources Department.

Employee References and Information Requests

All requests for information about employees must be referred to the Human Resources Department, which will verify employment and provide only specific employment dates and job title, unless (a) it has the employee's written authorization or permission to release additional information, or (b) as otherwise required under law or to resolve a disability, worker's compensation or other claim or dispute.

PAY PRACTICES

Wage Administration and General Pay Practices

SVSNS strives to provide a wage program that is internally equitable and externally competitive for our job market and consistent with job responsibilities and individual performance. Wage and salary provisions are continuously governed by the current and anticipated economic environment of SVSNS.

Employees will have their performance evaluated annually on their anniversary date and may be eligible to receive a merit increase based on their performance and SVSNS current economic status.

Non-supervisory employees who have transferred to other positions requiring different skills and responsibilities will receive a new evaluation date based on the date of the transfer. A 90-day evaluation will also be conducted.

Documentation of Work Time

The employee identification badge is also used for recording hours worked. All non-exempt employees will record their hours worked by swiping their identification badge in and out at the time clock when they begin and end work. This will ensure accuracy when computing their pay.

Employees should not swipe in any sooner than seven minutes before the start of their scheduled shift or swipe out any later than seven minutes after the completion of their scheduled shift unless additional work hours have been authorized by a Department Supervisor.

Working Additional Hours

To adequately meet the needs of persons receiving services in any of SVSNS programs, employees may be needed to work additional hours. Additional work hours must be authorized in advance by the department supervisor. When possible, the department supervisor makes every effort to provide timely advance notice and allow staff to sign up for additional work time.

Employees are also permitted to work additional hours at another worksite with prior approval of both their supervisor and supervisor for the other worksite. While covering at another worksite, employees are expected to adhere to all department specific rules and guidelines for that site and any violations may subject the employee to corrective action. Supervisors will review the expectations with staff as part of their orientation to the site and staff must sign off in acknowledgement. The signed expectations are then placed in the employee's personnel file.

Mandated Work Hours

Due to the necessity of adequate staffing, there are rare times when employees working in residential programs may be mandated to stay on shift until adequate coverage is obtained or until they are released from their duties by their supervisor or the supervisor on-call. Examples for being mandated would include inclement weather, a late call out, or an emergency situation.

Overtime

All overtime must be authorized in advance by a supervisor. All non-exempt employees who are authorized to work overtime will be compensated at one and one half times their weighted average rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a designated workweek.

Paid holiday, vacation, sick, or personal time, paid jury duty, organizational closing or any paid leave of absence is not counted as time worked when calculating eligibility for overtime premium during the workweek.

Holiday Pay

Holidays are determined on an annual basis by SVSNS. An employee needs to work his/her full scheduled workday *before* **and** his/her full scheduled workday *after* a holiday in order to receive holiday pay unless excused by SVSNS. Employees are eligible to receive holiday pay commencing with their first day of employment.

Regular non-exempt benefited employees who work on a designated holiday are compensated at time and one half their regular rate of pay for hours *worked* on the holiday. In addition, they are paid their holiday benefit time prorated based on the employee's scheduled hours. Non-benefited employees who are at a higher rate of pay, in lieu of benefits, will receive only time and one half for hours *worked* on the holiday. Regular part-time non-benefited employees, fill-in or per diem staff at a regular rate of pay who are not eligible for holiday accrued benefits, are paid double time for hours worked on a holiday.

Regular benefited employees scheduled off on the holiday are compensated at their base rate of pay for the day according to their regularly scheduled hours.

Payroll Deductions

Social Security, and State and Federal Withholding taxes are automatically deducted from an employee's pay according to law and vary according to the employee's earnings and number of dependents. Other mandatory deductions such as garnishments by court order or tax levy are also made without written authorization of the employee. However, the employee is notified by the Human Resources Department that such a demand has been made against his/her pay.

Voluntary deductions such as contributions to a credit union, retirement savings plan, charitable contributions, and health and dental benefits are made with the authorization of the employee. All deductions are recorded on the payroll stub.

Paychecks

SVSNS follows a biweekly pay schedule with payroll distributed to all employees every other week on Thursday. Paychecks are distributed within each individual department by a designated department representative, usually the supervisor. If the Thursday payday is a SVSNS designated holiday, paychecks will be distributed on Wednesday.

Any question or discrepancies regarding the paycheck should be directed to the department supervisor.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Vacation

Regular full-time and regular part-time benefited employees are eligible for vacation. Regular part-time employees working less than full time accrue vacation on a pro-rated basis according to their standard number of scheduled hours. All employees are expected to work their scheduled workday both before and after the vacation unless approved by SVSNS.

Due to the diversity of programs SVSNS offers, two different vacation schedules exist:

"Fixed Vacation Schedule"

Eligible employees assigned to the "school program" and "Kid's Connection" childcare program receive designated vacation shut-downs as determined annually. When a paid holiday falls during a fixed vacation period, this serves as compensation for that day.

Employees following this schedule are immediately eligible for the vacation shut-downs.

"Accrued Vacation Schedule"

All eligible non-school employees vacation time in fractional hours beginning from the date employment commences according to the following schedule:

Years of Continuous Service	Maximum Annual Vacation Time	(Supervisory Staff) Maximum Annual Vacation Time
Less than 5 years	2 weeks	3 weeks
5 years or more	3 weeks	4 weeks
10 years or more	4 weeks	4 weeks

Accrued vacation benefits are accrued bi-weekly and appear on the pay stub. While vacation time is accrued from the commencement of employment, employees may not begin to use vacation time until after they have successfully completed the probationary period and have the prior approval of their supervisor. Vacation time may be taken in days or hours. Employees who are on a leave of absence, worker's compensation, or related, do not accrue vacation time during their leave.

Requests for vacation time off should be made at least two weeks in advance by submitting a "Request for Time Off" form for approval from the supervisor.

Vacation may be carried over into the next year, however; at no time is an employee allowed to hold more than 150% of vacation time in accrual. Vacation time may not be used before it has been accrued (in other words, it cannot be advanced).

An employee who transfers from a position with an Accrued Vacation Schedule to a position with a Fixed Vacation Schedule will be allowed to keep any accrued and unused sick and personal days, but will receive a pay out for any unused, accrued vacation time.

Eligible employees who resign from SVSNS and who provide the required notice will receive a pay out for accrued and unused vacation time.

Personal Time

Regular full-time and regular part-time benefited employees are eligible for personal time. Regular part-time employees working less than full time accrue vacation on a pro-rated basis according to their standard number of scheduled hours. All employees are expected to work their scheduled workday both before and after as personal day unless approved by SVSNS.

Employees who do not follow the "school program" schedule can accrue the hourly equivalent of up to *four* personal days per year beginning from the date employment commences.

Employees who follow the "school program" schedule can accrue the hourly equivalent of up to *three* personal days per year beginning from the date employment commences.

Personal time benefits are accrued bi-weekly and appear on the pay stub. While Personal time is accrued from the commencement of employment, employees may not begin to use Personal time until after they have successfully completed the probationary period and have the prior approval of their supervisor. Personal time may be taken in days or hours. Employees who are on a leave of absence, worker's compensation, or related, do not accrue vacation time during their leave. Personal time may not be used before it has been accrued (in other words, it cannot be advanced).

Requests for personal time off should be made at least two weeks in advance by submitting a "Request for Time Off" form for approval from the supervisor.

Eligible employees who resign from SVSNS and who provide the required notice will receive a pay out for accrued and unused personal time.

Holidays

SVSNS provides 12 paid holidays per calendar year. The following 12 days are the standard holidays observed:

- * New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- * Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans' Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, it is observed on the preceding Friday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, it is observed on the following Monday. In the residential programs, the holiday is observed on the day it actually falls on.

*Residential Services employees may elect to have New Year's Eve in lieu of New Year's Day, or Easter Sunday in lieu of Good Friday as their holiday.

Sick Time

Regular full-time and regular part-time benefited employees are eligible for sick time. Eligible employees accrue the hourly equivalent of up to a maximum of *ten* sick days per year beginning from the date employment commences based on their standard number of scheduled hours. Sick time is accrued biweekly and appears on each pay stub. Employees may not begin to use sick time until after they have successfully completed the probationary period. Sick time may not be used before it has been accrued (in other words, it cannot be advanced) and the sick bank may accumulate to a total of 999 hours.

Insurance Programs

SVSNS offers comprehensive group insurance programs including Group Medical, Dental, Life, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Short-term Disability and Long-term Disability Programs to benefit eligible employees. Coverage for eligible dependents is also available under the group medical and dental programs. Group medical and dental are contributory and any contributions are based on an employee's number of scheduled hours per workweek.

Enrollment

New employees who are eligible for insurance benefits are required to submit enrollment forms to the Human Resources Department within 30 days of employment. Coverage is effective upon hire. Employees who do not enroll in the insurance benefits when they are first eligible, or who drop their coverage are eligible to enroll or re-enroll *only during the annual open enrollment period with an effective date of January 1st.*

Losing Other Coverage

An eligible employee who previously declined coverage may be eligible to enroll in the group medical or dental plan at any time during the year due to certain circumstances. Such circumstances include loss of other insurance coverage as a result of death, disability, divorce, retirement, or loss of employment. In such cases the employee is required to provide documentation from the other insurance carrier that the coverage has terminated. The employee is required to complete the necessary enrollment forms within 30 calendar days of the qualifying event. Coverage would then be effective the date of the qualifying event.

Employee Information Changes to Group Insurance Program Benefits

Employees are required to notify the Human Resources Department of any changes to their coverage such as adding or deleting dependents, address changes, name change or change in marital status within 30 calendar days of the event.

Additional Benefits

Section 125 Flexible Benefit Plan

SVSNS provides a Section 125 flexible benefit plan enabling *benefited* employees to save tax dollars by putting aside certain amounts of wages on a pre-tax basis to pay for reimbursable expenses. Examples include, but are not limited to, deductibles, co-pays, prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, dental services, or child care expenses. Coverage is effective upon hire.

Hyatt Legal Plan

SVSNS provides *benefit eligible* employees access to legal services for almost all personal legal matters through the Hyatt Legal Plan. Coverage is effective upon hire. Employee contributions are made on a post-tax basis and commitment is for the full plan year.

Supplemental Life Insurance

In addition to the basic life insurance plan, SVSNS offers a supplemental life insurance plan. Eligible employees may purchase life insurance for themselves and their eligible dependents through payroll deduction.

For a full and complete description of the SVSNS' insurance programs or benefits, please call or visit the Human Resources Department.

Retirement Programs

SVSNS understands how important it is for everyone to provide for his/her financial security during retirement years. To assist employees, SVSNS offers a Retirement Well-Being Program to all associates that provides total retirement benefits through the Ascension Health Retirement Savings Plan. Benefits through this plan include:

Before-Tax Savings Through Payroll Deduction — *All employees are immediately eligible.* Employees can elect to have payroll deductions diverted into their retirement account on a pre-tax basis up to a percentage or dollar limit as regulated by the Federal Government. Income taxes on contributions are deferred until the funds are withdrawn. Referred to as the Retirement Savings Plan, employees are eligible to establish and participate in the plan at the commencement of employment.

Employer Matching Contribution— As an added incentive for *benefited* employees to save for retirement, Ascension Health offers a matching contribution program. When an eligible employee participates in the Retirement Savings Plan, Ascension Health contributes \$.50 for every dollar the employee contributes up to 4% of an employee's annual earnings. The employee is eligible for the match following one year of service in which he/she worked at least 1,000 hours. Contributions are made each pay period with immediate vesting.

Annual Employer Automatic Contribution — An automatic contribution is made on behalf of all employees who work at least 1,000 hours their first calendar year of employment and for each year thereafter in which they work at least 500 hours and are eligible for the contribution. There is a 5-year vesting period for this benefit. The annual, year-end contribution is equal to a percentage of the employee's earnings based on years of service on December 31 each year.

For complete details of the plan, please refer to the Ascension Health Retirement Savings Plan documents, or contact the Human Resources Department.

For those employees who were hired prior to January 1, 2006 special circumstances may exist. Please visit the Human Resources Department for specific information.

Portability of Benefits

SVSNS is a member of the Ascension Health System. Any SVSNS employee who transfers to another Ascension Health entity may be able to retain or transfer certain benefits. Specific information is available in the Human resources Department.

Direct Deposit

For the sake of convenience and efficiency for both the employee and SVSNS, employees are *strongly encouraged* to have their payroll checks processed through direct deposit to the bank of their choice. The Human Resources Department provides employees with information to set up this process. Employees utilizing the direct deposit will receive a payroll stub at their worksite.

Credit Union

As an affiliate of St. Vincent's Health Services, SVSNS employees and members of their immediate family are invited to enroll in the St. Vincent's Medical Center Credit Union. The Credit Union allows employees access to a wide variety of loan products as well as traditional checking and savings programs. Employees interested in joining the Credit Union may obtain more information from the Human Resources Department. Credit Union members are subject to the rules and regulations established by that organization. Employees leaving SVSNS may continue membership in the credit union.

Educational Assistance Plan

SVSNS promotes the job-related development of employees through education by partially sharing in the expense of tuition costs. Regular benefited employees working at least 30 hours per workweek, who have completed at least one year of continuous service, and who are performing their jobs in a satisfactory manner are eligible to apply for educational assistance through the Human Resources Department.

Employee Assistance Program

SVSNS offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to help all employees and their families who are confronted with difficult personal problems, need advice or resources on any number of topics, or who are seeking wellness related information. The EAP provides professional and confidential services without cost to employees. Further information about the EAP is located at each SVSNS work site or in the Human Resources Department. Employees can visit the EAP web site to gain access to resources and materials or contact the EAP number directly to speak confidentially with a counselor.

Employee Hardship Fund

Consistent with SVSNS' Mission, the Employee Hardship Fund permits SVSNS employees to voluntarily donate accrued vacation, personal and, in some instances, sick time to co-workers experiencing financial need during unpaid leaves from work because of the illness of themselves or a family member or other serious circumstance. Employees wishing to donate hours may make application through the Human Resources Department.

Employee Giving Fund

Employees may make voluntary contributions, either through authorized payroll deductions or direct gift, to SVSNS' Employee Giving Fund which provides monetary assistance to persons receiving services from SVSNS or to SVSNS employees in emergency situations where there are no other financial resources available.

Employees may request help from the fund on their own behalf or on behalf of a fellow employee or a person(s) receiving services. The request is made to the Employee Giving Stewardship Committee whose members review the request. Housing, food, medical supplies and other necessities of life are the needs most commonly considered. Assistance grants are generally "one-time" only and are for a maximum of \$2,000. The identity of those receiving assistance from the Employee Giving Fund is confidential.

Leaves of Absence

Bereavement Leave

SVSNS recognizes the need for time away from work in instances of personal loss. In the event of the death of an immediate family member, a regular full-time or regular part-time benefited (refer to employment classifications) employee may request and receive up to three workdays off with pay. If an

employee needs time in excess of three workdays, he/she may request an unpaid leave of absence or use accrued vacation or personal time with the prior written approval of the supervisor and the Director of Human Resources.

"Immediate family member" is defined as spouse, child, stepchild, grandchild, parent or legal guardian, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparent, brother, sister, son-in-law or daughter-in-law.

Time off without pay, vacation day(s), or personal day(s) may be granted to attend the funeral of a relative who is not an immediate family member, or a friend, with the prior written approval of the supervisor.

Temporary and fill-in/per-diem employees may request and receive up to three workdays off without pay to attend the funeral of an immediate family member or relative. Prior supervisory approval is needed.

Jury Duty

Employees receiving notice to serve on jury duty are expected to advise their supervisor immediately so that work coverage can be arranged. Employees are required to report for work on any full or partial days in which the Court excuses them from jury duty. If at least four hours are remaining on a shift, the employee must report to work.

Regular and temporary employees are paid their full wages for the first five days of jury duty service. Jury duty needs to fall on a regularly scheduled workday to receive pay for that day(s). Employees subpoenaed to appear in court as witnesses, but not at the request of SVSNS, are excused from work in order to comply with the subpoena but are not paid for the time away from work, unless the employee requests payment of unused, accrued vacation or personal time.

Employees called to jury duty need to present proof of attendance at court by providing notice issued by the Court Clerk. In addition, employees serving jury duty need to maintain contact with their supervisor of their continuing need to be away from work.

Employees who work a second or third shift are released from work (and paid as stated above) if 50% or more of the hours of that shift fall on a day of jury service.

Military Leave

SVSNS abides by all the provisions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) and grants military leave to all eligible full-time and part-time employees. As with any leave of absence, employees are required to provide advance notice to their supervisor of their intent to take military leave and are required to provide appropriate documentation.

SVSNS pays the difference between the employee's regular rate of pay and military pay, if any, for a maximum of two workweeks per calendar year. If such leave falls during an employee's "fixed vacation schedule", he/she receives the full vacation pay. Benefit coverage continues for absences of 30 days or less, as long as the employee pays the normal portion of the cost of benefits. For leaves lasting 31 days or longer, an employee is eligible to continue health benefits under COBRA and is required to pay the monthly premium charged by SVSNS. Employees do not accrue vacation, personal or sick time during the military leave.

Upon return from military leave, regular full-time and part-time employees are reinstated with the same seniority, pay, status, and benefit rights they would have had if they had worked continuously. Employees are required to apply for reinstatement in accordance with applicable laws. Employees who fail to report for work within the prescribed time after completion of military service are considered to have voluntarily resigned employment with SVSNS.

If an employee was a participant in the Ascension Health Retirement Savings Plan (403(b) Plan) at the time he/she left for military duty, he/she is also permitted to make additional contributions to the plan. Employees may initiate these additional payments as of their re-employment date and continue them for the period of time permitted by law.

For specific information regarding military leave, please contact the Human Resources Department

Family and Medical Leave

Eligible SVSNS employees may request a Family and Medical Leave of Absence "FMLA leave" for the following reasons:

- A serious health condition that makes you unable to perform the essential functions of your job as a result of an illness or injury;
- The birth of the employee's child and in order to care for the child*;
- The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care*;
- To provide primary care for a spouse, child or parent (includes foster, step, legal guardians and parents-in-law) with a serious health condition;
- A serious health condition that renders the employee incapable of performing the functions of his/her job including illness or injury covered by Workers' Compensation.
- A qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that your spouse, son or daughter, or parent is on active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation as a member of the National Guard or Reserves;
- The fact that you are the spouse, son or daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member with a serious injury or illness.

*The entitlement to leave for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care expires 12 months from the date of the birth or placement.

Length of Leave

The amount of leave available at the time of the request may be 12 weeks in a 12-month period, or 16 weeks in a 24-month period, depending on whether Federal or State law applies for the first *five* reasons listed above. The amount of leave is reduced by any similar leave taken in the 12 or 24-month period prior to the commencement of this leave.

You have an entitlement under the FMLA for up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave in a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness.

Both Federal and State laws run concurrently. For example, the first 12 weeks of an employee's 16 week entitlement under the State law satisfies the employee's entitlement under the Federal law. Leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule.

The method used to determine the length of FMLA leave to which an employee is entitled is called "rolling month method."

General Eligibility

An employee is eligible for a Family and Medical Leave if he/she has been employed for at least one year and has worked at least 1,000 hours during the preceding 12-month period.

Use of Vacation, Sick & Personal Time

Family and Medical Leave is unpaid leave. However, the employee may be required to (or may otherwise) use available vacation, sick and/or personal time, as well as Short-Term Disability pay, if applicable, to provide pay during the leave period. For example, if leave is requested for an employee's own serious health condition, the employee is required to use all unused, accrued sick time. If the employee does not have sufficient sick time to cover the minimum 14 day waiting period for Short Term Disability pay to apply, he/she must use any available accrued vacation or personal time. For those employees who follow a "fixed vacation" schedule, the scheduled vacation time that falls during the requested Family and Medical Leave is used to cover that part of the leave entitlement. If leave is requested for any of the reasons recognized above other than their own serious health condition, an employee is required to use all accrued vacation and personal time. Up to two weeks of unused, accrued sick time may be utilized as required under applicable law.

Requesting a Family and Medical Leave of Absence

An employee requesting leave is required to provide advance notice of at least two weeks to his/her supervisor when the leave is foreseeable. Otherwise, the employee must provide notice as soon as possible. SVSNS may also designate any qualifying leave as an FMLA leave, even if the employee does not specifically request it.

Certification Requirements and Other Forms

The employee must complete the necessary forms available in the Human Resources Department. To request an FMLA leave, the employee must state the reason for the leave, and the starting and anticipated ending date. A leave request based on the serious health condition of the employee or covered family member is required to be accompanied by a medical certification statement completed by a health care provider. Failure to complete the necessary application requirements and provide the required medical certification within a reasonable period will disqualify an employee for FMLA Leave.

Adjustment to Annual Performance Review Date

If the FMLA leave exceeds 90 calendar days, the employee's performance review date is extended to account for a full review period cycle, with a goal to provide an annual evaluation.

Job Reinstatement

In most circumstances, an employee eligible for FMLA leave is entitled to be restored to his/her old position or to a position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment at the end of the leave, provided the employee meets all requirements of the leave.

Continuation of Benefits

During a granted FMLA Leave, an employee is retained on the health and dental plan under the same conditions that applied before leave commenced. If the employee is receiving a paycheck from SVSNS, contributions, if any, continue to be deducted. When the employee is no longer receiving a paycheck from SVSNS, it is the responsibility of the employee to continue to pay employee premium contributions to SVSNS the first day of each month. If the employee fails to return to work after his/her leave, the employee is expected to reimburse SVSNS for its portion of the insurance premium paid during the leave. Other benefits, such as life and disability insurance, continue to be administered according to plan design. If the employee is receiving a paycheck from SVSNS, then vacation, sick, and personal time will continue to accrue during the leave.

Returning to Work

When an employee returns from a leave due to his/her own health condition, the employee is required to provide a "fitness for duty" note from the physician and receive clearance from Immediate Health Care before he/she is permitted to return to work. SVSNS reserves the right to request that the employee be seen by a physician designated by the organization to verify the employee's fitness for duty. Employees who do not return to work when required are deemed to have resigned employment from SVSNS, except as noted below.

Extended Leave of Absence

If an employee is unable to return from an FMLA leave when required, he/she may request an extended leave of absence. The request may be approved at the discretion of the Department Supervisor in conjunction with the Employee Labor and Relations Manager from the Human Resources Department. However, due to the nature of services that SVSNS provides and to ensure the health, safety and well being of persons receiving services, extensions are provided based on departmental and SVSNS needs. In no event is an extension to be granted beyond six months (including the time of the originally granted leave). The employee is responsible for the full cost of medical and dental coverage during this extended leave period. Vacation, sick and personal time are not accrued. The employee will be reinstated to the same position upon their return.

Other Leaves of Absence

At its sole discretion, SVSNS may permit leaves of absence for reasons other than those specifically listed above. In these instances, the employee is responsible for the full cost of insured benefits during the leave. Vacation, sick and personal time do not accrue during such special leaves, and the employee is not entitled to any specific rights to job reinstatement. An employee must work 20 hours or more to be eligible for this type of a leave of absence.

CORRECTIVE ACTION AND EMPLOYEE MISCONDUCT

Corrective Action Procedures

To effectively meet the needs of those persons receiving services and to efficiently manage the organization, certain organization-wide rules and standards of employee conduct have been established regarding personal behavior, job performance and job safety to which all employees are expected to conform. These rules include, but are not limited to, the list appearing below and elsewhere in this handbook. Employees are also expected to abide by SVSNS' rules and codes of conduct specific to the unique nature of each department or job function.

In an attempt to allow for fair and equitable handling of employee acts of misbehavior, substandard performance and misconduct, SVSNS strives to follow a constructive and progressive form of discipline, when appropriate. The steps in the corrective action procedure are as follows:

- First Step – Verbal Counseling
- Second Step – Written Warning
- Third Step – Final Written Warning
- Fourth Step – Termination of Employment

SVSNS reserves the right to initiate corrective action at any stage in the progression, up to and including immediate termination of employment for certain offenses.

Since it is difficult to set an exact minimum and maximum corrective action for every violation when considering all the circumstances of each particular case, the following factors may be considered prior to taking corrective action:

- The severity of the current violation;
- The employee's past work record, including the severity and number of previous offenses, if any; and
- The time interval from the last violation.

Following are just some examples of inappropriate behavior warranting corrective action:

1. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness;
2. Failure to swipe in or out of the automated timekeeping system, or failure to keep an accurate time sheet;
3. Leaving assigned work area without the permission of the department supervisor;
4. Posting any literature, handbills, petitions, posters, or other materials, or tampering with or removing information from SVSNS bulletin boards without authorization;
5. Leaving work prior to the end of a shift without permission of the department supervisor;
6. Violation of any SVSNS policy;
7. Creating or contributing to an unsafe work place, or violation of SVSNS' safety rules;
8. Engaging in horseplay that could contribute to bodily injury or damage to property;
9. Driving carelessly on or with SVSNS' property and/or parking in such a manner as to obstruct SVSNS' entrances or exits;
10. Assisting or permitting a non-employee to enter a non-public area of a SVSNS work site without authorization;
11. Failure to attend mandatory staff meetings or professional in-service development programs;

12. Allowing a professional license or certification to expire;
13. Failure to work additional hours, in an extenuating circumstance, at the request of the supervisor to adequately cover a shift;
14. Smoking on any SVSNS property or campus.
15. Failure to follow established work rules and/or guidelines when working additional hours at another SVSNS worksite, including not following through on the commitment to work the hours.

Certain acts or behaviors are considered very serious in nature. These acts, and any act of a similarly serious nature not listed below, justify immediate termination of employment:

1. Any act or conduct detrimental to the health, safety, care and well-being of persons receiving services from SVSNS, or any employee;
2. Violation of the principles of the Mission Statement or Core Values;
3. Unauthorized possession or removal from the premises of any property belonging to persons receiving services, visitors or other employees without proper authorization;
4. Unauthorized possession or removal from the premises of any property belonging to SVSNS without proper authorization;
5. Fighting with or attempting or threatening bodily injury to persons receiving services, visitors, or other employees;
6. Use of threatening behavior or abusive language to persons receiving services, supervisors, fellow employees or visitors;
7. Falsification of employment application or resume, post-offer physical, personnel records, licenses, certifications or other credentials;
8. Swiping at the automated timekeeping system for another employee, requesting another employee to swipe for you, or falsification of work or time records;
9. Gambling or playing illegal games of chance while on SVSNS property or time;
10. Possession of firearms, fireworks, explosives, or any object that can be considered a dangerous weapon on SVSNS property;
11. Immoral conduct or indecency;
12. Willfully misusing, destroying or negligently causing serious damage to the property of SVSNS, persons receiving services, employees or visitors;
13. Refusal (insubordination), intentional failure, or inability to perform required job duties as a result of employee's own negligence.
14. Unauthorized sleeping while on duty;
15. Unauthorized possession, alteration, copying, use or reading of SVSNS' records, or disclosures or alteration of information contained in such records to unauthorized persons;
16. Leaving a direct care work station unattended causing those persons receiving services to be placed in jeopardy;
17. Failure to notify supervisor each workday in the event of an absence from work;
18. Entering a SVSNS work site under the influence of alcohol or drugs; possessing or consuming an alcoholic beverage during working time or at times proximate to working time or on SVSNS property at any time (unless authorized by CEO at designated organization functions); possessing or using drugs illegally;
19. Knowingly making false or malicious statements concerning SVSNS, its services, its employees, or persons receiving services, which would have an adverse effect on either the internal or external relationships of the organization;

20. Violation of the Right(s) to Confidentiality of persons receiving services;
21. Failure to reasonably communicate with supervisor, or failure to return supervisor's repeated telephone calls or other communications with employee;
22. Dishonesty/fabrication of information supplied by employee regarding work-related issues and employee attendance.
23. Any form of discrimination and /or harassment, regardless of whether it is sexual, racial, religious, or related to another's gender, age, sexual orientation, or disability.
24. Failure to pass a mandatory drug and/or alcohol test or refusing to take a drug and/or alcohol test.
25. Knowingly making a false record or filing a false claim for payment for services that were not provided.

In addition to the above lists, all employees working with persons receiving services are required to follow the staff guidelines specific to their department. These guidelines are reviewed during the orientation process.

Grievance Procedure for Non-Management Personnel

Grievance Policy

In our organization, as in any organization, it is understandable that misunderstandings and grievances may arise from time to time. Realizing that good employee relations are necessary to ensure that mutual understanding and trust is maintained between SVSNS and Employees, it is the SVSNS's policy that any misunderstandings or grievances be resolved fairly and as quickly as possible for both the good of the Employee and SVSNS. A grievance is defined as a violation of SVSNS policy resulting in an action taken against the employee that the employee believes to be unjust.

Grievance Procedure

Prior to submitting a formal grievance, the employee must first meet with his or her supervisor to discuss the complaint or potential grievance. Should an employee believe, at the conclusion of the supervisory review, that he or she has been aggrieved; the employee must consult with the Employee & Labor Relations Manager in the Human Resources Department prior to submitting a formal grievance on the prescribed SVSNS form in accordance with the following procedure:

Step One

If a problem is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, the employee may personally present a formal grievance to his or her Department Administrator. The grievance must be reduced to writing on the Grievance Form with a clear explanation of why the employee feels he or she was aggrieved. The Department Administrator will meet with the employee, thoroughly review the grievance and provide a written reply to the employee. An explanation of the reasons for the decision will be included in the written reply.

Step Two

If dissatisfied with the reply given by the Department Administrator, the employee may submit the grievance to his or her respective Director. The Director will meet with the employee, thoroughly review the grievance and provide a written reply to the employee. An explanation of the reasons for the decision will be included in the written reply.

Step Three

If dissatisfied with the reply given by the employee's Director, the employee may submit the grievance to the Appeals Committee which is a committee appointed and convened by the President/Chief Executive Officer. The Appeals Committee will consist of the President and four other voting members appointed by the President. Two of the appointed members will be from management. The other two appointed members will be non-managerial employees. Any member of management with reporting responsibility for the grievant will not be permitted to serve on the Appeals Committee.

The employee may also ask any non-managerial employee of the Medical Center to assume the role of the employee advocate by assisting them in making the presentation at the step 3 hearing. The President will approve a written reply to the employee setting forth the decision of the Appeals Committee.

The decision of the Appeals Committee is final and binding.

Human Resources Department Responsibility

The Employee & Labor Relations Manager is responsible for monitoring the grievance process and for providing the employee with any assistance through each step of the grievance procedure. This may include reviewing existing policies, gathering information, preparation and typing of the grievance, arranging for witnesses to appear on the employee's behalf, and processing the grievance to the next higher step. Prior to initiating a grievance, an employee must meet with the Employee & Labor Relations Manager.

Time Frames for Reviewing Grievances

To ensure that prompt consideration is given to grievances, Management is responsible for both reviewing the grievance and providing a written reply to the employee within five working days from time the grievance is received, excluding weekends and holidays. This time frame will apply to each level of the grievance procedure, including the supervisory review. The time frame for grievances submitted to the Appeals Committee (step 3), will be extended to ten working days.

Employee Responsibility

Realizing that the employee has a certain responsibility for the prompt review of his or her grievance, it is the employee's responsibility to submit his or her grievance within ten working days, excluding weekends and holidays, from the date of the action the employee believes was unjust. It is also the employee's responsibility to indicate his or her desire to have the grievance reviewed at the next step of the grievance procedure within five working days of a denial at a prior step.

Suspension

An employee may be suspended without pay by SVSNS at any time while an investigation is conducted into an incident where the employee is believed or alleged to have committed misconduct of a type that could merit immediate termination of employment.

In those situations where it is determined by SVSNS that no misconduct occurred, the employee will receive pay for the days he/she was suspended. If the misconduct is substantiated but termination of employment does not occur due to extenuating circumstances, a written warning will be issued, other appropriate corrective action may be taken, and the employee will not be paid for the time he or she was suspended.

Criminal Misconduct

In an effort to maintain the integrity and reputation of SVSNS and to protect operations, persons receiving services and employees, SVSNS reserves the right to apply corrective action in cases where employees are arrested or charged with a crime.

Upon learning that an employee has been arrested, the supervisor or Director should notify the Human Resources Department immediately so an investigation into the circumstances of the arrest can be conducted and employment decisions can be made.

When an employee is arrested or charged with a crime that constitutes a felony, the employee will be immediately suspended pending SVSNS investigation into the charges. Regardless of the court's findings, SVSNS reserves the right to initiate corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

SAFETY PRACTICES

Safety

The safety and well being of employees and persons served is one of SVSNS' highest priorities. Experience has shown that sincere commitment and active participation is necessary to achieve and maintain a safe work environment. It is important that employees understand this basic philosophy:

- Injuries and accidents can be prevented.
- All employees are responsible for preventing injuries and accidents.
- It is possible to safeguard against most operating exposures that may result in injury or accident.

SVSNS encourages all employees to be concerned with safety and to avoid unnecessary risks. Employees who ignore safety equipment requirements or department and organization-wide safety practices are subject to corrective action. Employees observing another employee violating safety rules are encouraged to give the employee a friendly reminder. If the violation continues, the observing employee should immediately notify their supervisor. Also, as a precautionary measure, employees are generally not permitted in work areas beyond their normal work hours, unless approved in advance by the supervisor.

SVSNS follows the mandates and procedures established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). In conjunction with this, most positions at SVSNS require completion of various in-service safety training programs. Important safety topics include Hazardous Communication for proper chemical usage and Bloodborne Pathogens training for ensuring safe work practices, both of which are conducted during the new employee orientation process, as well as on a continuous basis. Other required safety training programs include, but are not limited to, CPR, First Aid, safe lifting, safe driving, and safe equipment operation, all as necessary and/or required.

Personal Safety and Protective Equipment

Certain safety equipment such as gloves, masks or gowns may be required to be worn by certain employees when providing particular services. Employees will be trained in the use of protective equipment as appropriate. Supervisors are instructed to advise employees when this equipment should be used and where it is located.

General Fire Precautions

In case of a fire, supervisors who are present are instructed to inform employees of any specific activities which need to be performed within their department. All employees are required to:

- Know the location of fire extinguishers near their work area;
- Know the location of the nearest exit;
- Handle assigned tasks as instructed when a fire alarm sounds;
- Not stop to get personal belongings;
- WALK - DON'T RUN to exit the work site.

Emergency “Lock Down” Procedure

In the event of a natural or man-made situation occurring in the immediate vicinity of any SVSNS worksite or in the worksite itself, SVSNS has established a lock down procedure to ensure the health, safety and well being of persons receiving services, employees, visitors and other individuals on site. Each worksite has an individualized “lock down” procedure in place to deal with this type of emergency. Employees will be in-serviced as to the specifics for their worksite as part of their orientation process.

SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

Leaving SVSNS

In order to ensure the continuity of services for all persons receiving services, employees are expected to submit a letter of resignation to their supervisor well in advance of their last day worked, but not less than the appropriate notice specified below:

- Four workweeks are considered appropriate advance notice for exempt (salaried) staff.
- Two workweeks are considered appropriate advance notice for non-exempt (hourly paid) staff.

Such advance notice of resignation is required in order for an employee to be eligible to receive a pay out for unused accrued personal and vacation time. Employees who are terminated from employment, for any reason, forfeit all unused vacation and personal time.

After giving notice of resignation, an employee is expected to work for the notice period until the effective date of the resignation; however, SVSNS reserves the right to request a resigning employee to discontinue work at any time. In such case, the employee will be paid (at his or her regular rate of pay) and receive those benefits to which the employee would otherwise be entitled to receive, for the remainder of the notice period.

For "sick day calls" during the notice period, the employee's supervisor may require a physician's note for the sick day to be considered excused in order for the employee to meet the obligation of appropriate notice. Employees leaving SVSNS for any reason are required to immediately return all SVSNS property (keys, ID badge, cell phone, etc.) in their possession to the Human Resources Department.

Exit Interview

Employees voluntarily leaving SVSNS are requested to participate in an exit interview meeting with a Human Resources representative. The meeting is arranged through the Human Resources Department.

The purpose of the exit interview is to allow the employee to express any opinions or concerns about any aspect of his/her employment with SVSNS or about the organization itself. The exit interview also provides for valuable feedback about the employees' work experiences at SVSNS. At this meeting, Human Resources has an opportunity to share with the departing employee any necessary information regarding entitled benefits.

Information shared by the employee is maintained by SVSNS but is not included in the employee's personnel file. An employee has the option of requesting or declining to discuss reasons for his/her resignation.

NOTE : For further information or clarification of any policies, practices, programs or benefits described in this Employee Handbook, please visit or call the Human Resources Department.