



**safari**  
Child Care & Preschool

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

SAFARI CHILD CARE & PRESCHOOL, LLC

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## **Welcome**

Welcome to the Safari Child Care Center. We are pleased that you have chosen to work with us and hope that your association with Safari will be a long and mutually rewarding experience.

You and your work are very important to accomplish the mission of Safari – to provide quality childcare for Milford and the surrounding communities. Your contribution is essential to our success.

Safari is committed to providing a working environment that treats its employees with courtesy, respect, and dignity. In return, we expect that employees exercise the same towards the children, parents, other employees, and administration.

Your surroundings, your co-workers, and how Safari's routine is conducted throughout the day may be unfamiliar to you at first, so this handbook has been provided for you with information about your employment and setting guidelines for employee behavior and responsibilities. It will help answer questions you may have about benefits, policies, and procedures. As part of your orientation, the Director will discuss the various policies outlined in this document. Please read these policies carefully and bring any questions to

Safari reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portion of the Handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and its absolute discretion. Employees will be notified of changes in policy, benefits, or the Handbook at which they occur. This Handbook is intended to give you information about the main features of our employment policies, interests, and other general information. It is not designated to cover these matters in detail or serve as a contract between you and Safari. All statements in this handbook are subject to change without notice.

May we offer our good wishes to you as a new employee.

Program Owner and Staff

**Mission Statement**

The mission of Safari Child Care & Preschool is to *“provide quality childcare and learning experiences for children in a safe and caring environment, helping them develop socially, creatively, emotionally, physically, and intellectually”*. Safari will strive to work cooperatively with the community.

We take pride in our highly qualified teachers and our communications throughout the center. We strive to provide a safe and nurturing environment where children can express their individuality while we provide them with a variety of experiences and enhance their development. Safari takes pride in its reputation and strives to uphold and promote values and principles, which encompass fairness and honesty.

**Goal Statement**

It is our number one goal to provide the kind of environment and the kind of influences that encourage all children to become creative, independent, responsible, well rounded, self-directed adults who can make decisions for themselves. Our desire is for excellence in meeting the needs of children and their families for nurturing, growth and development, relationships, and understanding.

**Philosophy Statement**

*We believe in the value of human diversity and the fair treatment of all people. Our values and beliefs about children are deeply rooted in the history of Early Childhood Education.*

*We believe All children have the right to feel good about themselves, and it is the responsibility of all teachers to nurture the child's self-esteem.*

*We believe The home is an essential factor in a child's development. We will always strive to support and complement the family to promote the healthy development of children and parents.*

*We believe Loving, trusting, and respecting each child enables that child to love, trust, and respect others. Each child and family are due the respect for personal privacy demanded by professional ethics.*

*We believe It is essential to meet each child's needs for physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth by providing diverse experiences in a supportive environment.*

*We believe Each person is a unique individual and has his or her own needs. Each person has a right to meet this need their way and in their own time. However, one of the responsibilities of having rights is recognizing and respecting the rights of others.*

*We believe Children deserve to have teachers who are capable and caring and whose values enable them to be excellent role models. Our educational and guidance decisions must be based on our knowledge of child development.*

**PERSONNEL POLICY*****Employment Policies***

Safari expects all employees to work together in harmony for the good of the families and children that we serve. This employee handbook is given to you to outline your responsibilities, your benefits, and enhance your employment. Written personnel policies are made available to all center staff upon hire and are open to all staff while at the center.

***Employment Practices***

Safari retains the right to recruit, select, and hire employees and to determine the necessary qualifications for employment. To ensure effective employee performance, Safari maintains the right to promote, to classify, determine the size and composition of the workforce, to assign and allocate work, to transfer employees from job to job and from shift to shift, to determine schedules, hours worked, and to effect layoffs or terminations.

The selection of employees will be made according to the Administrator's assessment of their ability to provide quality care for the children of Safari. These assessments will be made based on knowledge, skill, experience, character, dependability, and the ability to meet the requirements of the job description. Processes concerning hiring, recruiting, interviewing, and selection of potential employees align with appropriate employment law practices.

Safari is committed to providing a working environment that treats its employees with courtesy, respect, and dignity. In return, it is expected that employees exercise the same values toward children, parents, other staff members, and management. Safari reserves the right to conduct pre-employment investigations of the employee's educational and work experience and to require a physical screening by a licensed health professional.

### ***Hiring Practices***

The Owner and or Director will oversee the hiring process, including recruiting, interviewing, and selection of new employees and requests for internal position changes.

Current Safari employees may apply for positions as they become available. Any current employee who applies for an internal job must submit a written request. In most cases, any area that becomes open at Safari will be considered internally before possible solicitation from outside. However, in some cases, the Owner/Program Director and Board may determine that it is appropriate to advertise a position simultaneously with the internal posting.

Applicants will receive a wage scale, employee handbook (including personnel policies), and information regarding the position-to-hire to assist in their decision to join the Safari Team. New employees will receive an employment packet containing a letter of acceptance, staff record form, background check information, withholding and eligibility forms, staff health report, orientation guides, and job description. The Administrator will provide additional information, if necessary, to assist the employee with a successful training experience that may include, but not limited to a training schedule, appointed trainer, evaluations, and feedback.

### ***Equal Opportunity Employment***

Safari Child Care & Preschool, LLC is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Its employment practices are intended to be consistent with both the State of Iowa and Federal laws concerning discrimination. Safari is committed to employing personnel who are qualified to meet the assigned responsibilities in their job positions. It is the intent and desire of Safari that equal employment opportunity will be provided in employment, wages, benefits, and all other privileges, terms, and conditions of employment. State and federal EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) laws are posted within the center.

### ***Anti-Harassment Policy***

Safari is committed to providing a professional work environment free from any type or form of harassment.

Harassment of any employee based on his or her race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or the presence of any physical, mental, or sensory disability is a severe violation and will not be tolerated.

Harassment can occur because of a single incident or a pattern of behavior where the purpose or effect is to create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work environment. Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical or verbal acts, which may include slurs, comments, jokes, innuendoes, unwelcome compliments, pictures, cartoons, or pranks. Some examples may include but are not limited to, the following:

1. Physical or verbal abuse
2. Racial, ethnic, or sexual insults
3. Ethnic or sexual jokes
4. Religious slurs or other slurs directed toward the group set forth above
5. Unwelcome sexual comments, advances, or innuendoes
6. Taunting, intended to provoke an employee
  
7. Requests for sexual favors used as a condition of employment or affecting any personnel decisions such as hiring, promotion, compensation.

### ***Sexual Harassment***

Sexual harassment is a type of harassment and occurs when the verbal and physical conduct is sexual in nature or is gender-based, that is, directed at a person because of gender. Sexual harassment, whether committed by supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, is expressly prohibited as unlawful and against Safari policy.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome verbal behavior such as comments, suggestions, jokes, or derogatory remarks based on sex. Physical behavior such as pats, squeezes, repeatedly brushing against someone's body, or impeding or blocking standard work or movement. Visual harassment such as posting of sexually suggestive or derogatory pictures,

cartoons, or drawings, even at one's workstation; unwanted sexual advances, pressure for sexual favors, and basing employment decisions upon the employee's submission to sexually harassing behavior in the workplace. Employees who feel they have been or have witnessed other employees subjected to harassment of any kind are encouraged to immediately identify the offensive behavior to the harasser and request that it stop. If the employee feels uncomfortable in addressing the matter directly with the harasser, or if they have done so and the behavior does not stop, the issue should be immediately discussed with the Administrator/Program Director or any Board member with whom the employee feels comfortable.

All complaints are investigated promptly, impartially, and discreetly. Upon completion of the investigation, the appropriate parties will be notified of the findings. All employees found to have harassed an employee will be subject to appropriate corrective action, ranging from disciplinary action to termination. **No employee will suffer retaliation in any form for reporting instances of harassment.**

**Responsibilities Include:**

1. Employees: Bring to the attention of the Owner/Program Director perceived or actual incident of harassment or witness of such.
2. Owner/Program Director: Maintain a work environment free of intimidation and harassment and respond immediately and appropriately to any complaints or indications of such behavior. Investigate all initial complaints and report them to the Board of Directors.
3. Owner and Program Director Administer the necessary disciplinary action toward any individuals proven guilty of such an act or who, knowingly, falsely accuse another of sexual or other forms of harassment.

***Conceal & Carry Policy***

Iowa Administrative Code DCF 251.06(2)(c) prohibits the possession of any dangerous items including, but not limited to, firearms, ammunition, knives, and explosive devices on the premises of a state-licensed childcare facility.

DCF 251.06(2)(c) addresses the presence of firearms and ammunition in a licensed group childcare center as follows: DCF 251.06(2)(c) Firearms, ammunition, and other potentially dangerous items may not be kept on the premises. This code applies regardless of whether or not the individual is licensed to carry a concealed weapon under Iowa State Law. DCF 251.06(2)(c) code does not apply to law enforcement officers while engaged in their official capacity.

***Zero Tolerance for Workplace Violence***

Safari will, within reason, do whatever is necessary to protect the lives and health of employees and provide a workplace free from verbal abuse, threats, or assaults that could cause or result in harm to those who are employed. Safari has a definitive "zero tolerance" for the violence of any kind, including threats of violence.

***Drug and Alcohol Policy***

Safari advocates that our institution be free from the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of controlled substances by employees. Additionally, employees are to work free from the effect of alcohol and other performance-impairing substances.

Drug testing may be required by any employee, who while on duty, demonstrates signs of being under the influence, and demonstrates inappropriate behavior suggesting impairment or who is observed consuming alcoholic beverages or drugs. Refusal to cooperate with drug testing and rehabilitation will result in immediate discharge. Violations of this policy will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Because prescription medication can also affect an individual's demeanor and job performance, it is the employee's responsibility to notify the Owner/Program Director if he or she is taking any legal prescription drugs. The employee is also required to provide the Owner/Program Director a doctor's note authorizing the drug is safe to take while working. Such prescription drugs must be given under medical supervision and may not interfere with the performance of job duties. Depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the offense, and at the company's sole discretion, an employee who tests positive for drugs and alcohol may be referred to counseling, rehabilitation, or employee assistance program. Refusal to cooperate in this program may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

**Code of Conduct:**

Aligned with NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)

**Ethical Responsibilities to Children:** Childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the human life cycle. Our paramount responsibility is to provide care and education in settings that are safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive for each child. We are committed to supporting children’s development and learning; respecting individual differences; and helping children learn to live, play, and work cooperatively. We are also committed to promoting children’s self-awareness, competence, self-worth, resiliency, and physical well-being.

**Ethical Responsibilities to Families:** Families are of primary importance in children’s development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child’s well-being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child’s development.

**Ethical Responsibilities to Co-workers:** In a caring, cooperative workplace, human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction is promoted, and positive relationships are developed and sustained. Based on our core values, our primary responsibility to our co-workers is to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs. The same ideals that apply to children also are used as we interact with adults in the workplace.

**Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society:** Early childhood programs operate within the context of their immediate community made up of families and other institutions concerned with children's welfare. Our responsibilities to the community are to provide programs that meet the diverse needs of families, to cooperate with agencies and professions that share the responsibility for children, to assist families in gaining access to those agencies and allied professionals, and to assist in the development of community programs that are needed but not currently available. As individuals, we acknowledge our responsibility to provide the best possible programs of care and education for children and to conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity. Because of our specialized expertise in early childhood development and education and because the more substantial society shares responsibility for the welfare and protection of young children, we acknowledge a collective obligation to advocate for the best interests of children within early childhood programs and in the broader community and to serve as a voice for young children everywhere. The ideals and principles in this section are presented to distinguish between those that pertain to the work of the individual early childhood educator and those that more typically are engaged collectively on behalf of the best interests of children—with the understanding that individual early childhood educators have a shared responsibility for addressing the ideas and principles that are identified as “collective.”

***Confidentiality***

All information concerning employees, children and families should be considered confidential. Any breach of the confidentiality of any information is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

***Dress Code***

Employees are expected to dress in a manner that promotes pride and respect for Safari and for the children and families it serves. Good grooming practices and appropriate attire improve an employee's overall effectiveness in fostering and maintaining a positive image. Safety, positive role-modeling, and customer service goals are attained through these measures. The Owner/Program Director will reserve the right to send an employee home if the attire is not deemed workplace appropriate.

Proper attire consists of business to casual professional dress Monday through Friday and must maintain a professional image. Shirts, sweaters, and cover-ups must support your professional attire. Clothing must not contain logos or pictures inappropriate for the workplace. Mid-regions should always be appropriately covered. Personal hygiene and appearance must promote a professional and clean look. Childcare is a service orientated business, and employees are expected to represent professionalism in the work environment. Special dress-up days will be considered and posted in advance (which may include homecoming events, Dr. Suess week and so forth).

***On the Job Injury***

All injuries, large or small, shall be reported to the Owner/Program Director immediately. It is the intent of Safari to maintain a safe workplace for all employees, but in the event of an injury, a report must be made in case a Worker's Compensation claim needs to be made. Any injuries not reported within 24 hours may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

***Smoking Policy***

Safari has a smoke-free policy following the Iowa Child Care licensing regulations. There will be no smoking within the Safari building or grounds, including vehicles.

***Telephone Policy***

If office staff are unable to answer the telephone during regular business hours, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., the team will answer the phone. The individual answer the phone is required to state their name. Telephones are never to be answered or played with by children. Personal phone usage causing distraction from supervision and interference with job duties is grounds for disciplinary

action up to and including termination. There is a phone port located in the office and the Infant room.

The use of personal phones should be limited to employee break times. Personal telephone calls should be discussed with the Owner/Program Director to ensure they will know you will potentially be on your phone. Employees should use the utmost discretion with personal cell phone calls. All phone calls during work time (excluding breaks) should pertain to business and not interfere with the supervision of children.

***Social Media Policy***

This policy provides guidance for employee use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, wikis, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a contemporaneous manner.

- Employees need to know and adhere to the Code of Ethical Conduct, Employee Handbook, and other company policies when using social media about Safari Child Care & Preschool.
- Employees should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their images, as well as that of Safari. The information that employees post or publish may be public information for a long time.
- Employees should be aware that Safari may observe content and information made available by employees through social media. Employees should use their best judgment in posting material that is neither inappropriate nor harmful to Safari, its employees, or customers.
- Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include

posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment.

- Employees are not to publish, post, or release any information that is considered confidential or not public.
- If employees encounter a situation while using social media that threaten to become antagonistic, employees should disengage from the dialogue respectfully and seek the advice of a supervisor
- Social media use shouldn't interfere with an employee's responsibilities at work. Safari computer systems are to be used for business purposes only.
- Subject to applicable law, after-hours online activity that violates the Safari Code of Conduct or any other company policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action or termination.
- Any personal posts including any Safari children, families, or staff members, **MUST** be approved by the Owner/Program Director before any post as such is made to your personal social media pages.

### ***Visitor Policy***

All visitors are to report to the office to conduct a temp screening. Staff will then be contacted, and visitation is to be done at the classroom doors or in the hallways. Visitors are NOT to enter the classrooms.

### ***Solicitation***

Employees may not solicit campaign, collect contributions, or distribute literature to children or families for any purpose. Employees may not solicit campaign, collect donations, or distribute literature to other employees except when all employees involved are not on work time.

### ***Safety***

Safety is an ongoing process that seeks to avoid, reduce, or eliminate unsafe acts or conditions that may result in injury to children, parents, or employees. Employees are to immediately communicate any recognizable hazards to the Owner/Program Director.

### ***Parking***

Employees are expected to park in the far row at the North end of the building by the dumpster, to allow parents access to center/front rows during drop-off and pick-up times. The parking lot is handicap accessible. Employees requiring special accommodations should contact the Owner/Program Director and make necessary arrangements. Parking on the Southside of the building is also permitted; the employee must be 15 feet away from the road per city regulations. Staff are also welcome to park on the street to the East of the Safari building, the road next to the playground.

### ***Policies and Procedures***

The Owner/Program Director of Safari have set forth various policies and procedures. Copies of these documents will be available to you with this Employee Manual. Children and parent policies and procedures should be reviewed by reviewing the Parent Handbook that is given to each parent utilizing the services of Safari. These policies and procedures are essential to the safe operation of Safari and should be read carefully and kept for future reference. Safari complies with all State Licensing codes.

As a matter of policy, Safari does not enter into a written or oral contract or agreements guarantying employment or compensation for any period with any individual employees. No employee is authorized to make guarantees of employment or salary. Employment with Safari is at-will. That is, employment may be terminated with or without cause at any time by the employee or by Safari. **Nothing in the Employee Handbook or any other document or statement shall limit the right to terminate employment-at-will.** No express or implied agreement to the contrary may be made unless it is made by the authority of the Owner/Program Director, and only if the Director does so in a formal written document that is signed by the administrator and employee.



***Recording Time Worked***

Employees are required to record their hours each workday on using their cellular device through Brightwheel. Your work hours should be reflective of your scheduled hours. Timecards are reviewed by the Owner/Program Director every Monday. Any mistakes noted on the timecard, payroll, or other items related to pay should be immediately brought to the attention of the Owner/Program Director.

Copies of the Federal and State W-4 forms and Employment Eligibility forms will be kept in the personnel files. It is the employee's responsibility to update W-4 forms as needed.

The employee who falsifies payroll records in any manner will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Staff is always expected to maintain appropriate staff-to-child-ratios; this would justify working before or after scheduled hours.

***Overtime***

Safari pays overtime in accordance with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Overtime hours are paid at one and one half your regular hourly rate for all hours worked over 40 hours during a single week.

Vacation and sick days are not counted toward overtime hours.

***Absenteeism and Tardiness***

Safari values stability and consistency of quality childcare services provided by our employees, which relies on the staff adhering to their scheduled hours. Safari requires regular attendance of all employees. All time off must be approved by the Owner/Program Director. Unscheduled time off should be used only in cases of illness and emergency. We hold employees accountable for non-scheduled absences while at

the same time remain sensitive to the family, medical, and personal emergencies. Excessive unscheduled absences will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees who are unable to work a shift because of illness should notify the Owner/Program Director at least two hours before starting time if the employee is unable to report to work. Employees that are going to be late for work must inform the Program Director as soon as possible. If the Owner/Program Director is not immediately available they should call the center right away to notify a staff member of absence. The Owner/Program Director will follow up with the staff member as soon as he or she is available.

Employees will receive a notice indicating that you are late according to scheduled hours. Exceptions may be granted due to actions beyond the employee's control, such as inclement weather or an emergency. If an employee is off work because of illness, employee is required to bring in a release from a health care professional certifying that the employee can return to work. Two consecutive days of unauthorized or unreported absence is considered a voluntary resignation by the employee.

Any employee exhibiting evidence of an infectious disease (rash, fever, etc.) will, at the discretion of the Owner/Program Director, be required to submit to a medical evaluation to determine if a communicable disease condition exists which threatens the health or well-being of the children or other staff. The affected employee will be required to furnish a statement from a licensed health professional attesting to freedom from a communicable disease before being allowed to return to work.

***Meals***

Staff will eat Safari prepared meals with a group of children when working during breakfast, lunch, or snack.

Mealtimes are considered a teachable time, and staff is expected to sit, assist, and participate in an appropriate manner. Dietary restrictions/substitutions will be taken into consideration as per physician's recommendations and upon preauthorization from the administration.

Food from outside sources is allowed only during employee break times and must be out of sight of children.

Considerations must be given to all children and all allergy situations. Meal size will always be considered upon the Children's portions first.

**Break Periods**

A break period is a privilege, not a right. It is intended to provide a brief break in the scheduled workday. The break is a non-productive paid time and shall be limited to a 15-minute break for every four hours worked as business need allows. If your shift starts after 12pm (Noon), you will not be granted a break. If essential to provide service or meet licensing requirements, the Owner/Program Director may withdraw the break. Employees should not leave the premises during their breaks unless business need allows. If it is necessary to leave, employees must clock out if departing the premises for more than 15 minutes and this must be discussed with the Owner/Director, before doing so.

**Scheduled Hours**

Schedules will be made in accordance with meeting licensing requirements in the room. When child ratios decrease, staff will end shift. Employees are not to clock in any more than 15 minutes prior to their shift. The Owner/Program Director will follow shift times strictly and will adjust where needed. We will not hire employees to work specific days; they should expect to work the days assigned by the Owner/Program Director as needed. Employees may be employed in a room; however, they should be aware that they will be trained for more than one room and will be expected to work in other rooms as needed.

Work schedules will be done weekly and will be posted before the beginning of the week on Facebook messenger and a copy printed for each room. Employees are expected to work the hours assigned. Personal and PTO requests must be submitted by each Tuesday at 9am prior to the schedule being posted. Hour of work/shifts may be adjusted periodically in response to enrollment changes and to meet mandated staff/child ratios.

**Schedule Requests**

Staff are allowed 2 requests per week. The first two staff to request on a given day, will be granted their time off based on scheduling availability and importance of request. If we are risking running short staffed, the requests will be denied. Safari needs to ensure they are fully staffed to meet the state child to staff ratio guidelines.

**Pay Periods**

The pay periods for employees of Safari consist of 7 consecutive calendar days. Paychecks will be completed by the Owner/Program Director for distribution to employees on the Friday following the end of the pay period by 5:30 PM. Deductions will be made for State and Federal income taxes, Social Security, and Medicare. Any other deductions must be discussed the Owner/Program Director.

Employees must have a savings account or a checking account as Safari uses on-line banking to distribute funds. Employees will have their own on-line pay hub through Intuit Payroll. All of your past paystubs and hours will be found here there as well.

**Wage/Salary Structure**

Starting salary for all employees is determined on Safaris base rate at the given time of hire. Movement within the salary structure will be determined based on years of service, Job Title, and maintaining acceptable performance standards to be determined by the successful completion of the 2 performance evaluations per year for the QRS.

## **ORIENTATION, INSERVICE, AND TRAINING**

### ***Probationary and In-Service Period***

The orientation period provides the Safari a period to evaluate the qualifications of a new employee during the first three months of service. New Staff will be given a tour of the facility and introduced to key personnel. New staff will be assisted with meeting children, families, and co-workers during the orientation period. Complete orientation to policies, procedures, childcare, and safety will be provided for you during your first three months of employment. The orientation for new staff will include observations in the classroom and meeting families/coworkers before assuming responsibilities. The employee will be required to complete the "new hire" packet of forms before the first day of employment. These forms will be kept in the employee's personnel file. You will be offered certification in CPR/AED/First Aid, Mandatory Reporter, Universal Precautions, and Child Abuse, Civil Rights, and Neglect Training through Safari. These classes are a mandatory requirement for the job. You may choose to obtain this training at your expense outside Safari's training. PBIS, Safe Sleep, any childcare conferences, and or training maybe comped at the time of training but are not mandatory.

The orientation of new staff to be completed within one week of working with children

1. Policies included in Safari Parent Handbook and Employee Handbook.
2. Review of contingency plans including fire and tornado evacuation plans and the operation of fire extinguishers
3. Reviewing each rooms daily schedule routine
4. The methods for ensuring that all childcare workers know the children assigned to their care and their whereabouts at all times including during center-provided transportation
5. Procedure for sharing information related to a child's special health care needs including any physical, emotional, social, or cognitive disabilities with any childcare worker who may be assigned to care for that child

The procedure to contact a parent if a child is absent from the center without prior notification from the parent

### ***Continuing Education***

All staff are required to be certified in CPR and First Aid. Staff will receive training in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS), and Child Abuse/Neglect (CAN). All Safari staff are also required to obtain 15 hours annually of continuing education through classes, seminars, workshops, conferences, and other related early childhood events. Monthly staff meetings are mandatory and are held every third Tuesday of each month. Continuing education hours that are obtained through credit courses resulting in transcripts may be used to meet the continuing education requirement during the year in which the hours are earned and for the two years following the year. Safari may provide continuing education hours during the mandatory monthly staff meetings. New staff are encouraged to obtain an equivalent of approximately 3 hours per each month of employment in their first year of work.

### ***Tuition Reimbursement Policy***

The **TEACH** Scholarship program provides eligible employees with the opportunity to obtain, maintain, or improve job-related or career-related capabilities through participation in academic courses of study at Iowa accredited colleges and universities. Employees must provide a copy of their receipts and final grades each semester. Successful completion requires a grade of "C" or above. Safari reserves the right to accept/reject the scholarship model. Employees who receive a TEACH Scholarship will be required to work for Safari for one year after their completed course.

Safari tuition reimbursement program covers the cost of tuition only. Employees enrolled in an approved application will be reimbursed ½ the tuition paid by the employee for education up to \$1,000 per calendar year in tuition reimbursement. An employee may receive up to an \$8,000 lifetime maximum of tuition reimbursement. The request for tuition reimbursement must be submitted to the Administrator/Program Director prior to the class start. Reimbursement will occur after successful completion of the course. Employees must provide a copy of their receipt and final grades. Successful completion requires a grade of "C" or above.

### ***Tuition Reimbursement – Default Policy***

Employees who do not work the minimum two-year requirement upon reimbursement will be responsible for repayment to Safari. Compensation will be subject to interest at 12% APR. Interest is calculated from the date participation in an educational program ceases, or employment is terminated, the repayment will begin immediately and is subject to collections.

### ***Staff Meetings and Training***

Staff meetings and training will be provided by Safari. All employees are required to attend. Staff meetings and training may be held within the facility or at another location and will be paid time depending on the educational budget. Attendance at such sessions is seen as an essential avenue for staff development and is mandatory unless excused for good cause by the Owner/Program Director. By which case, employees are available to participate remotely using skype or messenger.

Additional time may be added at the discretion of the Owner/Program Director. Any other additional time and training hours will be compensated at employee's current wage depending on the budget. Staff who miss training, and do not make up the missed time, will be subject to a verbal warning. All pieces of training must be pre-approved by the Owner/Program Director.

### ***Performance Management and Evaluation***

Employees receive their first performance evaluation at the end of a three-month orientation period. They will receive a second evaluation at 6 months and then at one year. Thereafter, your performance and salary will be reviewed twice each year using The Safari Annual Employee Review tool. Employees will meet with the Owner/Program Director to review and sign your Performance Evaluation, which becomes a permanent part of your personnel file. Safari reserves the right to terminate your employment at any time.

## **NEW HIRE REQUIREMENTS – PERSONNEL FILE**

### ***Staff Record***

The employee's name, address, date of birth, education, position, previous work experience in childcare including the reason for leaving previous positions, and the name, address, and telephone numbers of persons to be notified in an emergency.

### ***Employment Eligibility Verification***

Federal law mandates all persons hired must be able to verify their eligibility for employment in the United States. Section I of the Employment Eligibility form must be completed by the employee and the manager within 72 hours (3 days) of the date of hire.

### ***Criminal Background Check***

An Iowa State background check is completed prior to the employee's first day of employment and annually thereafter, that does not reveal any information which may preclude the person's employment. Before the employer completes any background checks, the employee MUST sign authorization to do so. A complete caregiver background check including the results of any subsequent investigation related to information obtained as part of the background check within 60 days of employment. Staff must always be supervised until a background check is completed. Fingerprint checks are required by State Licensing for all childcare employees and will be completed in accordance with the law. Child Care workers must obtain a fingerprint background check through the Dickinson County Jailer and return to Safari.

### ***Physical Examination Report (State Mandatory Form)***

All employees must have a physical examination six months prior to beginning work or within 30 days of hire. The report dated and signed by a licensed health professional, shall be on file in the center and certify that:

- The person is free from illness detrimental to children.

- The person is physically able to work with young children.

### ***The Registry Certificate***

Documenting that the person has met the educational qualifications for the position if the person has worked as a teacher, director, or administrator at the center for at least three months. A copy of an educator's license issued by the department of public instruction as a teacher may substitute for a certificate from the Registry. For persons not required to have a Registry certificate including assistant teachers and a teacher, center director, or administrator who has not worked for the center for more than three months, documentation of the person's educational qualifications shall be on file.

### ***Change in Personnel Records***

It is vital that you report any changes in the information that was originally given on your application, such as change of address, telephone number, marital status, change in the number of dependents, etc. Employees must notify the Owner/Program Director immediately. Pending charges, investigations, findings, etc. must be reported to DCF by the Department's next business day. Notification is required when any of the following occur:

- The person has been convicted of any crime.
- The person has been or is being investigated by any governmental agency for any other act, offense, or omission, including an investigation related to the abuse or neglect, or threat of abuse or neglect, to a child or other client, or an investigation related to misappropriation of a client's property.
- The person has an official finding substantiated against them of abuse or neglect of a client or of misappropriation of a client's property.
- In the case of a position for which the person must be credentialed by the department of regulations and licensing, the person has been denied a license, or the person's license has been restricted or otherwise

## **RULES OF CONDUCT / COMPLAINT RESOLUTION**

### ***Disciplinary Policy and Procedure***

When an employee disregards the rules established by Safari or conducts herself/himself in a manner which is deemed unacceptable, the first approach (when practical) will be that of guidance. Counseling by the Owner/Program Director is intended to assist you in the correction of your conduct. Safari Director will be notified of all disciplinary actions. All matters of disciplinary procedures are done in private.

#### **Policy Stages:**

**The stages that may be followed when discipline is deemed necessary include the following:**

- 1. Verbal Warning**
- 2. Written Warning/Corrective actions & Counseling**
- 3. Probation, Indefinite suspension, Demotion**
- 4. Termination**

The nature of the offense must be explained to the employee from the beginning of the procedure. The verbal warning may take the form of a simple oral reprimand but also a full discussion if that is necessary.

The employee must read and sign the written warning and indefinite suspension or demotion. These documents include the time limit in which an employee must correct their conduct before we take further disciplinary action.

**Performance Issues:** Disciplinary procedure starts at stage, 1, and 2: The following scenarios indicate where the disciplinary procedure starts depending on the violation: It includes but is not limited to:

- Failure to meet performance objectives
- Attendance issues
- Rude behavior to families, staff and or children

Further stages may also take place, per the Director, Owner and or On-Site supervisor, depending on the severity of the action.

**Severe offensive behavior/Felony:** Disciplinary procedure starts at stage 3 and 4. The following scenarios indicate where the disciplinary procedure starts depending on the violation: It includes but is not limited to:

- Breach of employment agreement/contract
- Harassment/Voluntary discrimination
- Workplace Violence
- Substance Abuse

Owner/Program Director may choose to repeat stages of our disciplinary procedure as appropriate. This decision depends on employee's reaction to our disciplinary procedure, whether they repent their behavior and the nature of their offense.

Our disciplinary procedure begins when there is sufficient evidence to justify it. When there is suspicion or hints of misconduct, Owner or Program Director must investigate the matter first.

Owner/Program Director should document every stage of our disciplinary procedure. If appropriate, include necessary information like evidence, documentation to staff file, testimonies and employee's progress or improvement. We are obliged to refrain from disciplinary actions that may constitute retaliatory behavior. A no retaliation company policy will be always effective to ensure there is no misuse of our disciplinary procedure. We have the right to modify this policy or act in any other legal or reasonable way as each case demands. But we will always enforce discipline in a fair and lawful manner.

These steps are meant to establish consistent guidelines to consider in conjunction with the severity of the offenses and the employee's personnel and performance records when administering discipline. We are not required to go through the entire four-step process, and discipline may begin or continue at any step, depending on the severity of the infraction. The nature and severity of any violation can be of such a degree as determined by management to eliminate all steps and discharge immediately. An employee may be subject to discipline or discharge for any reason, whether or not set forth in this Handbook. In all cases, determination of appropriate discipline, including release, rests solely in the discretion of the employer and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. All steps are documented in writing regardless of the phase of the process.

### ***Complaint Resolution / Grievance Policy***

The Owner/Program Director of Safari will do its best to make your employment a good experience. If for any reason, you are unhappy or dissatisfied with the work, work conditions, or management policies, you should contact the Owner/Program Director to discuss the problem. If no satisfactory solution can be reached, the administrator shall be advised of the situation for resolution. Safari Child Care & Preschool recognizes that grievances may arise in the normal course of employment and are fully committed to ensuring that any such issues that arise can be discussed openly and dealt with satisfactorily and promptly. This policy provides a mechanism for you to raise a grievance relating to your employment. This may be about your job, your working conditions, training, etc.

All employees are encouraged to raise issues informally in the ordinary course of their work with their immediate co-workers. This should be done as problems arise and are usually the most effective way to resolve matters speedily. When a problem or issue arises that cannot be dealt with in this manner; the formal grievance procedure may be invoked.

If you are not happy with the response received through the informal stage or wish to raise a grievance formally in the first instance, you should raise the issue in writing with the administrator/director. This should clearly set out the nature of the claim and make it clear that the formal grievance procedure is being invoked. A Conflict Resolution Worksheet and/or an Employee Deficiency Report are available upon request.

A meeting will be arranged with you to discuss the grievance. If necessary, more than one session will be held. A decision on the claim will be confirmed in writing within ten working days of the grievance meeting being held. If you are not happy with the outcome after this process, you may appeal the decision in writing to the administrator. The decision at this stage will be final.

All grievances will be dealt with in a confidential manner, and no employee will be penalized for raising an objection in good faith. All meetings and outcomes will be documented, and a copy given to you. A copy will be placed on your personnel file.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

### ***Educational and Quality Improvements***

The following employee benefits will be hosted by Safari in a timely manner to meet licensing regulations and quality improvement standards at no cost to the employee. The employee may choose to obtain certification/training separate from the center's designated opportunity at their own expense. Reimbursement of training costs must be approved prior to any training and must present a certificate of completion and receipt. These Trainings must be completed before receiving PTO

- Essentials Training (Required by the State of Iowa)
- Universal Precautions
- New Staff Orientation
- QRS Forms
- Mandatory Reporter Training
- CPR/AED/First Aid Training

### ***PTO***

#### **Scheduling:**

Safari's goal is to provide time for personal rejuvenation and to reduce unscheduled absences while providing reasonable accommodation to all staff members without impacting the employee's compensation. Guidelines are subject to change at any time at the Owner or Directors discretion.

- Staff are ONLY allowed 2 shift requests per week. Any more than that must be approved by the Owner or Director.
- Extended to all fulltime staff members, year-round, and is designed to provide employees with the opportunity to balance their work and personal lives.
  - Fulltime staff need to work an average of 32 hours or more per week, 250 or more days per year.
- PTO days will be paid as used, at employee's current rate of pay and based on employee's regular work schedule. PTO will not be considered as time worked for purposes of calculating overtime.
- PTO starts over January 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year

#### ***PTO Eligibility***

- Staff regularly scheduled/working an average of 32 hours or more per week and 250 or more days per year, with CURRENT CPR/First Aid, Mandatory Reporter, Universal Precautions, New Staff Orientation, and Essentials, qualify to receive and use PTO.
  - MUST be employed for 1 year, before granting any PTO. After 1 year of employment, PTO is granted yearly, please see table below for breakdown.
- PTO does not roll over.
- Staff may utilize 3 days per year of PTO for last minute illness or bereavement leave.
  - Staff will NOT be required to request this in advance but will need to notify Owner or Director prior to the following pay period, that you want to utilize PTO.
  - Staff must be CURRENT on CPR/First Aid, Mandatory Reporter, Universal Precautions, New Staff Orientation, and Essentials, before using PTO.

Breakdown by Years worked	PTO Hours Granted
1 Year	68 hrs
2 Years	108 hrs
3 Years	148 hrs
4 Years	188 hrs

### **Attendance Bonus**

- Qualifying staff= ALL staff
- Staff that have perfect attendance, (no call ins, no tardiness, unexcused absences, no call no show) in 12-week increments, will be able to receive a paid day off OR, received a \$50 bonus. These do not accrue.
- It's staff's responsibility to keep track of your 12 weeks. Admin will keep track of attendance discrepancies.
- Staff have 30 days from each 12-week marker, to notify admin of either a paid day off request OR \$50 bonus.
- The request will ONLY be granted within the 30-day time frame of 12 week marker.
- If staff choose a bonus, the bonus will be paid out the following pay period of the 12-week marker.
- Staff here for 1 year +, may ONLY utilize \$50 bonus every 12 weeks, per the attendance guidelines listed above, as they have PTO granted after 1 year.
- It's staff's responsibility to keep track of their 12 weeks. Admin will keep track of attendance discrepancies.

### **Requesting PTO**

- Requests should be submitted via the office door calendar, to the owner or Director, 1 week prior to requested time off dates by 9am on Tuesdays of each week, NO LATER!!
- Staff need to write the date next to their name, on the day their request is being made.
- PTO may NOT be requested in half day increments
- PTO may be requested up to a maximum of five consecutive days off at one time, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Owner or Director.
- Staff may NOT make requests on Monday from August 1-May 31, during the school year, as we have preschool aged students attending on Mondays, unless approved with the Owner or Director.
- Only two staff requests will be granted in a given day, as business need allows.

### **Blackout Periods**

Safari reserves the right to identify "blackout periods" where vacation requests will NOT be approved. Standard blackout periods include: Mandatory staff trainings, Non-School Days, Mondays (While school is in session), picture day, the week before school starts, and the first day of school. Such blackout periods shall be communicated verbally to the staff by the Owner or Director. In the event that a "black out period" must be added to the calendar, at least 30 calendar days written notice to staff, shall be given prior to the implementation of said black out period.

### **Separation of Employment**

Vacation time is a vested benefit. Upon separation of employment, employees will NOT be paid for any unused vacation days that have previously not been used. Staff may NOT put in a 2 week notice and utilize PTO within that 2-week time frame.



## **EMPLOYMENT RESIGNATION**

Employees must give a two-week written notice when voluntarily terminating their employment with Safari. The two-week period of notice must be a working notice (vacation and personal days will not be permissible). The two-week notice will begin on the date the Owner or Program Director receives the written notice directly from the employee. Employees who voluntarily terminate their employment with Safari within the first six months of employment will be required to reimburse the center for the training and development costs, as outlined in the Pre-employment Agreement signed by new employees. The amount will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck. Any outstanding balance will be the responsibility of the account holder and may be subject to a weekly late fee charge of \$25.00 and collections.

SAFARI CHILD CARE & PRESCHOOL

**Employee Acknowledgment Form**

Welcome to the Safari Child Care Center. We are pleased that you have chosen to work with us and hope that your association with Safari will be a long and mutually rewarding experience. You and your work are very important to accomplish the mission of Safari – to provide quality childcare for Milford and the surrounding communities. Your contribution is essential to our success.

Safari is committed to providing a working environment that treats its employees with courtesy, respect, and dignity. In return, it is expected that employees exercise the same towards the children, parents, other employees, and administration.

Safari strives to make your orientation & employment experience pleasant, informative, and comfortable. You can look forward to the following information when you join our team at Safari.

- Review Mission, philosophy, and history of the program
- Job Description
- Organizational outline of the team
- Personnel policies
- Parent Handbook
- Employment Forms
- Licensing & Regulatory Standards
- Tour of the Facility
- Meeting children, families, and co-workers
- Observation in classroom

I acknowledge that I have received the Employee Handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and understand the policies contained in the Handbook and any revisions made to it. I further acknowledge that the Handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document. The Handbook describes important information about Safari. I understand that I should consult a designated representative of the Board of Directors about any questions not answered in the Handbook. I have entered into my employment relationship with Safari voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment. Accordingly, either Safari or I may terminate the relationship at-will, with or without cause, at any time. I acknowledge that the information, policies, and benefits described in the Handbook are subject to

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Must be signed and placed in employee file – REQUIRED Document



