

Employee Handbook



Effective as of August 1, 2021

Silver SPRUCE Academy, Inc.

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970-500-5657

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Section 1 – Welcome

1.1 History, Goals & Culture

Silver SPRUCE Academy, Inc. (further referred to as SPRUCE) formed in 2013 to offer classes, tutoring, testing, and other services or resources to K-12 individualized curriculum education students and parents. SPRUCE was established after overseeing 8 years of increased demand for supplemental services in similar programs, establishing a 5-month co-op under the fiscal agent Skills for Living and Learning, and contracting with area libraries and additional educational organizations to meet the student needs. SPRUCE predominantly offers shared school enrichment courses to school choice students.

The **MISSION** of the nonprofit Silver SPRUCE Academy, Inc. is to provide educational enrichment programs and courses to students and families throughout the Four Corners area, in collaboration with other educational organizations.

The VALUE STATEMENT

Connecting people through enhanced educational choices in
Supplemental
Programs and
Resources
Utilized in
Curriculum
Education

1.2 Purpose of this Handbook

The SPRUCE Employee Handbook has been developed to provide general guidelines about SPRUCE policies and procedures for employees. It is a guide to assist you in becoming familiar with some of the privileges and obligations of your employment, including SPRUCE's Policy of voluntary at-will employment. None of the policies or guidelines in the Handbook are intended to give rise to contractual rights or obligations, or to be construed as a guarantee of employment for any specific period, or any specific type of work. Additionally, with the exception of the voluntary at-will employment policy, these guidelines are subject to modification, amendment or revocation by SPRUCE at any time, without advance notice. The personnel policies of SPRUCE are established by the Board of Directors, which has delegated authority and responsibility for their administration to the Executive Director. The Executive Director may in turn, delegate authority for administering specific policies. Employees are encouraged to consult the Executive Director for additional information regarding the policies, procedures, and privileges described in this Handbook. Questions about personnel matters also may be reviewed with the Executive Director. SPRUCE will provide each individual a copy of this Handbook upon employment. All employees are expected to abide by it. The highest standards of personal and professional ethics and behavior are expected of all SPRUCE employees. Further, SPRUCE expects each employee to display good judgment, diplomacy, and courtesy in their professional relationships with members of SPRUCE's Board of Directors, committees, membership, staff, and the public.

1.3 At-Will Employment

Employment is *at-will*, which means that either you or the Nonprofit may terminate employment at any time, for any reason, with or without notice. The policies and practices described in this employee manual are provided to you for guidance only, but do not constitute a contract of employment. Neither this handbook nor any other documents circulated to employees, nor any verbal representations constitute contracts. No supervisor or employee except the Executive Director has the authority to enter into an employment agreement, express or implied, with any employee concerning the employment relationship. These policies supersede any previous policies that may have been distributed previously. Your signature on the acknowledgement is a certification that you have received a copy of these policies as updated.

Section 2 – Workplace Commitments

2.1 Equal Opportunity Employment

SPRUCE is an equal opportunity employer and does not unlawfully discriminate against employees or applicants for employment based on an individual's race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status or any other status protected by applicable law. This policy applies to all terms, conditions and privileges of employment, including recruitment, hiring, placement, compensation, promotion, discipline and termination.

Whenever possible, SPRUCE makes reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities to the extent required by law. Employees who would like to request a reasonable accommodation should contact the Executive Director. Several laws enforced by the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission prohibit workplace discrimination. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires employers to provide, among other things, reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities unless to do so would cause an undue hardship to SPRUCE.

2.2 Harassment/Discrimination Policy

SPRUCE prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status or any other status protected by applicable law. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and is free from discriminatory practices, including, without limitation, harassment. Consistent with its workplace policy of equal employment opportunity, SPRUCE prohibits and will not tolerate harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status or any other status protected by applicable law. Violations of this policy will not be tolerated.

Discrimination includes, but is not limited to: making any employment decision or employment related action on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, disability, national origin, marital or veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable law.

Harassment is generally defined as unwelcome verbal or non-verbal conduct, based upon a person's protected characteristic, that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward the person because of the characteristic, and which affects the person's employment opportunities or benefits, has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the person's work performance, or has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets; slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation in the workplace of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group based on their protected characteristic.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include: unwelcome or unsolicited sexual advances; displaying sexually suggestive material; unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances or propositions; suggestive comments; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; sexually oriented jokes; crude or vulgar language or gestures; graphic or verbal commentaries about an individual's body; display or distribution of obscene materials; physical contact such as patting, pinching or brushing against someone's body; or physical assault of a sexual nature.

Reporting: Any SPRUCE employee who feels that he or she has been harassed or discriminated against, or has witnessed or become aware of discrimination or harassment in violation of these policies, should bring the matter to the Executive Director in written form. SPRUCE will promptly investigate all allegations of discrimination and harassment, and take action as appropriate based on the outcome of the investigation. An investigation and its results will be treated as confidential to the extent feasible, and SPRUCE will take appropriate action based on the outcome of the investigation.

No employee will be retaliated against for making a complaint in good faith regarding a violation of these policies, or for participating in good faith in an investigation pursuant to these policies. If an employee feels he/she has been retaliated against, the employee should file a complaint using the procedures set forth above.

2.3 Drug-Free / Alcohol-Free Environment

SPRUCE intends to help provide a safe and drug-free work environment for our participants, collaborating organizations, and our employees.

SPRUCE explicitly prohibits:

- The use, possession, solicitation for, or sale of narcotics or other illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription medication without a prescription on SPRUCE or collaborating organizations premises or while performing job duties.
- Being impaired or under the influence of legal or illegal drugs or alcohol away from SPRUCE or customer premises, if such impairment or influence adversely affects the

employee's work performance, the safety of the employee or of others, or puts at risk SPRUCE's reputation.

- Possession, use, solicitation for, or sale of legal or illegal drugs or alcohol away from SPRUCE or participants premises, if such activity or involvement adversely affects the employee's work performance, the safety of the employee or of others, or puts at risk SPRUCE's reputation.
- The presence of any detectable amount of prohibited substances in the employee's system while at work, while on the premises of SPRUCE or its participants, or while on SPRUCE business. "Prohibited substances" include illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs not taken in accordance with a prescription given to the employee. SPRUCE may conduct annual random drug and/or alcohol testing and under any of the following circumstances:
 - RANDOM TESTING: Employees may be selected at random for drug and/or alcohol testing at any interval determined by SPRUCE.
 - FOR-CAUSE TESTING: SPRUCE may ask an employee to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test at any time it feels that the employee may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, including, but not limited to, the following circumstances: evidence of drugs or alcohol on or about the employee's person or in the employee's vicinity, unusual conduct on the employee's part that suggests impairment or influence of drugs or alcohol, negative performance patterns, or excessive and unexplained absenteeism or tardiness.
 - POST-ACCIDENT TESTING: Any employee involved in an on-the-job accident or injury under circumstances that suggest possible use or influence of drugs or alcohol in the accident or injury event may be asked to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test. "Involved in an on-the-job accident or injury," means not only the one who was or could have been injured, but also any employee who potentially contributed to the accident or injury event in any way.

If an employee is tested for drugs or alcohol outside of the employment context and the results indicate a violation of this policy, or if an employee refuses a request to submit to testing under this policy, the employee may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and possibly including discharge from employment. In such a case, the employee will be given an opportunity to explain the circumstances prior to any final employment action becoming effective.

2.4 Open Door Policy

SPRUCE has an open-door policy and takes employee concerns and problems seriously. SPRUCE values each employee and strives to provide a positive work experience. Employees are encouraged to bring any workplace concerns or problems they might have or know about to the Executive Director or Executive Assistant in an appropriate manner and time.

Section 3 – SPRUCE Policies and Procedures

3.1 Professional Conduct/Ethics

SPRUCE expects its employees to adhere to a standard of professional conduct, integrity, and ethics. This ensures that the work environment is safe, comfortable and productive. Employees should be respectful, courteous, and mindful of other's feelings and needs. General cooperation between coworkers and supervisors is expected. Individuals who act in an unprofessional manner may be subject to disciplinary action.

- Listen to our stakeholders to make all reasonable efforts to satisfy their needs and concerns within the scope of our mission, to strive for excellence in innovation for demonstrating professional respect and responsiveness to constituents, donors and others.
- Make an effort to understand, respect and support our constituents from other cultures, exemplified by the contributions of our staff and executive leadership, and to contribute to the SPRUCE culture that respects the diverse, individual contributions of staff and leadership.
- Respect the confidentiality of sensitive information about SPRUCE, its participants, constituents, donors, board and employees.
- Comply with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and fiduciary responsibilities in an effort to create transparency in all of our operations.
- For the board of directors, provide credible and effective oversight to SPRUCE's work without personal bias.
- Not accept commissions, gifts, payments, loans, promises of future benefits or other items of value from anyone who has or may seek some benefit from SPRUCE in return, other than occasional gifts of nominal value that are in keeping with good business ethics.
- Abide by the governing documents and policies of SPRUCE
- Be accountable for adhering to this Code of Ethics.
- Implement and follow a Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Implement and follow a Whistleblower Policy.
- Act at all times in accordance with the highest ethical standards and in the best interest of SPRUCE, its participants, constituents, donors and reputation.
- Openly and honestly tell the truth.
- Honor commitments and promises to the best of our abilities.
- Appropriately acknowledge contributions from other individuals and organizations who help facilitate our goals.
- Not be deceptive in our fundraising activities or in prospecting for new members to join SPRUCE.
- Advocate for all nonprofit organizations, but not for any specific initiative - being respectful to the sector as a whole.
- Not lobby with the intent to influence individual candidates.

3.2 Dress Code

An employee's personal appearance and hygiene is a reflection on SPRUCE's character. Employees are expected to dress appropriately for their individual work responsibilities and position.

SPRUCE strives for professionalism in every aspect of its business. One very visible area is the personal appearance of all staff. Neatness, cleanliness and good personal health habits are very important to the success of SPRUCE. The impressions created by these factors all serve to create our image. Staff should always dress in a manner befitting the job, with due consideration to the needs of SPRUCE, other employees, students, and safety. If staff have questions as to what is appropriate or not, they are encouraged to consult with administration.

The staff is expected to demonstrate good taste and judgment in wearing business casual-appropriate clothing. Staff who appear for work inappropriately dressed will be directed to return home and return to work in proper attire. Under such circumstances, associates will not be

compensated for the time away from work. Administration is responsible for monitoring the dress code, and it is every associate's responsibility to follow and abide by it.

BUSINESS CASUAL DRESS CODE

For teachers in the classroom, different classes may require appropriate class specific dress. Teachers and staff are leaders for students who represent SPRUCE, and should dress accordingly. Guidelines as to what constitutes appropriate attire within SPRUCE are outlined below.

BUSINESS CASUAL—APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

- Casual pants/slacks, jeans provided they are in very good condition, without tears or holes, dress casual pants (khaki's, corduroy, business)
- Skirts/dresses/shorts: No shorter than 3" above the knee
- Capri/cropped pants of a dressier style
- Dress, denim, knit and sport shirts, blouses, sweaters, cardigans, dressy knit, polo, T-shirts with minimal writing, sweatshirts, ties, scarves
- Dress shoes, boots, tennis or athletic shoes, slip on shoes

BUSINESS CASUAL—INAPPROPRIATE ATTIRE

- Tank/tube/halter/midriff or any other revealing tops/dresses, undershirts
- Leggings and pants that are tight and form-fitting (unless worn with a skirt, dress, long shirt)
- Sweat pants and jogging/wind suits or pajama pants
- Mini or short skirts/jumpers/split skirts/dresses shorter than 3" above the knee
- Caps/hats (Occasionally for class specific activities)
- Clothing with inappropriate logos, crude slogans, tacky pictures or are in poor taste
- Clothing that is too revealing, tight, short, baggy or oversized
- Any clothing items which are torn, stained or in poor condition

OTHER

- Extreme hairstyles, clothing and/or jewelry that do not present a businesslike appearance
- Visible body piercings or art (i.e., facial and tongue piercings) other than pierced ears (moderate in number)
- Excessive cologne/perfume

Please be mindful that you are working with children as a leader and role model. SPRUCE may require a more specific dress code as appropriate (e.g., seminars, open house, professional development, community events, etc.).

3.3 Payday

Paychecks (or electronic deposits) are distributed every 5th and 20th of the month. If the pay date lands on a holiday, paychecks will be distributed on the closest business day before the holiday. The paycheck will reflect work performed for the 1st-15th and 16th-end of month period. Paychecks include salary or wages earned less any mandatory or elected deductions. Mandatory deductions include federal or state withholding tax, and other withholdings. Elected deductions are deductions authorized by the employee, and may include, for example, contributions to benefit plans. Employees may contact the Executive Assistant to obtain the necessary authorization forms for

requesting additional deductions from their paychecks. Notify the Executive Assistant if the direct deposit paycheck appears to be inaccurate. Advances on paychecks are not permitted. Information regarding final paychecks can be found under the termination section of this handbook. Paychecks will not be processed without submitting an approved SPRUCE time sheet signed by the employee.

Any change in name, address, telephone number, marital status or number of exemptions claimed by an employee must be reported to the Executive Assistant immediately.

3.4 SPRUCE Property

SPRUCE property, such as equipment, vehicles, telephones, computers, and software, is not for private use. These devices are to be used strictly for SPRUCE business, and are not permitted off grounds unless authorized. SPRUCE property must be used in the manner for which it was intended. Upon termination, employees are required to surrender any SPRUCE property they possess. SPRUCE computers, internet and emails are a privileged resource, and must be used only to complete essential job-related functions. Employees are not permitted to download any “pirated” software, files or programs and must receive permission from a supervisor before installing any new software on a SPRUCE computer. Files or programs stored on SPRUCE computers may not be copied for personal use.

School keys are the property of SPRUCE and are loaned to staff members for their use during school assignments. The distribution of master keys is limited to the Executive Director. It is illegal for keys to be duplicated under any circumstances. At the close of each academic year or when an employee will no longer be assigned to the school, keys previously issued shall be returned.

- Keys will be issued/renewed to staff members at the start of each academic year.
- Staff members are totally responsible for the security of their keys.
- Students are not allowed to use staff member’s keys.
- Keys are not to be left in desk drawers or in the open.
- In case of loss of keys, staff members are to immediately notify the Executive Assistant
- Lost keys will be replaced/rekeyed at employee expense.
- All keys will be collected at the end of the academic year and checked for discrepancies against records of keys that were issued at the beginning of academic year.
- All staff is reminded of the importance of maximum security for school keys at all times.
The security of school and personal materials depends on the care that each staff member gives to the safeguarding of his or her keys.

SPRUCE requests that employees not receive personal calls while in class with students or that interfere with work responsibilities. If urgent, please keep personal calls to a minimum and conversations brief. Personal and work technology devices should be used minimally for activities that do not relate directly to student instruction, especially during class time.

Employees are reminded that they should have no expectation of privacy in their use of SPRUCE computers or other electronic equipment. Violations of these policies could result in disciplinary action.

SPRUCE's laptop computers are the legal property of the Silver SPRUCE Academy, Inc. and are provided to employees for use both on and off school grounds in order to enhance, enrich, and facilitate teaching and learning, administrative duties, school communications, as well as, achieving SPRUCE's goals, purposes, and mission. Laptop computers are to be used for school-related business, curriculum enhancement, research, communications and other instructional purposes. Internet activities must be consistent with this purpose. Brief and occasional personal use of the electronic mail system or the internet is acceptable as long as it is not excessive or inappropriate, occurs during personal time (lunch or other breaks), and does not result in expense or harm to SPRUCE or otherwise violate this policy.

All SPRUCE resources that are issued to employees, all documents, email communication or data stored on the devices is subject to public record and therefore not private. This includes computers, files (current or deleted), portable media, portable storage devices, mobile devices, the Internet and email (including attachments).

The terms of use are listed below:

- The laptop computer is property of SPRUCE and issued to employees for conducting school business. It is intended only for the use of the SPRUCE employee to whom it is assigned. SPRUCE must maintain a record of changes to an employee's computer and email passwords.
- The laptop computer must be at school during regularly scheduled workdays in order to receive administrative communications, upgrades to anti-virus and other software, to take daily attendance and other requirements of the student management system. The laptop **MUST** be with you in all professional development classes/settings.
- The employee may take the laptop computer home or to other locations after school hours, and is responsible for the safety and care of the device.
- The employee is responsible, at all times, for the care, appropriate use, and damages incurred to the laptop computer beyond normal wear and tear. A SPRUCE Administrator will determine whether assessed damages are normal wear and tear vs. negligent/inappropriate use. If it is determined that the damage is due to negligence, the cost for repair and/or replacement will be relayed to the employee. The cost can be withheld from the paycheck of the employee as deemed necessary.
- Each laptop computer allows you to store data locally; however, we encourage you to use other tools provided with cloud-based storage such as Google Drive and Backblaze. A SPRUCE Administrator will provide direction for proper backup protocol.
- The laptop computer must be returned to SPRUCE when necessary to receive upgrades. Staff will be notified when this becomes necessary.
- All users of the computer must adhere to SPRUCE's internet and Computer Use Policy.
- If the employee leaves the employment of SPRUCE, it is the employee's responsibility to return all equipment to SPRUCE Administrator prior to your last day of employment.
- SPRUCE is not responsible for any service interruption or loss of data.
- Any unauthorized use or installation of software may result in loss of laptop privileges and possible disciplinary action.
- Antivirus software has been installed and configured for the laptop. It is the borrower's responsibility to run regular Windows, antivirus and Malware scans and updates as recommended by Administration.
- Consent from SPRUCE is required to adjust or alter the laptop by the addition or deletion of any hardware or software.

- The user will keep the laptop in good working order and will notify SPRUCE of any defect or malfunction during use. Some repairs / issues may not be repairable and require replacement.
- The user is responsible for the confidentiality and security of identifiable student information or other sensitive data on the laptop.
- The laptop should always be used by or under the supervision of the employee to whom it has been issued. The user agrees to not allow the laptop to be used by an unknown or unauthorized person and assumes responsibility for the actions of others while using the laptop.
- The user is permitted to use the laptop on a wireless network outside SPRUCE as long as it does not require the installation of any additional firewall software or change of any network configurations.
- The user is responsible for the security and care of the laptop. (Laptop User Guidelines Below)
- If the laptop is lost, stolen, or damaged while on or off school property, the incident **MUST** be reported within 24 hours to SPRUCE Administrator, and local police.
- The user **MUST** return the laptop, including accessories upon employment termination, transfer out of a position that no longer requires a laptop, periods when employee is not actively working, or retirement in accordance with SPRUCE's exit procedures.

Laptop User Guidelines

It is the employee's responsibility to keep their assigned laptop secure and protected at all times. Due care should be taken in the handling, transporting and usage of the laptop. Improper use or not being aware of safety issues can cause the laptop irreparable damage.

The following suggestions include:

- Use protected storage bags or carrying cases specifically designed for laptops.
- Lock laptops in cabinets or desks where and when necessary.
- Secure the laptop if you are temporarily leaving it unattended.
- Avoid creating a trip hazard when plugging in the laptop for power.
- Use car trunks or other means to keep laptop out of plain view and keep vehicle doors locked; however, be aware that extreme (hot or cold) temperatures in an enclosed vehicle will harm the laptop. Keep out of direct sunlight.
- Do not drop the laptop or allow it to fall.
- Do not leave the A/C adapter behind when moving the laptop.
- Keep drinks, food, lotion and other harmful materials away from the laptop.
- Make sure that before you put your laptop into its carrying bag, it is shut down.
- Inspect and clean the air vents in your laptop as part of your weekly routine.
- Operate your laptop on a hard surface preferably one that allows ventilation.
- Unplug any accessories whenever your laptop is not in use, even for short periods, as it uses power unnecessarily and can cause overheating.
- If your internet is delivered through DSL, cable or satellite, verify that your internet service provider (ISP) provides firewall protection.

RETURN POLICY

Upon expiration of the term of this Agreement, the User shall return the computer, all related equipment and all software to SPRUCE. A SPRUCE Administrator shall promptly check in all equipment. If the User does not turn in the Laptop by the appointed date, the User's paycheck or any monies owed to SPRUCE by the user, may be withheld until all equipment is returned.

SPRUCE provides technology, networks and internet services for the specific and limited purpose of achieving SPRUCE's goals and accomplishing its purposes and mission. Brief and occasional personal use of the electronic mail system or the Internet is acceptable as long as it is not excessive or inappropriate, occurs during personal time (lunch or other breaks), and does not result in expense or harm to SPRUCE or otherwise violate this policy.

Use is defined as "excessive" if it interferes with normal job functions, responsiveness, or the ability to perform daily job activities. Electronic communication should not be used to solicit or sell products or services that are unrelated to SPRUCE's business; distract, intimidate, or harass coworkers or third parties; or disrupt the workplace.

Use of SPRUCE computers, networks, and internet access is a privilege granted by management and may be revoked at any time for inappropriate conduct carried out on such systems, including, but not limited to:

- Sending chain letters or participating in any way in the creation or transmission of unsolicited commercial e-mail ("spam") that is unrelated to legitimate SPRUCE's purposes;
- Engaging in private or personal business activities, including excessive use of instant messaging and chat rooms (see below);
- Accessing networks, servers, drives, folders, or files to which the employee has not been granted access or authorization from someone with the right to make such a grant;
- Making unauthorized copies of SPRUCE's files or other SPRUCE data;
- Destroying, deleting, erasing, or concealing SPRUCE's files or other SPRUCE data, or otherwise making such files or data unavailable or inaccessible to SPRUCE or to other authorized users of SPRUCE systems;
- Misrepresenting oneself or SPRUCE;
- Violating the laws and regulations of the United States or any other nation or any state, city, province, or other local jurisdiction in any way;
- Engaging in unlawful or malicious activities;
- Deliberately propagating any virus, worm, Trojan horse, trap-door program code, or other code or file designed to disrupt, disable, impair, or otherwise harm either SPRUCE's networks or systems or those of any other individual or entity;
- Using abusive, profane, threatening, racist, sexist, or otherwise objectionable language in either public or private messages;
- Becoming involved in partisan politics;
- Causing congestion, disruption, disablement, alteration, or impairment of SPRUCE networks or systems;
- Maintaining, organizing, or participating in non-work-related Web logs ("blogs"), Web journals, "chat rooms", or private/personal/instant messaging;
- Failing to log off any secure, controlled-access computer or other form of electronic data system to which you are assigned, if you leave such computer or system unattended;
- Using recreational games;

- Defeating or attempting to defeat security restrictions on SPRUCE systems and applications;
- Employees are not to disclose confidential information to unauthorized individuals.

Using SPRUCE internet systems to access, create, view, transmit, or receive racist, sexist, threatening, or otherwise objectionable or illegal material, defined as any visual, textual, or auditory entity, file, or data, is strictly prohibited. Such material violates SPRUCE anti-harassment policies and subjects the responsible employee to disciplinary action. SPRUCE's electronic mail system, internet access, and computer systems must not be used to harm others or to violate the laws and regulations of the United States or any other nation or any state, city, province, or other local jurisdiction in any way. Use of SPRUCE resources for illegal activity can lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal and criminal prosecution. SPRUCE will comply with reasonable requests from law enforcement and regulatory agencies for logs, diaries, archives, or files on individual internet activities, e-mail use, and/or computer use. If you violate these policies, you could be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Ownership and Access of Electronic Mail, Internet Access, and Computer Files; No Expectation of Privacy

SPRUCE owns the rights to all data and files in any computer, network, or other information system used in SPRUCE and to all data and files sent or received using any SPRUCE system or using SPRUCE's access to any computer network, to the extent that such rights are not superseded by applicable laws relating to intellectual property. SPRUCE also reserves the right to monitor electronic mail messages (including personal/private/instant messaging systems) and their content, as well as any and all use by employees of the internet and of computer equipment used to create, view, or access e-mail and internet content. Employees must be aware that the electronic mail messages sent and received using SPRUCE equipment or SPRUCE-provided internet access, including web-based messaging systems used with such systems or access, are not private and are subject to viewing, downloading, inspection, release, and archiving by SPRUCE officials at all times. SPRUCE has the right to inspect all files stored in private areas of the network or on individual computers or storage media in order to assure compliance with SPRUCE policies and state and federal laws. No employee may access another employee's computer, computer files, or electronic mail messages without prior authorization from either the employee or an appropriate SPRUCE official.

Confidentiality of Electronic Mail

As noted above, electronic mail is subject at all times to monitoring, and the release of specific information is subject to applicable state and federal laws and SPRUCE rules, policies, and procedures on confidentiality. Existing rules, policies, and procedures governing the sharing of confidential information also apply to the sharing of information via commercial software. Since there is the possibility that any message could be shared with or without your permission or knowledge, the best rule to follow in the use of electronic mail for non-work-related information is to decide if you would post the information on the office bulletin board with your signature.

It is a violation of SPRUCE policy for any employee, including system administrators and supervisors, to access electronic mail and computer systems files to satisfy curiosity about the

affairs of others, unless such access is directly related to that employee's job duties. Employees found to have engaged in such activities will be subject to disciplinary action.

Electronic Mail Tampering

Electronic mail messages received should not be altered without the sender's permission; nor should electronic mail be altered and forwarded to another user and/or unauthorized attachments be placed on another's electronic mail message.

Policy Statement for Internet/Intranet Browser(s)

The internet is to be used to further SPRUCE's mission, to provide effective service of the highest quality to SPRUCE's customers and staff, and to support other direct job-related purposes. Supervisors should work with employees to determine the appropriateness of using the internet for professional activities and career development. The various modes of internet/intranet access are SPRUCE resources and are provided as business tools to employees who may use them for research, professional development, and work-related communications. Limited personal use of internet resources is a special exception to the general prohibition against the personal use of computer equipment and software.

Employees are individually liable for any damages incurred as a result of violating SPRUCE security policy, copyright, and licensing agreements.

3.5 Privacy

Employees and employers share a relationship based on trust and mutual respect. However, SPRUCE retains the right to access all SPRUCE property including computers, desks, file cabinets, storage facilities, and files and folders, electronic or otherwise, at any time. Employees should not entertain any expectations of privacy when on SPRUCE grounds or while using SPRUCE property. All documents, files, voice-mails and electronic information, including e-mails and other communications, created, received or maintained on or through SPRUCE property are the property of SPRUCE, not the employee. Therefore, employees should have no expectation of privacy over those files or documents.

3.6 Personnel Files

SPRUCE maintains a personnel file on each employee. These files are kept confidential to the extent possible. Employees may schedule a review of their personnel file upon request to the Executive Director. It is important that personnel files accurately reflect each employee's personal information. Employees are expected to inform SPRUCE of any change in name, address, home phone number, home address, marital status, number of dependents, or emergency contact information.

3.7 Conflict of Interest

As an employee, you are expected to act at all times in SPRUCE's best interests and to exercise sound judgment unclouded by personal interests or divided loyalties. Both in performing your duties at SPRUCE and in your outside activities, you should avoid the appearance as well as the reality of a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest exists if your circumstances would lead a reasonable person to question whether your motivations are aligned with SPRUCE's best interests.

If, for example, you are involved in an outside activity or have a financial or other personal interest that might interfere with your objectivity in performing SPRUCE duties and responsibilities, you may have a conflict of interest.

3.8 Confidentiality

Employees will not disclose confidential information belonging to, or obtained through their affiliation with SPRUCE to any person, including their relatives, friends, business or professional associates, unless SPRUCE has authorized disclosure. This policy is not intended to prevent disclosure where disclosure is required by law. Board members, volunteers and employees are cautioned to demonstrate professionalism, good judgment, and care to avoid unauthorized or inadvertent disclosures of confidential information and should, for example, refrain from leaving confidential information contained in documents or on computer screens in plain view. Upon separation of employment, the employee shall return all documents, papers, and other materials, that may contain confidential information. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in discipline, up to and including separation of employment.

Section 4 - Employment Classification

SPRUCE assigns positions, determines wages and compensates employees for overtime in accordance with state and local laws and the Fair Labor Standards Act.

4.1 Exempt Employees

Exempt employees are those that are excluded from the overtime pay requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Exempt employees are paid a salary and are expected to work beyond their normal work hours whenever necessary to accomplish the work of SPRUCE, not to exceed 40 hours/wk. Exempt employees are not eligible to receive overtime compensation. Employees should consult with an administrator if they have questions regarding their classification as an exempt employee.

4.2 Non-Exempt Employees

Non-exempt employees are those eligible for overtime pay of 1.5 times the regular hourly rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 per workweek. All overtime must be approved in advance. Employees should consult with an administrator if they have questions regarding their classification as a non-exempt employee.

4.3 Part Time, Full Time or Temporary Status

Part-time or full-time status depends on the number of hours per week an employee works. Regular employees who work fewer than 32 hrs/wk receive part-time classification. Part-time employees are not eligible for employee benefits as described in this handbook. Regular employees who work at least 32 hrs/wk receive full-time classification. Temporary employees may work either part-time or full-time. Only the Executive Director may change an employee's temporary status. Temporary employees are not eligible for employment benefits.

4.4 Licensure & Professional Development

Employees are expected to maintain teaching license or other employment licenses. This includes professional development requirements, continuing education classes, certifications, and renewal. SPRUCE has a budget for approved professional development. A request for professional

development financial assistance must be requested to the Executive Director prior to scheduling, payment or attendance in a training. Staff will not receive reimbursement for professional development. Failure to maintain active licenses may result in termination.

Section 5 – Attendance Policies

5.1 General Attendance

SPRUCE maintains working hours of 8:30am-3:30pm. Hours may vary depending on work location and job responsibilities. The Executive Director will provide employees with their work schedule. Should an employee have any questions regarding his/her work schedule, the employee should contact the Executive Director. SPRUCE does not tolerate absenteeism without excuse. Employees who will be late to or absent from work should notify a supervisor in advance, or as soon as practicable in the event of an emergency. Chronic absenteeism may result in disciplinary action. Employees who need to leave early, for illness or otherwise, should inform a supervisor before departure. Unauthorized departures may result in disciplinary action.

5.2 Tardiness

Employees are expected to arrive on time and ready for work. An employee who arrives late for their scheduled time is considered tardy. SPRUCE recognizes that situations arise which hinder punctuality; regardless, excessive tardiness is prohibited, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

5.3 Breaks

When working conditions permit, and pending the Executive Director's approval, full time employees are entitled to two 15-minute breaks for every six hours worked. Meal periods are paid for full time staff working over six hours, lasting for 30 minutes, considered working lunches, and must be approved in schedule by the Executive Director.

Section 6 – Leave Policies

6.1 Vacations

SPRUCE provides, as a benefit, paid vacations for its eligible employees. Forward requests for time off in advance to the Executive Director by email, who may approve or deny the request based on SPRUCE resources. SPRUCE is flexible in approving time off when doing so would not interfere with SPRUCE operations. Vacation days are granted only on a full day or half-day basis. A regular employee is eligible to receive paid time off after two months of full-time service. Time off may be taken any time except the last week of September and first week of October. Employees should consult with the Executive Assistant regarding the amount of vacation leave available/remaining. Vacation days may not be carried over into the next year. Abuse of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

6.2 Sick Leave

Situations may arise where an employee needs to take time off to address medical or other health concerns. SPRUCE requests that employees provide notification to the Executive Director as soon as practicable when taking time off. Sick days are granted on a paid basis to all employees. Employees may consult the Executive Assistant regarding the amount of (paid) sick leave provided each year. Sick days may not be carried over into the next year. Abuse of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

6.3 Healthy Family & Workplaces Act

Every employee receives three types of paid sick leave through the Healthy Family and Workplaces Act (HFWA). HFWA days may not be carried over into the next year. Abuse of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

1) Each employee receives HFWA which requires employers provide up to two weeks of normal hours worked in a 14 day period of paid sick leave to employees who are unable to work or telework under specific guidelines.

2) Paid Sick & Safe Time (PSST) can be used for “public health emergencies” and is accrued when employment begins, employees accrue one hour of PSST for every 30 hours they work, up to a maximum of 48 hours per year.

3) Public Health Emergency Leave (PHEL) can be used for “public health emergencies” for up to two weeks of normal hours worked in a 14 day period of paid sick leave to employees who are unable to work or telework under specific guidelines.

Please visit dol.gov/general/topic/benefits-leave

6.4 Calendar and Holidays

SPRUCE operates by an annually approved academic calendar. Holidays are listed on the calendar including school breaks. Holidays are observed on an unpaid basis for all employees.

6.5 Jury Duty Time Off

SPRUCE understands that occasionally employees are called to serve on a jury. Employees who are selected for jury duty must provide a copy of their jury summons to a supervisor. Time taken for jury duty is granted on an unpaid basis.

6.6 Voting Time Off

Employees are encouraged to participate in elections by mail in ballot, early voting outside of work hours, or voting outside of scheduled work hours. Voting time off is unpaid.

6.7 Military Leave

Employees called to active military duty, military reserve or National Guard service may be eligible to receive time off under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994. To receive time off, employees must provide notice and a copy of their report orders to an immediate supervisor. Military leave is granted on an unpaid basis. Upon return with an honorable discharge, an employee may be entitled to reinstatement and any applicable job benefits they would have received if present, to the extent provided by law. Every employer, regardless of the number of people employed, is required to comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. Under the Act, employers are prevented from taking disciplinary action against an employee because of their military status. For more information on the USERRA, visit the Department of Labor’s website at www.dol.gov/elaws/vets/userra/mainmenu.asp.

6.8 Leave of Absence

Regular full-time employees may request an unpaid leave of absence after the exhaustion of paid leave. A request for a leave of absence must be submitted in writing in advance to the Executive

Director. Leave of absences that are granted are unpaid, and will not be considered until an employee has exhausted all appropriate accrued leave balances. Continuation of employee benefits during a leave of absence will be addressed on an individual basis, as required by law.

Section 7 – Work Performance

7.1 Expectations

SPRUCE expects every employee to act in a professional manner. Satisfactory performance of job duties and responsibilities is key to this expectation. Employees should attempt to achieve their job objectives, and act with diligence and consideration at all times. Poor job performance can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

7.2 Reviews

SPRUCE may periodically evaluate an employee's performance. The goal of a performance review is to identify areas where an employee excels and areas that need improvement. SPRUCE uses performance reviews as a tool to determine pay increases, promotions and/or terminations. All performance reviews are based on merit, achievement, and other factors may include but are not limited to:

- Quality of work
- Attitude
- Knowledge of work
- Job skills
- Attendance and punctuality
- Teamwork and cooperation
- Compliance with SPRUCE policy
- Past performance reviews
- Improvement
- Acceptance of responsibility and constructive feedback

Employees should note that a performance review does not guarantee a pay increase or promotion. Written performance evaluations may be made at any time to advise employees of unacceptable performance. Evaluations or any subsequent change in employment status, position or pay does not alter the employee's at will-relationship with SPRUCE.

7.3 Insubordination

Supervisors and employees should interact with mutual respect and common courtesy. Employees are expected to take instruction from supervisors or other persons of authority. Failure to comply with instructions or unreasonably delaying compliance is considered insubordination. Acts of insubordination are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If an employee disagrees with a supervisor, the employee should first try to mediate the situation by explaining their position. If possible, a compromise might be met and accusations of insubordination avoided.

Section 8 – Discipline Policy

8.1 Grounds for Disciplinary Action

SPRUCE reserves the right to discipline and/or terminate any employee who violates SPRUCE policies, practices, or rules of conduct. Poor performance and misconduct are also grounds for discipline or termination.

The following actions are unacceptable and considered grounds for disciplinary action. This list is not comprehensive; rather, it is meant merely as an example of the types of conduct that SPRUCE does not tolerate.

These actions include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in acts of discrimination or harassment in the workplace
- Possessing, distributing or being under the influence of illicit controlled substances
- Being under the influence of a controlled substance, a prescription medication, a legal drug, or alcohol at work, on SPRUCE premises, or while engaged in SPRUCE business
- Unauthorized use of SPRUCE property, equipment, devices or assets
- Damage, destruction or theft of SPRUCE property, equipment, devices or assets
- Removing SPRUCE property without prior authorization or disseminating SPRUCE information without authorization
- Falsification, misrepresentation or omission of information, documents or records
- Lying
- Insubordination or refusal to comply with directives
- Failing to adequately perform job responsibilities
- Excessive or unexcused absenteeism or tardiness
- Disclosing confidential or proprietary SPRUCE information without permission
- Illegal or violent activity
- Falsifying injury reports or reasons for leave
- Possessing unauthorized weapons on premises
- Disregard for safety and security procedures
- Disparaging or disrespecting supervisors and/or co-workers; and
- Any other action or conduct that is inconsistent with SPRUCE policies, procedures, standards or expectations.

This list exhibits the types of actions or events that are subject to disciplinary action. It is not intended to indicate every act that could lead to disciplinary action. SPRUCE reserves the right to determine the severity and extent of any disciplinary action based on the circumstances of each case.

8.2 Procedures

Disciplinary action is any one of a number of options used to correct unacceptable behavior or actions. Discipline may take the form of oral warnings, written warnings, probation, suspension, demotion, discharge, removal or some other disciplinary action, in no particular order. The course of action will be determined by SPRUCE at its sole discretion, as it deems appropriate.

8.3 Termination

Employment with SPRUCE is on an at-will basis and may be terminated voluntarily or involuntarily at any time. Upon termination, voluntary quitting, or contract non-renewal, an employee is required:

- to continue to work until the last scheduled day of employment;
- to turn in all reports and paperwork required to be completed by the employee when due and no later than the last day of work;
- to return all files, documents, equipment, keys, access cards, software or other property belonging to SPRUCE that are in the employee's possession, custody or control, and turn

- in all passwords to his/her supervisor and recorded by admin;
- to participate in an exit interview/meeting as requested by the Executive Director
- to get approval from the Executive Director of the classroom inventory and remove personal items.
- to collect final paycheck after completing termination requirements. The cost of repair/replacement of computer and electronic equipment, the cost of re-keying SPRUCE facilities or rental premises, or other costs incurred by SPRUCE due to the failure of the employee to return SPRUCE in good condition may be deducted from the final paycheck.

Section 9 – Health and Safety

9.1 Workplace Safety

SPRUCE takes every reasonable precaution to ensure that employees have a safe working environment. Safety measures and rules are in place for the protection of all employees. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each employee to help prevent accidents. To ensure the continuation of a safe workplace, all employees should use all safety and protective equipment provided to them, and maintain work areas in a safe and orderly manner, free from hazardous conditions. Employees who observe an unsafe practice or condition should report it to the Executive Director or Executive Assistant immediately. Employees are prohibited from making threats against anyone in connection with his/her work or engaging in violent activities while in the employ of SPRUCE. Any questions regarding safety and safe practices should be directed to the Executive Director. In the event of an accident, employees must notify the Executive Director immediately. Report every injury, regardless of how minor, to the Executive Director immediately. Physical discomfort caused by repetitive tasks must also be reported. For more information about on the job injuries, refer to the worker’s compensation section of this handbook. Employees should recognize any potential fire hazards and be aware of fire escape routes and fire drills. Do not block fire exits, tamper with fire extinguishers or otherwise create fire hazards.

9.2 Workplace Security

Employees must be alert and aware of any potential dangers to themselves, their coworkers, or students. Take every precaution to ensure that your surroundings are safe and secure. Guard personal belongings and SPRUCE property. Report any suspicious activity immediately.

9.3 Emergency Procedures

SPRUCE intends to provide a safe environment for our participants, collaborating organizations, and our employees. Employees need to become familiar with the four calls for actions, acknowledge the calls when announced, and allow the teacher/staff/admin the final decision on execution of student safety depended on the situation and location;

- **SHELTER- “For a Hazard Using a Safety Strategy”**
- **EVACUATE- “To the Announced Location”**
- **LOCKOUT- “Secure the Perimeter”**
- **LOCKDOWN- “Locks, Lights, Out of Sight”**

SHELTER- “For a Hazard Using a Safety Strategy”

Shelter is called when the need for personal protection is necessary.

Sample Hazards include Tornado, Hazmat.

Sample Safety Strategies include evacuating to a shelter, seal the room, or move to safe area.

Students are expected to understand appropriate hazards and safety strategies.

Teachers are expected to understand appropriate hazards and safety strategies, take roll, account for students, and communicate with administration/parents.

EVACUATE- “To the Announced Location”

Evacuate is called to relocate students and staff from one location to another.

Sample Evacuations include fire, fumes, and flood.

Sample Safety Strategies include emergency evacuation of any facility to a different location

Students are expected to bring phone (if available), leave other personal items behind, form a single file line, keep hands visible, be prepared for alternatives during response

Teachers are expected to know emergency exit plan for facility, take attendance sheet, account for students while moving to evacuation location, and communicate with administration/parents.

LOCKOUT- “Secure the Perimeter”

Lockout is called when there is a threat or hazard OUTSIDE of the facility.

Sample Lockout Scenarios include emergency personnel notifications, wild animals, and people of suspicion.

Sample Safety Strategies include locking doors, closing windows, operating indoors normally

Students are expected to return inside facility and do business as usual.

Teachers are expected to recover students and staff from outside facility, account for all students, do business as usual while increasing situational awareness, and communicate with administration/parents.

LOCKDOWN- “Locks, Lights, Out of Sight”

Lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard INSIDE of the facility.

Sample Lockdowns Scenarios include admin notification of an intruder, threat, or hazard.

Sample Safety Strategies include keeping students calm, safety personal/admin/parents informed

Students are expected to move away from sight, maintain silence, remain calm, silence phones

Teachers are expected to lock classroom door, lights out, move away from sight, maintain silence, take roll to account for students, and communicate with administration/parents by TEXT ONLY in assigned and organized intervals to reduce jammed phone lines.

In the event of an emergency discovered by an employee, dial 911 immediately while taking responsibility for your students, other students, staff, and immediate area. If you hear a fire alarm or other emergency alert system, proceed quickly and calmly with your students and attendance sheet to the nearest exit. Once the building has been evacuated, only an administrator or emergency personnel may authorize employees to reenter. Please respect all posted emergency evacuation signs.

The final decision on execution of student safety is depended on the situation and location and determined by the teacher.

Section 10 - Employee Benefits

SPRUCE does not offer any benefit plans.

10.1 Health Insurance

SPRUCE does not offer health insurance.

10.2 Workers' Compensation

As required by law, SPRUCE provides workers' compensation benefits for the protection of employees with work-related injuries or illnesses. Workers' compensation insurance provides coverage to employees who receive job related injuries or illnesses. If an employee is injured or becomes ill because of his/her job, it is the employee's responsibility to immediately notify a supervisor of their injury in order to receive benefits. Report every illness or injury to a supervisor, regardless of how minor it appears. SPRUCE will advise the employee of the procedure for submitting a workers' compensation claim. If necessary, injured employees will be referred to a medical care facility. Employees should retain all paperwork provided to them by the medical facility. Failure to report a work-related illness or injury promptly could result in denial of benefits. An employee's report should contain as many details as possible, including the date, time, description of the illness or injury, and the names of any witnesses. A separate insurance organization administers the worker's compensation insurance. Representatives of SPRUCE may contact injured employees regarding their benefits under the plan. Additional information regarding workers' compensation is available from the Executive Assistant.

Section 11 - Termination

11.1 Voluntary Termination

SPRUCE recognizes that personal situations may arise which require a voluntary termination of employment. Should this occur, SPRUCE requests that the employee provide two weeks advance notice in writing. This request does not alter an employee's at-will relationship with SPRUCE. All rights and privileges of employment with SPRUCE terminate upon the date of separation. As further discussed in Section 8.3, terminating employees are required to return all SPRUCE property assigned to them. Failure to do so may result in the withholding of their final paycheck.

11.2 Final Paycheck

Employees who terminate employment with SPRUCE will be given their final paycheck on SPRUCE's next day of paycheck business.

11.3 Exit Interview

SPRUCE will request an exit interview upon notice of termination. The purpose of the exit interview is to complete necessary forms, collect SPRUCE property and discuss employment experiences with SPRUCE.

Silver SPRUCE Academy, Inc.
MAILING: PO Box 966 Bayfield, CO 81122
970-500-5657



**Acknowledgement of Receipt for
Employee Handbook**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Employee Handbook. I understand that I am responsible for reading the information contained in the Handbook and complying with the terms, conditions, and policies therein. I understand that the handbook is intended to provide me with a general overview of Silver SPRUCE Academy’s (SPRUCE) policies and procedures. I acknowledge that nothing in this handbook is to be interpreted as a contract, expressed or implied, or an inducement for employment, nor does it guarantee my employment for any period. I understand and accept that my employment with SPRUCE is at-will. I have the right to resign at any time with or without cause, just as SPRUCE may terminate my employment at any time with or without cause or notice, subject to applicable laws. I understand that nothing in the handbook or in any oral or written statement alters the at-will relationship. I acknowledge that SPRUCE may revise, suspend, revoke, terminate, change or remove, prospectively or retroactively, any of the policies or procedures outlined in this handbook or elsewhere, in whole or in part, with or without notice at any time, at SPRUCE’s sole discretion.

SPRUCE has the Employee’s permission for his/her photo to be used in the yearbook and promotional materials.

Signature of Employee

Date

Print Name

SPRUCE Representative

Date