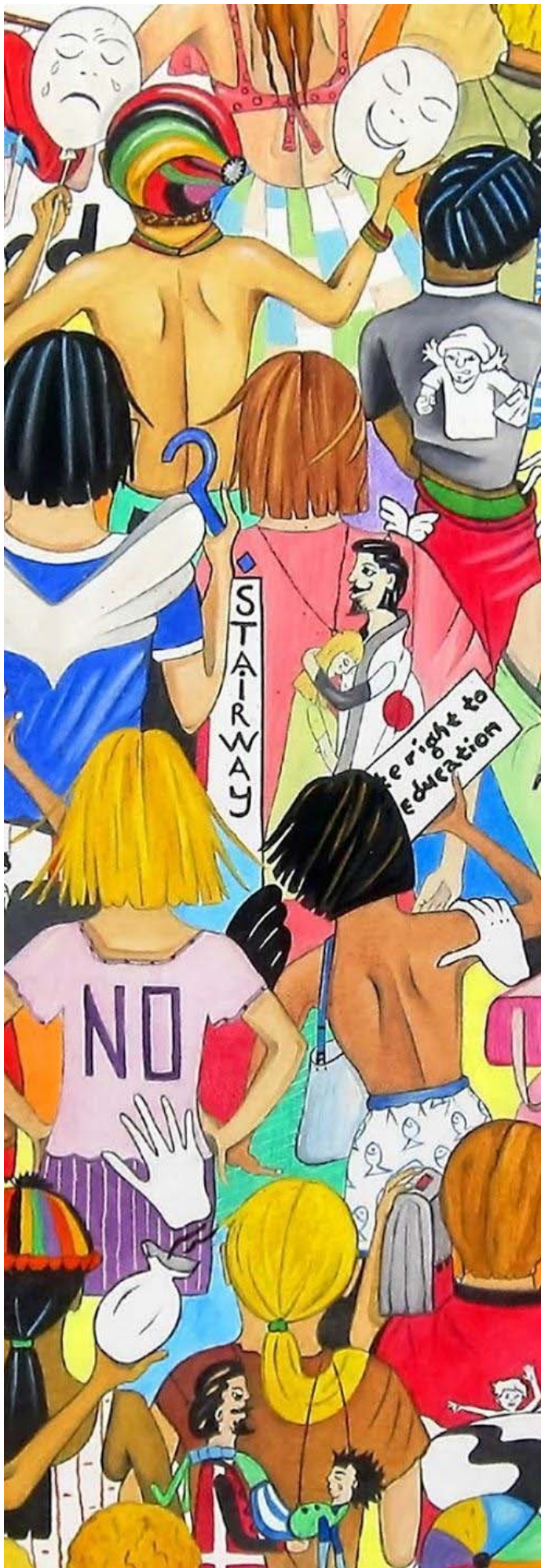




EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND CODE OF CONDUCT 2021

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Message to Employees

This Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct provides information about Stairway Foundation, Inc., its policies, employment terms and conditions and the common benefits, which are available to all regular employees. The Handbook is issued as a guide for your integration into our organization.

Being a dynamic organization, Stairway Foundation, Inc. is constantly changing, and this Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct is subject to revisions by a designated committee on a regular basis. The Human Resource Administrator shall have the responsibility of issuing the necessary amendments and updates of this Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct and of disseminating the same to all employees.

As the most valuable asset, Stairway Foundation, Inc. shall endeavor to provide you the opportunity to grow and develop as a professional. Accordingly, you are expected to perform your duties by being committed to meeting our organization's goals and by giving the best you can.

You are required to read and familiarize yourself with the provisions in this Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct and seek clarification, if any, from your immediate superior or a member of the Administration Department. You will be required to sign an acknowledgment that you have read, understood and agreed to Stairway Foundation, Inc.'s Child Protection Policy and this Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct.

Stairway Foundation, Inc. looks forward to a mutually beneficial working relationship with you. We shall see you through in building your career with us.



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I. STAIRWAY FOUNDATION, INCORPORATED

The Birth of Stairway Foundation, Inc.

Stairway Foundation, Inc. (SFI) is a non-stock, non-profit and non-government child care organization located in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines. SFI was founded in 1990 by Lars Jorgensen and Monica Ray. Initially, the foundation was established as an alternative program for the most marginalized and endangered street children in the Philippines.

As a result of working directly with street children for many years, it became evident that the children who entered SFI's programs did not only struggle with problems in relation to health, drugs and violence. As it turned out, a vast majority had been abused and exploited sexually. This realization compelled us to join forces with local and international networks of partners in the fight against child sexual abuse and exploitation.

The lack of suitable materials for advocacy and education concerning child sexual abuse and exploitation challenged SFI to develop cutting edge animations and a theater piece confronting the issues of incest, pedophilia, sex trafficking and child sexual abuse materials. These tools of creative expressions have earned international acclaim. They are being used widely to raise awareness and to educate children, teachers, social workers, law enforcers and communities on the issue of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Vision

A safe environment for children worldwide where their rights are equally respected.

Mission

Through innovation, creative excellence and professional networking, SFI is committed to continuously learn from our local operations and manifest our gains as a resource to inspire and educate partners in the region and the world to protect and promote children's rights.

Goals

1. To promote and protect children's rights.
2. To bring in innovative and creative approaches in raising the awareness of the greater public regarding the plight of disadvantaged and abused children.
3. To be a part of a network of government organizations (GOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs), in order to create and implement valid and lasting solutions to the problems of disadvantaged children.

II. PROVISION FOR AMENDMENT AND REVISION

The Labor Code of the Philippines (Presidential Decree No. 442, as amended) and other applicable laws apply to SFI's employees and to SFI's Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct.

Amendments and revisions to SFI's Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct, as wells as SFI's Manual of Operations, are done on a periodic basis (every three [3] years) and/or as the exigency for such may present itself. At the bequest of the Human Resource Administrator, and after approval from the Executive Director, the committee responsible for revision and amendment of the Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct, and the Manual of Operations, will be convened.

This 2021 edition of the Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct and the accompanying Manual of Operations was made possible through the efforts of the SFI Management Committee:

Lars C. Jorgensen
Executive Director

Monica D. Ray
Creative Director

Grace C. Esteban
Program and Operations Manager/OIC-NCR

Ysrael C. Diloy
Senior Advocacy Officer

Amihan B. Bajade
Program Coordinator

Donnalyne U. Baccay
Program Coordinator

Jason C. Abarquez
Program Coordinator

Milagros P. San Jose
Legal Counsel

1. The Committee is composed of the SFI management team, employee-representatives and a designated counsel. The Committee, with its Chairperson, shall inform the members regarding the items subject for revision or amendment. A draft listing the items to be discussed must be submitted and received by the Committee members prior to the meeting.
2. When a consensus is reached, the draft will be submitted for editing, cross-referencing and consistency in preparation for its final approval by the Executive Director.
3. A printing request is sent to a designated publishing house. Distribution and promulgation to employees commences at the earliest possible opportunity.
4. The Committee approved version of the Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct with its Manual of Operations supersedes, modifies and/or eliminates altogether previous rules and policies.

III. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

A. General Policy

As a child rights and child protection focused organization, SFI puts priority in ensuring that no children shall be harmed under any circumstances in its operations. In order to fulfill this, SFI has elaborated and continuously updated its child protection policy (CPP) to maintain strict child protection and child safeguarding measures in the organization. As such, the following measures shall be implemented:

1. All employees, volunteers and interns, along with others regularly connected to the organization, shall be oriented on the Child Protection Policy (**see Appendix A**).
2. All employees, volunteers and interns, along with others regularly connected to the organization, shall sign the Child Protection Policy commitment form.
3. All employees, volunteers and interns, along with others regularly connected to the organization, shall strictly abide to the provisions of the SFI Child Protection Policy.
4. The SFI Child Protection Policy shall be published at SFI's website, for public dissemination.

B. Social Media Policy

With the advent of social media, SFI has put into place special policies in order to guide staff members on how to behave in social media in order to protect the rights of children and the interest of SFI, as an organization. As a technology precaution, SFI shall install filtering software for its internet connection in order to block access to inappropriate materials for children, specifically, pornography.

1. Online/Social Media Behavior Guidelines for the Staff:

- a. Staff members should automatically report to the social media platform any online child protection concern that they encounter (cyberbullying, child sexual abuse materials, etc.)
- b. Staff members shall refrain from sharing, uploading and *liking* content, which is:
 - o Pornographic,
 - o Hateful,
 - o Violent,
 - o Discriminatory,
 - o False or misleading,
 - o Spam, or
 - o Sexualized content.

- c. If a staff member decides to share or upload any controversial post (posts in support of a particular election candidate, an opinion about a polarizing issue not related to children, etc.), then the staff member should put a disclaimer indicating that his/her views do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization.
- d. Staff members have the option to post in their social media accounts their employment/occupation in SFI. However, staff members are reminded that, by doing so, they must be vigilant and take extra care with regard to their online activities, as these also reflect on the organization.
- e. Staff members should not add children beneficiaries of SFI as social media friends. If, prior to the effectivity of this policy, staff members already have children beneficiaries of SFI as social media friends, then staff members should consider removing them from the list or shall put them under the social media account's list of "restricted friends"
- f. Staff members should not post via social media any material on internal organizational issues.
- g. If staff members would like to share work related content, then protection of confidentiality of children's information and protection of SFI's image shall be upheld.
- h. Dissatisfaction in relation to work or a co-worker should not be posted online but, rather, be coured through official channels for proper resolution.
- i. Staff members should not post confidential information about any child beneficiary via social media, including single or group photos or other images of children.
- j. Staff members should ensure the privacy and security of their social media accounts.
- k. Staff members shall not engage in cyberbullying or cyber trolling.
- l. Staff members shall not engage in online fights or other online conflicts.
- m. Staff members shall not be involved in any multi-level marketing scheme (Ponzi s scheme).
- n. When attending online meetings via video conferencing platforms, staff members shall ensure that what are seen and heard via their webcam/audio feed are child safe and appropriate.

2. Online Engagement of SFI Family Home Program (FHP) and Community Assistance Program (CAP) Staff Members with Children Beneficiaries:

- a. Staff members are prohibited from adding children beneficiaries of SFI in their social media accounts.
- b. Communication shall be done ONLY via an official SFI closed Facebook group (NOT VIA GROUP CHAT), which shall be created by the program coordinator together with a program staff member.

- c. The said Facebook group shall be administered by the program coordinator and at least one (1) program staff member.
- d. General rules on respectful online interaction and the sharing of non-abusive content and language shall be enforced.
- e. Personal messages should not be sent to children messages except when approved by the Executive Director.

3. *Management of SFI's Social Media Presence;*

- a. Confidentiality of children will be protected even online.
- b. Individual or group photos of children, or other images of children, shall not be posted, as much as possible. If such images will be posted, SFI shall ensure that only non-identifying information will be provided.
- c. Dignity in the portrayal of children shall be maintained at all times.
- d. Pseudonyms for children shall be used at all times.
- e. Children's consent will be acquired at all times if their images are to be posted online.
- f. SFI shall have at least four (4) persons to form the social media team. The team will be responsible for managing the social media accounts of SFI.
- g. At any given time, two (2) persons shall safe-keep the account details of SFI's social media accounts.
- h. Child Protection concerns reported to the social media accounts shall be linked up to the case management system of SFI. No account administrator or staff member shall delete any private message sent to any SFI Facebook page or to any other SFI social media account.

C. Data Protection General Policy and Guidelines

Stairway Foundation adheres to the policy of the state to protect the fundamental human rights of privacy of communication while ensuring free flow of information to promote innovation and growth, as contained in Republic Act No. 10173 also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Pertaining to this are the following general policies and guidelines currently observed and practiced by the organization.

As a general rule, the organization collects and processes personal data/information of individuals with whom the foundation has existing relationships and transactions, only when necessary and more importantly, with their consent. Personal Information refers to any information whether recorded in a material form or not, from which the identity of an individual is apparent or can be directly ascertained by the foundation, or when put together with other information would directly and certainly identify an individual.

C.1. Data Collection

1. The data to be collected must be specified and for a legitimate purpose. The purpose for the data collection must be disclosed and discussed to the Data Subject;
2. It must be processed fairly and lawfully;
3. Accurate, relevant, and, where necessary for purposes for which it is to be used, the processing of personal information, kept up to date; inaccurate or incomplete data must be rectified, supplemented, destroyed or their further processing restricted;
4. Adequate and not excessive in relation to the purposes for which they are collected and processed; and
5. Retained only for as long as necessary for the fulfilment of the purposes for which the data was obtained or for the establishment, exercise or defense of legal claims, or for legitimate business purposes, or as provided by law.

C.2. Data Processing

The organization ensures implementation of personal information processing principles set out herein:

1. The data subject has given his or her consent;
2. The processing of personal information is necessary and is related to the fulfilment of a contract or lawful engagement with the data subject or in order to take steps at the request of the data subject prior to entering into a contract or lawful engagement;
3. The processing is necessary to protect vitally important interests of the data subject, including life and health; and
4. The processing is necessary in order to respond to national emergency, to comply with the requirements of public order and safety, or to fulfil functions of public authority which necessarily includes the processing of personal data for the fulfilment of its mandate.

C.3. Access to Data/Information

Access to data refers to the disclosure, reproduction and releasing of data collected by the foundation. Access to data must be strictly monitored. Requesting of data must follow appropriate and lawful guidelines.

The organization shall continuously review, enhance and update these existing general policies and guidelines, in consultation with the board, the staff, if possible with volunteers and partners, and shall seek assistance from the National Privacy Commission who is the lead implementing agency of the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

IV. HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

A. Guiding Principles

SFI is committed to providing a safe environment for all its employees, free from discrimination on any ground and from harassment at work, including sexual harassment. SFI will promote a culture and atmosphere of integrity, in which all staff members treat each other and SFI's community partners with dignity and respect, free from abuse and harassment.

SFI will not tolerate any type of harassment within the workplace or associated with the work performed on behalf of the organization. The organization's strategy is to place emphasis on prevention through awareness-raising and training. In the event that harassment occurs, this policy provides the means for intervention on informal and formal levels. All allegations of harassment will be fully, fairly and promptly dealt with in a confidential manner.

The relevant laws on harassment shall apply to SFI and its employees and volunteers.

B. Responsibilities

Creating a work environment, which is free from harassment is every staff member's responsibility. Staff members should conduct themselves in accordance with the standards of conduct set by the organization and stipulated in the Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct, which aims to ensure that the workplace is free of any form of harassment.

SFI's management team bears added responsibility and has a key role to play by:

1. Informing the respective team members about the policy;
2. Setting an example;
3. Fostering a positive working environment in which harassment by individuals or groups does not occur; and
- 4. Ensuring adherence to the policy, including taking corrective action if needed.

All persons who are aware of a harassment complaint, or are involved in its resolution, must recognize the seriousness of the situation and respect the sensitivity and confidentiality of the matter. They must refrain from disclosing any information to others, or from discussing the complaint among themselves or with anyone who does not have a "need to know." Every effort will be made to preserve the dignity and self-respect of the parties involved. Parties to the complaint must also observe this requirement of confidentiality.

C. Definition of Harassment

Harassment means any improper behavior by a person that is directed at, and is offensive to, another individual and which the person knew or ought reasonably to have known would be offensive. It comprises objectionable or unacceptable conduct that demeans, belittles or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment to an individual. Mildly offensive comments or behavior can rise to the level of harassment if they are repeated; a single incident can be considered harassment if it is so severe that it has a lasting negative impact on the individual(s) concerned.

Although harassment may occur more often between persons of different levels of authority, it may also occur between peers. When behavior of this kind is engaged in by any person who is in a position to influence career or employment conditions (including hiring, assignment, contract renewal, performance evaluation or promotion) of the recipient, it also constitutes an *abuse of authority*.

Harassment can take many different forms and may include, among others:

1. Degrading tirades by a supervisor or colleague;
2. Continual unjustified and unnecessary comments or deliberate insults related to a person's professional competence;
3. Threatening, abusive or insulting comments, whether oral or written;
4. Deliberate desecration of religious and/or national symbols;
5. Malicious and unsubstantiated complaints of misconduct against other employees;
6. Mimicking of others, making fun of others or belittling of others;
7. Continual interference with a person's work space, work materials, equipment, etc.;
8. Continual and unfounded refusal of leave application or training;
9. Display of posters, pictures, electronic images or written materials, which are offensive, obscene or objectionable;
10. Continual exclusion of a person or group from normal communication, work or work related social activities; and
11. Unreasonable intrusion into a person's private life, such as unnecessarily seeking to communicate with that person outside office hours or when the person is at home or elsewhere, or repeatedly asking inappropriate questions about personal affairs.

D. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a particular form of harassment, which includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, especially when it interferes with work, where it is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. While typically involving a pattern of behavior, it can take the form of a single incident.

Sexual harassment can occur regardless of whether the harasser considers the behavior to be offensive or not. Sexual harassment is distinguished from other forms of contact by its unwelcome and coercive nature. Conduct becomes sexual harassment when it is forced upon a recipient against his/her will, and the behavior persists even where a reasonable person would understand that the behavior is not welcome.

Sexual harassment can take many different forms and may include, among others:

1. The repetition of suggestive comments or innuendo;

2. The exhibition of sexually-oriented material in the workplace;
3. The use of crude or obscene language or gestures, including obscene jokes or stories;
4. Repeated and/or exaggerated compliments or comments about a colleague's personal appearance, or his/her physical features;
5. Invitations to social activities or "dates," if they persist after it should be clear to the person issuing the invitations that they are not welcomed by the recipient;
6. Deliberate and unsolicited physical contact, or unnecessarily close physical proximity;
7. Direct propositions of a sexual nature;
8. Any link between submissions to sexual advances and conditions of employment, promotion, professional development, etc.; and
9. Unwelcome and inappropriate letters, telephone calls, emails or other communications.

Any person who directs or induces another to commit any act of sexual harassment, as herein defined, or who cooperates in the commission thereof by another, without which it would not have been committed, shall also be held liable under this policy.

Mutually acceptable social behavior is not sexual harassment regardless of the employment relationship.

Where Sexual Harassment is Committed

Sexual harassment may be committed in any work or training environment. It may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- In or outside the office building or training site;
- At office or training-related social functions;
- In the course of work assignments outside the office;
- At work-related conferences or training sessions; or
- During work-related travel.

E. Unfair Labor Practices or Bullying in the Work Place

Under Philippine Law, bullying pertains to child-to-child cases in a school setting. But, bullying can also take place in a work setting between adults. Examples are the use of force or coercion that impair the free will of an employee to resign, and the employment of tactics to maneuver an employee's ouster. Since there are no special laws or specific provisions in the Labor Code that provide penalties for these acts, most of such cases are classified under the unfair labor practice provisions of the Labor Code or the "catch all" provisions of the Civil Code of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 386, as amended), specifically, Articles 19, 20 and 21 of the Civil Code.

Unfair labor practices consisting of bullying in the work place can take many different forms and may include, among others:

1. A co-worker or supervisor constantly screams at, curses and insults an employee.
2. A co-worker spreads false stories or rumors about an employee around the work place or in the community.
3. A co-worker takes credit for another employee's accomplishment.
4. An employee's mistakes are highlighted for no constructive reason.
5. An employee's privacy is intruded upon by spying or stalking.
6. An employee receives offensive jokes at his/her expense.
7. Intentional sabotage, for example, delaying requests.

An employee who has experienced bullying should inform a SFI Designated Staff Contact Person or the Executive Director for counsel. The employee can also submit a written complaint to the Human Resource Department and Executive Director.

F. Discriminatory Harassment

Discriminatory Harassment is harassment based on grounds such as race, nationality, creed, religion or sex, which may have the purpose or effect of giving less favorable treatment to a staff member or group of staff members than to any other staff member or group of staff members in the same circumstances. Discriminatory harassment may take the form of dismissive treatment or the expression of stereotypic assumptions about a group to which a person may belong.

G. Conduct that Would Not Be Considered Harassment

Staff members must have reasonable grounds before making a complaint of harassment. Some situations which appear to meet the definition of harassment might, ultimately, not be found to be instances of harassment. There is a wide range of ambiguous behavior that might offend some people, but not others. The key is whether the action was offensive, particularly in light of whether the recipient has asked the alleged harasser to stop it, where this is possible.

It is important to note that supervisors may make negative decisions (e.g., about performance or work assignments) which do not, in themselves, constitute harassment. Supervisors have a responsibility to give balanced, frank and constructive feedback and to take appropriate action. It is only where such feedback or action is unduly biased or is used as retaliation against an individual that it may constitute harassment.

H. Retaliation

Any retaliation or threat of retaliation against any person making a complaint of harassment, or involved in the procedure for dealing with a complaint of harassment, will be considered a violation

of the SFI Code of Conduct. If retaliation is found to have occurred at any time, appropriate disciplinary action will be initiated against the individual who has engaged in such retaliation.

I. Application of Policy

This policy applies to all staff members and to non-staff personnel contracted by the organization (consultants, interns, volunteers, etc.). Allegations of harassment made by individuals who are neither staff members nor non-staff personnel will be reviewed by the Executive Director, outside the framework of this policy.

J. Complaints Procedure

Anyone who is subject to sexual harassment should, if possible, inform the alleged harasser that the conduct is unwanted and unwelcome. SFI recognizes that sexual harassment often occurs in unequal relationships (i.e., between a supervisor and his/her employee, or between an SFI employee and a community partner) and that it may not be possible for the victim to inform the alleged harasser. If a victim cannot directly approach an alleged harasser, he/she can approach one of SFI's Designated Staff Contact Persons who is responsible for receiving complaints of any harassment, including sexual harassment.

When the Designated Staff Contact Person, such as the social worker or care professional, receives a complaint of sexual harassment, he/she shall:

- immediately record the dates, times and facts of the incident(s);
- ascertain the views of the victim as to what outcome he/she wants;
- ensure that the victim understands SFI's procedures for dealing with the complaint;
- discuss and agree the next steps: either (i) file, inside or outside SFI, an informal complaint, or (ii) file, inside or outside SFI, a formal complaint, on the understanding that choosing to resolve the matter informally, through filing an informal complaint, does not preclude the victim from pursuing a formal complaint if he/she is not satisfied with the outcome;
- keep a confidential record of all discussions;
- respect the choice of the victim, provided it does not put others at heightened risk;
- ensure that the victim knows that he/she can lodge the complaint outside of SFI; and
- confer with the Executive Director to determine if preventive suspension of the alleged harasser is necessary.

K. Staff Support System

SFI understands the need to support victims in making complaints, as SFI recognizes that because sexual harassment often occurs in unequal relationships within the workplace or with community partners, victims often feel that they cannot come forward. Throughout the complaints procedure, a victim is entitled to be assisted by a support person (a Designated Staff Contact Person) within the organization. The Executive Director will assign four (4) social workers or care professionals as

Designated Staff Contact Persons to assist victims of harassment, including sexual harassment. The group will undergo training in dealing with concerns and complaints from their colleagues. The Designated Staff Contact Persons will also act as Designated Mediators, when required.

L. Complaints Mechanism

Below are the mechanisms for filing an informal complaint and a formal complaint in SFI:

Informal Complaints Mechanism

If the victim wishes to deal with the matter informally, the Designated Staff Contact Person shall:

- give an opportunity to the alleged harasser to respond to the complaint;
- ensure that the alleged harasser understands the complaints mechanism;
- facilitate discussion between both parties to achieve an informal resolution, which is acceptable to the complainant, or refer the matter to a Designated Mediator within the organization to resolve the matter. A Designated Mediator is a member of the appointed Designated Staff Contact Persons. (See section on Designated Staff Contact Persons);
- ensure that a confidential record of what happens is kept;
- ensure that the above is done speedily and within 14 days of the complaint being made; and
- follow up after the outcome of the complaints mechanism to ensure that the behavior has stopped.

Formal Complaints Mechanism

If the victim wants to file a formal complaint in SFI, or if the victim had earlier made an informal complaint in SFI, but the informal complaint mechanism has not led to a satisfactory outcome for the victim, the formal complaint mechanism should be used to resolve the matter.

The Designated Staff Contact Person who initially received the complaint will refer the matter to the SFI Committee on Decorum and Investigation (CODI) to instigate a formal investigation. One (1) of the four (4) CODI members will head the investigation and he/she will not participate in any eventual deliberation on disciplinary actions against the harasser.

The CODI member carrying out the investigation shall:

- interview the victim;
- interview other relevant third parties separately;
- produce a report detailing the investigations, findings and any recommendations;
- present the report to the CODI and the Executive Director, who shall furnish a copy to the alleged harasser. The alleged harasser will be given five (5) days to submit a written response to the complaint;
- upon receiving response from the alleged harasser, the investigator shall present the response to the victim and the CODI;

- the CODI shall set up a conference with all parties involved for everyone to be heard. The Invitation to the conference will be in writing with no less than three (3) days' notice. The complainant and the alleged harasser may bring in counsel for the conference;
- following the conference, the CODI shall deliberate and determine whether, or to what extent, the harassment took place, and shall decide what the appropriate remedy for the victim and the organization is, in consultation with the victim (i.e., an apology, a change in working arrangements, a promotion if the victim was demoted as a result of the harassment, training for the harasser, discipline, suspension or dismissal);
- if the CODI cannot determine that the harassment took place, it may still make recommendations to ensure proper functioning of the workplace;
- the investigator will keep a record of all actions taken and ensure that all records concerning the matter are kept confidential; and
- the investigator will ensure that the process is done as quickly as possible and, in any event, within 60 days of the complaint being filed.

M. SFI Committee on Decorum and Investigation (CODI)

The Executive Director shall appoint four (4) members to sit in the CODI for a period of three (3) years at a time. CODI members may be reassigned multiple times.

The Executive Director will aim for gender balance and diverse representation in the CODI, with at least one (1) member of the Board of Trustees of SFI represented and sitting as Chairperson of the CODI, securing the implementation of proper and timely procedures, and heading any conferences needed. Another member of the CODI will be the secretary, responsible for proper documentation of all procedures. Between the remaining two (2) members, one (1) will be the investigator, carrying out all investigations as prescribed in the organization's Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure (see section on Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure). The investigator may not partake in the committee's decision on sanctions and disciplinary measures. The Executive Director may not be a CODI member, but may monitor all procedures and share insights and advice.

The CODI shall be activated in any formal harassment complaint. Informal complaints filed with SFI can be managed between the complainant, the alleged harasser, their supervisors, a designated SFI staff member, and the Executive Director.

N. Sanctions and Disciplinary Measures

Anyone who has been found to have sexually harassed another person under the terms of this policy may be held liable and may be subjected to any of the following sanctions:

- verbal or written warning;
- adverse performance evaluation;
- reduction in wages;
- transfer;

- demotion;
- suspension; or
- dismissal.

The nature of the sanctions will depend on the gravity and extent of the harassment. Suitable deterrent sanctions will be applied to ensure that incidents of sexual harassment are not treated as trivial. Certain serious cases, including physical violence, will result in the immediate dismissal of the harasser.

O. Implementation of this Policy

SFI will ensure that this policy is widely disseminated to all relevant persons and is included in the employees' handbook. All new employees must be informed of the content of this policy as part of their induction into the organization.

It is the responsibility of every team leader to ensure that all his/her team members are aware of the policy.

V. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

SFI believes in equal employment opportunity. It selects applicants regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry or political beliefs.

SFI follows a standard procedure in hiring employees. Selection shall be determined based on competence, good working attitude, ability to relate well with others, experience, potential to grow with the organization, and cultural fit with SFI.

A. Job Positions

Initial job positions are defined by the Executive Director and the immediate supervisor, Program Coordinator/Manager, after discussion with the concerned staff. Owing to changing work demands, certain positions may be reclassified to suit these new work requirements. Reclassification of jobs may entail a change in certain job duties with no change in salary.

B. Recruitment and Hiring

- A Human Resource request must be submitted to the Executive Director should there be a need for additional human resource for any department.
- The approval of the immediate supervisor and the Executive Director will be sufficient to start recruitment.
- The position should be advertised on the website of SFI, free websites and major job portals in the Philippines, stating a job title, job description, period of employment, required credentials and experience, application submission requirements and application deadline.

- Selected applicants are required to comply with all the hiring requirements to determine their fitness for the job.
- All information provided in the application process shall form part of the conditions of employment and any misrepresentation therein may constitute a valid ground for future termination of employment.
- Interviews and background investigation are conducted in the selection of applicants.
- Psychological/personality assessment by a licensed psychologist shall be conducted to assess the chosen candidate's personality before he/she is hired.
- The final decision on the choice of applicant rests on the Executive Director.
- A new employee shall be given an orientation program (**see Appendix B**) to acquaint him/her with SFI's policies, procedures, and operations to create a favorable attitude for adjustment to his/her new job and to the new environment.
- The immediate supervisor shall orient the new employee on the requirements of the job and the tasks and duties expected of him/her.
- New employees must understand that the support and financing of all job positions under the organization are dependent on funding availability.

C. Classification of Employees

SFI employees are classified as Probationary Employees, Regular Full-Time Employees, Regular Part-Time Employees, and Temporary Employees. Temporary Employees may be either Project-Hired/Contractual or Casual. The types of employment are defined, as follows.

Probationary Employee

- A person hired to occupy a regular position in SFI.
- He/she undergoes a probationary period not exceeding six (6) months, reckoned from the date he/she actually started working, to determine his/her capabilities and fitness to the position.
- During the middle of the probationary period, also known as the third month, the employee is coached by the immediate supervisor in terms of meeting the performance expectations of the organization, in line with the employee's job description.
- One (1) month prior to the end of his/her probationary period, the employee's performance is evaluated using standards for regularization and the Employee Appraisal (**see Appendix C**) which he/she was made aware of at the start of the probation.
- Peer Appraisal and Supervisor Appraisal will also be conducted regarding the employee's performance.
- If the appraisals are satisfactory and the management sees the employee as a match with the culture, beliefs and values of the organization, he/she is appointed to regular status or hired on a project basis.
- Otherwise, his/her services are terminated before the end of six (6) months.

Regular Full-Time Employee

- A regular full-time employee is an employee who, after satisfactorily passing his/her probationary employment, is placed on the regular payroll and is assigned to perform work directly connected with the regular normal operations of SFI.
- He/she is regularly scheduled to work during SFI's full-time schedule from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M, unless otherwise required by his/her duties and agreed with SFI.

Regular Part-Time Employee

A regular part-time employee is an employee who is regularly scheduled to work less than the full-time schedule, but at least two (2) days each week.

Temporary Employee

A temporary employee is an employee hired to perform activities, which are by nature temporary to the normal operations of SFI. A temporary employee may either be project hired/contractual or casual

Project Hired/Contractual

A project hired/contractual employee is an employee hired to render services for a fixed period and for a definite and specific project or undertaking, the completion of which has been determined at the time of his/her engagement.

Casual

A casual employee is hired when employment to an activity is not necessary or desirable in the usual business of SFI, but may be needed on a temporary basis.

D. Background and Reference Checks

- Recognizing that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way, SFI shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working in the organization.
- SFI shall develop best practices in the recruitment and selection of individuals to a childcare position.
- Particular attention will be paid to an applicant's previous work experience, references from previous employers, and background checks with the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the Philippine National Police (PNP).
- Interviews of the potential employee shall attempt to investigate his/her attitudes towards children.
- Online checks shall be a part of the background checking procedure during the recruitment process.

E. Internal Transfers and Promotions

- The standard set for promotion is merit, efficiency, competence, attitude and ability.
- Seniority becomes a factor in consideration only when candidates for promotion possess equal qualifications and merit.
- Newly promoted employees shall be subjected to a probationary period of at least six (6) months, but not to exceed 12 months.
- If the newly promoted employee falls short of the set expectations for the position within this period, he/she shall revert to his/her former job level.
- In such a case, there is no diminution in salary.
- Promotions are decided by the Executive Director after a screening process and according to the needs of the program.
- Propositions for salary increases are set by the Executive Director, usually upon recommendation of the immediate supervisor of the staff in question.

VI. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

It is in the best interest of SFI to be aware of, and to properly manage, all conflicts of interest and appearances of a conflict of interest. This Conflict of Interest Policy is designed to help trustees, officers and other employees and volunteers of SFI to identify situations that present potential conflicts of interest, and to provide SFI with a procedure to appropriately manage conflicts in accordance with legal requirements and the goals of accountability and transparency of its operations.

A. Conflict of Interest Defined

In this Conflict of Interest Policy, a person with a conflict of interest is referred to as an “Interested Person.” For purposes of this policy, the following circumstances shall be deemed to create a Conflict of Interest:

1. A member of the Board of Trustees (a trustee), officer and other employee or volunteer, including a Family Member of any of the foregoing, of SFI is a party to a contract, or is involved in a transaction with SFI for goods or services.
2. A trustee, officer and other employee or volunteer, or a family member of any of the foregoing, of SFI has a Material Financial Interest in a transaction between SFI and an entity in which the trustee, officer and other employee or volunteer, or a family member of the foregoing, is a director, trustee, officer, agent, partner, associate, employee, trustee, personal representative, receiver, guardian, custodian, or other legal representative.
3. A trustee, officer and other employee or volunteer, or a family member of any of the foregoing, of SFI is engaged in some capacity, or has a Material Financial Interest in a business or enterprise that competes with SFI.

Other situations may create the *appearance of a conflict*, or present a *duality of interests*, in connection with a person who has influence over the activities or finances of SFI. All such circumstances should be disclosed to the SFI Board of Trustees or staff, as appropriate, and a

decision shall be made as to what course of action the organization or individuals should take so that the best interests of SFI are not compromised by the personal interests of stakeholders in SFI.

B. Gifts, Gratuities, Entertainment and Favors

Accepting gifts, gratuities, entertainment and/or other favors from individuals or entities can also result in a conflict of interest or duality of interest when the party providing the gift/gratuity/entertainment/favor does so under circumstances where it might be inferred that such action was intended to influence, or possibly would influence, the interested person in the performance of his/her duties. This does not preclude the acceptance of items of nominal or insignificant value, or entertainment of nominal or insignificant value, which are not related to any particular transaction or activity of SFI.

C. Fiduciary Responsibility

Members of the Board of Trustees (the trustees) and employees have a clear obligation to conduct all affairs of the organization according to the highest ethical standards. Loyalty, honesty, truthfulness and moral virtue are expected to be practiced and upheld in all actions of the board and staff.

D. Covenant

Members of the Board of Trustees (the trustees) and employees agree to place the welfare of the organization above personal interests, interests of family members, or interests of others who may be personally involved in substantial affairs affecting the organization's basic functions.

E. Definitions

1. A "Conflict of Interest" is any circumstance described in Part 1 of this Conflict of Interest Policy.
2. An "Interested Person" is any person serving as a member of the Board of Trustees (a trustee), an officer or other employee or volunteer of SFI, or is a major donor to SFI, or anyone else who is in a position of control over SFI or who has a personal interest that is in conflict with the interests of SFI.
3. A "Family Member" is a spouse, parent, child or spouse of a child, brother, sister, or spouse of a brother or sister, of an Interested Person.
4. A "Material Financial Interest" in an entity is a financial interest of any kind which, in view of all the circumstances, is substantial enough that it would, or reasonably could, affect an Interested Person's or Family Member's judgment, with respect to transactions to which the entity is a party.
5. A "Contract" or "Transaction" is any agreement or relationship involving the sale or purchase of goods or services, the providing or receipt of a loan or grant, the

establishment of any other type of financial relationship, or the exercise of control over another entity organization. The making of a gift to SFI is not a Contract or Transaction.

F. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest

1. Prior to action of the Board of Trustees or any committee appointed by the Board of Trustees to address a Conflict of Interest, regarding a Contract or Transaction involving a Conflict of Interest, a trustee or committee member having a Conflict of Interest, and who is in attendance at the meeting, shall disclose all facts material to the Conflict of Interest. Such disclosure shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.
2. If the Board of Trustee members (the trustees) are aware that staff members or volunteers have a Conflict of Interest, relevant facts should be disclosed by the trustees or by the Interested Person himself/herself, if invited to the board meeting as a guest, for purposes of disclosure.
3. A member of the Board of Trustees (a trustee), or a committee member who does not plan to attend a meeting at which he or she has reason to believe that the Board of Trustees or committee will act on a matter in which the person has a Conflict of Interest, shall disclose to the chairperson of the meeting all facts material to the Conflict of Interest. The chairperson shall report the disclosure at the meeting, and the disclosure shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.
4. A person who has a Conflict of Interest shall not participate in, or be permitted to hear, the Board of Trustees' or committee's discussion of the matter, except to disclose material facts and to respond to questions. Such person shall not attempt to exert his/her personal influence with respect to the matter, either at or outside the meeting.
5. A person who has a Conflict of Interest with respect to a Contract or Transaction that will be voted on at a meeting shall not be counted in determining the presence of a quorum for purposes of the vote.
6. The person having a Conflict of Interest may not vote on the Contract or Transaction, and shall not be present in the meeting room when the vote is taken, unless the vote is by secret ballot. Such person's ineligibility to vote shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting. For purposes of this paragraph, a member of the Board of Trustees of SFI has a Conflict of Interest when he/she stands for election as an officer or for re-election as a member of the Board of Trustees.
7. Interested Persons who are not members of the Board of Trustees of SFI, or who have a Conflict of Interest with respect to a Contract or Transaction that is not the subject of a Board of Trustees' action or a committee action, shall disclose to their supervisor, or the chairperson of the meeting, or the chairperson's designee, any Conflict of Interest that such Interested Person has with respect to a Contract or Transaction. Such disclosure shall be made as soon as the Conflict of Interest is known to the Interested Person. The Interested Person shall refrain from any action that may affect SFI's participation in such Contract or Transaction.

In the event it is not entirely clear that a Conflict of Interest exists, the individual with the potential conflict shall disclose the circumstances to his/her supervisor, or the chairperson of the meeting, or the chairperson's designee, who shall determine whether full board discussion is warranted, or whether there exists a Conflict of Interest that is subject to this Conflict of Interest Policy.

G. Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy

1. If the Board of Trustees has reasonable cause to believe that a trustee, committee member, employee or volunteer has failed to disclose actual or possible Conflicts of Interest, the Board of Trustees shall inform the trustee, committee member, employee or volunteer of the basis for such belief, and afford the trustee, committee member, employee or volunteer an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
2. If, after hearing the trustee's, committee member's, employee's or volunteer's response, and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Board of Trustees determines that the trustee, committee member, employee or volunteer has failed to disclose an actual or possible Conflict of Interest, then the Board of Trustees shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

H. Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the meetings for discussion of the Board of Trustees, and committees with board-delegated powers, regarding Conflicts of Interest, shall contain the following information:

1. The names of the persons who disclosed, or otherwise were found to have, a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible Conflict of Interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a Conflict of Interest was present, and the Board of Trustees' or committee's decision as to whether a Conflict of Interest in fact existed.
2. The names of the persons who were present in the meeting for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

I. Confidentiality

Each trustee, officer or other employee and volunteer shall exercise care not to disclose confidential information acquired in connection with disclosures of Conflicts of Interest or potential Conflicts of Interest, which might be detrimental to the interests of SFI. Furthermore, trustees, officers or other employees and volunteers shall not disclose or use information relating to the business of SFI for their personal profit or advantage or the personal profit or advantage of their Family Member(s).

J. Review of Conflict of Interest Policy

1. Each trustee, officer or other employee and volunteer shall be provided with, and asked to review, a copy of this Conflict of Interest Policy, and to acknowledge in writing that he/she has reviewed it.
2. If relevant, annually, each trustee, officer or other employee and volunteer shall complete a disclosure form identifying any relationships, positions or circumstances in which he/she is or has been involved, that he/she believes could contribute to a Conflict of Interest. Such relationships, positions or circumstances might include service as a trustee of, director of, or consultant to another non-profit organization, or ownership of a business that might provide goods or services to SFI. Any such information regarding the business interests of a trustee, officer or other employee or volunteer of SFI, or a Family Member thereof, shall be treated as confidential and shall generally be made available only to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the Executive Director, and any committee appointed to address Conflicts of Interest, except to the extent additional disclosure is necessary in connection with the implementation of this Conflict of Interest Policy.

VII. SEPARATION FROM SERVICE

In the event of an employee's separation from SFI, the following guidelines shall be observed:

A. Resignation

- A 30-day notice from the employee is required prior to effectivity of the employee's resignation in order to give SFI time to recruit and train a suitable replacement.
- SFI has the option to accept the resignation immediately or insist upon the 30-day notice.
- A resigning employee is required to effect proper turnover of duties and responsibilities as well as SFI property (files, equipment, materials, etc.) in his/her keeping and possession, to his/her immediate superior.
- A Clearance Form (**see Appendix D**) is required to free him/her from any accountability with SFI and entitle him/her to the necessary benefits, privileges and remuneration.
- Clearance from all the departments and respective supervisors should be submitted to the Human Resource Administrator.
- The Immediate Supervisor and/or the Human Resource Administrator shall conduct an Exit Interview for the purpose of gathering feedback from the employee about his/her employment in SFI.
- A resigned employee shall sign the Release, Waiver and Quitclaim Form (**see Appendix E**) and surrender his/her SFI I.D. to the Human Resource Administrator before receiving his/her last pay and benefits.
- A resigned employee shall receive his/her pro-rata 13th month pay.

B. Retirement

The employee may retire upon reaching the age of 60 years or more but not beyond sixty-five (65) years old (and have served the organization for at least five (5) years).

Amount of Retirement Pay

The minimum retirement pay shall be equivalent to one-half (1/2) month of salary for every year of service, a fraction of at least six (6) months being considered as one (1) whole year.

For the purpose of computing retirement pay, “one-half month salary” shall include all of the following:

- a. Fifteen (15) days salary based on the latest salary rate;
- b. Cash equivalent of five (5) days of service incentive leave;
- c. One-twelfth (1/12) of the thirteenth-month pay.

Thus, “one-half month salary” is equivalent to twenty-two and a half (22.5) days. The COLA shall not be included in the computation of retirement pay. Retirement pay is exempt from income tax.

References on Republic Act No. 7641 “Retirement Pay Law”

1. Presidential Decree No. 442, Labor Code of the Philippines
2. DOLE Omnibus Rules Implementing the Labor Code
3. DOLE Department Order No. 20, series of 1994 – Amending Section 2 of RA No. 7641
4. Handbook on Worker’s Statutory Monetary Benefits 2020 Edition, DOLE

<https://www.laborlaw.ph/library/retirement-pay-under-philippine-labor-law>

https://www.dole.gov.ph/php_assets/uploads/2017/07/DO-167-16-Implementing-Rules-and-Regulations-of-RA-10757-entitled-An-Act-Reducing-the-Retirement-Age-of-Surface-Mine-Workers.pdf

C. Termination

- Employment may be terminated upon the existence of a just and valid reason.
- One (1) month notice shall be provided prior to termination of services.
- Due process shall be strictly observed in dealing with termination cases.
- A terminated employee shall receive a pro-rata 13th month pay.
- A terminated employee should undergo clearance procedures and shall sign the Release, Waiver and Quitclaim Form before he/she gets his/her last pay and any benefits due him/her
- An employee whose services were terminated for just cause cannot be rehired by SFI.

SFI may decide to terminate the services of an employee on the following grounds:

Just Causes

- Failure to maintain efficiency in work based on the standards set by SFI may be a ground for termination of services.

- Serious misconduct; gross and habitual neglect of duties; willful disobedience or insubordination; fraud or willful breach of trust; serious harassment, including sexual harassment of colleagues or community partners; commission of crime against the employer or his representative; loss of trust and confidence of the organization to employee; and analogous cases.

Authorized Causes

- Change of program strategies and/or lack or absence of funding may be grounds for termination.
 - o Installation of Labor-saving Devices
 - o Redundancy
 - o Retrenchment or Downsizing

Closure or Cessation of Operation

Disease

- When an employee's ailment poses a threat to him/her or his/her co-employees, and could not be cured within six (6) months as certified by a medical professional. In case of disease, termination of service will happen only as a last resort; after all other options are exhausted, like changes in job description and compensation corresponding to the current capability of the employee.
- In cases of installation of labor-saving devices, redundancy and retrenchment, the "Last-In, First-Out Rule" shall apply except when an employee volunteers to be separated from employment.

References on Article 297 of the Labor Code "Rules governing the application of the just and authorized causes of termination of employment"

1. DOLE Department Order No. 147-15, series of 2015 – Amending the implementing rules and regulations of book VI of the Labor Code of the Philippines

<https://www.divinalaw.com/dose-of-law/you-are-fired/>

<https://ndvlaw.com/how-to-terminate-an-employee-based-on-loss-of-trust-and-confidence/>

Payment of Separation Pay

Separation Pay shall be paid by the employer to an employee terminated due to installation of labor-saving devices, redundancy, retrenchment, closure or cessation of operations not due to serious business losses or financial reverses, and disease.

An employee terminated due to installation of labor-saving devices or redundancy shall be paid by the employer a separation pay equivalent to at least one (1) month pay or at least one (1) month pay for every year of service, whichever is higher, a fraction of six (6) months service is considered as one (1) whole year.

An employee terminated due to retrenchment shall be paid by the employer a separation pay equivalent to one (1) month pay or at least one-half (1/2) month pay for every year of

service, whichever is higher, a fraction of six (6) months service is considered as one (1) whole year.

An employee terminated due to closure or cessation of business operation not due to serious business losses shall be paid by the employer a separation pay equivalent to one (1) month pay or at least one-half (1/2) month pay for every year of service, whichever is higher, a fraction of six (6) months service is considered as one (1) whole year. Where closure is due to serious business losses or financial reverses, no separation pay is required.

An employee terminated due to disease shall be paid by the employer a separation pay equivalent to one (1) month pay or at least one-half (1/2) month pay for every year of service, whichever is higher, a fraction of six (6) months service is considered as one (1) whole year.

An employee whose employment is terminated by reason of just causes is not entitled to separation pay except as expressly provided for in the company policy or Collective Bargaining Agreement(CBA).

References on Article 298-299 of the Labor Code “Separation Pay in Authorized Causes of Termination of Employment”

1. DOLE Department Order No. 147-15, series of 2015 – Amending the implementing rules and regulations of book VI of the Labor Code of the Philippines
2. Handbook on Worker’s Statutory Monetary Benefits 2020 Edition, DOLE
<https://ndvlaw.com/when-is-an-employee-entitled-to-separation-pay-2/>

VIII. WORKPLACE SAFETY AND SECURITY

This policy:

- shows the commitment of SFI management and workers to health and safety,
- aims to remove or reduce the risks to the health, safety and welfare of all workers, visitors, and anyone else who may be affected while working for SFI, and
- aims to ensure that all work activities are done safely.

A. SFI is responsible for providing and maintaining:

- a safe working environment,
- safe systems of work,
- facilities for the welfare of all employees,
- any information, instruction, training and supervision needed to make sure that all employees are safe from injury and risks to their health,
- a commitment to consult and cooperate with employees in all matters relating to health and safety in the workplace, and
- a commitment to continually improve the performance of SFI through effective safety management.

B. Employees are responsible for:

- ensuring their own personal health and safety, and that of others, in the workplace,
- complying with safe work practices, with the intent of avoiding injury to themselves and others and damage to equipment,
- taking reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and others,
- reporting all accidents and incidents on the job immediately, no matter how trivial, and
- reporting all known or observed hazards to their supervisor or manager.

C. SAFETY AND SECURITY RULES

- Attendance and participation in fire prevention or firefighting seminars and actual fire drills are required for all employees.
- Electrical equipment/appliances are to be disconnected, except the internet connection, before leaving the office and other work premises.
- Octopus connections, dangling wires, exposed wiring or other conditions that may cause electrical troubles are strictly prohibited.
- Defective wiring and electrical equipment must not be used and should be replaced or repaired immediately.
- Doors in the office and other work premises should be locked when not in use.
- In case of damage or theft, the employee should inform the management together with the Inventory personnel.
- In case of sickness or injury, no matter how slight, the employee shall report this at once to his/her supervisor. An employee should not treat his/her own or someone else's injuries, unless in cases of capable first aid intervention. In case of any accident resulting in a severe injury, the employee is not to be moved until medical attention has been given by authorized personnel.
- In case of epidemics or pandemics, SFI will do everything possible to protect and keep safe children and staff in the organization. SFI will issue safety protocols, which as a minimum will follow the safety standards set by the local and the national authorities. All children and staff must strictly follow the set safety protocols in the best interest of all. Breaches in safety protocols must be reported to management immediately.
- Employees should not operate machines or equipment until they have been properly instructed and authorized to do so by their supervisors.
- Employees should keep their work areas clean.
- Possession of firearms, deadly or sharp objects, explosives and other deadly weapons is prohibited.
- Driving SFI's vehicles without a valid driver's license or under the influence of liquor or illicit drugs, or reckless driving potentially resulting to injury or death to a third party or damage to vehicles, is strictly prohibited.

D. Drug-Free Workplace

- Possession, use, or sale of illicit drugs is strictly prohibited.
- Being under the influence of illicit drugs at work is strictly prohibited.
- Prescription drugs are allowed as long as a current prescription is held and the use of those drugs does not adversely affect work performance.

E. Alcohol-Free Workplace

- Drinking liquor or other alcoholic beverages while in the performance of duties is not allowed.
- Coming to work under the influence of alcohol is not allowed.

F. Smoke-Free Workplace

- Smoking is prohibited on properties designated as SFI facilities.
- Smoking is prohibited in front of clients (see Child Protection Policy).

IX. WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

A. Attendance, Punctuality and Tardiness

Attendance

An employee is expected to devote full time and attention to the business and other interests of SFI during hours of work and whatever additional time that may be asked of the employee. The employee's position in SFI exists because it is necessary to assure the smooth flow and efficient handling of daily business activities.

Punctuality

Punctuality means reporting to work on time. In other words, an employee is punctual if he/she is at his/her place of work and ready to tackle actual tasks right on the first minute of his/her working hours.

Tardiness

Tardiness means reporting to work past the specified starting time. It is disruptive of the work process and results in delays and inefficiency. Habitual tardiness is subject to disciplinary action.

B. Working Relationships

No employee shall be degraded, defamed or insulted by a co-employee in front of other people.

The Supervisor

SFI believes that the relationship of an employee with others within the organization is directly influenced by the employee's contacts with his/her immediate superior. The employee's supervisor or manager is the person who gives the employee instructions, who judges the employee's performance, who compliments or criticizes the employee's work, and who exercises the primary influence over the kind of rewards and recognition that the employee receives. For these reasons, the employee's immediate superior is as keenly interested in making a success out of the employee's job, SFI, or any problem. The immediate supervisor will appreciate the confidence the employee places in him/her if the employee seeks his/her advice or counsel, whenever such matter arises.

Other Superiors and Co-workers

Other Superiors and the co-workers of an employee complete the working environment where an employee belongs. An employee's superior deserves to be regarded with respect. In the same manner, an employee's superior and co-workers will treat the employee with the same amount of courtesy and respect if the employee is friendly, honest, and cooperative in his/her dealings with them.

Interfering and refusing to cooperate with one's superiors or co-workers in the performance of their duties are tantamount to insubordination or failure to carry out a work assignment. Insubordination is not an acceptable behavior and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

C. Telephone Use

- It is important that an employee observes proper phone courtesy and professionalism all the time.
- The SFI phone is for official use only and should not be used for personal calls.
- Personal calls require permission from supervisor or management and will be treated on a case-to-case basis, especially in case of emergencies.

D. Preservation of Assets

- All employees should take care of all work-assigned property, equipment and furniture, as if these were their own. They should handle them properly and carefully in order to avoid losing or damaging them.
- Careless handling or intentional damaging and loss may make employees liable for damages and subject to disciplinary action.
- Failure to immediately report to superiors any damage to SFI property, or injury to a person, may lead to disciplinary action.
- Mishandling of equipment, tools, fixtures and parts, and/or failure to comply with established guidelines regarding their care and maintenance, may lead to disciplinary action.
- Employees may not transfer, remove or take out equipment, tools, fixtures and spare parts, without proper authorization.
- Inefficiency and misuse of SFI supplies and materials may lead to disciplinary action.

X. EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL FILES

SFI is dedicated to, and is in compliance with, the provision under the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). SFI shall collect, use, maintain and safely dispose of personal data in accordance with industry standards and relevant ordinances. The Human Resource Administrator and SFI management, in close collaboration with the Database Management Officer, shall ensure and maintain the integrity, veracity and safety of the organization's database. Likewise, SFI shall develop a system to assess, identify, document and manage risks related to data entry, processing and disposal.

SFI maintains a physical record of its employees' files (201 files) for a period provided for in the law and may destroy archived files when such period has lapsed.

XI. COMPENSATION AND WORK HOURS

SFI practices a "fair pay for fair work" policy. SFI management and its employees are ensured that salary/wage rates are consistent with provisions set forth by the Labor Code. In addition to government-mandated benefits, regular employees are entitled to social welfare packages i.e., salary loans, access to the educational assistance program, and similar arrangements, through an application process and upon meeting established criteria.

The Executive Director reserves the right to allocate remuneration packages or other monetary incentives based on merit, such as performance-based bonuses and similar arrangements.

A. Performance Reviews and Salary Reviews

An immediate supervisor and the Executive Director are responsible for employee performance evaluation and/or subsequent compensation review. Employee performance evaluations follow a prescribed process and are conducted annually. The result of this serves as one of the bases for salary increase. SFI also considers the existing government pay-scale system and inflation rate in computing for appropriate salary adjustment.

B. Wage and Salary Administration

Wage and Salary Rates

Salary rates are determined by a number of factors related to the job, such as skills, efforts, responsibilities and working conditions. SFI also considers inflation factor, wage orders, and prevailing industry rates.

Schedule and Manner of Payment

- All employees receive their salary in two (2) equal semi-monthly instalments on the 15th and at the end of each month.

- If the payday falls on a weekend or holiday, salaries shall be paid on the last working day prior to the weekend or the holiday.
- Payments are generally facilitated through direct deposits to individual bank accounts.
- In some exceptional cases, payment may be made paid by check or cash, handed out by the SFI Finance Team.
- The Bookkeeper shall distribute the pay slips every pay day.
- The employee's pay slip will always reflect a complete statement, not only of the employee's earnings but also of the employee's deductions.
- An employee is advised to keep his/her pay slips for ready reference and use.

Inquiries and Adjustments

- Questions regarding salaries are directed to the Finance Team.
- Any adjustments to salary require the approval of the Executive Director.

C. Hours of Work

- The staff members shall render five (5) work days a week, with two (2) days off a week.
- Working hours are flexible in accordance with the needs of the organization.
- Flexi-time refers to a varying start-end work schedule that equals an 8-hour shift, the total of which must be 40 hours on a weekly basis.
- All regular employees can avail themselves of the flexi-time work schedule, subject to SFI management's approval.
- See individual Program Manuals for specific work hours arrangements for specific programs.

Hours of Work for Office Staff

7:00 AM to 4: 00 PM

8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

9:00 AM to 6: 00 PM

Monday to Friday (except holidays)

Hours of Work for Family Home Program (FHP) Staff

Family Home Program staff members follow a flexi-time, rotating-shift work schedule. As stated earlier, flexi-time refers to varying start-end work schedule that equals an eight-hour shift, the total of which must be 40 hours on a weekly basis.

Family Home Program staff members share holiday and weekend duties. Family Home staff members have two (2) days off per week.

Hours of Work for Community Assistance Program (CAP) Field Workers

CAP Field Workers follow a flexi-time work schedule. As stated earlier, flexi-time refers to a varying start-end work schedule that equals an eight-hour shift, the total of which must be 40 hours on a weekly basis.

Hours of Work for Environmental Awareness for Children and Youth (EACY) Staff

EACY Workers follow a flexi-time work schedule. As stated earlier, flexi-time refers to a varying start-end work schedule that equals an eight-hour shift, the total of which must be 40 hours on a weekly basis.

Hours of Work for National Capital Region (NCR) Staff

NCR staff members have the option to avail themselves of a four-day, 40-hour work week for their productivity hours.

Should the NCR staff members decide to avail themselves of the said four-day, 40-hour work week, they will be working for more than eight (8) hours per day on their scheduled work days. In accordance with their employment contract, this will not constitute overtime, since the total hours worked per week will remain 40. Based from experience during pandemic imposed community quarantines and lock-downs, SFI is also seeing partly Work from Home (WFH) as a viable way forward for some program officers. This will lessen hours spent in traffic and offer the staff more time home and with family. At the same time, it is a positive development in terms of SFI's efforts in lessening our CO₂ footprint. WFH schemes will be made in agreement between the individual staff member and the NCR Program Manager.

D. Meal Periods and Rest Periods

- Employees are granted one (1) hour lunch breaks and 15-minute morning breaks and afternoon breaks.
- In-house employees are granted free meals.
- All other staff members assigned at the Mindoro Office, are granted free lunch and two (2) snacks.

E. Overtime Pay

SFI promotes an environment where work-life balance is achieved. SFI management has put in place systems to ensure that effectiveness, efficiency and optimum work productivity are delivered within the allotted work schedules for all employees. Thus, overtime work is not necessary.

Due to budget constraints, working overtime with pay is generally not allowed.

Audit, emergency meetings, trainings and representation may warrant additional working hours. To balance and offset this, employees are allowed to take days off during weekdays, with prior arrangement with their Immediate Supervisor.

F. Thirteenth (13th) Month Pay

- The employees are entitled to a 13th month pay given sometime in mid-December.
- This is equivalent to an employee's monthly basic salary at the time the bonus is paid, if the employee has been with SFI for one (1) year or more.
- If the employee has not completed one (1) year of service, the 13th Month Pay will be computed proportionate to the number of months in service.

G. Employee Travel and Reimbursement

(See Finance Manual)

XII. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Training and development programs will be made available to help an employee improve his/her performance in his/her present job, and to prepare him/her for positions of greater responsibility.
- The Human Resource Administrator, in coordination with the department heads or committee heads, shall determine the training and development needs of the organization and will arrange such according to priorities.
- For trainings outside the country, a contract between SFI and the employee will be required before an employee may avail himself/herself of such.

XIII. TIME OFF AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A. Holiday

SFI believes that relaxation and recreation are essential to promote an environment where work-life balance is achieved and maintained. Holidays are reserved for such purposes. In doing so, public holidays are observed, and a "No work on a holiday" policy applies to all employees, for whom it is not absolutely necessary to work due to the nature of their job description. Employees working on holidays will be compensated properly either through off setting or additional pay, following the existing guidelines of the DOLE.

Declared public holidays on a local level will also be observed.

- Holiday Pay refers to pay received by an employee on the occasion of a regular holiday or special non-working holiday.
- In the case of a regular holiday, the employee is paid even if he/she does not work.
- He/she receives twice his/her pay if he/she works on a regular holiday.
- If an employee works on a special non-working holiday, he/she is entitled to 130% of his/her regular pay.

Regular Holidays

The Philippines has 12 regular holidays PLUS the day designated by law for holding a general election.

Event	Date
New Year's Day	January 1
Araw ng Kagitingan	April 9
Maundy Thursday	Movable
Good Friday	Movable
Labor Day	May 1
Independence Day	June 12
National Heroes Day	August 31
Bonifacio Day	November 30
Christmas Day	December 25
Rizal Day	December 30
Eid'l Fitr	Varying dates
Eid'l Adha	Varying dates

Source: The Official Gazette <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/nationwide-holidays/>

Special Non-Working Holidays

The Philippines has the following special non-working holidays:

Event	Date
Chinese New Year	Varying dates
EDSA People Power Revolution Anniversary	February 25
Black Saturday	Varying dates
Ninoy Aquino Day	August 21
All Saints' Day	November 1
Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary	December 8
Additional special (non-working) day	As declared

Last Day of the Year	December 31
Source: The Official Gazette https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/nationwide-holidays/	

B. Vacation

- SFI believes that a periodic relief from work is beneficial to an employee.
- Therefore, an employee is given a chance to enjoy, annually, a period of rest and recreation.
- Fifteen (15) days' vacation leave with pay shall be granted to employees after appointment to regular employment.
- See items C to J on how to schedule vacations, personal leave of absence and sick leave.
- SFI reserves the option to schedule the vacation leaves of the employees.
- Unused vacation leave will not be carried over to the following year, unless special arrangement has been made with the Executive Director.

C. Sick Leave and Family Welfare Leave

- A regular employee who becomes ill or is indisposed may avail himself/herself of sick leave with pay so that he/she may recuperate from injury at no loss of income.
- This benefit shall be granted to employees after appointment to regular employment status.
- Fifteen (15) days sick leave with pay may be availed of by all regular employees.
- Further, seven (7) days Family Welfare Leave (FWL) may also be availed of by all regular employees, provided there is valid basis for FWL.
- For sick leave of four (4) days or more, the employee must attach to his/her leave form a medical certificate from the attending physician for approval of his/her Department Head, and to be submitted to the Human Resource Administrator.
- The employee must submit an approved Sick Leave Form (**see Appendix F**) to the Human Resource Administrator as soon as he/she returns to work.
- Sick leave and FWL compensations are strictly to be used ONLY on a needs basis.
- Unused sick leave and FWL cannot be converted to cash. Neither can they be accumulated for the next year.

D. Personal Leave of Absence

- For leave of half day to two (2) days, an employee shall submit an approved Leave Form (**see Appendix G**) to the Human Resource Administrator and/or the executive director at least one (1) day before the scheduled leave.

- For leave of three (3) days or more, an employee shall submit an approved Leave Form to the Human Resource Administrator and/or executive director at least one (1) week before the scheduled leave.

E. Bereavement Leave

An employee may be paid up to one week that he/she is absent from work, to attend the funeral of a family member such as a parent, spouse, or child.

F. Maternity Leave

A female employee is entitled to maternity leave as provided by Republic Act No. 11210 or the "105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law" and other applicable laws, as follows.

- A female employee is entitled to a maternity leave of 105 days with full pay, regardless of whether she gave birth via caesarean section or natural delivery.
 - A female employee who is a solo parent as defined by Republic Act No. 8792 or the "Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000" is entitled to an additional 15 days of maternity leave.
 - A female employee is entitled to a maternity leave of 60 days with full pay in cases of miscarriage or emergency termination of pregnancy.
 - Employment of maternity leave cannot be deferred but should be availed of either before or after the actual period of delivery in a continuous and uninterrupted manner.
 - In cases of live childbirth, or in cases of miscarriage or emergency termination of pregnancy, the maternity leave can be credited as combinations of prenatal and postnatal leave as long as it does not exceed 105 days for live childbirth, and 60 days for miscarriage or emergency termination of pregnancy. In no case shall postnatal care be less than 60 days.
 - A female employee has an option to extend for an additional 30 days without pay, for a live childbirth, provided that SFI (the employer) shall be given due notice, in writing, at least 45 days before the end of her maternity leave. No prior notice shall be necessary in the event of a medical emergency, but subsequent notice shall be given to SFI (the employer). The extended period of maternity leave without pay shall not be considered a gap in the service of the employee.
 - A female employee who is a Social Security System (SSS) member who has paid at least three (3) monthly contributions in the 12-month period immediately preceding the semester of her childbirth, miscarriage, or emergency termination of pregnancy shall receive full pay, which consists of (i) SSS maternity benefits based on her average daily salary credit, and (ii) salary differential paid by SFI (the employer), if any. SFI shall shoulder the excess of the allowable SSS benefits to cover the employee's full salary for the maternity leave. She is required to notify SFI (the employer) of her pregnancy and the probable date of her childbirth, which notice shall be transmitted to the SSS in accordance with the rules and regulations it may provide.
- (1) The full payment shall be advanced by SFI (the employer) within 30 days from the filing of the maternity leave application;

- (2) Payment of daily maternity benefits shall be a bar to the recovery of sickness benefits provided under Republic Act No. 1161 or "the Social Security Act of 1954", as amended, for the same period for which daily maternity benefits have been received;
- (3) The SSS shall immediately reimburse SFI (the employer) one hundred percent (100%) of the amount of maternity benefits advanced to the female employee by the employer, upon receipt of satisfactory and legal proof of such payment; and
- (4) If a female employee should give birth or suffer a miscarriage or emergency termination of pregnancy without the required contributions having been remitted for her by SFI (her employer) to the SSS, or without the SSS having been previously notified by the employer of the time of the pregnancy, SFI (the employer) shall pay to the SSS damages equivalent to the benefits which said female member would otherwise have been entitled to.

Unless otherwise provided by Republic Act No. 11210 or the "105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law," and other applicable laws, female employees availing themselves of the maternity leave period and benefits must receive their full pay. SFI shall be responsible for payment of the salary differential between the actual cash benefits received from the SSS by the covered female employees, and their average weekly or regular wages, for the entire duration of the maternity leave.

Allocation of Maternity Leave Credits.

Any female employee entitled to maternity leave benefits as provided for by law may, at her option, allocate up to seven (7) days of said benefits to the child's father, whether or not the same is married to the female employee, provided that in the death, absence, or incapacity of the father, the benefit may be allocated to an alternate caregiver who may be a relative within the fourth degree of consanguinity, or the current partner of the female employee sharing the same household, upon the election of the mother/female employee, taking into account the best interests of the child. In such cases, a written notice shall be provided to the employer of the mother (SFI) and the employer of the alternate caregiver. This benefit is over and above the benefit provided under Republic Act No. 8187 or the "Paternity Leave Act of 1996."

Death or Permanent Incapacity of the Female Employee

In the event the beneficiary female employee dies or is permanently incapacitated, the balance of her maternity leave benefits shall accrue to the father of the child or to a qualified caregiver, as provided above.

Maternity Leave for Women Regardless of Civil Status

All female employees of SFI who are members of the SSS, regardless of their civil status, shall be granted maternity leave, with full pay, upon compliance with the legal requirements.

Maternity Leave with Pay in Case of Childbirth, Miscarriage, or Emergency Termination of Pregnancy after the Termination of an Employee's Service

Maternity leave with full pay shall be granted even if the childbirth, miscarriage, or emergency termination of pregnancy occurs not more than 15 calendar days after the termination of an employee's service, as her right thereto has already accrued. However, such period is not applicable when the employment of the pregnant female employee has been terminated without just cause, in which case SFI (the employer) will pay her the full amount equivalent to her salary for 105 days for childbirth, and 60 days for miscarriage or emergency termination of pregnancy, based on her full pay, in addition to the other applicable daily cash maternity benefits that she should have received had her employment not been illegally terminated.

Maternity Leave Credits

The maternity leave can be credited as combinations of prenatal and postnatal leave, as long as it does not exceed 105 days, and provided that compulsory postnatal leave shall not be less than 60 days.

Maternity Benefits for Female Employees Who are Non-Members of the SSS

Female employees, who are neither voluntary members nor regular members of the SSS shall be governed by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) Circular No. 022-2014 or the "Social Health Insurance Coverage and Benefits for Women About to Give Birth."

Maternity Leave of a Female Employee with Pending Administrative Case

The maternity leave benefits granted under applicable laws shall be enjoyed by a female employee even if she has a pending administrative case.

Non-Diminution of Benefits

Nothing in the applicable laws shall be construed as to diminish existing maternity benefits currently enjoyed, whether or not these are granted under collective bargaining agreements (CBA) or present laws, if these benefits are more beneficial to the female employee.

Any other working arrangement which the female employee shall agree to, during the additional maternity leave period, shall be allowed, provided, that this shall be consented to in writing by the female employee, and shall primarily uphold her maternal functions and the requirements of postnatal care.

Security of Tenure

Those who avail themselves of the benefits of applicable laws on maternity leave shall be assured of security of tenure. As such, the exercise of this option by them shall not be used as basis for demotion in employment or termination.

The transfer to a parallel position or reassignment from one organizational unit to another in the same agency or private enterprise shall be allowed, provided that it shall not involve a reduction in rank, status, salary, or otherwise amount to constructive dismissal.

References on Republic Act No. 11210 or the "105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law":

1. Copy of the law, Republic Act No. 11210 or the "105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law":

<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2019/02feb/20190220-RA-11210-RRD.pdf>

2. Copy of the Implementing Rules (IRR) of Republic Act No. 11210 or the "105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law":

https://www.dole.gov.ph/php_assets/uploads/2019/05/IRR-RA-11210-dated.pdf

G. Paternity Leave

- A married male employee is entitled to a seven-day paternity leave with full pay after his legitimate wife's childbirth or miscarriage.
- The married male must be living in the same house as his wife for this benefit to be in effect.

H. Parental Leave and Flexible Work Schedule for Solo Parents

Parental Leave for Solo Parents

- As provided by Republic Act No. 8972 or the "Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000," an employee who is a solo parent, in addition to leave privileges under existing laws, is entitled to parental leave of not more than seven (7) working days every year, provided that the solo parent has rendered service of at least one (1) year.
- The parental leave shall be availed of every year and shall not be convertible to cash. If not availed of within the calendar year, said privilege shall be forfeited within the same year.
- A "solo parent" is defined by Republic Act No. 8972 or the "Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000," as amended, and other applicable laws.
- Under the law, "parental leave" shall mean leave benefits granted to a solo parent to enable him/her to perform parental duties and responsibilities where physical presence is required.

Flexible Work Schedule for Solo Parents

- SFI shall provide for a flexible working schedule for solo parents, provided that the same shall not affect individual and organization productivity. SFI may request exemption from this requirement from the DOLE on certain meritorious grounds.
- “Flexible work schedule” is defined by law as the right granted to a solo parent employee to vary his/her arrival and departure time, without affecting the core work hours as defined by the employer.

References on Republic Act No. 8972 or the “Solo Parents’ Welfare Act of 2000”:

1. Copy of Republic Act No. 8972 or the “Solo Parents’ Welfare Act of 2000”:

<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2000/11/07/republic-act-no-8972/>

2. Primer on Republic Act No. 8972 or the “Solo Parents’ Welfare Act of 2000”:

https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/attachments/aodao/article/Q%20%26%20A_Solo%20Parent%27s%20Welfare%20Act%20and%20Parental%20Leave.pdf

I. Magna Carta Leave for Women

Under Republic Act No. 9710 or the “Magna Carta for Women,” and its implementing rules and guidelines, female employees who are scheduled to undergo surgery for gynecological disorders can file for a special leave of absence. The availment of such leave will be according to the applicable procedure and guidelines of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

- The special leave is in addition to the leave privileges under existing laws.
- The special leave may be for a maximum period of two (2) months per year with full pay, based on the employee’s gross monthly compensation, following surgery caused by gynecological disorders.
- The special leave benefit shall be granted to a qualified female employee after she has undergone surgery, without prejudice to the employer allowing an employee to receive her pay before or during the surgery.
- The special leave may be used for the period covering the surgery until recuperation. Absence incurred from the pre-surgery period, as well as those in excess of the two months allowed under the special leave of absence benefit, may be charged against the employee’s earned leave credits.

- To apply for special leave of absence, a female employee shall file her application leave within a reasonable period of time from the expected date of surgery, or within such period as may be provided by SFI rules or by a collective bargaining agreement (CBA).
- The term “gynaecological disorders” refers to disorders that would require surgical procedures such as, but not limited to, dilation and curettage and those involving female reproductive organs such as vagina, cervix, uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries, breast, adnexa, and pelvic floor, as certified by a competent physician.
- The benefit is non-cumulative and not convertible to cash, unless otherwise provided for in a CBA.

If there are existing or similar benefits under SFI’s policy, practice or CBA, the existing similar benefits shall be considered as compliance, unless the SFI policy, practice or the CBA provides otherwise. In case the SFI policy, practice or CBA provides lesser benefits, SFI shall grant the difference.

References on Republic Act No. 9710 or the “Magna Carta for Women”:

1. Republic Act No. 9710 or the “Magna Carta for Women”:

<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2009/08/14/republic-act-no-9710/>

2. Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9710 or the “Magna Carta for Women”:

[http://www.ro6.dole.gov.ph/fndr/mis/files/IRR%20Magna%20Carta%20of%20Women%20presentation%20for%20launch%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.ro6.dole.gov.ph/fndr/mis/files/IRR%20Magna%20Carta%20of%20Women%20presentation%20for%20launch%20(1).pdf)

3. Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) opinion on the special leave of absence under Republic Act No. 9710 or the “Magna Carta for Women”:

<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2011/03/18/dole-approves-special-leave-for-women-in-the-private-sector-who-undergo-surgery/>

4. Primer of the Philippine Commission for Women (PCW) on the special leave of absence under the Republic Act No. 9710 or the “Magna Carta for Women” (Primer no. 1):

<https://pcw.gov.ph/availment-of-special-leave-benefit-faqs/#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20special%20leave,surgery%20caused%20by%20gynecological%20disorders.>

5. Primer of the Philippine Commission for Women (PCW) on the special leave of absence under Republic Act No. 9710 or the “Magna Carta for Women” (Primer no. 2):

https://pcw.gov.ph/assets/files/2019/04/RA-9710_Gynecological-Leave.pdf

J. Special Leave of Absence for Victims Under the “Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004”

Female employees who are victims and who have filed cases under Republic Act No. 9262 or the “Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004” (the VAWC Act) are entitled to a special leave of absence.

- Violence against women and their children (VAWC) and the acts constituting VAWC are defined by the VAWC Act.
- Under the VAWC Act, victims shall be entitled to take a paid leave of absence up to 10 days, in addition to other paid leaves under the Labor Code, extendible when the necessity arises, as specified in the protection order.
- The 10-day leave under the VAWC Act may only be availed of if the victim has applied for any protection order with the intention to file a case against her assailant.
- To be entitled to the leave benefit, where the victim has applied for any protection order with the intention to file a case against her assailant, the only requirement, in cases filed in the Barangay, is for the victim-employee to present to her employer a certification from the Barangay Chairman or Barangay Kagawad, that an action relative to the VAWC Act is pending. In cases filed in court, the only requirement is for the victim-employee to present to her employer a certification from prosecutor or the Clerk of Court, as the case may be, that an action relative to the VAWC Act is pending.
- The availment of the 10-day leave shall be at the option of the female employee, which shall cover the days that she has to attend to medical and legal concerns. Leaves not availed of are non-cumulative and not convertible to cash.

References on Republic Act No. 9262 or the “Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004” (the VAWC Act):

1. Copy of Republic Act No. 9262 or the “Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004” (the VAWC Act);

<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2004/03/08/republic-act-no-9262-s-2004/>

2. Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) on the leave provided by Republic Act No. 9262 or the “Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004” (the VAWC Act):

<https://bwsc.dole.gov.ph/images/InfoMaterials/What-Women-Shld-Know-VAW.pdf>

K. Lactation/Breastfeeding

- Philippine law protects the rights of working mothers who breastfeed.
- Republic Act No. 10028 or the “Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act of 2009” requires workplaces to establish lactation stations.
- These stations must be kept “private, clean, sanitary, and well-ventilated” at all times.

- The law also prohibits the promotion, marketing, and sale of instant formula within these stations.
- The law requires “lactation periods” for breastfeeding employees, in addition to time-off for meals, to allow them time to express their breast milk.
- Lactation stations should be separate from the toilet.
- When relevant, SFI will allocate a room/space with privacy and comfort for the purpose of breastfeeding and/or lactation.
- There will be no minimum or maximum time set for the mother to breastfeed or extract her milk.

L. Under-time

- Under-time must be filed and have prior approval by the employee’s immediate superior.
- Leaving or abandoning the employee’s post without prior approval is punishable under the Code of Conduct.
- Under-time is granted only in times of emergency, very important personal reasons, illness or injury.
- An approved Under-time Form (**see Appendix H**) must be submitted to the Human Resource Administrator before leaving the work premises.

M. Offsetting

In instances where an employee on day off is required to report for work, he/she is allowed to re-schedule his/her day off on another day.

N. Absences

Absence means failure to report to work on an officially designated time and place. Unnecessary absence disrupts the work schedule of an employee’s department, resulting in the slowdown of operation and delays. However, SFI allows certain unavoidable absence within reasonable limits, as follows:

Excused Absence

- An employee’s absence is excused if he/she has filed a Leave of Absence Request Form (**see Appendix I**) prior to his/her absence, and which has been approved by his/her immediate superior.
- This is subsequently charged to the employee’s vacation leave credits, if any.

Absence Due to Illness

- Absence without prior notice is excused if it is due to illness (refer to Sick Leave procedure)
- In these instances, all processes covered in the Sick Leave section of the Leave of Absence Request Form should be complied with.

Unforeseen Absence

- If, for valid reason, an employee cannot report to work, he/she is obliged to notify the Office of his/her absence, stating the reason and duration, by whatever convenient communication system available, at least one (1) hour before the start of work.
- The officer informed must immediately relay the absence notification to the immediate superior of the employee concerned.
- In case the leave of absence is longer than expected, another notice is required.
- A Leave of Absence Request Form is then filed upon return to work.
- If found reasonable, the absence is excused and charged against vacation leave credits.
- If found unreasonable, the absence is considered unexcused, therefore without pay, and is subject to disciplinary action in conformance with the SFI Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct.

Unauthorized Absence or Absence without Official Leave (AWOL)

- An absence is considered unauthorized if an employee fails to notify his/her immediate superior or the Human Resource Administrator within the first four (4) hours of the scheduled work day.
- Upon return to work, the employee must fill up the Leave of Absence Request Form stating reasons for his/her absence, and must secure approval from his/her immediate superior.
- If approved, the absence will be charged to leave credits, if any.
- Otherwise, the absence will be deducted from the employee's salary.
- If absence is disapproved, the immediate superior will impose appropriate disciplinary action based on the SFI Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct.

XIV. Employee Benefits

A. Social Security System (SSS), the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), and Pag-IBIG Fund

For SSS, PhilHealth, and Pag-IBIG Fund membership requirements, SFI shall withhold and remit the employee's share of contributions to each corresponding agency.

B. Medical and Health Services

- All regular employees are enrolled annually with SFI's medical insurance provider (health maintenance organization or "HMO").
- All employees are required to undergo an annual physical/medical examination (APE) once a year. It should be the initiative of the employee to arrange with the Human Resource Administrator and the accredited hospital when availing himself/herself of his/her APE.
- The Human Resource Administrator shall take necessary steps to enhance and promote utilization of the HMO. Repeated failure for no valid reason of the regular employee to undergo his/her APE within the year can forfeit his/her membership with the HMO for two (2) consecutive years.
- Epidemics and pandemics are valid reasons to refrain from pursuing an APE.

C. Group Health Care Program (Healthy Lifestyle and Wellness Program)

This program is administered through an HMO. The cost of funding this program is borne solely by SFI. All regular employees who have been with SFI for at least one (1) year are covered by this program.

D. Employee Dependent Educational Assistance Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Employee Dependent Educational Assistance Policy is to provide assistance to eligible employees' dependent children, who are seeking education at elementary, junior high school, senior high school, vocational and undergraduate levels.

Definitions

An eligible dependent is a student who is a child of a full-time employee, meaning, any naturally born child, legally adopted child, stepchild, or ward of an employee who (i) is unmarried and under 25 years of age, and (ii) is chiefly dependent on the employee for support (claimed as a dependent for tax purposes).

Eligibility for Employee Dependent Educational Assistance Program

Any regular full-time employee of SFI, who has been working with SFI for at least two (2) years as a regular employee, may apply for benefits under the Employee Dependent Educational Assistance Program.

1. The dependent is enrolled as a full-time student. An enrollment status is required for a dependent child to be eligible.
2. Assistance under the Employee Dependent Educational Assistance Program will be limited to elementary, junior high school, senior high school, vocational and college levels of dependents.

Terms and Conditions

1. The Employee Dependent Educational Assistance Program shall provide Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) tuition per semester (vocational and college levels) or Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) every school year (elementary, junior high school and senior high school levels).
2. The employee cannot use the Employee Dependent Educational Assistance Program as an inducement to employment or continuing employment.
3. Employees will be billed for their dependents' tuition if they resign from SFI and the effective date of resignation occurs during the first thirty (30) days after classes have commenced.
4. Only one (1) dependent child per employee will be accepted every semester/school year.
5. Accepted dependents are expected to have passing grades in all units, submit grades every end of the semester (vocational and college) and school year (elementary, junior high school and senior high school), attend awareness sessions provided by the organization, and render time for community service during school breaks.
6. An employee whose child is a beneficiary of the CAP educational assistance program (any level from primary to college) is eligible to apply another dependent child in the Employee Dependent Educational Assistance Program.
7. Failure to remain in good academic standing or complete the school year, as described above, will result in the dependent's loss of eligibility to participate in the program for the subsequent semester or subsequent years.
8. In cases that the employee decides to transfer the grant to another dependent, the first dependent should finish the current level first, i.e., graduate from elementary if in grade school, graduate from junior high school if in junior high school, graduate from senior high school if in senior high school, graduate from the vocational course if in a vocational school, and graduate from college if in college. The benefits of the Employee Dependent Educational Assistance Program are non-transferable if the existing dependent was not able to finish the level, unless there is valid reason for the dependent to stop schooling, e.g., a medical condition as declared by a certified medical practitioner or unresolved behavioural issues, attested by the relevant school authorities.
9. In cases that the existing dependent stops from school, the employee's grant will be suspended for the following school year and will only be resumed after a year.

Procedures

1. Forms for filing an application for the Employee Dependent Educational Assistance Scholarship Program are available in the Human Resources Department. To receive educational assistance for a dependent child, the forms must be filed at least two (2) months in advance at the beginning of classes.
2. The dependent child must meet the school admissions criteria and must complete registration requirements.

3. Upon request, an employee must produce any supporting documentation requested by SFI to show that the dependent child meets the criteria set forth in this program.
4. As a precondition to approving a request to participate in this program, SFI will require the employee to enter into an agreement with SFI in order to enjoy participation in this program.

Documentary Requirements

- Accomplished application form for recommending approval of the Human Resource Administrator and the final approval of the Executive Director.
- A photocopy of the birth certificate (certified by the Philippine Statistics Office or the “PSA”) of the dependent.
- School Registration Form/Certificate of Enrollment of the dependent.

Once Approved

Signed agreement between SFI and the employee.

E. Employee’s Special Loan Policy

Purpose of the Policy

Stairway Foundation, Inc. will offer to its employees a special loan program. The purpose of this program is to offer low interest loans to any of our colleagues in a situation, where they need to loan money for any of the reasons stipulated under the terms and conditions for obtaining a loan.

If the basis for a loan is a personal or immediate family emergency, a loan can be afforded with NO interest as an Emergency Loan. Emergency loans will be granted on a case-to-case basis upon counsel between borrower and management. Emergency Loans do not fall under this policy.

The funding for this program will come from a portion of SFI Restricted Funds for Sustainability and Retirement of Employees.

The scope of this policy applies to regular employees of SFI and its objective is to establish a sustainable and all-inclusive procedure for the application of personal loans from the organization. Management reserves the right to withdraw this privilege at any time.

Eligibility

Under certain circumstances, the company provides financial loans to its employees. The amount and conditions under which loans are provided may vary.

This policy applies to all regular employees with at least three (3) years of tenure in the organization.

Employees should carefully consider whether they are able to meet the loan repayments before applying for a loan under this scheme.

All applications should be completed and authorised in line with the procedure and forwarded to Admin and Finance unit for processing.

Grant of Special Loan

The organization may assist employees financially by granting low interest-based loans for purposes that may improve their quality of life and long term financial situation. Examples of purposes:

- Health/Medical Assistance to Family/Friends, outside of the immediate family (niece, uncle, grandparents, in-laws, etc.)
- Education
- Livelihood
- Home Improvements
- Other special needs

A “Special need”

For the purposes of this policy, a special need is considered to be an event that

- a. could not be reasonably expected to occur, and
- b. is unlikely to occur again.

Examples of “special need” that do not meet the qualifications for obtaining a loan:

- a. Inability to pay recurring, predictable, or routine expenses, such as credit card and utility bills, and automobile maintenance costs.
- b. Inability to pay for taxes, insurance, or vehicle registration fees.
- c. Inability to pay for vacation or holiday expenses.

Provisions of the Policy

Loans will be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. A contract must be entered between the employee and SFI;
2. The funds and cash flow position of SFI will be an important consideration before loans are granted;
3. The maximum loan to grant shall not exceed four months’ total salary of the borrower;
4. Loans will not be granted if an employee’s net or take-home pay consequently reduces to lower than 50%;
5. An employee may obtain up to two employee special loans within a 12-month period; however, an employee may not obtain a second special loan if an unpaid balance remains on an existing loan;
6. Loans must be used for their stated purpose. Failure to do so constitutes fraud and is regarded as a serious matter. This will lead to disciplinary action being taken like increasing the interest rate of the loan if the contract is breached;
7. Documentary proof should accompany all applications for loans;

8. The policy shall be reviewed periodically in keeping with the trends observed in granting the loans;
9. Management reserves the right to withdraw this privilege at any time.

Loan repayment Terms and Interest Charges

1. Term. The maximum loan repayment period is twenty-four months.
2. Interest. The fixed interest rate is 5% per annum of the loan amount.
3. Payment method. Repayment of the loan must be made through a monthly payroll deduction.
4. Application of payment. Any partial payment will be applied first to the interest amount due, with the remainder applied against the principal balance.
5. First payment. The first repayment of the loan will be scheduled for the next available payroll, with subsequent payments deducted monthly until the loan is paid in full.
6. Recovery upon Default or Resignation. All loans are due and payable in full upon termination of employment with the organization and the balance amount will be claimed against the employee's final settlement or last pay.

Loan Application Process

1. A prospective borrower may obtain information about requesting an Employee Special Loan from the Admin and Finance Department.
2. Application Form to apply for Employee Special Loan Program is available in Admin and Finance Department.
3. It is the responsibility of the employee to provide all requested proof / supporting documentation to substantiate the loan application.
4. Recommendation/endorsement from the borrower's coordinator is needed, or in the case of NCR office, recommendation from the OIC. Executive Director will give the final approval.
5. Only when approval to continue with the process has been awarded to the employee will a Loan/Advance agreement be drafted.
6. The processing period for the application and disbursement of loanable amount will take three to five working days from the submission date of application. The granted loan will be issued via check or through online bank transfer to employee's payroll account.
7. To enable repayment of the special loan, the borrower must sign an automatic payroll deduction authorization, which is included as part of the promissory note.
8. A monthly/quarterly reconciliation will be conducted by the Admin and Finance Department to ensure that loans are recovered as per loan agreement.
9. Two copies of the loan agreement will be generated. One for own record of employee and the other one for admin and finance department. For NCR colleagues, an additional copy for the NCR Office OIC.

The parties agree to enter into a confidential agreement with respect to the disclosure of confidential information. Disclosing the confidential information related to this application to non-authorized personnel is strictly prohibited.

EMPLOYER (DESIGNATE)

EMPLOYEE

Signature: _____

Signature _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

XV. CODE OF CONDUCT

A. Rationale

The rules and regulations consolidated in this Code of Conduct were stipulated in order to:

- Promote discipline, order, proficiency and rapport among employees of SFI.
- Secure consciousness among employees, the clients and the public, on the standard of conduct and behaviour expected of employees in the performance of their duties and responsibilities, and in respect to clients and the public.
- Impact adequate guidelines in the conduct of disciplinary/corrective action cases.
- Reinforce elements stated in the Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct.

B. Forms of Disciplinary Actions

Verbal Warning

A verbal warning is a warning served through face-to-face discussion and counselling for committing a minor offense.

Written Warning

A written warning is a warning served in writing to an erring employee for committing an offense.

Suspension

Suspension is imposed on an erring employee found guilty of a serious or grave offense. The employee is laid off from duty without pay for a specified period.

Dismissal

Dismissal means separation of an employee from SFI with just cause, with no provision for re-employment in SFI.

C. Basic Disciplinary Procedures

- Any violation of SFI rules and regulations shall be investigated by the immediate superior or a Designated Staff.
- The employee concerned will be given equal opportunity to present his/her side of the case.
- Disciplinary actions involving verbal warnings can be accomplished by the Supervisor within the boundaries of the Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct

- Disciplinary actions involving written warnings can be accomplished by the Supervisor within the boundaries of the Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct and with approval from the Executive Director.
- Disciplinary actions involving suspension or dismissal shall be discussed with the Executive Director before implementing the corresponding sanctions

D. Application of Penalties

SFI may increase or decrease the gravity of the sanction to be imposed on the erring employee by taking consideration of appropriate factors such as:

- Employee's disciplinary record
- Length of service
- Extent of participation in the offense
- Magnitude of the effects of the offense on SFI, its employees and community partners.
- Employee's admission of the offense
- Employee's cooperation in the investigation
- Employee's resolve to rectify the act

E. Specific Violations

1. Offense against Clients

This means any breach of elements in SFI's Child Protection Policy (CPP) or an offence against community partners, who are not minors.

2. Offenses against Job Performance

This means any breach of the elements in the Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct, and specifically the offenses that follow:

- a. Absence without official leave (AWOL),
- b. Tardiness,
- c. Sleeping during working hours,
- d. Loitering/abandonment of post,
- e. Wasting time or loitering includes, but shall not be limited to:

- (1) Being in an area where an employee has no legitimate business,

- (2) Being in his/her authorized area but not doing anything useful in the accomplishment of his/her work,
- (3) Taking more than the allowed time for lunch or coffee break, or
- (4) Wasting time to avoid work.

- f. Inefficiency and misuse of SFI's supplies and materials,
- g. Limiting output/production,
- h. Failure to submit work on time,
- i. Failure to follow instructions of superiors, or
- j. Three (3) consecutive evaluations with "NEEDS IMPROVEMENT" performance rating.

3. Offenses against Fellow Employees, Subordinates and Superiors

This means any of the following offenses:

- a. Acts against Teamwork
 - i. Insubordination (Breach of Instruction, Official Order or Memorandum),
 - ii. Disrespect/discourtesy for authority,
 - iii. Withholding of cooperation,
 - iv. Concealment/withholding of information; refusal to communicate, or
 - v. Abuse of authority or position in SFI to gain profit or advantage from employees under one's position.
- b. Violent Acts (assault/fighting)
- c. Theft

4. Offenses against SFI's Interest and Policies

This means any of the following offenses:

- a. Mishandling of confidential information,
- b. Failure of an immediate superior to maintain discipline or impose disciplinary measures on an erring subordinate,
- c. Offering or accepting anything of value in exchange for a job, work assignment, or favorable condition of employment, or
- d. Engaging in personal business during working hours.

5. Offenses against Good Personal Behavior

This means any of the following offenses:

- a. Reporting for work under the influence of liquor, or
- b. Vandalism – destroying, defacing or removing official memos from bulletin boards; destroying or defacing other official documents of SFI or property of SFI.

6. Offenses against Honesty and Integrity

This means any of the following offenses:

- a. Misuse of SFI documents for personal benefit or the benefit of another,
- b. Pilferage or embezzlement,
- c. Falsification of SFI documents for personal benefit or the benefit of another,
- d. Perjury, including falsification or misrepresentation of any material or relevant personal document or record of employment and/or false testimony in an SFI investigation,
- e. Unofficial use of SFI property and facilities, regardless of whether or not there is damage to the property or facilities,
- f. Intentional hiring of non-qualified applicants for employment,
- g. Disloyalty, or
- h. Conflict of interest/using SFI time and property for personal gain.

7. Offenses against Safety and Housekeeping

This means any of the following offenses:

- a. Failure to comply with established safety and housekeeping rules,
- b. Failure to immediately report to superiors any damage to SFI property or injury,
- c. Mishandling of equipment, tools, fixtures, and parts; failure to comply with established guidelines regarding their care and maintenance,

- d. Transferring, removing or taking out equipment, tools, fixtures and spare parts, without proper authorization,
- e. Drinking liquor or other alcoholic beverages while in the performance of duties,
- f. Unlawful possession of firearms, deadly or sharp objects, explosives and other deadly weapons, or
- g. Possession, use, or sale of illicit drugs.

8. Offenses against People or Property

This means any of the following offenses:

- a. Malversation of SFI funds,
- b. Driving SFI vehicles without a valid driver's license, or under the influence of liquor or illicit drugs, or reckless driving potentially resulting to injury or death to a third party or damage to vehicles,
- c. Unauthorized use or lending of any SFI-owned property such as tools, equipment, vehicles, etc., for any purpose,
- d. Fraud against SFI,
- e. Substituting SFI material or equipment with something of lesser value,
- f. Any damage caused to SFI property or the property of another employee, either through negligence or willful intention, or
- g. Negligence or improper use of tools, equipment or machines resulting to damage or loss of SFI property and materials.

9. Offenses against Security and Public Order

This means any of the following offenses:

- a. Refusal to submit to, or failure to obey, security requirements of SFI and other lawful orders affecting SFI and employee security, or
- b. Contributing to unsanitary and unsightly conditions such as but not limited to: spitting, open urinating, littering, improper use of lavatories and toilets, vandalizing SFI property.

10. Offenses against Public and Organizational Ethical Standards

This means any of the following offenses:

- a. Having a serious contagious disease, which may endanger other employees, knowing about it, yet failing to report it to SFI authorities,
- b. Showing/exhibiting pornographic materials, pictures or literature within SFI premises,
- c. Using profane language in addressing another person within SFI premises or during interaction with community partners or other partners, or
- d. Violation of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law and similar laws.

11. Other Offenses

Offenses not specifically enumerated under this Code of Conduct, when considered just cause under the Labor Code and other applicable laws, shall also be subject to disciplinary action and shall be dealt with on a case to case basis.

F. “Wipe Clean” Policy

A period of twelve (12) consecutive months, with no violation of light offenses (punishable by written and verbal warning), “cleans” the employee of his/her previous offenses on record. Hence, should another violation be committed, it will be treated as if it were the first offense.

G. Amendment/Supplement

SFI reserves the sole right to amend this Code of Conduct as the situation requires, with prior notice to the employees. SFI may also supplement this Code of Conduct by issuance of memoranda to be duly disseminated to the employees by the Human Resource Administrator.

XVI. Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct Acknowledgment and Receipt

The employee shall sign the following acknowledgment and receipt:

Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct Acknowledgment and Receipt

The Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct describes important information about Stairway Foundation, Inc. (SFI). I understand that I should consult my supervisor or the Human Resource Administrator regarding any questions not answered in this Employee Handbook and Code of

Conduct. I have entered into my employment relationship with SFI voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment.

I understand that all employment is based on available funds and the management's priorities in terms of programs and projects being implemented.

I also understand that, except for employment-at-will status, any and all policies and practices may be changed at any time by SFI, and that SFI reserves the right to change my hours, wages and working conditions at any time. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify or eliminate existing policies.

I understand and agree that nothing in this Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct creates, or is intended to create, a promise or representation of continued employment, and that employment at SFI is employment at will, which may be terminated at the will of either SFI or myself, subject to applicable laws. Furthermore, I acknowledge that this Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document.

- I have received this Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct and any revisions made to it.
- I have received a copy of the Child Protection Policy.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the Child Protection Policy and any revisions made to it.

Employee's Signature

Employee's Name (Print)

Date

The *Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct Acknowledgment and Receipt* shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.