



# Employee Handbook

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# Welcome

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Dear Team Members:

We are thrilled to have you on the team at Northwest Kidney Centers. Our mission of enhancing the lives of those impacted by kidney disease guides the meaningful work we do every day.

What truly sets us apart is our incredible staff. Regardless of our role, each of us plays a vital part in delivering compassionate and dignified care to our patients. We are dedicated to each other and to the individuals we serve.

At Northwest Kidney Centers, we believe in creating an environment where everyone can learn, grow, and contribute. Our culture promotes teamwork, recognition, and inclusion because we understand that sharing perspectives, contributing ideas, and embracing curiosity make us stronger. Our management team is committed to open and honest dialogue, and we genuinely value your feedback.

Since becoming the first organization to offer outpatient dialysis in 1962, Northwest Kidney Centers has become a nationally recognized leader in high-quality care, advocacy, and innovation. We firmly believe that together, we can create a world where kidney disease no longer inhibits people from living their best lives.

As a team member at Northwest Kidney Centers, remember that you have the power to make a profound difference in the lives of our patients. Your work will have a lasting impact, and we hope that you find a deeply satisfying and fulfilling career with us.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Fox  
President and CEO

# Mission and Vision

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## Mission

TO PROMOTE THE OPTIMAL HEALTH,  
QUALITY OF LIFE AND INDEPENDENCE OF  
PEOPLE WITH KIDNEY DISEASE,  
THROUGH PATIENT CARE,  
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH.

## Vision

To create a world where kidney disease no longer inhibits people from living their best lives.

# Values

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**Teamwork:** We work together and honor each member of the team. We each do our fair share and help co-workers be their best. We combine our skills in a multi-disciplinary approach to care for our patients.

**Integrity:** We demonstrate the highest levels of ethical and professional conduct in a place of healing, caring, teaching and research. We recognize the worth and dignity of patients and families, our co-workers, physicians, and our community.

**Excellence:** Combining skill, innovation, creativity, professionalism, and compassion, we create superior results. We expect this combination from all our staff, believing that it is essential to our mission of patient care, education, and research.

**Respect:** We treat others as we want to be treated. We embrace everyone's unique talents and honor diverse life and work styles. We bring a spirit of cooperation as we learn from diverse cultures, communities, and points of view.

**Stewardship:** We use resources wisely, aware that they are precious. We take good care of colleagues, buildings and equipment, donors' funds, our nonprofit position in the community, and the trust placed in us by the people we serve.

# History

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In 1960, University of Washington researcher Dr. Belding Scribner created the Scribner shunt, a cannula that made long-term repeated dialysis possible. For the first time, chronic kidney failure did not have to be a death sentence.

Community leaders came together to raise money and find space so the Seattle Artificial Kidney Center (now Northwest Kidney Centers) could open its doors on Jan. 9, 1962. Dr. James Haviland, then-president of the King County Medical Society, spearheaded the effort. Ours is the first organization in the world established to deliver dialysis treatments outside of a hospital.

The University of Washington and Seattle Area Hospital Council joined in creating the Center. This nonprofit Center was in the basement of Eklind Hall, the nurses' residence for Swedish Hospital. Nine patients could be dialyzed using the center's three beds. Nurses at the new center had responsibilities and tasks usually done by doctors before then.

Funding support came in 1963 from various sources, primarily the John A. Hartford Foundation and U.S. Public Health Service, but for years a shortage of money prevented many people in need from receiving dialysis.

A physician advisory committee was appointed to select patients based on medical criteria. The resources were still too limited, and the medical community turned to the public for help – creating a seven-member committee of anonymous layperson volunteers to decide who would be admitted for dialysis.

The committee decided who would be treated based on medical and financial criteria, patients' ability to adjust to dialysis, their family status, and their potential contribution or burden to society. The "Life or Death Committee" operated for five years, until 1966. Its work was the subject of an article in Life magazine in 1962 that spurred a national debate now considered the birth of bioethics.

In 1964 the Center expanded to 10 stations serving 47 patients. Resources continued to be overtaxed and finances were in serious trouble. Dr. Scribner developed home hemodialysis and Seattle Artificial Kidney Center opened the world's first home program in 1967.

In 1970 Seattle Artificial Kidney Center was renamed Northwest Kidney Centers to reflect a patient base that included all parts of Western Washington and Alaska. Also, that year, Northwest Kidney Centers added peritoneal dialysis as an alternate treatment thanks to the pioneering researchers at the University of Washington.

Kidney transplants began locally in 1967 at the University of Washington Medical Center and later at Swedish and Virginia Mason hospitals. Regional organ coordinating agencies began to develop across the country to retrieve and coordinate organ donation. In 1971, the Northwest Organ Procurement Agency at Northwest Kidney Centers began serving Oregon, Alaska, Montana, and Western Washington. (Northwest Kidney Centers is no longer involved in organ procurement.)

In 1973 Medicare made financial support available to almost all kidney failure patients. With several sources of state and federal funding, Northwest Kidney Center finally was financially stable. Now it was possible to look beyond the financial needs to help meet new challenges.

Northwest Kidney Center established a program to provide acute dialysis in many area hospitals and other inpatient facilities in 1982.

In 1988 Northwest Kidney Centers, Puget Sound Blood Center, and University of Washington Department of Orthopedics jointly opened Northwest Tissue Center, housed at the blood center. The tissue center provides human bones, tendons, skin, and other tissues (not eyes) for transplantation.

Northwest Kidney Centers was the primary site for human studies on EPO, or Epogen, a genetically engineered version of the hormone erythropoietin by Amgen, Inc. Epogen increases red blood cell production and thereby treats anemia. Federal Food and Drug Administration approval came in June 1989.

Northwest Kidney Centers established the country's first non-hospital retail pharmacy specializing in medications for kidney patients. It operates unique special care units – with intensive nursing service and beds for very frail patients – to help avoid hospitalizations and save costs.

Today Northwest Kidney Centers is the 8th largest dialysis organization in the country. It remains a not-for-profit, locally managed provider of kidney dialysis and public health education investing in research into the causes and treatments of chronic kidney disease. It is an influential model in the field because of its high-quality services, deep community connections and generous donor support.

Among its unique characteristics are the long-established renal specialty pharmacy, special care services for patients who are very frail or at the end of life, high transplantation rate compared with the rest of the country, and strong home dialysis program.

Each year Northwest Kidney Centers administers nearly 300,000 treatments in its dialysis centers, local hospitals and the homes of patients trained to self-dialyze. Northwest Kidney Centers is the largest dialysis provider in King County and the only dialysis provider in Clallam County.

Each year Northwest Kidney Centers invests in the community – to provide services for pre-dialysis patients and transplant recipients, fund training for kidney physicians, assist with transportation, medications and nutritional supplements, fund charity care, and make emergency grants for patients in crisis.

Northwest Kidney Centers has provided seed funding for two organizations dedicated to improving the lives of those impacted by kidney disease and offer patients more treatment options – the Kidney Research Institute and the Center for Dialysis Innovation.

Northwest Kidney Centers educates the public about kidney disease and organ donation. Free public health classes target people approaching kidney failure and instruct them on treatment options, preparation for dialysis and good nutrition. Another class teaches people with kidney transplants how to protect the gift.



# Purpose of the Handbook

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The purpose of this Employee Handbook is to bring together in a convenient place a summary of some of the policies that affect employees at Northwest Kidney Centers (NKC). Employees should read this handbook and become familiar with its content. Employees should be comfortable referring to the handbook whenever a question regarding employment with NKC arises. **Note that the handbook does not contain every policy that applies to NKC employees, nor will it answer all the questions employees may have about NKC policies or benefits.** If the handbook does not answer the question, employees should contact their supervisor or the People Team for assistance. The handbook revokes and supersedes any prior summaries or statements of the employment policies and procedures addressed herein.

NKC expects to revise and update this handbook from time to time. NKC will advise employees of changes, additions, or deletions in policies and procedures covered in this handbook by circulating such changes, additions, or deletions either in writing or electronically.

This handbook is **not a contract of employment**. It does not promise or guarantee any particular benefit or specific action. As explained in this handbook, all employment with NKC is “at-will” which means that NKC or employee may terminate our employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice. In addition, employees may be demoted, their job duties may be changed, or their benefits altered at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice. No one in NKC has the authority to enter into any agreement for employment for a specified period, or to make any representations or agreements that are inconsistent with the at-will status or other provisions of this Handbook.

**Notice to employees outside of Washington:** If you reside and/or work outside of the State of Washington, or are a current employee planning an out-of-state move, some of the policies addressed in this handbook may not apply or may apply differently to your employment. If you request and are approved to work for NKC outside the state of Washington, the the People Team will review your specific circumstances and obligations with you.

# Employment Status

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## *At-Will Employment*

Employment with NKC is “at-will.” This means that either NKC or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, with or without notice. No one in NKC has the authority to enter into any agreement for employment for a specified period, or to make any other representations or agreements that are inconsistent with the at-will status.

## *Classifications of Employees*

Wage rates or salary and benefits can be affected, in part, by the employee’s classification. The following are the most common employee classifications used by NKC. An employee may fall into more than one of these categories:

1. Regular, Full-Time Employee: An employee who is regularly scheduled to work 32 hours or more per week.
2. Regular, Part-Time Employee: An employee who is regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 24 and fewer than 32 hours per week.
3. Per Diem: Registered Nurses (RNs), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), Dialysis Technicians (DTs), Pharmacists, and others who may be regularly scheduled to work fewer than 24 hours per week or assigned to availability requirements as described in the Policy and Procedure for Per Diem Staff.
4. On-Call Employee: An employee who is hired to work on an intermittent or as needed basis.
5. Temporary: Employees who are hired for a temporary assignment, generally six consecutive months or less.
6. Non-exempt Employee: An employee whose duties render their job eligible for overtime pay for all hours worked over 40 hours in a week, in accordance with applicable federal and state wage and hour laws.
7. Exempt Employee: An employee who is paid a fixed salary on a weekly, monthly, or annual basis and whose duties meet the criteria for exclusion under the applicable federal and state wage and hour laws, including but not limited to executive, administrative, or professional employees. An exempt employee is not eligible to receive overtime pay.

## *Orientation*

The initial 180 days of employment is considered an orientation period, during which the employee's supervisor should be observing their ability to satisfy both general and specific job requirements. Employees who do not demonstrate satisfactory performance during the orientation period may be terminated.

### ***Clinical Training***

NKC has a commitment to excellence and education. Newly hired clinical employees will receive clinical training based on their role and previous dialysis experience to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skills to capably perform the functions of the job. All newly hired dialysis technicians that do not have an active national dialysis technician certification (CHT/CCHT) and/or Washington State hemodialysis technician certification must complete the training program.

### ***Employment of Relatives***

NKC believes it is best to keep business and professional relationships separate from personal and family relationships and will not employ an employee's relatives in the same location as the employee except under limited circumstances. For this policy, "relative" is defined to include an employee's spouse, domestic partner, parents, children, siblings, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins, grandchildren, grandparents, in-laws, and any person with whom the employee lives in a relationship substantially equivalent to marriage.

Under certain circumstances NKC may approve the employment of relatives. Such employment will only be approved where:

- neither employee will supervise, appoint, remove, or discipline the other;
- neither relative will evaluate or audit the work of the other; and
- the working relationship is unlikely to create a real or apparent conflict of interest.

NKC also reserves the right not to employ relatives (including those in dating or other similar relationships) of Officers or other high-level employees of our competitors, major vendors, or government agencies that regulate our business, where such a restriction may avoid creating an actual or apparent conflict of interest or to protect confidential information.

### ***Consensual Romantic Relationships***

Northwest Kidney Centers does not permit employees who are engaged in romantic or sexual relationships to serve in roles where one employee reports directly or indirectly to the other except in limited circumstances. Please refer to page 22, *Consensual Romantic or Sexual Relationships*, for more information.

### ***Employment of Patients and Relatives of Patients***

To ensure patient confidentiality and avoid an actual or perceived conflict of interest, in most cases, NKC will not consider patients for employment. Relatives of patients may be considered for employment but will not be scheduled to work in the same unit as a dialyzing family member.

### ***Employment Conflict of Interest***

To adequately protect NKC's interests, and in accordance with NKC's Conflict of Interest Policy, employees are expected to avoid working for any other person or organization where such work represents a conflict of interest, or where such additional work interferes with the employee's current job responsibilities or work schedule. NKC's expectation is that an employee's position with NKC is their primary job. Before accepting a second job (or establishing a business) employees are expected to notify their supervisor to ensure any potential for a conflict is identified.

### ***Personnel Records/References***

NKC maintains personnel files on employees. Medical records related to an individual's role as an employee (for example, a physician's report related to a leave of absence) are maintained in a separate confidential file from other personnel records. Records, if any, related to an employee's participation in the NKC Employee Health Plan (NKCEHP), a separate entity from NKC, will be maintained in separate NKCEHP files.

Personnel records, including medical information about an employee, are confidential. Access is limited to those who have a need to know the information for purposes related to their role at NKC. Although NKC will maintain personnel records as confidential, employees may discuss their wages, benefits, or other terms and conditions of employment with other employees or third parties at their choosing.

Current or former employees may review and obtain copies of their own personnel records at a mutually convenient time during business hours and may add additional items to the file in accordance with applicable law. Any concerns regarding the completeness or accuracy of the information contained in the personnel file should be discussed with the employee's supervisor or the People Team.

The People Team manages access to personnel files. No prospective or current supervisor, manager, or other employee may review information in an employee's personnel file without explicit authorization from the People Team.

When a current employee needs NKC to verify employment (such as for a loan approval), the Employee should advise Payroll of the need at the earliest opportunity so that Payroll can verify the authorization to release employment information.

NKC reserves the right to provide references regarding current or former employees. Generally, such references include verification of dates of employment and job title and duties. More information may be shared at NKC's discretion in accordance with applicable law. NKC also reserves its right to provide personnel information to third parties, such as government agencies or law enforcement, or in response to legal processes, like subpoenas or court orders.

### ***Personal Information***

Employees are responsible to promptly notify the People Team of any personal changes, including but not limited to changes in name, addresses, telephone numbers, emergency contact, increase in number of dependents, or other personal information so that NKC may keep personnel, tax, and benefit records accurate and up-to-date and can communicate with employees as needed. Employees must update any of the personal changes indicated above in the NKC HRIS system no later than 10 days after the change is effective.

### ***Reassignment***

NKC utilizes staff on a company-wide basis.

Short term reassignment (floating) may be required when a clinic's census does not support the need for the number of staff on a particular day or shift. In these cases, staff may be floated to a clinic in need that is in the same region as their home unit. Floating assignments will be applied in alignment with the Low Census policy.

# Workweek and Daily Schedule

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## ***Workweek and Scheduling***

For payroll and overtime computation purposes, the regular workweek begins at 12:00 a.m. Sunday and ends at 11:59 p.m. the following Saturday. The employee's supervisor establishes the normal workday hours and weekly schedule for non-exempt employees. Non-exempt employees should normally begin work no earlier than five minutes before their shift starts and end work no later than five minutes after their shift ends.

Exempt employees are generally expected to work during NKC's normal business hours. In addition, they may be expected to work additional hours to complete duties and assignments.

NKC reserves the right to change the regular workweek, the normal business hours, or the normal workday at any time. NKC will strive to provide a full pay periods' advance notice regarding changes to scheduling.

Individual work schedules may be established by supervisors and communicated in advance. Employees are expected to work all assigned hours and days. Requests for scheduling changes or for days off must be made ahead of time and approved by the employee's manager.

## ***Rest and Meal Periods***

It is the policy of Northwest Kidney Centers to comply with state and federal laws regarding meals and breaks.

All non-exempt employees are required to take up to 20 minutes (minimum of 10 minutes) of paid rest for each four hours of working time. Rest periods shall be scheduled as near as possible to the midpoint of the work period. No employee shall be required to work more than three hours without a rest period. The right to receive paid rest breaks cannot be waived by the employee or NKC. These breaks may be taken intermittently as the nature of the work allows or they may be scheduled (or both).

Staff members who smoke or need to make personal phone calls are to do these activities only during the rest or meal period and only in designated areas.

All non-exempt employees working shifts of more than 5 hours are required to take an unpaid meal break of 30 minutes. Employees working more than 11 hours in a day must receive an additional meal period of 30 minutes. Meal breaks are not counted as hours worked.

Employees are to be completely relieved from duty during their meal break. If a non-exempt employee is required to perform any work duties during their meal break period, the employee must be compensated for the entire meal period. Any time spent working during the meal break will be counted toward the total hours worked.

Meal breaks should be taken between the second and fifth working hour. Employees may leave the facility during their meal periods. However, RN's and dialysis technicians may only leave the facility if another RN or dialysis technician is on duty to cover for them. If an employee is required to remain on duty on the premises to meet minimum staffing requirements, the meal period is treated as paid working time.

Employees are not permitted to add required break/rest time to a meal period or combine two rest breaks. Managers are responsible for the scheduling of meal and break periods. Any non-exempt employee prevented from taking rest or meal breaks must notify their supervisor and manager so that NKC can reschedule the break or ensure the employee receives proper compensation. Employees who fail to return on time from breaks or meals, or who otherwise abuse breaks or meal periods, may be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees can waive their meal break requirement if both they and NKC agree. Waiver agreements must be signed by both the employee and the People Team Management. Employees cannot waive rest break requirements.

# Compensation

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## ***Pay Periods and Pay***

NKC's pay periods are bi-weekly. The pay periods end on Saturday and paydays occur on the following Friday.

## ***Payroll Deductions***

NKC makes the following deductions in accordance with applicable law: FICA (social security), Medicare, federal income tax, state paid family and medical leave and state long term disability, as applicable. Other deductions may require an employee's written authorization. Examples of other deductions may include deductions for an employee's portion of any insurance premiums or retirement plan contributions or contributions to NKC's employee giving campaign.

## ***Exempt Employees/Pay on a Salaried Basis***

NKC adheres to the federal and state regulations that require exempt employees to be paid on a salary basis. Generally, this means that after any applicable type of paid leave is used, an exempt employee's salary is reduced only for full-day absences occasioned by personal reasons, illness, or injury.<sup>1</sup> NKC continues an exempt employee's salary during workweeks while the exempt employee is on jury duty or a witness in a legal proceeding. NKC limits the use of unpaid disciplinary suspensions with exempt employees to full days and to those circumstances allowed by applicable law and regulations. Exempt employees, who are FMLA-eligible, may have their salaries reduced during workweeks in which they take unpaid FMLA leave, whether in full or partial-day increments. Please note that NKC is not required to pay the full salary to an exempt employee in any partial initial or terminal week of employment.

Any exempt employee who believes that improper or inaccurate deductions have been made from their salary is urged to report their concern immediately to Payroll. A People Team Manager or designee will investigate the report promptly. NKC will reimburse exempt employees for any excess or improper deductions made from their salary.

## ***Shift Differentials***

Employees who work certain shifts or schedules may be paid a premium for working those hours. This shift differential is included in the regular wage rate when NKC calculates non-exempt employees' overtime pay. Shift differentials do not apply to exempt employees.

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<sup>1</sup> This policy statement reflects regulatory requirements in effect as of May 2024 and is subject to change upon change in regulation.

### ***Overtime***

Occasionally some overtime may be required of non-exempt employees. Completing assigned overtime is an important part of each non-exempt employee's job responsibilities. All overtime work must be authorized in writing in advance, unless due to an emergency, by a manager. Non-exempt employees must record all overtime worked on their timecard. The overtime rate is one-and one-half times the regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 hours in one week (or over 80 hours in a work period, if applicable). Although NKC will pay employees for all hours worked (including unauthorized overtime) in accordance with the requirements of state and federal law, employees may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment, for working unauthorized overtime.

Exempt employees are expected to work the hours necessary to complete their work. They do not receive overtime compensation.

### ***Timekeeping***

Employees are responsible for maintaining accurate, timely, and complete records of all hours worked and all time off. All non-exempt employees are required to clock in and out to record all hours worked including time in and out for unpaid meal periods. Exempt employees are required to record absences due to illness, injury, vacation, or holidays. Once submitted, employees may correct or make changes to their time records only through communications with their manager.

Non-exempt employees are not permitted to work "off the clock." Any supervisor/manager who solicits or tolerates a non-exempt employee working "off the clock" is in violation of this policy and subject to discipline. No employee may ever clock in or out for another employee.

If an employee fails to record their time, or does so incorrectly, they must notify their manager immediately to correct the mistake. The manager must approve any changes to the time record system.

Falsification of time records will result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

### ***Performance Reviews***

Periodic performance reviews provide an opportunity for employees and managers to discuss how well the employee is meeting expectations, to clarify job responsibilities, and to explore possibilities for development and advancement. Performance reviews are also part of personnel records. Employees may be asked to sign each performance review to indicate that it was reviewed; an employee's signature does not signify that the employee agrees with the evaluation of the employee's performance. Performance reviews are usually conducted:

- At or before the end of any orientation period.
- At the end of an employee's first year as an employee or after the first year in a new position of job responsibility; and

- Upon the annual anniversary of position start date

Performance reviews may also be completed at other times at management's discretion.

Wage or salary increases may be tied to an employee's performance and are at NKC's sole discretion. NKC may grant increases at any time they are considered appropriate based on merit, increased responsibilities, or changes in market conditions. Similarly, there may be no increase or a delay in the increase if the employee's job performance, finances or market conditions do not support one.

Supervisors are required to adhere to the guidelines (e.g., maximum approved increases) established by NKC leadership when recommending salary increases. In some cases, Director and/or Executive level approval may be required.

### ***Transfer and Promotion***

Efforts are made to fill job openings with employees within the organization when suitable applicants express interest. Thoughtful attention is given to employee requests for transfers or promotions. Length of service is a determining factor in selecting for a regular job opening; skill, competence, ability, and past performance are also considered. The exact timing of a transfer to a new role will be determined by the current and new manager.

Positions available, as far as practical, are listed on K-Net.

An employee must have been employed and in the same position for 6 continuous months before being eligible for a transfer. NKC may make an exception to this requirement only where warranted by extraordinary circumstances.

If an employee wishes to formally apply for a transfer or a promotion, they must apply for the position via Jobvite and are encouraged to report their interest to their hiring manager or the People Team.

### ***Employee Referral Program***

Employees are encouraged to identify friends or acquaintances interested in employment opportunities and to refer qualified outside applicants for posted jobs. An employee may receive payment for referring a successful applicant in accordance with the Employee Referral Program.

When a referred person applies, they should identify the referring employee on the application. Employees must complete a referral form and submit it to the People Team prior to the hiring decision to qualify for any referral payment. Some positions and some employees are not eligible for this program. Please seek any clarification from the People Team.

The Employee Referral Program may be changed or terminated at any time for any reason at the sole discretion of the People Team. The People Team reserves the right to administer and interpret the Employee Referral Program at its discretion. Please refer to the Employee Referral Program policy for more information.

### ***Expense Reimbursement***

Employees may occasionally incur expenses related to their jobs. Such expenses may include mileage for use of a personal vehicle on NKC business, including travel between sites within the same workday or to a clinic that is located further than their assigned worksite, other transportation charges, parking, meals, and lodging. Such expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with NKC policy. Mileage for use of your personal vehicle on NKC business will be reimbursed at the IRS rate then in effect.

Travel expenses for such costs as airfare and hotel costs must be approved in advance by a manager. Other travel expenses (such as meals, parking, etc.) will be reimbursed without prior approval so long as the expenses are reasonable. NKC does not reimburse employees for personal expenses incurred while an employee is traveling for NKC business (e.g., spa visits, souvenirs). An employee should discuss any questions about what constitutes a reasonable or authorized business expense with their manager.

To receive reimbursement, an employee must fill out and return to their manager a reimbursement request form with receipts attached. NKC generally will not reimburse employees for expenses submitted without a receipt. The reimbursement form should normally be completed within the month the expenses occurred. Forms are available on K-Net.

# Employee Relations

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## ***Equal Employment Opportunity***

NKC is an equal employment opportunity employer. Every employee has the right to work in surroundings that are free from all forms of unlawful discrimination. NKC will not engage in or tolerate any discrimination in the workplace prohibited by local, state, or federal law. Specifically, no employee will be discriminated against on the basis of their race (including physical characteristics historically associated with race, such as hairstyle or hair type), sex/gender, religion/creed, pregnancy, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, national origin, citizenship, immigration status, genetics/genetic markers, military or veteran status, sexual orientation, including gender expression or identity, actual or perceived victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local law.

## ***Reasonable Accommodation - Disabilities***

NKC recognizes that employees with a disability may need reasonable accommodation to enable them to perform the essential job functions of their position. Any employee who believes they need a reasonable accommodation should notify their manager and The People Team. Although the need for accommodation(s) is determined on a case-by-case basis, generally NKC and the employee engage in an interactive process with the employee's healthcare provider(s) to confirm the existence of the condition, its limitations in the workplace, and possible reasonable accommodation(s). The employee has an obligation to cooperate with NKC and the employee's healthcare provider(s) concerning the employee's condition, its limitations, and possible reasonable accommodations. Please note that employees experiencing limitations related to pregnancy will be accommodated pursuant to this policy and applicable law.

## ***Pregnancy and Lactation Accommodation***

NKC recognizes that during an employee's pregnancy, they may need certain accommodations to perform their job. Upon request, NKC will provide the following accommodations during pregnancy: (1) frequent, longer, and/or flexible restroom breaks; (2) modify any existing no food or drink policies; (3) provide seating or allow an employee to sit more frequently; or (4) lifting restrictions more than 17 pounds.

Upon an employee's request, NKC will engage in an interactive process to determine the need for any additional accommodations, including: (5) job restructuring; (6) temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous position; (7) providing assistance with manual labor (including lifting restrictions less than 17 pounds); (8) schedule flexibility for prenatal appointments; (9) providing reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for two years after the child's birth each time the employee has need to express the milk and providing a private location, other than a bathroom, if such a location exists at the place of business or worksite or working with employee on alternative accommodations if no locations exists and (10) other accommodations.

NKC may request written information from a healthcare provider regarding the need for accommodation (5) through (10). Employees should contact the People Team with any questions or accommodation requests under this policy.

### ***Reasonable Accommodation - Religion***

NKC respects the religious beliefs and practices of all employees and will provide, upon request, an accommodation for such observances when a reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship on NKC's business.

An employee who believes that their sincerely held religious beliefs or practices conflict with their job, work schedule, or with NKC's policy or practice regarding dress and appearance or other aspects of employment, and who seeks a religious accommodation must request accommodation from the People Team. The request should explain the religious conflict that exists and the employees' suggested accommodation.

NKC will evaluate the request considering whether a work conflict exists and whether an accommodation is available which is reasonable and which would not create an undue hardship on NKC's business or for its other employees.

### ***Reasonable Safety Accommodation - Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking***

NKC recognizes that employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking may need reasonable safety accommodations. Any employee who believes they need a reasonable safety accommodation because they are a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking should notify the People Team of the specific safety accommodation request in writing and should indicate that the safety accommodation request is related to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

## ***Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation***

### **Objective**

Northwest Kidney Centers strives for a work environment in which people are treated with dignity, decency, and respect. The environment of NKC should be characterized by mutual trust and the absence of intimidation, oppression, and exploitation. Northwest Kidney Centers will not tolerate unlawful discrimination or harassment of any kind. Through enforcement of this policy and by education of employees, Northwest Kidney Centers will seek to prevent, correct, and discipline behavior that violates this policy.

Managers and supervisors who knowingly allow or tolerate discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, including the failure to immediately report such misconduct to the People Team, are in violation of this policy and subject to discipline.

### **Prohibited Conduct Under This Policy**

Northwest Kidney Centers, in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local anti-discrimination and harassment laws and regulations, enforces this policy in accordance with the following definitions and guidelines:

## **Discrimination**

It is a violation of Northwest Kidney Centers' policy to discriminate in the provision of employment opportunities, benefits or privileges: to create discriminatory work conditions; or to use discriminatory evaluative standards in employment if the basis of that discriminatory treatment is, in whole or in part, the person's race (including hairstyle/texture), color, national origin, age, religion, disability status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify or, genetic information or marital status.

Discrimination of this kind may also be prohibited by a variety of federal, state, and local laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination Act of 1967 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This policy is intended to comply with the prohibitions stated in these anti-discrimination laws.

Discrimination in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment.

## **Harassment**

Northwest Kidney Centers prohibits harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, and will take appropriate and immediate action in response to complaints or knowledge of violations of this policy. For purposes of this policy, harassment is any verbal or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate, or coerce an employee, co-worker, or any person working for or on behalf of Northwest Kidney Centers.

The following examples of harassment are intended to be guidelines and are not exclusive when determining whether there has been a violation of this policy:

- Verbal harassment includes comments that are offensive or unwelcome regarding a person's national origin, race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, appearance, disability, gender identity or expression, marital status, or other protected status, including epithets, slurs, and negative stereotyping.
- Nonverbal harassment includes distribution, display, or discussion of any written or graphic material that ridicules, denigrates, insults, belittles or shows hostility, aversion, or disrespect toward an individual or group because of national origin, race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, appearance, disability, gender identity, marital status, or other protected status.

## **Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is a form of unlawful employment discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and is prohibited under Northwest Kidney Centers anti-harassment policy. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), sexual harassment is defined as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature...when...submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions ...or such conduct has the purpose or effect of...creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment."

Sexual harassment occurs when unsolicited and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature:

- Is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment.
- Is used as a basis for an employment decision.
- Unreasonably interferes with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or otherwise offensive environment.

Sexual harassment may take different forms. The following examples of sexual harassment are intended to be guidelines and are not exclusive when determining whether there has been a violation of this policy:

- Verbal sexual harassment includes innuendoes, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, lewd remarks, and threats; requests for any type of sexual favor (this includes repeated, unwelcome requests for dates); and verbal abuse or "kidding" that is oriented toward a prohibitive form of harassment, including that which is sexual in nature and unwelcome.
- Nonverbal sexual harassment includes the distribution, display or discussion of any written or graphic material, including calendars, posters, and cartoons, that are sexually suggestive or show hostility toward an individual or group because of sex; suggestive or insulting sounds; leering; staring; whistling; obscene gestures; content in letters, notes, facsimiles, e-mails, photos, text messages, tweets and Internet postings or other forms of communication that are sexual in nature and offensive.
- Physical sexual harassment includes unwelcome, unwanted physical contact, including touching, tickling, pinching, patting, brushing up against, hugging, cornering, kissing, fondling, and forced sexual intercourse or assault.

Courteous, mutually respectful, pleasant, noncoercive interactions between employees that are appropriate in the workplace and acceptable to and welcomed by both parties are not considered to be harassment including sexual harassment.

### ***Consensual Romantic or Sexual Relationships***

Romantic or sexual relationships between a manager or other supervisory employee and an employee who reports directly or indirectly to that person are problematic, because such relationships may create real or perceived conflicts of interest and may lead to bias and favoritism. Moreover, given the uneven balance of power within such relationships, it may be difficult to verify that consent by the staff member is consensual and not the result of coercion or intimidation. If there is such a relationship, one or both parties may be moved to a different department, or other actions may be taken.

If any employee enters into a consensual relationship that is romantic or sexual in nature with an employee who reports directly or indirectly to them, or if one of the parties is in a supervisory capacity in the same department and/or unit in which the other party works, the parties **must** notify their department Vice President and the Vice President of People & Culture using the disclosure form on K-Net. NKC will evaluate the situation and determine whether one or both parties need to be moved to another job or department and or unit. If it is determined that one party must be moved, and there are jobs in other departments or units available for both, the VP of People & Culture and departmental leadership will determine who will be the one to apply for a new position. If the parties cannot amicably come to a decision, or the party is not chosen for the position to which he or she applied, the Vice President of People & Culture and departmental leadership will decide which party will be moved based on the needs of the organization. If no other jobs are

available for either party, the parties will be given the option of terminating their relationship or resigning.

### **Retaliation**

No hardship, loss, benefit, or penalty may be imposed on an employee in response to:

- Filing or responding to a bona fide complaint of discrimination or harassment.
- Appearing as a witness in the investigation of a complaint.
- Serving as an investigator of a complaint.

Lodging a bona fide complaint will in no way be used against the employee or have an adverse impact on the individual's employment status. However, filing groundless or malicious complaints is an abuse of this policy and will be treated as a violation.

Any person who is found to have engaged in retaliatory conduct in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

### **Confidentiality**

All complaints and investigations are treated confidentially to the extent possible, and information is disclosed strictly on a need-to-know basis. The identity of the complainant is usually revealed to the parties involved during the investigation, and the Vice President of People and Culture will take adequate steps to ensure that the complainant is protected from retaliation during and after the investigation. All information pertaining to a complaint or investigation under this policy will be maintained in secure files with limited access.

### **Discipline and Corrective Action**

Employees who are determined to have violated any of the policies addressed herein, including but not limited to the policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, retaliation, and abuse of the complaint process, will be subject to corrective and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination. The nature and extent of corrective or disciplinary action in a specific situation is determined on a case-by-case basis after consideration of all relevant factors, and may involve counseling, mandatory education, establishment of a performance improvement plan (PIP), suspension, or termination. In certain cases, employees alleged to have violated the above or other policies may be placed on administrative leave during the pendency of an investigation or other process to verify the accuracy of the allegation(s).

### **Alternate Legal Remedies**

Nothing in this policy may prevent the complainant or the respondent from pursuing formal legal remedies or resolution through local, state, or federal agencies or the courts.

# Employee Responsibilities

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## ***Attendance and Tardiness***

Regular and timely attendance is an essential function of every employee's job and critical to the smooth operation of NKC. Employees are expected to report for work when assigned, regularly, and on time. If an employee cannot report to work or will be late, they must contact their supervisor as soon as possible but not later than two hours before the assigned shift starts. If the supervisor is unavailable, the employee should follow the protocols with the department or clinic for which shift the employee is assigned, stating the reason for being late or absent, when the employee is anticipated to return to work, and a telephone number where the employee may be reached. If the employee's absence or tardiness is for a reason covered by the sick time laws (as explained in NKC's Paid Time Off (PTO) policy or Illness Bank (IB) policy, the employee should refer to those policies for applicable notice requirements for the absence.

If the absence or tardiness is due to an emergency, the employee must have someone contact NKC within the same time-period as applied to the employee. If the absence is for purpose(s) protected by law, the employee should refer to the applicable policy for notification requirements. If the employee's absence or tardiness is for a reason covered by the policy, the employee should refer to the PTO or IB policies for applicable notice requirements for the absence.

Recurring absenteeism or tardiness, including the failure to comply with the call-in features of this policy, may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment. However, employees who are absent for covered reasons pursuant to NKC's PTO or IB policies will not be disciplined for use of paid sick leave if such use complies with the policies and applicable law. If an employee fails to report for work or calls in for 2 days in a row (and is not on a pre-approved leave of absence), the employee will be deemed to have abandoned their job and employment will terminate.

## ***Employee Credentialing***

Only practitioners who are professionally competent and continuously meet the credentials, standards, and requirements established by NKC shall be approved to provide health care services. Employees whose positions require credentialing by state agencies and/or Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services regulations are required to keep all credentials current and in good standing. NKC shall be under no obligation to hire or continue employment of individuals who fail to become licensed, registered, or certified, or who fail to renew such as required where it is necessary to legally perform their duties.

## ***Smoking***

Smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes, is prohibited in the workplace. Employees may only smoke in designated areas outside NKC buildings.

### ***Employee Use of Vehicles***

If an employee uses a NKC vehicle or the employee's own vehicle for work, employees are expected to comply with the following requirements:

- Employees must have and carry a valid driver's license and evidence of satisfactory insurance (if using the employee's own vehicle) at all times when driving on NKC business. They may be required to provide NKC or its insurers with access to their driving records as well. The Employee will be asked to provide a copy of these documents for their personnel file.
- Employees are expected to always drive in a safe and lawful manner. Business-related cell phone use while driving is permitted if a hands-free device is used and the employee complies with all state laws related to cell phones, and the use does not otherwise interfere with safety.
- If an employee is assigned a NKC vehicle for the employee's business use on an ongoing basis, the employee is responsible for maintaining the vehicle in good running order.
- Employees are prohibited from operating a NKC vehicle or a personal vehicle used for work under any influence of alcohol or any drug, or when doing so would be unsafe.
- Employees may not place bumper stickers or other signs or stickers of any kind on NKC's vehicles.
- Employees are expected to promptly notify The People Team of any citations for moving violations or accidents involving a NKC vehicle or while using a personal vehicle for work.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

Employees are expected to avoid situations that might lead their personal interests to conflict with or appear to conflict with the interests of NKC or that might compromise or appear to compromise NKC's reputation for integrity. In addition, employees must report any conflict of interest that arises, or of which they become aware, to the Legal and Compliance Department. A conflict of interest or the appearance of one occurs when the employee or a member of the employee's household or immediate family uses the employee's position with NKC for personal benefit or for personal gain. A financial interest or investment, personal association, or business relationship with a customer, supplier or competitor that interferes with the employee's ability to exercise independent judgment on NKC's behalf is prohibited. "Immediate family" includes an employee's spouse, domestic partner, siblings, parents and grandparents, children and grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and people living in the same household in a relationship substantially comparable to any of the above.

### ***Alcohol and Drug Use***

Use of alcohol or any drug that is illegal under federal or state law (including marijuana) while on the job presents a serious threat to personal health, workplace safety and job performance. Employees are strictly prohibited from possessing, selling, consuming or being under any influence (defined as having any detectable amount in their body) of alcohol or illegal drugs while on the job or in any other manner that may affect the employee's work performance or NKC's interests or reputation. This prohibition also extends to legal drugs for which an employee may not have a valid prescription, or that are not used in a manner consistent with accepted frequency or dosage requirements.

At times, NKC may elect to provide alcohol at certain NKC-sponsored events. Any employee who elects to consume alcohol on those occasions remains responsible for their conduct and may be disciplined for excessive use or engaging in inappropriate conduct after such use, including any use of illegal drugs, including marijuana.

Any employee who is taking a medication that may be legally prescribed under both federal and state law should determine from their physician or pharmacist whether the prescription drug could impair their ability to perform the job safely and effectively. If the employee's performance of essential job functions may be functionally limited at work by use of a legal drug, the employee should advise their supervisor and the People Team so that reasonable accommodations can be considered.

Any employee experiencing difficulties with drugs or alcohol is encouraged to contact NKC's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or Human Resource Department before the drug or alcohol issue affects their work performance. Either EAP or the People Team can provide referrals to helpful resources.

To ensure compliance with this policy, NKC may require drug and alcohol testing of employees at its discretion. This includes testing based upon NKC representatives' reasonable belief that an employee may be under any influence of drugs or alcohol, or any other situation that suggests that an employee is otherwise violating this policy.

NKC will impose disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, in the event of any of the following: (1) violation of this policy; (2) a positive test result; (3) refusal or failure to submit to testing when requested to do so; (4) refusal to cooperate in the testing process; or (5) adulteration of any sample or tampering with any part of the testing process.

Alcohol and drug test results are maintained as employee medical records in an employee's separate medical personnel file. NKC limits access to employee medical personnel files in accordance with applicable law, which means that test results are shared only with those who have a need to know the information.

Questions concerning NKC's drug and alcohol policy, including any drug or alcohol testing, should be directed to the People Team.

## ***External Communications***

Employees may occasionally be contacted by outside third parties, including the media, former employees, competitors, and attorneys, requesting information about NKC. Employees contacted by any outside third-party requesting information about NKC should immediately refer the outside third party to the Marketing and Communications department. Employees should not provide any information concerning NKC unless authorized to do so in writing, and under no circumstances should any employee present themselves as a spokesperson for NKC without express written authorization. This guideline does not prohibit and should not be read to preclude employees from discussing their terms and conditions of employment with their co-workers or others, or from participating in any investigation or proceeding where doing so is protected by law. Requests for job references or employment verifications for current or former employees must be forwarded to Payroll.

## ***Electronic Communications***

This policy sets forth general principles to be applied to employees' use of electronic communications in the workplace (including but not limited to computers, e-mail, telephones, text messages, voicemail, fax machines, external electronic bulletin boards, PDAs, on-line services, cell phones, blogs, and the internet). It applies to all electronic media and services which are accessed on or from NKC premises; accessed using NKC computer equipment, or via NKC-paid access methods; or personal system, devices or services used for NKC business or containing NKC information and/or used in a manner which identifies the individual with NKC.

Employees' use of our electronic systems must conform to our other workplace policies (including anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies). Examples of prohibited usage include sexually explicit or X-rated messages, cartoons, or jokes; unwelcome propositions or love letters; ethnic or racial slurs; or any other message that can be construed to be harassment or disparagement of others based on their sex, race, sexual orientation, age, national origin, or religion or other protected characteristics. Employees should not use our email system or internet for personal purposes, for forwarding messages under circumstances likely to embarrass the sender, for inappropriate responses to business correspondence or work situations, or for sending confidential business information to their personal email accounts. Using these electronic systems for any illegal purpose or against NKC policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

In addition, no employee may download any file, software, upgrade, or other material from any website, nor may they e-mail or install any software on our communication systems without the express approval of Information Technology.

The electronic mail system, internet access, and other electronic systems have been installed by NKC to facilitate business communications. Although each employee has an individual password to access this system, the communications and the password belong to NKC. NKC reserves the right, in its discretion and without employee permission, to review any documents or electronic files created by or stored on our systems, as well as employees' voice or email messages and internet usage to the extent necessary to ensure that electronic systems are being used in compliance with the law and with NKC policies. Employee privacy does not extend to the

employee's work-related conduct or to the use of NKC-provided equipment or supplies. Therefore, employees should never assume any electronic communications are private or confidential.

Electronic communication systems and services are primarily for business use. Limited, occasional, or incidental personal, non-business use during nonworking time is acceptable. However, employees must demonstrate a sense of responsibility and may not abuse this privilege. NKC reserves the right to access and disclose all messages sent over or accessed through its electronic systems or its equipment, including the email system, and to monitor internet activity without regard to content. Any employee abusing the privilege of NKC-facilitated access to electronic media, equipment or services will be subject to corrective action.

Finally, employees are expected to not use personal cell phones, personal data devices, smartphones, tablets, or similar devices during working time for personal business. Personal devices may never be used in patient care areas, and violations of this prohibition may be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Camera phones are never permitted in NKC clinics and may be further restricted at NKC's discretion to protect proprietary or confidential information or to prevent behavior that violates NKC policies.

### ***Protected Health Information (PHI) Within Email***

Protected Health Information (PHI) has the meaning ascribed by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and includes any unique identifier such as name, social security number, date of birth, phone, address, email address, etc.

It is never acceptable to exchange unencrypted PHI via email. Per HIPAA guidelines, the preferred method of sharing PHI is via phone, fax, interoffice mail, U.S. mail, or email that is fully encrypted. NKC's Microsoft Outlook email has full encryption capability ("TLS") that has been enabled.

NKC staff may, as a practical consideration, use email to share PHI if the sender intends for the email to be sent only within the NKC domain ("nwkidney.org") to other NKC employees or to the NKC Chief Nursing Officer. Even when communicating within the NKC domain, PHI must never be included in the subject line of any email.

If employees have questions about whether information is appropriate for communication by email, they should consult with their supervisor, clinical director, or the NKC Compliance and Privacy Officer before sending the email.

If an employee becomes aware that an unencrypted email containing PHI was sent outside of the NKC domain, they should:

- Send a follow-up email asking the recipient to not open and to delete the email, or if already opened and printed, to shred the email document(s); and
- Report the incident to the NKC Compliance and Privacy Officer.

Deliberate infractions of this policy are subject to disciplinary action.

### ***Social Media***

NKC recognizes that some employees may choose to post personal information on the internet through personal websites, Facebook, X, blogs, forums, newsgroups, or chat rooms, by uploading

content, or by making comments on other websites or blogs. For simplicity, this policy refers to these platforms collectively as “social media.” Please remember as new devices, platforms, and technologies become available, this policy will still apply even though the next device or site is not explicitly referenced in this policy.

NKC acknowledges that employees may be engaging in these forms of personal expression on personal time, devices, and systems and not on NKC time, devices, in patient care areas. In some cases, employees may be using social media as part of their NKC duties. This policy is intended to provide guidance for both work-related and personal use of social media.

**Those who use social media should remember some simple guidelines:**

- 1. The internet may be forever.** Everything written on the web can be traced back to its author one way or another. Information is backed up often and repeatedly, and posts in one forum are usually replicated in others through trackbacks and reposts or references.
- 2. Personal posts or messages can influence others' views of you professionally.** Although one may expect that only friends will view whatever is posted, in fact, customers and co-workers can easily see anything posted on the internet. That information may alter the customer's or co-workers' view of the individual or NKC. NKC does not condone, and strongly cautions against, any posts of or links to any material that may be defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, pornographic or indecent on any personal site. Photos posted should always reflect professionalism.
- 3. Maintain confidentiality.** Never post or comment on any confidential or proprietary information about NKC as defined in our Confidentiality policies. Follow copyright, fair use, trademark, and financial disclosure laws. For the purposes of this guideline, confidential information does not include information related to employees' wages, hours, or working conditions.
- 4. You are responsible for what you post.** Anyone who posts online is responsible for what is written or presented online, both in a personal and professional capacity. NKC may elect to discipline its employees for commentary, content, or images, in either personal or work-related postings that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, intimidating, violent, pornographic, unethical, harassing, or that otherwise violate NKC policies. Employees will not be disciplined for discussing with co-workers or others issues related to their wages, hours, or working conditions, or for otherwise engaging in concerted action that may be protected by federal or state laws.
- 5. Do not use NKC resources for personal use of social media.** Employees are expected to adhere to all policies with respect to the use of NKC's computers, internet access and other equipment or systems. Personal use of social media should not be done during work time or on work systems or devices, including monitoring Facebook or Twitter or watching YouTube videos for personal entertainment. Limited reasonable personal use of social media during breaks, meal periods or before/after work is acceptable if such activities do not otherwise violate NKC policies related to computers, internet access or other equipment. Such activities are strictly prohibited in and must never take place in patient

care areas. When using any social media for personal matters, employees should use a personal e-mail address device and system (not NKC's).

6. **Respect NKC's intellectual property.** When using social media for personal purposes, employees may not misuse NKC trademarks, logos, or other images. This prohibition is intended to protect NKC's brand image, but it is not intended, and should not be read to prohibit employees' use of NKC's logo or trademarked images when communicating with co-workers or other about matters related to employee terms and conditions of employment.
7. **You are an employee, but not the NKC spokesperson.** You may identify yourself as an employee of NKC, and you are free to discuss matters related to NKC's business (provided such discussions comply with NKC policies and do not disclose confidential, proprietary, or non-public financial information). If you choose to identify yourself as a NKC employee, and regardless of the topic of discussion, please state that the views expressed are your own, and do not necessarily reflect the view of NKC.
8. **Social network friends may be separate from your work relationships.** Participation in Facebook, Snapchat, and X (and similar social media sites) as a personal network need not include patients, co-workers, or customers. Employees are strongly encouraged to say "no" to those requests and to maintain professional boundaries with patients and customers at all times. Employees should understand and use the levels of privacy control available on personal social media accounts.
9. **Questions may be directed to NKC leadership** for appropriate use of social media.

### ***Weapons and Explosives***

Weapons (including all firearms and other items capable of harming others) and explosives are prohibited on NKC's premises, including the NKC parking lot. Employees are encouraged to promptly report any weapons on NKC premises to any supervisor or the People Team and will not be retaliated against for doing so.

### ***Workplace Violence***

NKC endeavors to provide a safe workplace for all employees. All employees are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities. The following is a non-exhaustive list of conduct that is prohibited.

- Causing physical injury to another person.
- Making threatening remarks.
- Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person or subjects another individual to emotional distress.
- Intentionally damaging employer property or property of another employee.

- Possession of a weapon on NKC property or while on NKC business.
- Committing acts motivated by or related to unlawful harassment or domestic violence.

Any potentially dangerous situation must be reported immediately to a supervisor or the People Team. Reports or incidents warranting confidentiality will be managed appropriately. This means that information is shared with others on a need-to-know basis.

While NKC does not expect employees to be skilled at identifying potentially dangerous persons, employees are expected to exercise good judgment and to inform a supervisor or the People Team of co-worker behavior that could cause concerns. Examples include:

- Discussing weapons or bringing them into the workplace.
- Displaying overt signs of extreme stress, resentment, hostility, or anger.
- Making threatening remarks.
- Sudden or significant deterioration of performance; or
- Displaying irrational or inappropriate behavior.

Employees who have concerns about domestic violence are urged to contact the People Team so that the People Team can collaborate with such employees to evaluate risks and minimize such concerns in the workplace.

Employees who encounter a threatening person should not attempt to challenge or disarm that individual. Employees should remain calm, keep constant eye contact, and talk to the individual. If a supervisor can be safely notified of the need for assistance without endangering the safety of the employee or others, such notice should be given. Alternatively, if possible, call 911.

Any employee determined to have engaged in workplace violence will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### ***Confidential Information***

Employees may have access to and learn confidential and proprietary information about NKC, its products, services, pricing, finances, business plans, trade secrets and its patients. Employees are expected to keep such information confidential and not disclose such information, either during or after employment, to any third party without prior written authorization from the employee's supervisor. For purposes of this policy, NKC does not define Confidential Information to include and, therefore, NKC does not seek to limit employees' discussion of matters related to their terms and conditions of employment or to prevent employees from participating in any investigation or proceeding where doing so is protected by law.

## ***Standards of Conduct***

The professional image of employees is an important contribution to the impressions and evaluation of NKC by our patients and the public. High standards of professionalism are essential for every employee and are outlined here.

**Appearance:** It is important to adhere to the appearance standards of our work environment. Employees should check with their supervisor to learn of special dress and grooming requirements for their work area. Any employee who, in the opinion of the supervisor, is not appropriately groomed or attired will be subject to disciplinary action.

Subject to any specific departmental requirements, employees should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Fit and general style of work clothes should be non-revealing, clean and professional in appearance.
- Items that are not considered part of our on-the-job wardrobe include: sportswear (such as workout apparel or jogging suits), sports tank tops, halter-tops, and sweatpants.
- Denim, on days permitted, must be clean and free of holes and tears.
- Hats and caps are not to be worn while on duty (except for religious purposes or when part of a uniform).
- Accessories and/or clothing with writing/pictures/symbols on them are not to be worn while on duty. Small apparel logos are acceptable (less than 2 inch squared)
- Hands must be always clean. Artificial nails and nail extenders may not be worn in patient care settings. Natural fingernails may not extend more than one quarter inch in past the end of finger. Nail polish must be in good repair and not chipped.
- Employees working in clinics or patient care departments are expected to comply with the department dress codes and in alignment with safety procedures.
- Professional, clinical attire is the only acceptable clothing for clinical staff during work hours and should promote patient confidence in the caregiver.
- Clinical staff that represent NKC in patients' homes or at other facilities should wear conservative business attire that reflects professionalism.
- We encourage a fragrance-free environment. In the patient and healthcare settings the use of excessive fragrances is discouraged.
- When working from home professional appearances should be adhered to.

Employees requiring religious accommodation from NKC's Appearance Policy should contact the People Team.

**Safety/Infection Control:** A lab coat is to be worn over personal attire when working with blood and body fluids. Lab coats are not to be worn outside of clinical areas. Jewelry must not interfere with safety. Do not wear jewelry that has the potential to create a safety issue.

Staff working with blood-borne pathogens must wear OSHA required fluid resistant coats over personal attire when working with patients. Fluid resistant coats must be changed whenever they are soiled or every 3rd day to reduce the spread of infection. Fluid resistant coats are not to be worn outside of patient care areas.

All shoes must be clean, closed toe in the clinical units or hazardous areas and in good repair. All clothing and shoes must be in good repair.

Hair should be worn in a style that prevents it from falling into the work area or obstructing vision. Hair ornaments and scarves can be dangerous if caught in equipment.

Clinical attire is the only acceptable clothing for staff working in the Isolation Room. Protective attire will be worn in the Special Precautions rooms. Specific directions appear in the procedure “Isolation Guidelines” in the Clinical Dialysis Procedure Manual.

**Professionalism:** Keep the following tenets in mind while at work:

1. Professionals always maintain their composure.
2. Seek opportunities within NKC to empower and involve patients in their own care and interactions.
3. Everyone must treat each other with courtesy and support regardless of position or personal relationship.
4. Be sensitive to, and respect, diversity while maintaining a positive relationship with all patients and staff.
5. Make sure efforts to accommodate are extended to all. Show no favoritism.
6. Know and support workplace standards, protocols, policies, and procedures.
7. Understand and employ high customer service standards.
8. The following are to be avoided in all situations, both at work and outside of work.
  - a) Accepting personal gifts from patients or their family members. Gifts and donations intended to be shared by the team are acceptable.
  - b) Discussing your personal problems or intimate feelings with a patient.
  - c) Keeping secrets with the patient other than those appropriate to staff-patient relationship confidentialities.
  - d) Close personal relationships, physical intimacy, or dating and marrying patients.
  - e) Violations of the Department of Health Standards of Professional Conduct.
  - f) Financial exchanges between staff and patients (unless the relationship existed prior to one of the parties becoming a patient or staff member) including but not limited to:
    - i) Buying and selling items,
    - ii) Loaning money,
    - iii) Borrowing money,
  - iv) Staff hiring a patient, or a patient hiring staff to work or perform tasks. The only exception is for a Northwest Kidney Centers’ Home patient who is ventilator dependent and wishes to hire NKC staff to provide dialysis care at home.
  - v) Staff/patient sharing of living quarters or financial sharing of household expenses.
9. A Northwest Kidney Centers professional understands and employs customer service standards.
10. Nothing in this policy prohibits staff from discussing the terms and conditions of their employment as permitted by law.

**Conversations:** Seek opportunities to engage in conversations with patients. Conversations between staff, in the presence of patients, should always respect the confidentiality of patients and may not be derogatory or negative about clients, other staff, or the organization. Profanity, vulgar speech, or inappropriate humor is not acceptable in the workplace. You should not carry-on personal conversations within hearing distance of patients.

**Skills and Knowledge:** A professional engages in ongoing skills and knowledge development. Know and work with your competencies. It is OK to seek help when you need it.

## 11 CHANGES OF STATUS AND TERMINATION

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### *Transfers and Promotions*

Notices of open positions are posted on K-Net, NKC's Intranet/website. An employee who is qualified for an open position may apply for a posted job opening by submitting an internal application via Jobvite, (via K-Net). To be considered for a position, an employee must complete and apply to demonstrate interest in such a role. NKC reserves the right to determine whether an opening should not be posted or to determine qualifications for a posted position, to select a candidate of its choosing, or to hire from outside rather than promote from within.

Although NKC will normally seek volunteers for transfers and promotions, there may be times when business needs require NKC to unilaterally initiate a transfer or promotion.

### *Termination of Employment*

Involuntary Termination: Consistent with the “at-will” employment relationship between NKC and the employee, NKC may terminate an employee at any time, with or without cause, with or without notice.

Resignation: Employees may also resign their “at-will” employment with NKC at any time, with or without cause, with or without notice. NKC expects that an employee who is resigning will provide as a courtesy two weeks’ (14-days) written notice of resignation. NKC may elect to waive the two weeks of notice at its discretion. Manager level roles and above are required to give 30-days’ notice period. Employees failing to provide this written notice, unless waived, will not receive PTO payout, and will be considered ineligible for rehire.

Layoff or Reduction in Force: NKC may find it necessary to lay off employees or implement a reduction in force due to lack of work, lack of money, the elimination of a job or position, changes in technology or other business reasons. NKC will provide notice prior to layoff, if required by law, or when feasible under its assessment of the circumstances.

### *Final Pay upon Termination*

Upon termination of employment, the employee’s final paycheck shall be provided with the next regularly scheduled pay date after termination of employment or in accordance with state law.

## Employee Services

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### ***Bulletin Boards and E-mail System***

Bulletin boards, NKC's Intranet and its e-mail systems are for the purpose of keeping employees informed of various NKC-related issues and announcements. Bulletin boards are also used to communicate information required by law in the form of official postings. Please check bulletin boards and e-mails frequently, as employees are responsible for being aware of their contents.

### ***Personal Mail and Copying/Facsimile***

Employees may not use NKC's name, address, envelopes, letterhead, or postage machine for personal correspondence. Employees may use NKC's copy and facsimile machines for personal use so long as such use does not interrupt regular business and such use is not excessive.

From time-to-time employees request the use of NKC's offices, telephones, or other equipment such as fax and copy machines, in connection with their personal support of non-profit and community causes. Although NKC encourages employee involvement in non-profit and community activities, NKC may limit employee use of its facilities and equipment for such activities. Requests to use NKC facilities should be directed to your manager.

### ***Personal Possessions***

NKC furnishes desks, closets, and/or lockers, for storage of employee coats, purses, briefcases, backpacks, and other personal possessions. Remember that all lockers, desks, or closets are NKC property. NKC does not, however, assume responsibility for any theft or damage to an employee's personal possessions on the NKC's premises. NKC reserves the right to search an employee's desk, locker, or personal belongings, like purses or backpacks, brought onto NKC premises at any time.

# Safety and Security

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## ***Solicitations***

Solicitations by outside third parties are inappropriate in the workplace. Such solicitations are an intrusion on employees and patients and may present a risk to employee safety or to the security of employer or employee property.

Persons not employed by NKC may not solicit, survey, petition, or distribute literature on NKC premises at any time. This includes persons soliciting for charities, salespersons, questionnaire surveyors, labor union organizers, or any other solicitor or distributor.

Employees may not solicit each other for any purpose during work time. Reasonable solicitation between employees is permitted during non-work time, such as before or after work or during meal or break periods. Employees who are on non-work time may not solicit other employees who are on work time.

Employees may not distribute literature at any time in work areas. Employees may only distribute literature in non-work areas during non-work time. The employee lunchroom is considered a non-work area under this policy. Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with employees' rights under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act.

## ***Safety***

Employee safety depends on the safety consciousness of everyone in the workplace. Always observe the special safety rules applicable in each work area and always follow general rules of safety. Employees are expected to comply with the following specific safety rules, including but not limited to:

- Report immediately any injury or accident, safety hazard, or property needing repair to your supervisor and/or complete a request for repair on K-Net or submit a report on SAS.
- Wear all necessary personal protective equipment.
- Always keep your individual work area clean and orderly.
- Do not smoke or permit others to smoke in “No Smoking” areas.
- Do not allow unauthorized persons to operate equipment or to have access to restricted areas.
- If you are assigned a job or task requiring protective clothing or equipment, use it. Do not dress in a way that might increase the risk of a job-related injury.
- Store all materials and equipment in their proper places and appropriately.

- Do not engage in unprofessional or inappropriate work conduct.
- Drive safely and courteously when operating a vehicle as part of work.
- If your job duties include lifting heavy objects, do so with the appropriate equipment and/or assistance.
- Complete all training in NKC's learning management system as assigned and required.
- Wash and sanitize hands regularly.

NKC's Safety Program also requires that employees' children or dependents under the age of 18 may not be present at the work site except under exceptional circumstances and with the pre-approval of the Chief Nursing Officer or Vice President of People & Culture. Children or dependents under the age of 18 may accompany an employee to work and stay in the department or unit lobby if the employee is only "stopping by" for less than 15 minutes.

If an employee wishes to make suggestions regarding solutions to safety problems and hazards, they should provide them to the Safety Committee Representative or any membership of management for their area.

### ***Security***

Access to NKC premises is limited to persons who have a legitimate reason to visit. Employees must always wear and ensure visibility of their NKC badge while on NKC premises and may be requested to show their badge if it is not visible upon their entry to the premises. Unauthorized persons may present a risk to employees, patients, or legitimate visitors. If an employee notices an unauthorized person or witnesses conduct that is suspicious, they must report it immediately to a supervisor and/or contact NKC Security using the telephone number on their identification badge. If an employee believes there is a threat to personal safety involved, the police and the Administrator on Call (AOC) should be alerted immediately.

### ***Accidents and Accident Reports***

If an employee is injured or suspects that they have been injured on the job, or an employee is involved in an accident, the employee must notify their supervisor immediately. As soon as practicable, but in no case later than 72 hours following an injury or accident, or suspected injury or accident, an employee must complete an accident report form describing the circumstances surrounding the incident. This form may be obtained from K-Net in the SAS (safety alert system).

### ***Emergencies***

A copy of NKC's fire and disaster evacuation plan is available on K-Net. Employees are responsible to be familiar with this plan. Questions regarding the fire and disaster evacuation plan should be directed to a supervisor. Employees with disabilities that may limit their ability to safely evacuate should discuss their limitations with the People Team so that accommodation can be considered.

# Benefits

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## ***Group Insurance Programs***

Employees may be eligible to participate in certain employer-sponsored insurance programs, such as medical/dental, life, and disability insurance. This section of the Handbook contains a very general description of NKC's employee benefits.

NKC strives to be an employer of choice and provides a competitive and comprehensive benefit package including but not limited to Medical, Dental, Vision, and retirement options. Managing and designing this package with compliance in mind, NKC reserves the right to add to, amend, administer, or interpret and discontinue any of its employee benefit plans and/or programs at any time, subject to applicable laws and regulations, with notice. The actual benefits provided, as well as eligibility requirements, are determined by the plan documents. For more detailed information about NKC's benefit plans and group insurance programs, as well as to avoid any inconsistency between this Handbook and the current plan design, please consult the annually updated Benefits Guide or applicable summary plan description or contact the People Team.

## ***401(k) Program***

NKC's Retirement Plan provides a 401(k) program for eligible employees. New employees may begin tax deferred contributions to the plan the first of the month following 60 days of employment.

Employees may choose to defer a personal salary contribution to the program. After the employee completes one year of service and works the requisite number of hours, NKC will match the employee's personal contribution up to the first 4% of their salary. This matching portion is immediately vested.

Please see the Benefits Guide for more up-to-date information on the 401(k) plan.

## ***Tuition Reimbursement and Employee Scholarship Programs***

NKC employees may apply for an Employee Scholarship funded by NKC donors. In addition, many employees are eligible for NKC's Tuition Reimbursement program, established to allow and encourage employees to improve their job-related skills, enhance their ability in their current position, or prepare for advancement to a higher-level position with NKC.

Tuition reimbursement funds are available quarterly on a first-come, first-served basis for all employees who work at least 24 hours per week and have one year of service. Approval must be received prior to taking the course. Employees can receive up to \$1,000 per quarter (up to \$4,000 in a rolling 12 months). Once the funds are depleted, no further employees will be eligible for reimbursement unless funds become available in the next fiscal year.

Eligible courses include:

- A single job-related course, taken through an accredited college or university, or teaching institution which provides CEUs.
- Courses leading to job-related certification (e.g., coding certification).
- Job-related courses, which allow the employee to achieve an Associates, bachelor's, or master's degree.

Reimbursement is made after completing the course with a grade "B" (2.5 on a 4.0 scale) or better and submitting the original documentation with a check request to the Human Resource Department.

### ***Professional Development***

NKC provides funding for employees to attend outside training sessions based on their individual training needs and available funding resources. Training needs that address mandatory job requirements receive priority for funding. Training opportunities, which enhance job knowledge and skills receive second funding priority. Requests for other training are considered if funding is available.

Types of expenses that are considered include: The cost of the course; airfare; hotel accommodations; meals and necessary ground transportation. Please contact The People Team for more information.

### ***Helping Hands Fund***

NKC has established a Helping Hand Fund, funded by NKC donors, to provide confidential emergency financial assistance to NKC employees. Consistent with our culture of philanthropy, NKC encourages all employees to consider donating to this fund, or to NKC generally, to the extent they are able. The full policy and Request for Assistance Form are available on K-Net.

### ***Employee Assistance and Counseling***

NKC sponsors an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that provides referrals for confidential employee assistance and professional counseling services. Employees are encouraged to utilize such services whenever necessary to resolve personal or family issues, or other problems, which can affect an employee's performance on the job. Information about employee assistance and counseling services is available from the People Team.

# Time Off

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## ***Holidays***

NKC observes the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Memorial Day	Independence Day
Labor Day	Thanksgiving
Christmas Day	

In addition to the above-listed holidays, employees are granted one Floating Holiday which may be taken at the employee's discretion. Each holiday is observed on its actual date unless a unit or department is routinely closed on that day of the week.

Nonexempt employees who are scheduled to work on a recognized holiday receive one- and one-half times their regular salary. This holiday premium pay applies to time worked on the actual date of the holiday and not to time worked on a Monday or Friday, which may be designated as the date for observing a weekend holiday. Holiday premium pay is given for the entire shift, when the bulk of hours worked are on the actual date of the holiday.

Exempt employees are expected to not work on scheduled holidays. If an exempt employee perceives the need to work on a scheduled NKC holiday and wishes to take another day as a holiday, prior approval must be obtained from the exempt employee's supervisor.

## ***Paid Time Off (PTO) – Regular Full-Time and Part-Time Employees***

The importance of time off for periods of rest and relaxation and for illness/injury purposes is well-recognized by Northwest Kidney Centers (NKC). NKC provides Paid Time Off (PTO) benefits to all regular full-time and regular part-time employees. NKC grants Illness Bank (IB) benefits to on-call, per diem, and direct hire temporary employees. PTO and IB benefits are used under specified conditions as set forth in this policy. PTO and IB must be used prior to time off without pay.

## ***Parental/Disability Leave***

Employees are entitled to leave for the actual period of disability associated with pregnancy and childbirth. If the employee is eligible for family leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act, described above, that leave will run concurrently with any parental/disability leave under this section. Parental/disability leave will also run concurrently with leave under the Washington Paid Family Leave law, to the extent permissible by law. The leave is unpaid unless the employee is receiving PFML benefits or has available PTO or IB available, which must be used during this leave. Available PTO may be required to be used during this leave in certain circumstances in accordance with applicable law. This policy will be administered according to any applicable state and federal law. Employees should contact the the People Team Department with questions about these available leave benefits.

### ***Non-FMLA/PFML Medical Leave***

Employees who are ineligible for FMLA or PFML leave but need time off from work due to their own serious illness or injury may be granted a non-FMLA/PFML medical leave for up to 30 days. The leave is unpaid unless the employee has available vacation and sick leave (which must be used during this leave to the extent permitted by applicable law). Where the employee's condition qualifies as a disability, this policy will be administered according to general principles of reasonable accommodation. Employees should contact their supervisor or the People Team Department with questions about non-FMLA medical leave.

### ***Jury Duty***

Jury duty is an individual's responsibility as a citizen. Unless job responsibilities require it, NKC will not ask or encourage an employee to be excused from or postpone a call to jury duty. Exempt employees will continue to receive their regular salary for days spent in court. Employees are expected to work their regular schedule on any day the employee is not required to be present in court. Employees are also expected to work the remaining part of any scheduled shift if they are excused from jury duty.

An employee must provide their supervisor with a letter or other confirmation from the court clerk indicating the time served.

### ***Military Leave of Absence***

If a non-exempt employee is required to take a temporary military leave, for example to attend annual military reserve training or other short-term active military duty, the employee may take the time as either regular vacation [consolidated annual leave] or unpaid leave.

If an exempt employee is required to take temporary military leave for only part of a workweek, NKC pays the exempt employee's salary for that entire week. However, if an exempt employee is absent and provides no services to NKC during a workweek of temporary military leave, the exempt employee may either use vacation [consolidated annual leave] or take unpaid leave for that absence.

If an employee takes temporary or regular military leave, they are entitled to return to the employee's former job as provided under federal and state laws.

### ***Military Spousal Leave***

Any employee who works more than 20 hours per week and whose qualifying spouse or domestic partner is deployed or about to be deployed or is on leave from deployment in a military conflict declared by Congress or the President is entitled to up to fifteen (15) days of leave of absence per deployment. The leave is unpaid except that the employee can use their vacation, sick leave [or other paid time off] at the same time. An employee wishing to take this leave must notify their supervisor within five business days of receiving official notice that the spouse is being deployed or will be on leave from deployment. Upon conclusion of the leave, the employee will return to

their position or an equivalent one unless the employee would otherwise have been terminated had the employee not taken the leave.

### ***Mandatory Time Off and Periods of Overstaffing***

During temporary periods of limited work or excess staffing, an employee may be required to take time off. Volunteers will first be sought out prior to the implementation of a reduced staffing schedule. If sufficient volunteers are unavailable, mandatory time off will be rotated equitably among employees within the department, starting with the least senior employee first, subject to ability, skills, and special knowledge needed to carryout departmental tasks. Every effort will be made to offer affected employees additional hours on other units, depending on the qualifications of the affected employees.

Employees may choose to use PTO or take the time without pay.

NKC may assign affected employees to a position for which they are qualified. Employees may be required to float to other units as per business need.

# Employee's Statement of Understanding

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Employee Handbook dated \_\_\_\_\_.

I also acknowledge that its purpose and content have been explained to me and I have been offered an opportunity to ask questions regarding it. I understand the Employee Handbook summarizes various employment policies and procedures applicable to my employment with NKC but does not include a complete set of policies applicable to my work. I agree that I am responsible for awareness of and adherence to all applicable NKC policies and procedures, including those maintained in the NKC Policy Management system.

I further understand that the Employee Handbook is not an employment agreement or contract for employment [for any period]. I have been told and I understand that unless a contract executed by a responsible NKC official provides otherwise, my employment with NKC is “at-will,” which means it may be terminated at any time, with or without cause, with or without notice, by either me or NKC. I also understand that I may be demoted, my job responsibilities may change, or my benefits altered after I accept employment with NKC, with or without cause and with or without notice.

I understand that this Handbook supersedes any prior handbooks or policy manuals regarding employment with the NKC.

I understand that NKC may add to, modify, delete, or make exceptions to any of the policies and procedures contained in the Employee Handbook from time to time.

I agree to perform my job and otherwise act in a manner consistent with the Employee Handbook and any subsequent additions, modification, or deletions, which may be implemented by NKC during my employment.

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(Employee Signature)

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(Print Name)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_